
Multimedia Review

Multicultural Websites

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Diversity & Current Issues Website: *The Teachable Moment*

<http://www.teachablemoment.org/>

The election of a bi-racial American, Barack Hussein Obama, as the 44th President of the United States of America in November 2008 marked an important milestone of equity after 245 years of cruel slavery, 100 years of racial segregation, and 47 years of Affirmative Action. This epic event would not have been possible without millions of White voters dismissing race as a factor in a presidential election.

Educators from pre-kindergarten through university should take this opportunity to reexamine and deconstruct the social, economic, and political forces that deprived people of color, women, and others of their inalienable human and constitutional rights during most of America's history. This deconstruction is best contextualized by providing learning opportunities that link students to empirical evidence through guided activities. The Internet provides 24/7 access to data about current issues which touch the lives of students in a globalized world. One website to help in this reflective process is *The Teachable Moment*.



The Teachable Moment (<http://www.teachablemoment.org/>) is a classroom activity site sponsored by the *Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility*, founded in 1982 by teachers concerned about nuclear war. The *Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility* provides outreach to New York City public schools and community organizations, helping teachers, students, and parents build skills, knowledge, and a sense of community by promoting critical thinking, social awareness, and neighborhood action. They offer programs and training in conflict resolution and intercultural understanding. Their website is divided into four components—elementary,

middle school, high school, and ideas and essays—in addition to a newsletter aptly named *Action News*.

The **elementary section** has 27 activities for grades K-6 students, many of them with diversity themes such as:

- *Respecting Differences For K-2*: Students learn from each other even though their friends may have different opinions and disagree. The lesson includes an opinion continuum exercise that encourages students to express and listen respectfully to different opinions.
- *Two Activities on Diversity*: In a group and as individuals students consider their similarities and differences and recognize the appropriateness of talking about diversity.
- *Exploring Stereotypes--First Thoughts*: Students consider stereotypes, beginning with the category of teenagers.

The **middle school section** offers 15 activities to help adolescents feel better emotionally about themselves and others during their transition to young adulthood:

- *Affirmation Interview*: Students interview and learn about each another.
- *Cultural Banners*: Students work individually to create a cultural banner expressing values, traditions, and activities important in their families.
- *Find Someone Who*: This is a rapid exercise for students to connect with each other and overcome shyness.
- *Coping Strategies--Managing Feelings*: Working in small groups, students categorize coping strategies as positive, negative, neutral, and time-out behaviors.
- *Metaphors for Expressing Feelings*: Students examine how feelings are expressed in a poem and then use metaphor to write about their own feelings.

The **high school section** is divided into five major sections with a wide range of activities under each topic. “Current Domestic Issues” presents 140 issues and activities, such as:

- *Election 2008: The Issue of Race*: Language used at some political rallies raises questions about racial bias in the 2008 presidential election.
- *Opening a Dialogue--How people in Muslim countries view the U.S. and how people in the U.S. view Muslims*: Students are invited to think critically about these complex issues through poll questions, brief case studies, and a critical thinking exercise.
- *Exploring Race & Racism through Obama's Speech on Race*: Senator Barack Obama's March 18, 2008, speech is used as a teachable moment for issues of race, racism, and race relations.

- *The Immigration Debate & A DBQ*: An overview of the current immigration bill followed by a Document-Based Question activity offers multiple points of view on immigration.
- *Media Bigotry*: Students read and discuss samples from TV, radio, the record industry, and other outlets that raise questions about racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and Islamophobia in the media.
- *The Class & Race Divide In New Orleans & In America*: Hurricane Katrina in 2005 created a teachable moment on issues of race, class, and inequality.
- *Affirmative Action and the Courts*: In view of the Supreme Court's 2008 ruling on the University of Michigan's Affirmative Action program, four lessons, and original source materials are presented.
- *War, Peace, Terrorism & Other Global Issues*: 58 activities are presented.
- *The Middle East*: Seven activities are available.
- *Nuclear Weapons & Other Related Issues*: 15 activities are provided.
- *Teaching Strategies*: 10 activities are suggested.

The site concludes with a section entitled "Ideas & Essays" which offers 18 activities and templates for teachers who want to incorporate important social, political, environmental, and economic issues in their lesson plans.

The appearance and navigation of *The Teachable Moment* website is simple, with medium color/text contrast and horizontal menus. The site and individual activities load in one second using Internet Explorer Version 7 or Firefox Version 3.03. A site map with text but no metatags provides an overview of all sections. The site has eight accessibility errors and is only available in English. It does not comply with the automatic and manual checkpoints of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and HTML markup and has 700 minor errors. On November 09, 2008, the site posted November 05, 2008, as its latest update.