

## ADDRESSING CONTROVERSIAL POLITICAL ISSUES TOWARD STUDENTS

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Controversial issues involve problems where individuals or groups of people do have conflicting actions toward a particular situation. It is an issue where society does not have any solution that can be considered universally accepted. It is a problem that requires a solution but because of the diverse point of view, it is very difficult to settle on a single solution. A particular issue was labeled controversial due to a debatable dialogue between two opposing groups or individuals. Most teachers define it as sensitive subjects because of their contrasting viewpoints and opinions (Awan, 2014).

Education does have many bases. It can be social, political, cultural, economic, historical, etc. In research conducted about politics and education, there is a contradicting idea. For some, education and teaching roles are already political but for some, it is unrelated realities. Politics must keep out in education and vice versa. It is because politics are anchored with conflicts (Ozdemir, 2018).

Discussion of controversial political issues (CPI) in a classroom setting might create confusion on the teachers' role or how they will address this topic. It depends on the teacher how the students can express themselves freely. It's up to them whether they will create or lessen inequalities among students (Ozdemir, 2018). There are teachers who were into teaching students about controversial political issues because it can be a tool for preparing students for political participation. It serves as a response to civic education, empowering them to be part of democratic processes. It is a way of informing and engaging the public. Introducing controversial political issues is the same as raising public consciousness about political issues (McCracken, 2015). Political awareness is very

important to the students specifically as they are also citizens of this democratic country. They must be informed of any political matters to understand the political agenda and the challenges in the nation. Teachers play an important role in making the student wiser and to have a sort of progress on how they view the current situation (Rahman & Raxzali, 2018).

On the other hand, Article 2, section 5, of the Philippine Teachers Code of Ethics, states, "A teacher shall not engage in the promotion of any political, religious, or other partisan interest, and shall not directly or indirectly, solicit, require, collect, or receive any money or service or other valuable material from any person or entity for such purposes." In addition to that is the Preamble that says, "Teachers are duly licensed professionals who possess dignity and reputation with high moral values as well as technical and professional competence in the practice of their noble profession." Republic Act 6713 also known as the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees in Section 4 (b) talks about the political neutrality of public officials.

In response to that, teachers are expected to be neutral. Wherein they are expected to limit their views and opinions, particularly on sensitive issues that might deeply challenge the beliefs of their student. That is why teachers should maintain balance and diversity in the classroom (Richards, 2020). It does not mean that politics are prohibited in the classroom, it is just that teachers must be in the neutral position when talking about it. Teachers are bounded to different views such as they are authority figures and expected to be objective. But at the same time, trying to keep the balance might also lead to limiting what is ought to know by the students.

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2021 Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers Explained, Art. 2, sec. 5

[https://depedtambayan.net/the-code-of-ethics-for-professional-teachers/#ARTICLE\\_V\\_THE\\_TEACHERS\\_AND\\_THE\\_PROFESSION](https://depedtambayan.net/the-code-of-ethics-for-professional-teachers/#ARTICLE_V_THE_TEACHERS_AND_THE_PROFESSION)

Ibid., Preamble. [http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1989/ra\\_6713\\_1989.html](http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1989/ra_6713_1989.html)

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