

Sensitive Topics in the Learning Community WCSD Guide to Lesson Planning and Resource Selection

Careful planning is paramount in our efforts to create inclusive teaching and learning environments [362](#), [362.1](#), [381](#), [871](#)

WCSD lessons and resources MUST:

- Support the grade level standards
- Be appropriate for the age and developmental level of the students
- Be accurate, current, and research-based
- Reflect sensitivity with regard to gender, race/ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, social or geographical environment, intellectual and physical abilities

IF your lesson or resource includes sensitive and controversial topics like these:

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Slavery | Rape or sexual abuse | Political affiliation | Violence and physical abuse |
| Genocide | Gender expression | Religious affiliation | Oppressive power structures |
| Abortion | Economic hardships | Sexual orientation | Legalization of controlled substances |
| Death penalty | Immigration policy | Racial slurs & trigger speech | |

THAT IS OKAY because [students deserve true and accurate history](#).

BUT we must

- Create an environment that honors feelings and
- Ease students into these conversations

AND ANALYZE the lesson or resource ahead of time by answering:

1. Whose voices, perspectives, or experiences are **heard and centered** in this resource?
2. What **identities** are included in this resource? Consider all facets of identity: race, religion, gender, gender identity, ability, socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, family structure, language, citizenship, age, political viewpoint or affiliation, etc.
3. Are hierarchies and power structures shown through this resource? **Who is benefitting** from the hierarchies and structures?
4. Who is shown to be **harmed** from these hierarchies and power structures? What consequences or forms of oppression are shown or explained?

AND REFLECT using [Readiness Indicators for Sensitive Topics](#)

ALSO

IF the lesson or resource asks students to simulate a situation where one group has power over another...

IF the lesson or resource includes stereotypes of a marginalized group...

IF the lesson or resource shows people harmed by systems of power...

DON'T USE IT.

This could harm a student.

ALSO SHOW that these stereotypes are harmful and aid in racist/bigoted thinking.

ALSO SHOW their resistance and personal agency.

AND CONSULT your PLC, instructional coach, or administrator. This resource includes hard history, and you need to carefully plan trauma informed talking points.

WHAT IF?

Even with thoughtful consideration, we may cause harm without intending to do so. Should anyone raise a concern related to a topic, resource, or lesson that may be causing trauma, curriculum endorsed prejudice, or any aspect of harm, staff should immediately do the following.

1. **Stop.**
2. **Apologize** for the harm you caused.
3. **Listen** empathetically to those harmed.
4. **Ask** what is needed to repair the harm.
5. **Take action** to follow through.
6. **Alert** your supervisor to the incident.
7. **Seek advice and support** from administrators, instructional coaches, and peers as needed.