

***New York Times* Activities for Portfolio 2**

Contributed by Sue Doe

Goals: To use the *New York Times* in support of the goals of COCC150, and to integrate the *Times* throughout the course

The emphasis here is on seeing the relationships between issues and contexts. Students can look for the economic, social, and political ramifications of issues. They may look for the interconnections between health and environment, for instance. Additionally, they might look for historical perspectives or how discussions have evolved over time.

Students should be:

I. Sharing perspectives on issues

- 1) sharing their issues and discussing their positions in as many ways as possible to get a sense of how differing points of view and backgrounds guide the positions that their classmates take.
- 2) examining their own and others' reactions and reasons for reactions (values, beliefs, attitudes, affiliations, backgrounds) in order to understand the multiplicity of perspectives out there.

II. Striving to see connections and dilemmas inherent to issue discussions

- 1) Why do issues matter to people?
- 2) How might the news be different in another city, region, country, or culture?
- 3) Why are values, beliefs, attitudes, shared perspectives important to the discussion of specific issues?
- 4) What are the differing perspectives of varied parts of the U.S. population on this issue and why?
- 5) How might differing countries or cultures view this issue?
- 6) Are there issues for which there are no answers, only better and lesser solutions?
- 7) Why do issues embroil some people in debate while having no meaning or resonance to others? Name some examples.

III. Working to see the assumptions and implications of policies on issues

- 1) What are the assumptions that form a foundation for views on topics?
 - 1) Where do these policies take us? What are the possible outcomes, as identified by shared perspectives? How might a perspective become policy—and what are the possible ramifications of such policies?
 - 2) What is an acceptable or desirable outcome from your way of thinking?
 - 3) How do policies create dilemmatic situations? In what ways are goals of policies sometimes at odds with one another—as in the SAT wars, which illuminate the conflicting simultaneous goals of maintaining educational high standards while opening the doors of opportunity to an ever-enlarging portion of the population

For Portfolio 2 students build news and issue analysis based upon contexts, so in addition to keeping news clips, whole classes might clipings to theme-related bulletin boards maintained in the classroom. As their issues and willingness to

discuss positions become more public, they might even offer an interactive bulletin board to other classes who attend class in that room and read their posted articles.