Workshop Resources for Challenging Bias

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Workshop Resources for Challenging Bias

By Mark Szymanski <marks@pacificu.edu>

In previous columns I’ve been writing about a theme that’s been hard to veer away from: finding funding and workshop opportunities for educators that help them fight hate, promote tolerance, and protect civil rights. Writing for a monthly on-line journal provides me with the opportunity and challenge of looking for and listening to the important events that are in our direct line of site. Since the events of September 11th, 2002 and the escalating violence in the Middle East, it’s been difficult to consider other topics.

In the writing process, after I consider issues for the column, I search for funding and workshop opportunities on the Internet that might help educators create curriculum or learning opportunities for their students. All of my previous columns have focused on funding opportunities for educators. As result, I think it’s important to dedicate equal time to workshop and training opportunities that are available to educators. The next step is to change the traditional definition of a workshop to fit our Internet world.

When we attend a workshop, we usually think of sitting in room and listening to a person give us resources and ideas to meet some important need we have as educators. Clearly the time and location part of this definition needs to change if we are to consider workshops and training opportunities on the Internet. An Internet training opportunity still starts with a need and results in the participants leaving with some tools and resources, but the workshop or resources should be free and accessible via the internet. Just as educators have had to experiment and develop new ideas of how learning can take place, it seems workshop and training opportunities face the same changes.

This month, as the violence in the Middle East continues to escalate, again we as educators face the task of helping our students confront stereotypes and understand cultures and individuals. The media provides images and information that is filtered through editors and editorial boards with a wide range of political views. As a result, our students are forming opinions about
cultures that are based on the actions of a few members of the culture. In this column I’d like to discuss a part of the teaching tolerance web site (1) that organizes and discusses resources educators can use to challenge bias against Muslim and Arab Americans. As I see it, all of the resources in this section of the web site are workshop material.

As the web site states, “educators are initiating discussions with their students about the injustice of blaming entire groups of people for the actions committed by only a few” (2). To help teachers with this task, this section of the teach tolerance web site provides “resources on how to prevent anger and grief from escalating into bias and stereotyping”(3). Tracing bias and stereotyping back to emotional states allows students and educators to consider how to deal effectively with the roots of anger and grief that live in each individual. As a result, students are able to consider the power that emotions have over our conclusions.

The section of the teaching tolerance site (3) provides 18 links to a range of resources. These links are divided into three sections. The first section lists a number of general resources. Some of the resources are intended to provide information about American-Arabs. For example, The American Forum on Global Education (4) provides activities for teachers interested in addressing the Muslim Middle East and other global issues. In addition, the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University (5) makes the purpose of their web site clear with the banner “Who are the Arabs”. This section also gives teachers some resources and tools they can use when working with American-Arab students and families. Wendy Schwartz of Columbia University provides a useful summary of the literature about curriculum and counseling techniques that may be more effective with students from Arab cultures (6).

The second section of the site (2) provides advice to educators from the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. The Committee makes a point of reminding us of that American-Arab students and citizens condemn the violence of September 11, 2002. They also suggest three ways educators can take a stand against discrimination and support American-Arab students since they may be feeling like they are targets of violence. First they suggest educators make a public statement that innocent people should not be blamed for the violent acts of other members of their culture. Second, they suggest that educators create an educational forum that makes it possible and safe for all students to express their views and emotions. As stated earlier, anger and grief drive the early reactions of students; therefore, it’s necessary for us to provide places and opportunities for students to work through those feelings. Third, it’s important for schools to provide counseling for students who want to share their concerns privately.

The third section of the site is titled Tolerance as a Casualty of War. It is unique and gives educators links to resources that help students examine the U.S. government’s internment of the Japanese after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and points out the parallel lessons our students can learn from this event.

I hope that the definition of workshops will be begin to evolve as more and more educators begin to use the Internet. As you can see from this section of the teach for tolerance site, the types of
resources available are useful because they are immediate, applicable and free. All valuable elements of any workshop.

(1) http://www.tolerance.org  
(2) http://www.tolerance.org/teach/printar.jsp?p=0&ar=249&pi=current  
(3) http://www.tolerance.org/teach/printar.jsp?p=0&ar=249&pi=current  
(4) http://www.globaled.org/  
(5) http://www.ccasonline.org/publications/teachmodule_whoarabs.htm  
(6) http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/digests/dig142.html

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5 THOUGHTS ON “WORKSHOP RESOURCES FOR CHALLENGING BIAS”

Wojewódzki  
on January 30, 2014 at 7:10 AM said:

Awesome talk! Thank you so significantly for hosting Great.

dating  
on January 30, 2014 at 11:33 AM said:

nice work, i like reading your post. Maintain the great work.

plotka  
on February 1, 2014 at 1:49 AM said:

Thanks to your advice! I’ll read it to realize more about Holy Cross.

dating online  
on February 3, 2014 at 1:46 AM said:
Attractive section of content. I just stumbled upon your weblog and in accession capital to assert that I invest in in fact enjoyed account your blog posts. Any way I will be subscribing for ones augment and even I success you access consistently quickly.

Nigeria social network
on February 5, 2014 at 12:18 AM said:

Thanks , I've just been searching for information about this subject for your lengthy time and yours could be the best I've came upon so far. But, what in regards to the conclusion? Are you certain for the supply?