

JISS Social Justice Perspectives

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Social Studies for Social Responsibility

The article for this column of Social Justice Perspectives is written by Jamie Campbell Naidoo and Miriam E. Sweeney. They stretch the boundaries of social education by integrating Library and Information Science to address international social justice issues. Library studies are often untapped by social educators, although our most critical issues are addressed in both fields.

The authors suggest alternatives to privileging and reproducing the dominant culture through “targeted justice-oriented curricular collaborations between social studies educators and librarians.” And they discuss the creation of a social justice framework that extends beyond cross-cultural education and media literacy as commonly practiced, to cross-cultural competency “embedded in critiques of structural power in order to connect individual experience and identity formation to systems of oppression and domination.” The formal structures and informal norms of these systems are directed by “white supremacy and features of whiteness . . . “ [a] benchmark of the status quo.”

We are encouraged to examine the assumptions underlying pedagogical paradigms that are presented as neutral. Paradigms reflecting the status quo hide the unequal/immoral distribution of knowledge, a deficit-based perspective of the digital divide, and an unwillingness to acknowledge the effects of social exclusion on education and wealth/well-being. These issues are highlighted in the article with supporting scholarship and focused questions that lead to understanding, and hopefully to action.

Strategies for moving forward include using authentic literature, digital media, and relevancy in materials and activities, because students need to connect injustice in their lives with broader social injustices, and become involved in solutions. Multiple resources and multiple literacies can be incorporated in the service of international social justice, and many examples of how to do this are provided.

I was especially touched by the very impressive speech of Malala Yousafzai (see youtube website) in the suggested lessons. It reminded me that student activities can be life-changing events. I hope that the materials shared here will be integrated into the work of all IA members and readers of the *Journal of International Social Studies*.

Thank you Jamie and Miriam for sharing your expertise, your commitment to social justice, and your exemplary pedagogical practice.