6 Benefits of Teaching Controversial Political Issues to Students

The Political Classroom
Diana E. Hess and Paula McAvoy’s book ‘The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education’ discusses their landmark four-year study on the teaching of controversial political issues in the classroom.

Among their findings: students benefit from learning about controversial political issues. Six are presented here.

1. Engagement
Students participate more, especially when they are encouraged to be a part of class discussions.

2. Political Literacy
Students stay more informed about controversial political issues.

3. Tolerance
Students respect and understand other viewpoints.

4. Confidence
Students grow more confident in holding their own viewpoints and discussing politics in general.

5. Civil Discourse
Students learn to engage in civil discourse.

6. Political Participation
Students vote more often later in life.

“Before taking the class, I tended to avoid any political or controversial discussions, and now I don’t mind talking about those kinds of things with my friends occasionally. I became more comfortable with the structure of the conversation and with being able to have my own views, whether they were the same or different from the people around me.” (Hess & McAvoy 119)

—High School Student

Source

More Information
SIRS Issues Rosenhause is a pro/con database that helps students understand today’s controversial political issues with editorially selected analysis and opinions that cover the entire spectrum of viewpoints. Don’t have SIRS Issues Researcher? Free trials are available.