



# TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR AND ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE

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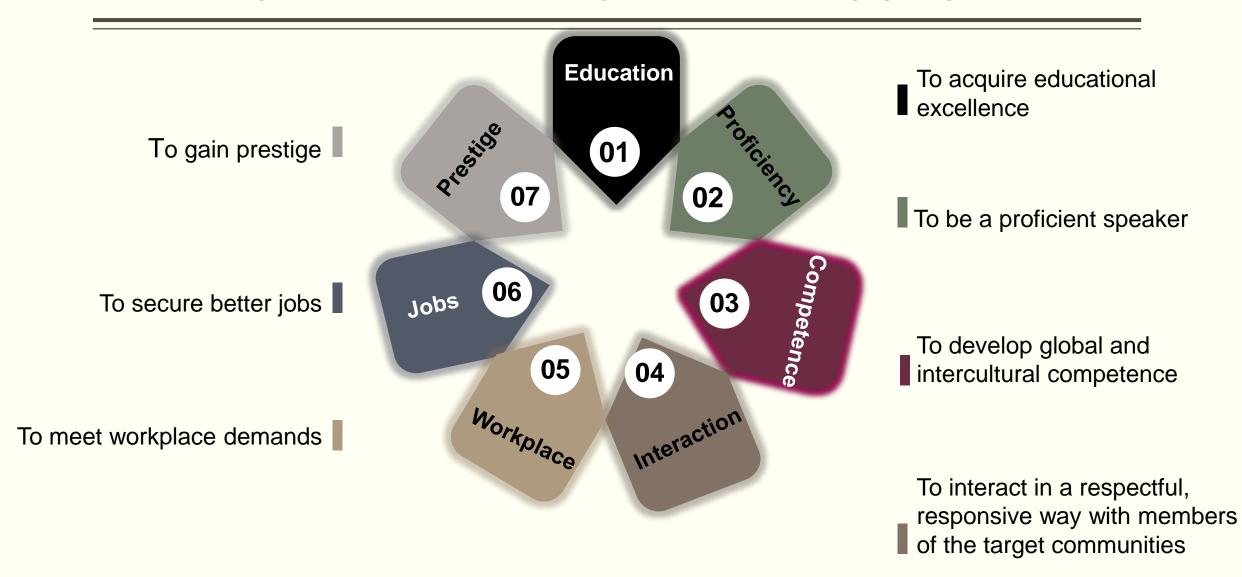
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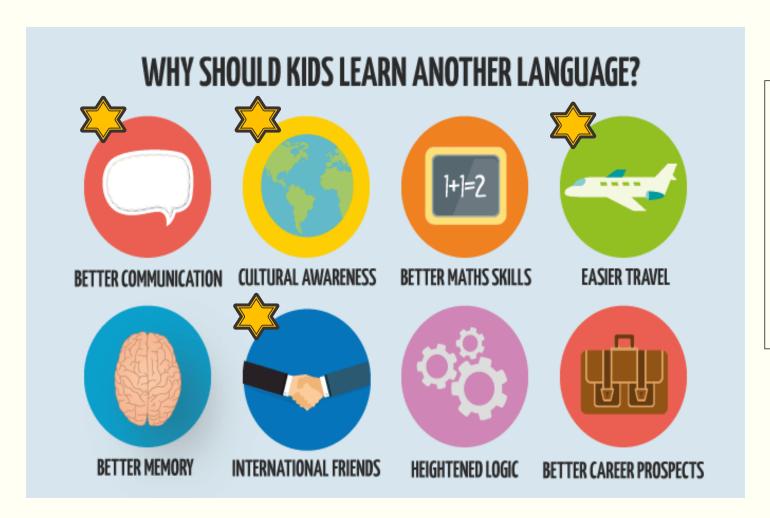
#### FLOW...

- What is social justice?
- What is social justice teacher education?
- Why English language classrooms?
- What do we offer in this project?

#### WHY DO WE LEARN ANOTHER LANGUAGE?



## WHY DO WE LEARN ANOTHER LANGUAGE? (cont'd)



A shift from communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence:

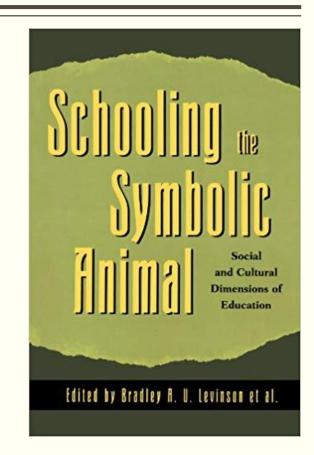
To see relationships among different cultures and mediate among them (Byram, 1997)

#### LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

# Based on the aforementioned reasons for learning another language:

there is a demand for teachers to know how to adequately support students to learn English although there is little agreement in the educational literature on how best to do so.

 virtually all teachers, regardless of geographic location or area of expertise, must be prepared to teach students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Hawkins, 2011, p. 1)



#### PROBLEMS IN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

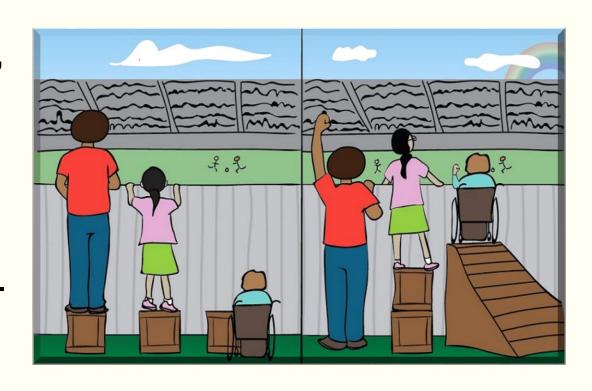
Often newly qualified teachers of English may demonstrate sensitivity to individual learners' abilities and weaknesses and organize learning activities that expose learners to simulated acquisition-rich situations. They are keen to organize drama, debate, writing and other activities and offer genuine feedback on performance. But as they gain experience and make sense of their work environment, they soon lose confidence in their own efforts when they cannot determine how to meet the specific learning needs. And this is especially because the system demands good grades from everyone and does not cater to individuals. The teachers resort to the routines prescribed by the examination syllabus, anxious to identify with their immediate social groups in the schools that evaluate them. They feed students on the discrete grammar of English, composition writing in the form of creative writing and reading comprehension without much care for the functional approach. (Kyeyune, 2011, p. 91 in Hawkins, 2011)



## WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE?

"a philosophy, an approach, and actions that embody treating all people with fairness, respect, dignity, and generosity"

(Nieto, 2010, p. 46).



## SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHER EDUCATION (SJTE)



■ SJTE aims to prepare teachers to teach in ways that will lessen "the inequalities that exist in school systems throughout the world between children of the poor and children of the middle and wealthy classes, and the injustices that exist in societies beyond systems of schooling, in access to shelter, food, healthcare, transportation, access to meaningful work that pays a living wage and so on." (Zeichner, 2011, p. 7)

# WHAT DOES TEACHING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE MEAN FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS?



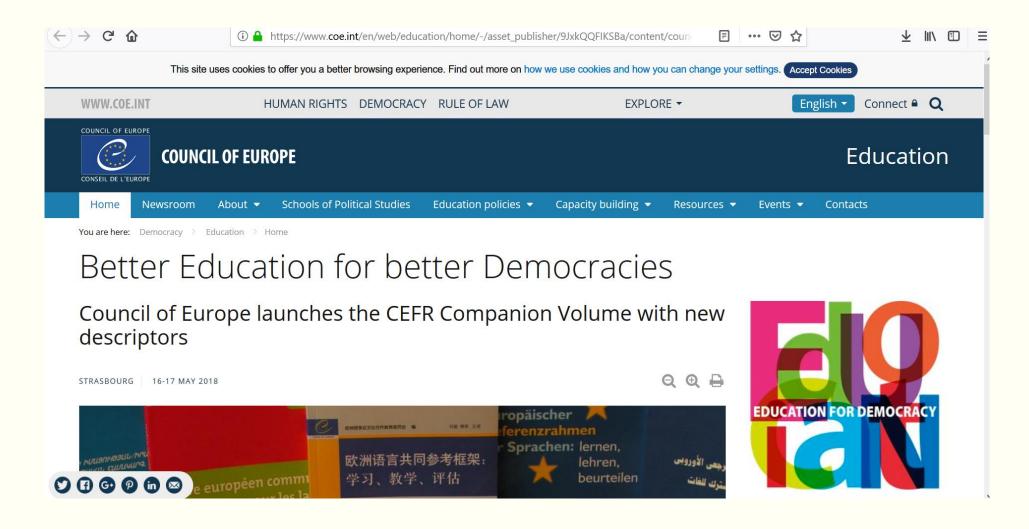
- To value students' diversity and establish a caring and inclusive environment
- To build on students' cultural and linguistic resources, and attempt to reach every student.
- To accommodate and differentiate instruction.
- To make curriculum relevant and applicable to students.
- To build good relationships with students and their families and respect student's parents and work with them.

- To engage in community work and get students engaged in these kinds of activities for any sort of work that would contribute to the improvement of that community.
- To know their students, care for them, and understand students' social and cultural contexts.
- To be fair to all students in the classroom without showing favorites.
- To develop a culture of respect among students and between students and teacher.
- To advocate for all students.

Sources: Piedrahita (2016, pp. 209-210), Cochran-Smith et al. (2009)





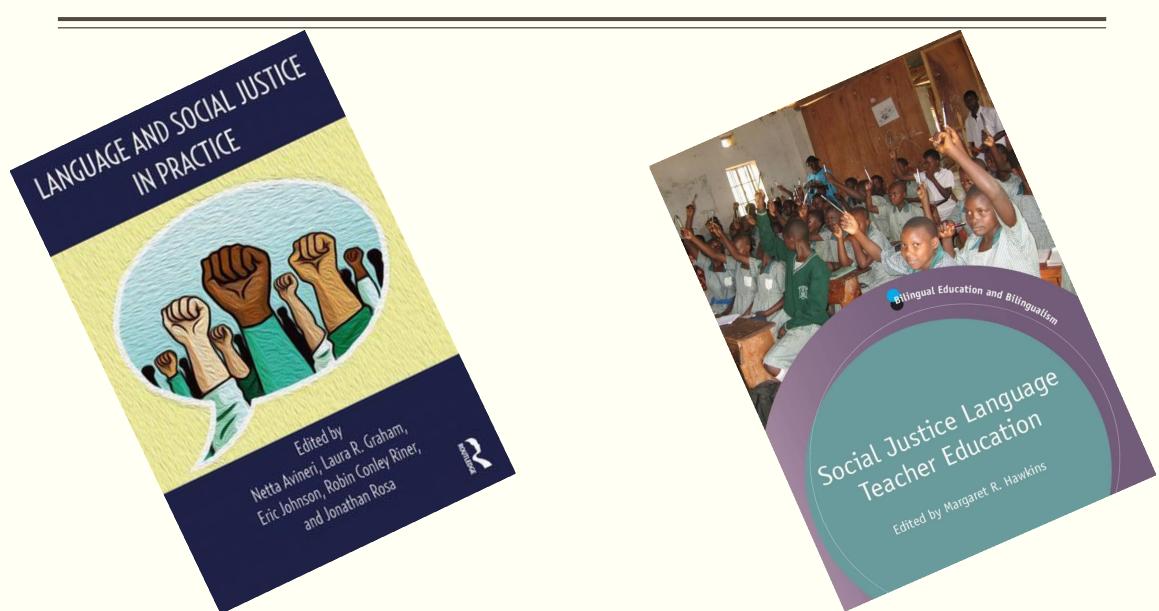


The CEFR Companion Volume: inclusive quality education, transparent and equitable assessment and social justice.

## WHY ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS?



#### WHY ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS?



# WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHER EDUCATION? AND, WHY LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS?

#### **Social justice teacher education:**

1. challenges, confronts, and disrupts misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes that lead to inequality and discrimination based on social and human differences.

#### **Teacher educators & Language teachers:**

should deeply examine their own attitude and assumptions about those who are different from themselves in various ways

#### Language teachers **students**:

should encourage direct comparisons among the target cultures and students' own cultures as well as question stereotypes and myths students have about people living in other cultures

# WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHER EDUCATION? AND, WHY LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS?

#### **Social justice teacher education:**

2. provides *all students* with the resources necessary to learn to their full potential, including both material and emotional resources.

#### Language teachers:

- should build high expectations for all students,
- should cultivate the ability to care authentically about others and to demonstrate trust and solidarity

# WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION? AND, WHY LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS?

#### **Social justice education:**

3. draws on the talents and strengths that students bring to their education.

All classes are historically and culturally situated, no matter what is taught, and all students have their own cultures and identities that they bring to the classroom.

#### Language teachers:

- should learn about their students' families and communities and how to translate this learning into culturally responsive teaching practices
- should call on their students' talents, strengths, abilities and backgrounds rather than simply focusing on delivering material.

# WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION? AND, WHY LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS?

#### **Social justice teacher education:**

 creates a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and agency for social change.

#### Language teachers:

- should teach more than the content area (e.g., teaching grammar)
- should teach students how to think, whom to trust, what to believe, what to value, and more.
- should help students to think critically about social change in other cultures in order to help them see things that they might not see in their own cultures.

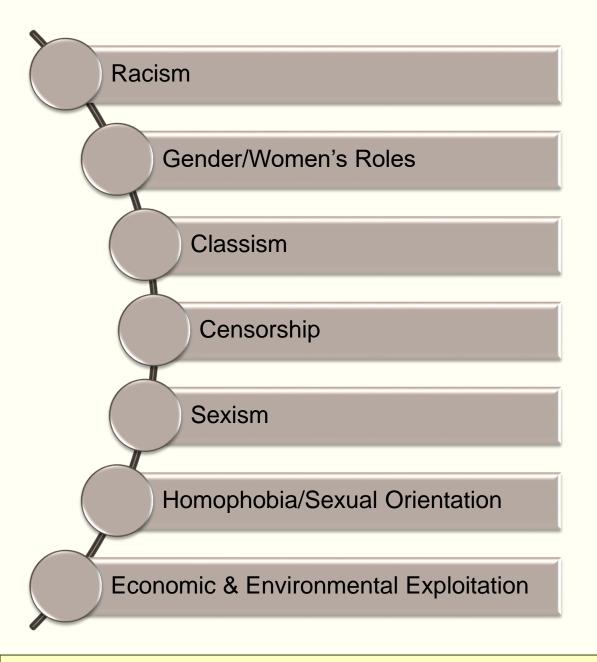
## **OUR GOALS IN THIS PROJECT**

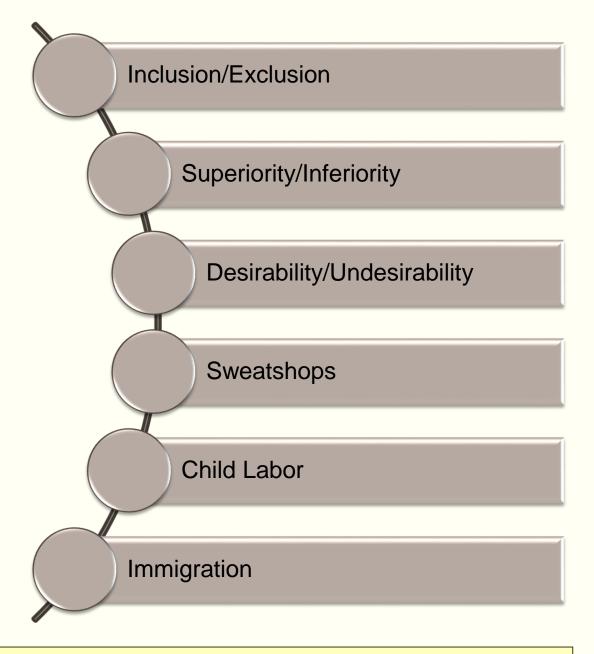


• We hope to support pre-service English language teachers in recognizing their students' diverse backgrounds, while also supporting their ability to think critically about the world around them.

## OVERVIEW OF OUR PROJECT

- Introductory seminars (we are here!)
- Webinars (January-February 2019)
  - Themes
  - Lesson plans
- Social responsibility projects (Spring 2019)
- Symposium (June 2019)
- TESOL Convention 2020, Denver, Colorado
- National conferences (2019-2020)

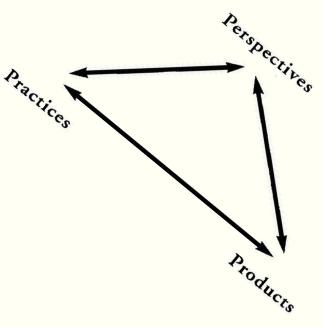




To explore the ways in which they influence pedagogy and constrain students' life chances beyond the classroom

# IN OUR WEBINARS: TYPES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014, p.8)

- **1. Perspectives** (i.e., attitudes and values):
  - How beliefs about the humanity of individual groups has affected access to employment
  - The evolution of beliefs about homosexuality and marriage laws in the target cultures
- **2. Practices** that arise from how people interact:
  - Language usage and its implications in specific contexts (schools, jobs, etc.)
  - Ways that communities express themselves in the face of oppression and discrimination
- **3. Products** that focus on access to and relationships with tangible and intangible resources:
  - How access to clean water affects developing countries and communities
  - Educational systems and language policy



# IN OUR WEBINARS: CATEGORIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES



#### 1. Problem-posing activities:

- Activities focusing on discussion, critical inquiry, and interactive participation
- E.g., Problems about cultural artifacts in students' own culture or other cultures, followed by a reflection and examination of accepted truths by simply asking "Why?" (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014, p. 8)



#### 2. Text analysis activities:

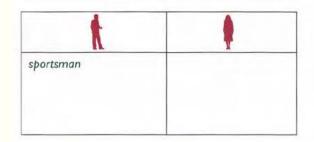
not just the written word, but also the spoken word, audio and videotape, media elements, and even images with no written materials (Kramsch, 1993 in Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014, p. 7)



#### **1A** Match the jobs with photos A–N.

- I cleaner
- 2 cook/chef
- 3 hairdresser
- 4 hotel manager
- 5 IT worker
- 6 musician
- 7 office worker A
- 8 personal assistant
- 9 pilot
- 10 police officer
- II receptionist
- 12 retired
- 13 shop assistant
- 14 tourist information assistant
- B Put the jobs in the correct group.

<del>sportsman</del> actor businesswoman waitress actress waiter sportswoman businessman



















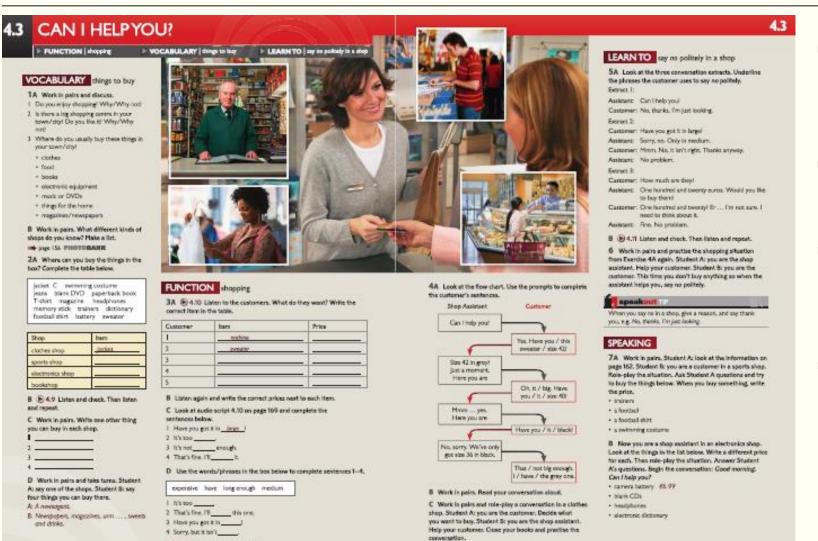






- What common professions are taught when we teach vocabulary about professions?
- What professions are not taught? Which words are privileged?
- What do the visual representations used in the textbook, on posters, on worksheets, or on visual flash cards say about who typically works in each profession? (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014, p. 7)

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- A typical reading might focus on a transaction in a store:
- How do the customer and the seller behave?
- What does the customer seek, and how is that shown to have value?
- Why do we focus on professions and exchanges of money in language learning so regularly? (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014, p. 7)



#### 3. Reflection activities:

 Journaling, participating in multicultural awareness tasks, consciously comparing themselves to others, and other similar activities (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014, p. 9)

#### **AWARDS**

**Social Responsibility Projects** 

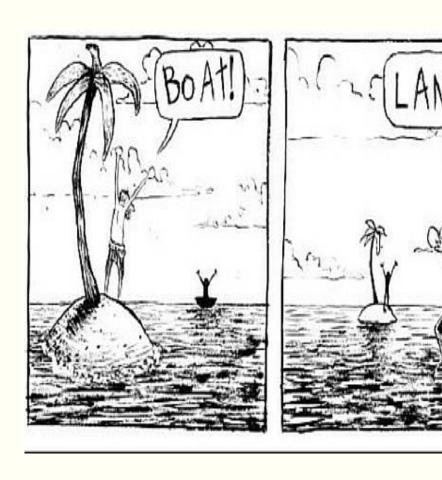
Attendance to TESOL International Convention and English Language Expo, the USA, 2020

**Conference Travel Award, Turkey** 

## YOUR OWN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROJECTS

#### • Individual experience investigations:

looking into individual experiences through face-to face interviews, simulation activities, questioning via email or social media, or participating in an online community or network (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014)



- Organizing a field trip with classmates or students
- Organizing community panels
- Inviting guest speakers to talk about their experiences as people who normally deal with social problems in their own neighborhoods
- Planning activities in which teachers spend time interacting with people from neighborhoods who experience inequalities and injustices
- Organizing a clothing drive for local domestic violence shelter
- Using noncertified adults in communities as paid teacher educators teaching prospective teachers cultural knowledge
- Existing bullying policies in schools
- Writing a children's book about injustice for local 5th grade
- Investigating school-based arrests (Dover, 2013)

One to World: <a href="https://www.one-to-world.org/site/296/Global-Classroom">https://www.one-to-world.org/site/296/Global-Classroom</a>



# FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.socialjusticeinelt.com







You might still have questions about how your teaching philosophy, your context and your students fit with the notions of teaching for and about social justice!

# POSSIBLE QUESTIONS: "SOCIAL JUSTICE IS ABOUT TEACHING VALUES."

- Social justice and its focus on societal inequalities can be seen as value-laden, or some might say political (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014, p. 74).
- Social justice isn't a euphemism for liberal politics. It isn't a way to excurse a group of preservice teachers who belong to a certain political party or vote a certain way. It is a way of approaching public education, and teacher education, that ensures that it will be as open, equitable as possible to all children, regardless of their identities, biologies, experiences (Alsup & Miller, 2004, p. 138)

- > Social justice education encourages exploration and awareness-building.
- > Students in these classrooms are encouraged to think critically about all perspectives.

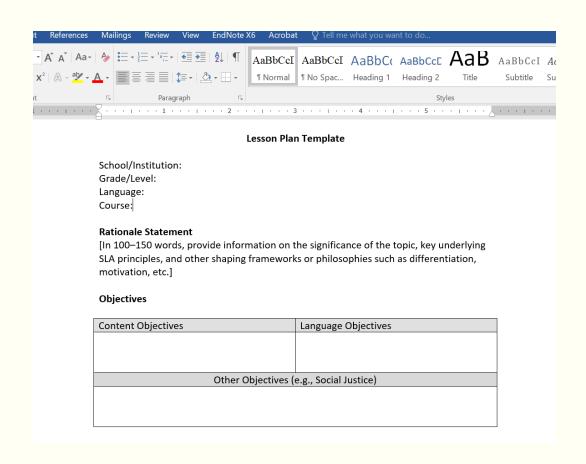
# POSSIBLE QUESTIONS: "THE STUDENTS (AND THEIR PARENTS) WON'T ACCEPT THIS."



- Teachers teach real students, who might feel confronted by unexpected topics in the classroom. While marginalized students may feel affirmed or empowered by social justice instruction, privileged students might have trouble being asked to reconsider and possibly change their perspective on the world (Swalwell, 2013).
- Response: Communicate as much as possible about your work with your students and parents (if applicable). We have numerous standards (TESOL, ACTFL, CEFR), well-respected literature, and research at our fingertips to demonstrate that an integration of social justice understandings is beneficial for all students in English language classes—share them! (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014, p. 74)

# POSSIBLE QUESTIONS: "SOCIAL JUSTICE INSTRUCTION TAKES THE FOCUS OFF OF LANGUAGE LEARNING."

- A focus on social justice in the classroom is a diversion from the "basics." That is, it erodes the traditional educational canon.
- Response: Social justice instruction is at its best when it is fully integrated with language objectives. It offers students ways to use the language in real-life, contextualized ways (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014, p. 74).



## WHY SOCIAL JUSTICE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING?

- We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, "It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem." Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.
  - Fred Rogers (1994)

 Language teachers are in the position to instill in their students the ability and desire to respond to others' needs rather than to turn away (Glynn, Wesely, & Wassell, 2014, p. g)

It is our hope that our project will inspire you to be one of these heroes.

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