

What happened to the Social Studies Education after the Sewol Ferry Disaster and Candlelight Rally in Korea?

Youngseog Kim

Department of Social Studies Education, Gyeongsang National University, Korea

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to discover the changes in classroom practices affected by recent significant events such as the Sewol ferry disaster and Candlelight rally in Korea. The sinking of the Sewol ferry and the mass protests known as Candlelight rally are the most important events that raised political awareness among Korean youth in recent years. Young people felt a strong connection to the high school-age victims of the ferry accident in 2014 and the administration's fumbling response to the rescue created political distrust in government. Also, the political scandals that led to President Park's impeachment sparked youth participation in the massive protests that erupted in 2016 and 2017. In this study, a focus group interview was conducted with seven secondary social studies teachers to discuss what happened in their classes after these two emotionally charged events. The interview revealed that these two events produced various educational responses including safety education, commemorative events, and classroom discussion. Also, the two social incidents provided rich and vivid sources of political education and raised students' interests in social issues. Teachers preferred the role of 'neutral moderator' when implementing the classroom discussion on controversial issues. School leadership and parent influence gave a significant impact on the way of teaching social issues related to the incidents.

Keywords: Sewol ferry disaster, Candlelight rally, significant social events, teaching current issues, school climate

Introduction

Social studies educators have long considered current controversial events as valuable materials for citizenship development. For example, Hunt and Metcalf (1955) argued that students should have experiences of reflective inquiry on "society's closed areas" in their social studies classroom. Oliver and Shaver (1966) proposed the "public issues approach" to engage students in the analysis and discussion of political dilemmas. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 2013) issued a position statement recommending that "schools should incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events into the classrooms."

However, some social events involve sensitive topics, which is challenging to deal with in classroom discussion. Such events as war, terrorism, disasters, and political scandals create many emotionally charged situations in which people keenly respond to the differences of opinions. Besides, school administrators often have restricted the teaching of specific controversial issues (Sharp, 2009). For example, after 9/11 in the United States, the critical examination of issues related to war was discouraged in many school districts. Knox County

schools in Tennessee banned the discussion about the war on the elementary and middle level and limited the debate on the secondary level (Barker, 2003). In Los Angeles, a social studies teacher filed a lawsuit claiming administrative retaliation in response to critical thinking activities about the war in Iraq (Garrison, 2006).

Also, teachers have tendencies of avoiding controversial issues as teaching materials for their career safety. According to a study (Byford, Lennon, & Russell, 2009), teachers concern about teaching issues “controversial within the community in which they teach,” although they still have beliefs in the importance of doing so. Teachers worry about student-related disruptions and conflict, as well as controversies that could implicate or be detrimental to their career. Further, mandated curriculum and test preparation activities cause teachers to decrease the time for their discussion of meaningful and relevant controversies (Mitsakos & Ackerman, 2009).

Despite cautions, teachers still value the controversial issues as educational materials. In a survey conducted on the social studies teachers in Appalachian area, the seventy-one out of the 76 teachers reported that the teaching of controversial current events is essential to their students’ citizenship development (Sharp, 2009). Also, 67 of the teachers responded that their students are interested and motivated to learn about controversial current events.

The findings related to teachers’ conflicting perceptions on teaching controversial issues suggest that school climate is essential for the implementation of issue-centered approaches. According to 2009 international civic and citizenship study held by IEA (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010), teachers’ perceptions on school climate have a positive association across countries with their perception on classroom climate and the students’ civic knowledge scores. It means that, if teachers have more positive perceptions on their school climate, the extent to which allow teachers and students’ participation in the school decision making, they are more likely to engage their students in classroom discussion and their students tend to have more civic knowledge. Further, teachers’ positive perception on classroom climate has a positive association with students’ perception on classroom climate. On the other hand, if a school forces teachers to focus their curricula and to teach on achieving high scores on tests, a democratic classroom climate which facilitates free discussion of controversial issues is hardly attainable (Mitsakos & Ackerman, 2009).

Given the importance of school climate, it is necessary to conduct a case study describing how the school community responds to significant events currently drawing massive attention from media and society. Such events as war, disasters, and political scandals are valuable sources of teaching materials for students to understand the essential elements of social problems. However, these events involve many different sensitive issues that school administrators do not want to implicate. By providing a holistic description of school responses to current social events, we can get valuable insights for the improvement of school practice on teaching controversial issues.

In this study, the Sewol ferry disaster and Candlelight rally are selected as examples of the social events that educators have to deal with in their schools. In Korea, these two social events have been the most significant topics to discuss in recent years. According to a poll on the most significant events in modern Korean history (Lee, 2015), the second largest percentage (13.2%) of respondents said that the ferry disaster was the most significant event since the independence of Korea in 1945. Another survey conducted by Korea Democracy Foundation showed that 17.2% of respondents thought that impeachment of President Park caused by the Candlelight protest was the most significant event for the formation of civic consciousness in Korean history

(Choi, 2018).

The Sewol ferry disaster occurred on April 16, 2014. The ferry was carrying 476 people, mostly students from Danwon High School in Ansan, Kyung-gi Province. In total, 304 passengers and crew members died in the disaster. Of the 325 students in total, only 75 of them survived. Among the 15 teachers in charge, three survived.

Candlelight rally is a series of protests against President Park Geun-Hye that occurred throughout South Korea from November 2016 to March 2017. Approximately 17 million protesters gathered in many cities of Korea and called for the resignation of Park Geun-Hye. Park Geun-Hye was finally impeached on March 10, 2017, by the decision of the constitutional court of Korea. When the Korean National Assembly passed the impeachment bill, they recognized the issue of failing to protect the lives of the ferry disaster's victims.

The two events raised political awareness among Korean youth. Young people felt a strong connection to the 250 high school-age victims of the ferry accident and the government's mismanagement of the disaster raised their political distrust in the Park administration. According to a survey for 11th-grade students at the same age as the victims, 8 out of 10 students still remembered the disaster and the 86 percent of students thought the ferry disaster influenced the youth participation in Candlelight Rally (Kang, 2017).

The purpose of this study is to describe how schools and teachers have responded to significant social issues such as the Sewol ferry disaster and Candlelight rally. A focus group interview was conducted with seven secondary social studies teachers to discuss what happened in their classes since these two emotionally charged events occurred.

Research Methods

Focus Group Interview

This study employed a focus group interview as a qualitative data collection method to understand how Korean schools and teachers cope with social issues that can create significant impact on school education. Focus group interview produces "a rich and detailed set of data about perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and impressions of people in their own words" (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p.140). Also, focus group interview provides "a more natural environment than that of the individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others- just as they are in real life" (Casey & Krueger, 2000, p.11).

Participants

The participants of this study are seven school teachers from Seoul, Korea. They are recruited through purposive sampling with the following inclusion criteria: They (1) are secondary social studies teachers, and (2) have experiences of teaching current issues in their classrooms. The participants are members of a teachers' group for studying social studies instructional methods in Seoul city. They have been maintaining a voluntary meeting once a month for several years. They have experiences in producing instructional materials together, and they published a book with those teaching materials. Focus group interview participants are as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants of the focus group interview

ID	Gender	Subjects	Career	School
A	Female	General social sciences	10 years	Middle school
B	Female	Common social studies	9 years	High school
C	Female	General social sciences	25 years	Middle school
D	Male	Common social studies	6 years	Middle school
E	Female	General social sciences	4 years	Middle school
F	Female	Common social studies	9 years	Middle school
G	Male	General social sciences	27 years	High school

As seen in Table 1, some of the participants are comparatively new teachers, and some of them are very experienced ones. The participants defined themselves as progressive and passionate teachers. They support educational reforms advocated by progressive superintendents. Some of the teachers had job experiences at “Innovative Schools,” which is public schools designated to “innovate” school system based on “democratic schooling model.” Several progressive superintendents initiated the innovative school movement, and progressive teachers passionately participate in the movement. According to a study on teachers’ orientations and their role type in managing classroom discussion (Oh, 2015), politically progressive teachers are more likely inclined to the role of “balancing moderators” than conservative teachers. The participants said that they are eager to implement student based instruction utilizing various materials on current events for classroom discussion.

Data Collection

The interview took place on September 16th, 2018 from 4 pm to 7 pm in a noisy free seminar room located in central Seoul. The researcher took a role of both facilitator and moderator and offered prepared interview questions to participants. The interview questions were as follows:

- (1) What has happened in schools after the Sewol ferry incident?
- (2) What is the influence of the Sewol ferry incident on students and the classroom?
- (3) What has happened in schools after Candlelight protest?
- (4) What is the impact of Candlelight protest on students and the class?

The researcher informed participants about the purpose of the interview and why they were selected. Also, the researcher emphasized the rules of confidentiality and allowed them to ask any questions if they have. After each interview question was discussed, the researcher checked whether the researcher’s understanding of the participants’ words given in the interview truly reflected the participants’ experiences. The researcher took the field notes while the interview was recorded.

Data Analysis

First, the researcher grouped participants’ words into categories. Second, considering the context of participants’ uses of words, the categories were developed into thematic ideas. Third, the researcher organized participants’ words and the contexts under the themes which characterize the relationship between significant social events and school members’ responds to them.

Findings

School Responses to the Sewol Ferry Disaster

Safety Education

According to participants, since the Sewol ferry accident occurred, educational authorities put a great emphasis on safety education. All the schools should allocate fifty-one class hours on legally mandated safety education activities annually. Other than mandated class activities, local schools manage such activities as online courses for teachers, survival swimming, home correspondence, principal's announcement, and Q&A for safety guidelines. Safety education includes contents about school safety including commute safety. One of the participants' schools had students investigate safety problems and give suggestions to a local administrative office about the installation of traffic lights.

Participant C said, "Safety became the keyword after Sewol Ferry accident in school." Also, participants reported the changes in field trip grouping from whole school group to theme-based small group.

Commemorations and Collective Memory

Participants mentioned various forms of remembrance events for victims held in schools. For example, they had culture festivals about the Sewol ferry disaster. Students presented their poems or posters at the festival. Also, they held a memorial ceremony to make sure that this is a tragedy that should not happen again.

These kinds of services are mostly student-led or individual teacher-led services rather than school-based services. According to participants, it is because principals did not like to get involved in controversies around the Sewol ferry incident. The Yellow Ribbon campaign is the symbol of the voluntary movement commemorating victims of the disaster. People began to wear tiny yellow ribbons to show their solidarity with the missing students' families. In many schools, students and teachers held ceremony attaching yellow ribbons on trees or walls.

Commemoration activities are considered to facilitate the formation of collective memory. According to participant C, "Students still remember the incident even though it happened in their young ages. It is a collective memory. News broadcastings on the ferry investigation keep reminding people of the incident." "Many schools observe April remembering the victims of the Sewol ferry disaster (C)."

Participant D termed the ceremony of commemoration as "an emotional approach." According to him, "Commemoration is an approach based on emotion and emotion abates with time." Participant C said, "Both teachers and students were angry about the incident at first, but later as time passes by, interests are getting smaller. Nowadays, only a handful of teachers care about the issue (C)."

Structural Approach: Accident (事故) vs Incident (事件)

Korean society has been sharply divided on the definition of the Sewol ferry disaster (Kim & Ham, 2015). Some conservative politicians defined it as a traffic accident. According to the idea of "traffic accident," the government had nothing to do with the disasters and there is no need for the president to take responsibility because a traffic accident could happen to anybody anytime.

On the other hand, a majority of Korean people believe that this is an incident that requires structural explanations on the following questions: "Why this incident happened?" "What is hidden beneath the surface?"

“What is government responsibility?” “What is a state for?” Participant D said, “The reason why they emphasize safety issue is to turn responsibility away. Negligence in the attempted rescue, inappropriate government responses, greedy capitalist and corruption are the real problems.” “I have tried to give students structural understandings even though the government wanted to define it as an accident (G).”

Later in 2018, a South Korean court acknowledged the government’s liability for the sinking of the Sewol ferry and ordered it to compensate victims’ families.

School Leadership and Parent Influence

Teachers said that school leadership is essential in teachers’ approach to the issue. According to G, “Conservative principals and vice principals dislike structural approaches and prefer to stay in safety issues.” On the other hand, “Progressive superintendents encourage Gyeonggi-Gyoyuk (education occasioned by a specific issue) on various social issues. Teachers can implement instructional strategies based on the structural approach other than the safety issue. Teachers feel more encouraged to incorporate current issues into their classrooms than before (D).” For reference, in the 2014 provincial election, progressive candidates for school superintendent were elected in 13 out of 17 provinces. Democratic citizenship education became the principal objective of educational reform in the school districts controlled by progressive superintendents.

According to teachers, parents are important in deciding school responses to social events. One of the participants said, “We have ever discussed what if it was a school in Gangnam instead of Ansan, which is one of the poorest school districts (C).” Some other teachers shared their experiences with parents of Gangnam school districts where is the most affluent school district in Seoul. According to participants, Gangnam school parents are very active in expressing what they want from the school. Also, they have connections to talk to someone in government. Participant F was working in a school in Gangnam, and she mentioned the parents of her school. “In schools located in Gangnam, parents care about transportation. In a school trip to Jeju, they wanted to choose major airlines over low-cost airlines (F).” Participant A also had experiences of working at a Gangnam school in the past. She said that parents of Gangnam schools show bigger distrust in teachers. “Once in August, when a typhoon was coming, they asked us to report how their children were doing hour by hour (A).”

Empathy: It could Happen to me

According to participants, students have great compassion for the victims of the disaster. Participant A said, “Students show great interests in the Sewol ferry issues because they think it can happen to them. Even seventh and eighth-grade students show interests in social issues related to the incident.” According to participant G, “When watching footage of student victims’ last moments saying goodbye to their parent, students became very emotional.” “Because the victims are their age people, students take the event seriously and sadly (G).”

Also, participant G stressed the significance of empathy in dealing with social issues. According to him, “Empathy comes before rational thinking when dealing with social issues. When they think that a certain social issue is their problem, they begin to ask questions. They begin to ask questions about politics and social problems.”

Participants agreed that teachers also have empathy for the teacher victims from Danwon high school. Eleven teachers died in the accident, and one of the four surviving teachers killed himself two days later than the ferry sinking. Participant E told that she thought “What would I do if I was in that ship with students?” They also

have compassion for the head teacher (the vice principal of the school) who hanged himself from a pine tree with grief and guilt. Participants called it “work ethics.” According to participant E, “We don’t have to be a hero/heroine, but just doing a given job is important.” According to C, “When we went on a school trip, we tried to be with students as much as possible.”

The Sewol Ferry in the Social Studies Class

Teachers utilized the incident in their social studies teaching. “I used it as an example of the lack of leadership in a lesson related to the executive branch of government and president (A).” “Some students made presentations about the Sewol ferry incident in their social issue projects. When I discussed the incident with students in a Gyegi Gyogyuk class, a 7th-grade girl introduced her aunt’s story of suffering from trauma after serving as a volunteer helping victims’ family members (C).” “When teaching about justice, I used the ferry incident for the lifeboat game discussion. Most students chose themselves to live, but some chose to sacrifice themselves for the community (B).” The way of using the incident vary by teachers and situations. According to E, “It depends on who the teacher is and when the teacher uses it. Some prefer engaging students in discussion and others deliver the message directly to students. Especially in Gyegi-Gyoyuk, it is hard to spend time for discussion.”

Impact of ‘Candlelight’ on Students and Classroom

Student Participation in the Protest

Participants shared their experiences when they accidentally met their students in the protest. “When I went to the rally in Gwanghwamun Plaza as a citizen, I was surprised by unexpected encounters with my students and graduates there. One of my 7th grade students delivered a public speech to the crowd, and the video went viral on YouTube. He became popular, and later he was elected as the vice president of the student association (C).” According to participants, many students participated in the protest with their friends and parents. “Participating in the rally was fun for them. Candlelight rally seemed like a festival for them. There were music performances and celebrity speaking (A).” “One student presented a project about his experience of participating in the protest. He was very proud of it. He picked up the Candlelight rally as number one significant event in recent Korean history (B).”

Parent Influence

Some participants told that their schools had different stories. According to the teacher from a Gangnam school, the participation of the students was less than in other areas. “In my school in Gangnam, only a handful of students reported that they participated in the rally. I assume that the participation of the students from Gangnam schools was less than in other areas. When we talk about the issue, their responses were passive (F).” Also, students who their parents are small traders participated less. “My students also reported that only a few students went to the rally. Their parents are mostly small traders who work all day long. They have little time to hang out with their children for anything (E).”

Political Efficacy

Participants believed that students' participation gave a positive impact on their political efficacy. According to them, students were thrilled by their experience of success that their participation influenced the impeachment. "Some students might join the rally just for fun. However, no matter what the motivation was, they were proud of being part of the political change. Their feelings of political efficacy must have gotten higher (A)." "My class watched live broadcasting together at the moment when the constitutional court upheld the decision of impeachment. Students were thrilled and very proud (C)." "The issues caught students' interests in various ways including corruption, fairness in college admission, Chaebol (conglomerate) problem (D)."

Valuable Source of Political Education

Participants agreed that the candlelight rally provided a rich source of political education. Participant E said, "When teaching political education, it has become easier to explain such topics as impeachment and constitutional court after the Candlelight. Students could learn how impeachment and 'check and balance' work from the real example instead of textbook description." "I used the constitutional court's judgment as a document for a class activity and a quiz test (C)." "Textbook contents are very boring. However, the Candlelight made boring facts and concepts easily memorizable. It turned traditional instruction into a multi-dimensional one (A)." Participant D took one step further. "I had students to discuss which the real contributor to change is: Public participation or constitutional system. I thought the impeachment was the case that both worked."

Self-censorship and Teacher Neutrality

Participants mentioned self-censorship. According to participant D, "students were curious if I had been in the protest. When they asked me, I hesitated to answer. Also, it was hard for me to ask students if they participated in the protest. I thought a kind of self-censorship worked when I talked about the Candlelight." Participant F from a Gangnam school said, "One of my students was a relative of Jeong Yun-hoi (a man involved in the political scandal). It was hard to make mention of the case."

Teachers also emphasized teacher's neutrality in managing class discussion. For example, participant G said, "I prefer the way the discussion is initiated naturally. My role is limited to managing the discussion." According to participant A, "I only tell partial stories on the Candlelight. I have never presented the case as a whole." "I think it is OK to have students discuss the case, but it is not appropriate to present teacher's idea to students (E)."

Table 2. Themes on how social incidents influenced on schooling

Research question	Themes
School responses to Sewol ferry incident on school education	Safety education Commemorations and collective memory Structural approach School leadership Parent influence Empathy Source of instructional materials
Impact of 'Candlelight' on students and classroom	Student participation in the protest Parent influence Political efficacy Source of instructional materials Self-censorship and teacher neutrality

Summary

From the interview, the researcher could identify the following themes that emerged from qualitative data. As seen in Table 2, teachers' responds to each question have two themes in common with each other. First, parent influence is essential for both teachers and students when dealing with current events in school. According to teachers, parents have influences on school decision making on the field trip and students' attitude towards political issues. Second, teachers considered these two social events as valuable sources of teaching social phenomenon. For example, a teacher used the cases of the Sewol ferry disaster when teaching about political leadership. Also, teachers agreed that Candlelight rally was a rich and vivid source of instructional materials for political education.

The Sewol ferry disaster produced more themes than the Candlelight. It means that the former case has required more educational responses from schools and teachers than the latter one. Schools have increased educational activities because educators were forced to share responsibility on the disaster by the government or by their work ethics. The Korean ministry of education has mandated schools to manage such classes as survival swimming or cardiopulmonary resuscitation, although there were no victims related to the swimming issue. Such educational responses signify Korean educational authority's attitude toward the incident that this was an accident caused by the negligence of safety protocol by the transportation company and passengers, including students and teachers.

Qualitative data related to students' empathy for the victims and their participation in the protest suggest that these two social events raised students' interests in such themes as political leadership, corruption, fairness in college entrance, impeachment, check and balances, and constitutional rights. Increased interests in social issues made it happen to have a more political discussion related to these events. We can assume that student participation and discussion of political issues have a positive association with their political efficacy. According to research, internal efficacy is enhanced by successful participation in politics and has a positive co-relation with participatory habits (Valentino, Gregorowicz, & Groenendyk, 2008). Also, political conversation enhances students' political interest and political efficacy (Park, 2012).

A commemoration is a practice to build a collective memory. According to research, communication, and social remembrance events play a decisive role in creating a collective memory on such events as war

(Coopmas, Van Der Lippe, & Coopmas, 2017). Discussion of significant events, including the Sewol ferry disaster and presidential impeachment and student participation in commemorative events and protests have the potential impact on collectively shared memories that last lifetime.

Teachers reported that they were cautious when dealing with controversial issues related to the two social events. One of the teachers expressed his caution with the word of self-censorship. However, participants' caution does not suggest that they avoid classroom discussion of controversial issues, or they worry about their career. They have beliefs in teacher's role as a neutral mediator of discussion while they defined themselves as progressive. Participants' beliefs in teacher neutrality and their definition of their political attitudes are consistent with research finding that politically progressive teachers are more likely to take a stance as a balanced moderator in discussion management (Oh, 2015).

Finally, the focus group interview revealed several factors giving influence on teachers' approach to controversial issues. On the institutional level, such factors as school leadership, parent influence, and political environment are essential in creating a school climate that facilitates discussion of social issues. According to participants, principals' and superintendents' attitudes toward teaching social issues are critical in providing opportunities for teaching current events. On a personal level, parent background and student experience have significance in determining the level of interests in specific social issues. As reported in the interview, students of parents from Gangnam and small trading business displayed fewer interests in the topics related to the Sewol ferry disaster and Candlelight rally. On the other hand, students with experiences of participating in the rally were attracted by various social issues related to the events. Further, students' exposure to news media such as live broadcasting of court decision, YouTube videos, and fake news is also considered by teachers as an important factor in raising students' interests in social issues.

Discussion

Since the progressive superintendents took over jobs in most provinces around the country, there has been a steady growth of advocacy for teaching current issues in democratic citizenship education such as Gyegi-gyoyuk (education occasioned by specific issue). However, at the same time, teachers face considerable challenges when handling issues which arouse strong emotions and divide public opinion. The political sensitivity of controversial issues is regarded as a significant obstacle to teaching because they tend to arouse public concerns among students, parents, school officials, public authorities, or even among teachers themselves (Byford et al., 2009). The focus group interview in this study revealed that teachers were cautious when discussing the two events and that they try to take a stance as a neutral mediator of the discussion. Despite this concern, there is a request of more active teachers' role in managing discussions. For example, Kelly (1986) argues that teachers should exercise impartiality rather than neutrality. According to Kelly, being neutral for a teacher is refusing to present their views on the issues and this attitude often frustrates students who are willing to share their opinion. On the other hand, impartial teachers share their opinion but also encourage dissenting opinions and discourage parroting. While the teacher impartiality provides students with a model of how to respond to dissenting ideas on the controversial issue, it may also lead them into accepting a view simply because it is their teacher's. Further studies on teachers' role or teaching strategies in handling controversial issues are recommended in Korean classroom settings.

Other than teacher neutrality, student sensitivity must be considered as a possible obstacle of teaching controversial issues. In the focus group interview, the teacher from a Gangnam school revealed her caution when mentioning the presidential impeachment because one of her students was a relative of a person involved in the political scandal. Teachers often allow students to express their views on the issue freely in classroom discussion. Sometimes, however, this is likely to lead other students to feel offended. According to a study conducted by Philpott, Clabough, McConkey, and Turner (2013), students tend to become emotional and attacked when they conceive classmates' comments as personally offensive. Students sometimes also feel under attack from teachers when teachers present accounts which portray students' sincerely held opinion as inappropriate or politically incorrect. Teachers' self-reflection on the way they address and interact with students is required for the proper teaching of controversial issues. Also, it is necessary to establish a classroom atmosphere in which students are free from any fear of expressing reasonable points of view which contradict those held either by their class teacher or by their peers. For example, the codes of conduct or ground rules for discussion are helpful in the creation of this kind of atmosphere (Passe & Evans, 1994).

In addition to creating the right atmosphere, providing students with an in-depth understanding of the public issue will help students to develop civic competency. According to a study conducted by Solhaug (2006), there are clear correlations between knowledge and tolerance and civic involvement. Also, in the focus group interview, participants emphasized the importance of a structural explanation around the question of why this incident happened. However, an in-depth understanding of the current issue demands on teacher knowledge not usually experienced in other areas of the curriculum. This is a particular challenge when controversial issues are very recent. Further, as Stradling, Noctor and Baines (1984, p.4) pointed out, it is 'difficult to obtain teaching materials which deal with these disputes adequately or in a suitably balanced way, and the sources of information with which teachers have to work are likely to be 'biased, incomplete and contradictory.' To meet this challenge, teachers need to obtain conceptual tools to analyze current issues. For example, the jurisprudential framework developed by Oliver and Shaver (1966) provides useful methods for analyzing a public issue using such strategies as the justification of a value position, the clarification of a definitional issue, and the proof process involved in a factual issue. Clarke (2005) also offered a four-step strategy which provides students with a set of questions. These questions give students a number of ways of looking at an issue as well as a sound basis for making a judgment on it. They are: 'What is the issue about?', 'What are the arguments?' 'What is assumed?' and 'How are the arguments manipulated?'

Finally, interaction with colleagues is essential for developing teaching expertise in dealing with controversial issues. According to a study conducted by Spillane, Shirrell, and Adhikari (2018), higher performing teachers are more likely to seek instructional advice from colleagues. The participants of this study have built a professional relationship with each other to share their instructional ideas. They have maintained a voluntary meeting monthly base for several years. In results, they prove their expertise by publishing a book with teaching materials they developed together. These findings have implications for policy and practices to develop teacher expertise in teaching controversial issues.

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