

Weaving Current Events into Student Assignments and Classroom Activities

One way to help students recognize the relevance of a course of study is to incorporate current events into the mix of classroom strategies. Whether your students use actual newspapers or electronic resources, there are dozens of ways to weave current events into student assignments and classroom activities. The New York Times Learning Network posted “50 Ways to Teach with Current Events” on their website last fall and there are hundreds of other suggestions on the web.

The following list includes a few of my favorite news-related assignments and activities:

- Give extra credit for current news articles that directly relate to class content. Invite students to bring in an article, explain why it’s relevant and present a 1-2 minute summary.
- Have students closely examine one news event by comparing the coverage from different news sources. How is the coverage similar and how is it different?
- Given a particular news event, ask students to identify two credible resources and two questionable resources, and justify their selections.
- After discussing a current event, provide event photographs and ask students to develop their own captions and share in class.
- When following one issue for a full semester, ask students to write an opinion piece at the beginning, middle and end of the semester.
- With more complex current event topics, ask students to create a timeline of events.
- Invite students to look at the stories that have made the front page of a local newspaper during the last few days and to talk about why each of those stories made headlines.
- Ask students to choose an article and write about how that issue matters to them, to their family or to their community.
- Ask students to analyze how photographs are used, what they add to the understanding of the article, how they may bias the content of an article and what makes them memorable and/or questionable.
- Ask students to write a letter to the editor about a topic/issue emerging from the course content and discussion.
- Ask students to compare a current event to a historical event of their choosing.
- Help students practice research skills by distributing articles for students to use to practice summarizing, paraphrasing, using quotations, avoiding plagiarism and citing sources.

Resources

Education World: *Twenty-Five Great Ideas for Teaching Current Events*. Retrieved from
http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson072.shtml

The Learning Network: *50 Ways to Teach with Current Events*. Retrieved from
<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/07/50-ways-to-teach-current-events/comment-page-1/>

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