

Teaching Current Affairs in Middle East Studies





“Morning” Meetin g

**Find a spot in the circle and
grab a card from the pile.**



“ Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.

-Rumi *13th-century Persian Sunni Muslim poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic.*

*Probably
not Rumi*

Salam!

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Marty Anderson of Carroll nears the end of a half-mile row. She contracted detasseling fieldwork for her family.

Big Picture for Our Session

“Morning” Meeting ([Responsive Classroom](#))

1. Morning Message
2. Greeting - the languages of the Middle East
3. Activity “This is a...”
4. News & Announcements

Relationships Matter!

Building a trusting Classroom Community Helps us Teach

Part 1: “Specialness” of Middle Eastern Representation in the Curriculum

Part 2: The Importance of Media Literacy

Part 3: Using Current Events to Create Dynamic Instruction



“Papa Bessma” & his Granddaughter Nalla

Review of Materials

Teaching About the Wars

by Jody Sokolower
Rethinking Schools

<http://www.choices.edu/curriculum-unit/responding-terrorism-challenges-democracy/>

The Middle East in Transition: Questions for US Policy

The Choices Program
Brown University

<http://www.choices.edu/curriculum-unit/middle-east-transition-questions-u-s-policy/>



Big Picture for Our Session

**Processing
What
We've
Learned**

**Heavy Heads - &
Hopeful Hearts**

**Planning for
What's
Next:**

**New & Improved
Instructional
Leadership**



*"Papa Bessma" & his
Granddaughter Nalla*

Find “Your People”

Move into small groups based on the age level and subjects that you teach.



*Summer School Students in Madrasa -
Fez Morocco*

Discussion with “Your People”

What are the considerations or issues that are important to recognize when studying current events with your students?

Local Politics?

Age/Developmental Stage?

Classroom demographics?



*The friendliest man
(with the dirtiest English) at the bus stop.
(Rabat Morocco)*



2

minutes

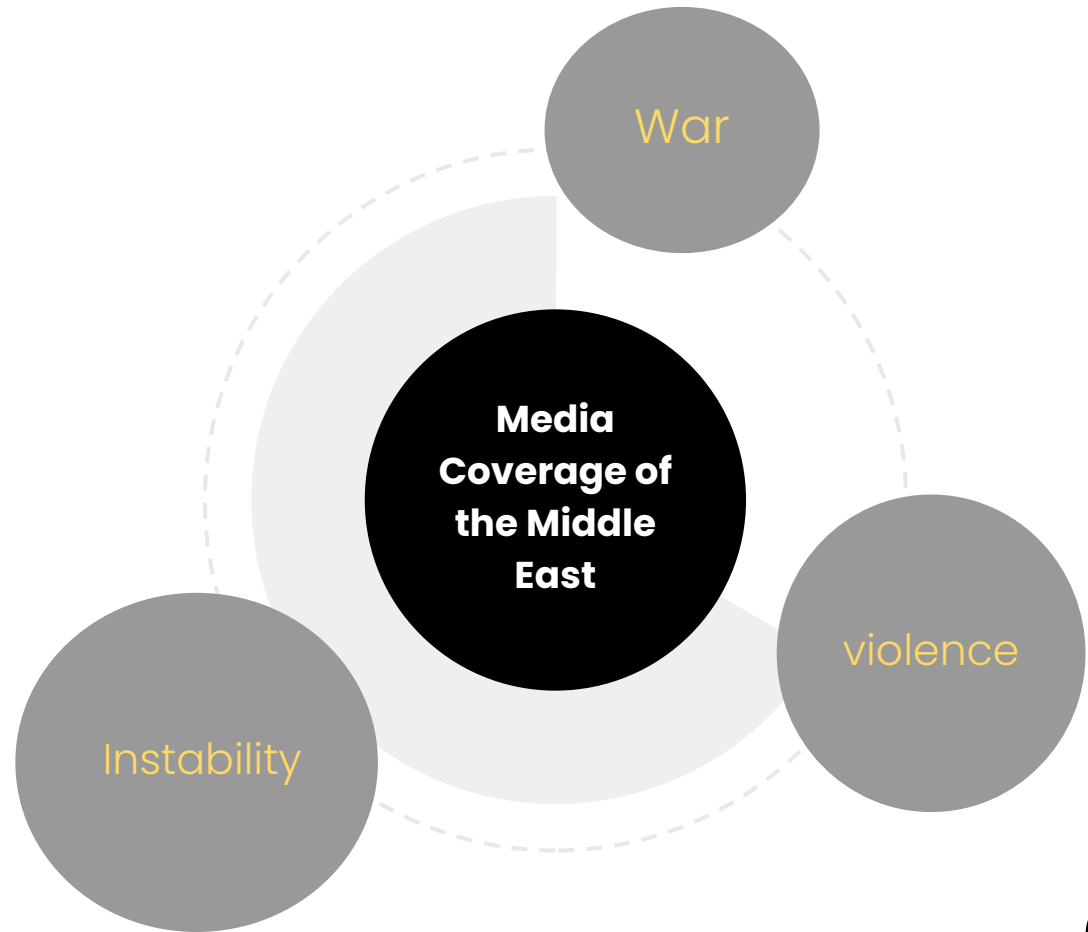
In Your Table Teams...

**Gather as many
CURRENT EVENTS stories
about the Middle East as
you can!**

GO!

What do we know now...

What does this mean for our classrooms?





What do kids know about the Middle East?

**If you asked your students what
they know – what do you predict
they would say?**



What do kids know about the Middle East?

**Think
Pair
Share**

<https://www.primarysource.org/for-teachers/podcasts/episode-one>



Part 1:

The “*Special-ness*” of Teaching Current Affairs in Middle East Studies

Confronting the “Single Story” with Courage

- Dispelling Myths so you can talk about what is truly interesting
- Making yourself and your students aware of bias
- Students want teachers who teach “against the textbook”

Build Critical Content Knowledge

- You’re here! (Now Keep Going)
- What Resources exist in your communities?
 - Universities & Cultural Centers
- Travel & Experiences that will make you confident and competent



Part 1: Building Critical Content Knowledge

What have you learned **HERE** so far?

- Think
- Pair/Partners
- Share

What are the BIG CONTENT take-aways you have gathered from being here?

How has this workshop built your content knowledge?



Content Take-Away... so far.

Teach ME studies from ME perspective	Humanize - don't just teach what the media says	Connect with the humanity of others seeing differences but still seeing similarities
Danger of the single story	Just as o think ofyou story is special so do others	

**Knowing the
Content...**

Buckle Up.





Pick a Question

**you don't know the
answer to...**

What can you find out in 4 minutes?

- What's the deal with East Jerusalem?
- Why don't Iran and Saudi Arabia get along?
- Why is Russia siding with the Assad regime in Syria?
- What is Israel's "Nation State Law"?
- Is the crown Prince of Saudi Arabia a real reformer?

- What is the tension between Canada and Saudi Arabia about?
- Why is there tension between Qatar and most other Gulf States?
- Whose side is the US on in the War in Syria?
- Does the US rely on oil from the Middle East or what?





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Resources!

The stuff you want!

Part 1: Building Critical Content Knowledge

Choices “The Middle East in Transition”

[Choices Program – Brown University](#)

[Middle East Resources Page](#)

At your tables - Read/Review your assigned section.
Prepare a short description/Overview for the group.

How could this be used for:
Elementary classrooms
Middle/High School
Teacher Training

The Middle East in Transition:
Questions for U.S. Policy



Teaching the Wars

[Rethinking Schools](#)



Part 1: Building Critical Content Knowledge

Primary Source: What Teachers Need to Know about the Middle East

[Episode #1: What and Where is the Middle East, Anyway?](#)

[Episode #2: Underneath the Veil](#)

[Episode #3: Media Literacy & the Middle East](#)

[Episode #4: Syria, Explained](#)

[Episode #5: The Saudi-Iran Cold War](#)

[Episode #6: The Diversity of Islam](#)

[Episode #7: Water and War in Yemen](#)

[Episode #8: Arab Youth & Youth Activism](#)

[Episode #9: Learning from Refugees](#)

[Episode #10: Teaching about Iraq, a State in Flux](#)

What Teachers Need to Know

THE MIDDLE EAST



Videos & On-Line Film Sources

[Vox World](#)

[TRT World](#)

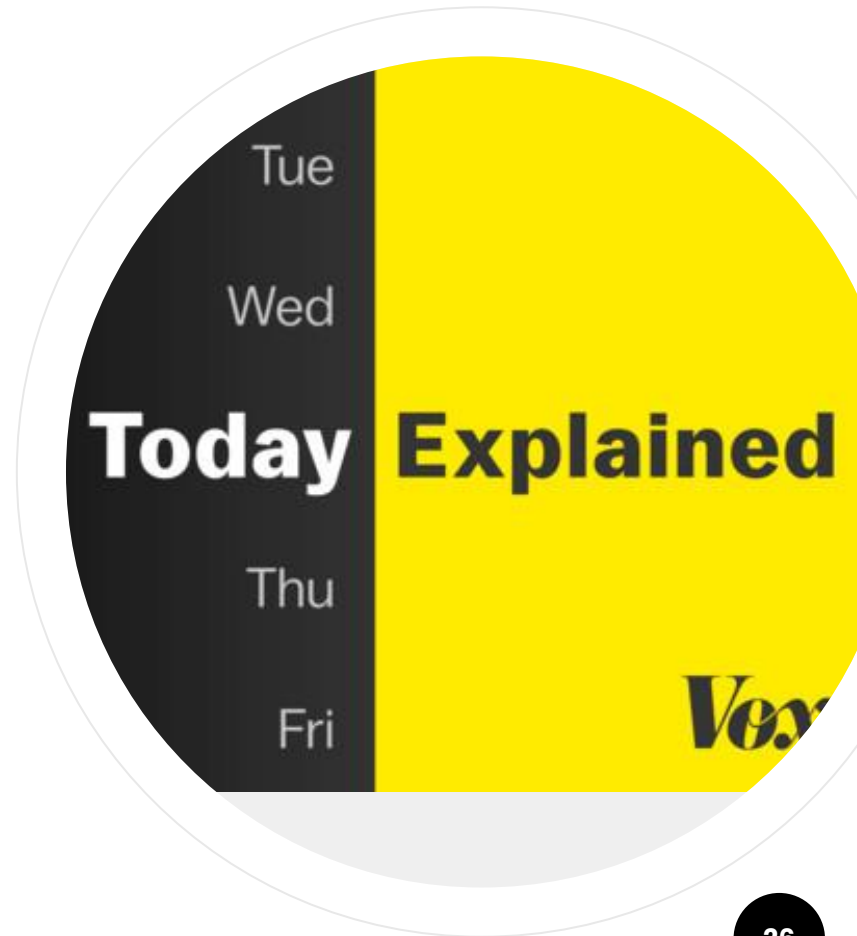
[Now This World](#)

[The Economist](#)

[Visual Politc](#)

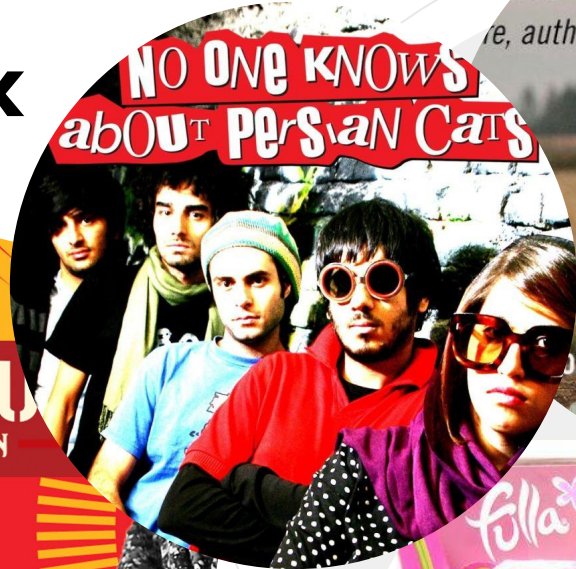
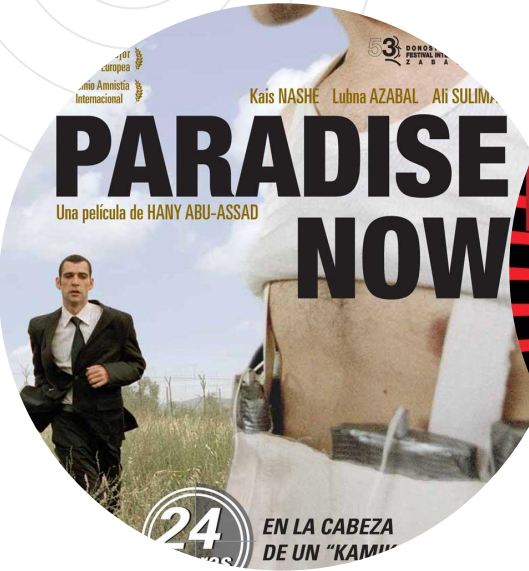
[Caspian Report](#)

[Kurgestagt - In a Nutshell](#)



Part 1: Building Critical Content Knowledge

Other things I think you would love...



Part 1: Building Critical Content Knowledge

Teacher Travel & Professional Development Grants

[Qatar Foundation](#)

[Fulbright Hays](#)

[National Council on US-Arab Relations](#)

[International Schools](#)

[IREX \(Teachers for Global Classrooms\)](#)

[National Endowment for the Humanities](#)

[GEEQ](#)

University Programs

Rotary



["24 Teacher Travel Opportunities"](#)

Part 2: Media Studies/Literacy

Teaching students to “read” the news like they read a book:

1. **Who is writing this story?**
2. **Why are they telling this story?**
3. **What voices are missing?**





Getting Kids to “Read” the News

[Daily News Summary](#)

Can you Corroborate That?

1. Read the article provided (choose a story you don't think your students already know).

Use the [worksheet](#) provided to:

2. Annotate the story using a Current Events Summary Sheet
3. As a group look for 2 additional articles on this story.
4. How much of the original story information is the same?



NEWSEUM^{ED}



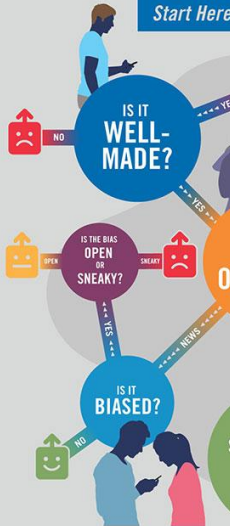
IS THIS STORY
SHARE-

The F...
and pu...
worth...
you fi...

NEED
HELP?

IS IT REAL?
Does the EVIDENCE hold up?

Start Here



DEFINITELY SHARE-WORTHY

This is real, solid information. It may not be all sunshine and rainbows, and you may not like what it has to say, but it's backed up with facts to provide plenty of food for thought. It doesn't have the shock value of a crazy fake news story or the viral potential of an angry rant, but what it lacks in sappy distractions it makes up for with reliability and real-world implications.

MAYBE SHARE-WORTHY

It all depends on how you do it. These stories can be perfect for getting insight into how other people think or starting a productive debate, but only if you stay aware of the risks. Take a minute to foresee the possible consequences of your actions and choose your words wisely to steer clear of troll bait or flame wars. Look for a way to stir the pot without making it boil over.

PROBABLY NOT SHARE-WORTHY

Motivated by false agendas and bad intentions, these stories can fuel destruction and chaos. With no concern for consequences, they can spread deceit, fear and sometimes even danger. From scamming the system for profit to tricking people into bad decisions to just plain making folks look stupid, there's something tricky going on here.

ENTERTAIN AND/OR RAISE AWARENESS?

What is this story's PURPOSE? Weigh whether the story was created for darker reasons, like causing destruction, scamming people for profit, or unfairly hurting someone or something.

NEWSEUM

THERE'S MORE TO EVERY STORY.

NEWSEUM^{ED}
PRESENTS

E.S.C.A.P.E. NEWS

Visit
NewseumED.org
for more
resources!



DO THE FACTS HOLD UP?

Look for information you can verify.

- Names
- Numbers
- Places
- Documents

WHO MADE THIS, AND CAN I TRUST THEM?

Trace who has touched the story.

- Authors
- Publishers
- Funders
- Aggregators
- Social media users

WHAT'S THE BIG PICTURE?

Consider if this is the whole story and weigh other forces surrounding it.

- Current events
- Cultural trends
- Political goals
- Financial pressures

WHO IS THE INTENDED AUDIENCE?

Look for attempts to appeal to specific groups or types of people.

- Image choices
- Presentation techniques
- Language
- Content

WHY WAS THIS MADE?

Look for clues to the motivation.

- The publisher's mission
- Persuasive language or images
- Manipulating tactics
- Shared or unstated agendas
- Calls to action

HOW IS THIS INFORMATION PRESENTED?

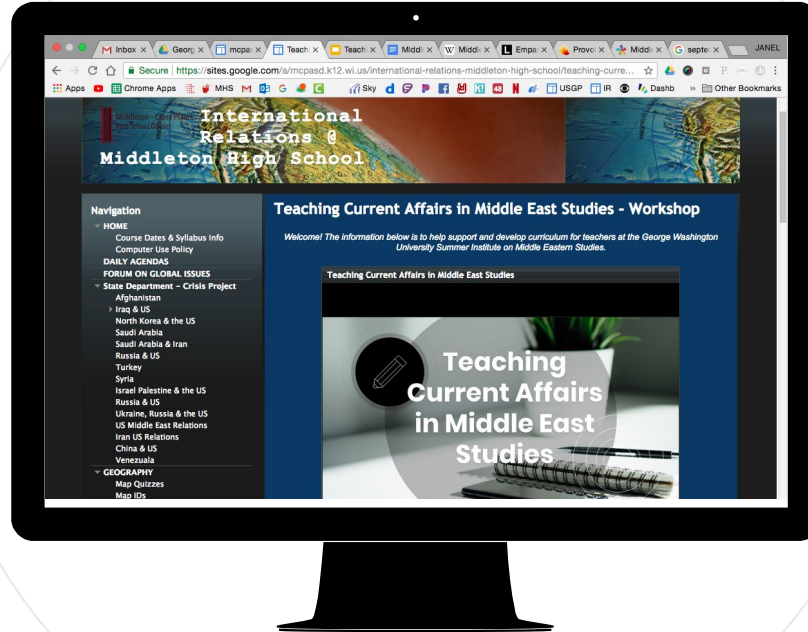
Consider how the way it's made affects the impact.

- Grammar
- Tone
- Image choices
- Placement and layout

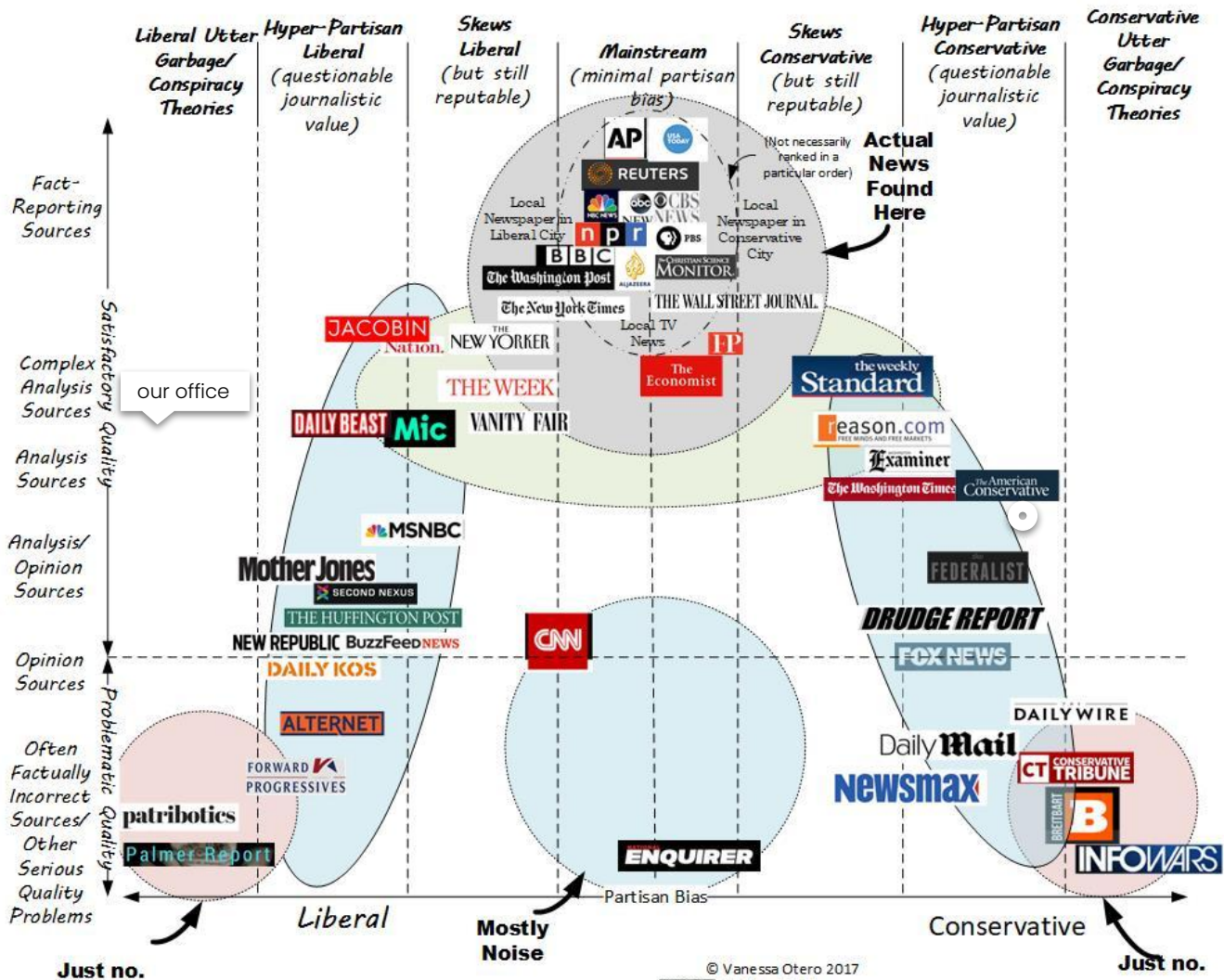
PURPOSE

EXECUTION

New Sources



George Washington University



Part 3:

Ideas for Dynamic Curriculum for Middle East Studies

- Global Studies – Best & Worst Practices
- Resources
- Using Current Events
 - Connections with What we know
 - Research
 - Discussion
 - Projects



A hand-drawn illustration of a planet with a ring, a star, and a hand pointing to the text. The planet is in the upper right, the star is in the upper left, and the hand is in the lower left, pointing towards the word 'Consider'.

Things to Consider

When Planning Instruction on Modern Middle East...

Bring the attention of your audience over a key concept using icons or illustrations



Leading w 9/11

Setting the framework of discussing the middle east by starting with 9/11 is problematic for a number of important reasons.

The Power of Israel & Palestine

This issue is critical and complex and in many ways shapes the lense through which people in the region see world events.

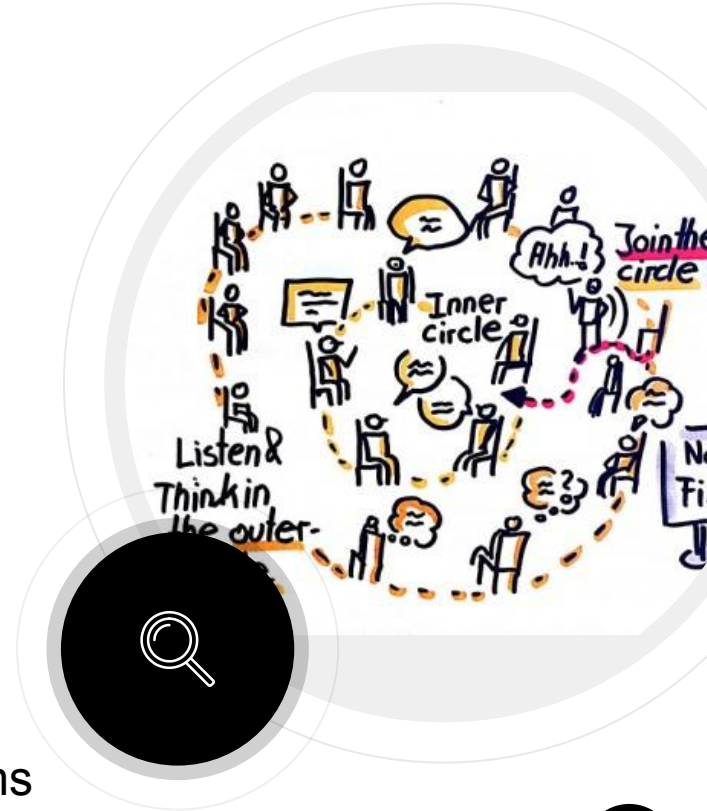
The Problem with “Good” News

Exclusive focus on “good” news is biased in the same way as “bad” news focused curriculum.

The Big List of Class Discussion Strategies - [The Cult of Pedagogy](#)

Tips for Success in Classroom Discussion

1. Nurture a Safe Environment
2. Send them in Prepared - Give them time to research & think.
3. Remind Students that Silence is OK
4. Allow for Supportive Partner Discussion Teams



Best Practice... Your Ideas!

Culturally Responsive Classrooms

Student Choice & Voice

Following the Standards & Teaching Against the Textbook

Working in your table groups come up with a list of ideas/tips/teaching tools that you would use or recommend!

Be ready to share!

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What are the resources in your communities?

Guest Speakers?

Field Trips?

- Local Organizations
- Restaurants
- Houses of Worship
- Authors
- University Organizations

Research right now the organizations in your area...



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Stuff that comes up...

WHAT ARE THE QUESTIONS KIDS (OR ADULTS)
ASK ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST?

