

History Texts: A Potential Vehicle for Social Justice

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Abstract

This article approaches social justice as a potential outcome from the social studies or history instruction. While the narrative offered through history or civics education is fundamental to the building of national character, the attention paid to national and other borders between different groups of people can have consequences that do not serve the needs of a particular nation or an increasingly globalized and interdependent world. This article will present an analysis with examples from history curriculums around the world and argue for a re-examination of national borders as they are depicted through the history texts. The use of examples here does not comprise an exhaustive analysis as that would be impractical, but it does provide an indicator for the orientation of historical depiction. The consequences of particularized or single dimensional depiction, be they intentional or unintentional, carry repercussions that readily thwart the progress and greater understanding between various populations around the world. The history curriculum has the potential to serve as a vehicle for understanding social justice in ways that more accurately reflect the interactions between groups of people. It would compel the closer examinations of the strengths of nations and also their contradictions. Through this, the larger patterns of human behavior would be better understood and change across nations would be complimentary and cohesive.

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