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**About Face International One
Article per Day**

Karyn E. Vostok

[DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING CURRENT- EVENTS]

As an educator, it is important to understand the difficulties and precautions before starting current-events in your classroom.



“He who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying.” Friedrich Nietzsche

Before undertaking work with a class in current topics the teacher should know that there are certain difficulties which he is sure to encounter that by knowing and heeding a few cautions and suggestions he may reduce them to a minimum. Chief among these difficulties are: 1.) The work is likely to be disconnected, to lack of unity, and to have few tangible results, 2.) The importance of contemporary events is easily overemphasized, because we are too near them to get a proper perspective; the student is likely to get the idea from newspaper and periodical accounts that most present-day happenings are as important as the French of the American Revolution. 3.) Securing, using, and properly interpreting the sources of information are obstacles too great for an ordinary class to overcome. Because of these difficulties, few final conclusions can be made, which is somewhat unfortunate for young people who crave finality. 4.) The results of the work do not lend themselves to the customary test used in history and civics. The complaint is often heard that pupils seem interested, but when any semblance of a test is administered they show dense ignorance of what they are suppose to know.

The following precautions and suggestions may help to solve and avoid some of the foregoing difficulties: 1.) To keep the work from being scrappy and disconnected, center the attention of the class as far as possible on large problems as central themes, and correlate the minor events around them. Let the class always be informed as to the exact problem or problems under consideration; keep the information on each large problem separate; on finishing a topic summarize the knowledge gained in studying it. 2.) Continually emphasize the difficulties connected with getting the proper perspective of history in the making. This may help to counteract the tendency to overemphasize certain present-day happenings. 3.) Make the work so definite that it can be tested by means of the customary school tests. Definite assignments and regular tests will aid in this matter. If it is felt desirable, short weekly tests could be given, these in turn to be followed by a regular examination once in every five or six weeks. Of course it should be kept in mind that one big result which must come from this work can probably never be satisfactorily tested, namely, the habit of reading periodical literature and passing judgment on the contents thereof. 4.) Change the method of conducting the work as soon as it is discovered that the class is losing interest in the one in use. However, a method once undertaken with a class should be continued until it has been mastered. If interest seems to lag, it may be because the details of the method are not clear. 5.) Make the work concrete by means of such devices as individual collections of clippings, pictures, and cartoons, and a bulletin-board for which the entire class is responsible. In order to keep up interested in the bulletin-board some attention should be given to it every day. The details of management might be placed in charge of a committee appointed by the class, said committee being held responsible for keeping the board filled with material directly related to the work the class is doing. Individuals may loan clippings, cartoons, and pictures to the committee for display purposes, these to be returned and properly filed when they have served their purpose on the bulletin-board.

If you as the educator decide to add *One Article per Day's* middle school or high school curriculum to your subject matter, many of these issues will be alleviated.



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Difficulties in Teaching Current-Events

To learn more regarding About Face International's *One Article per Day* and the unique current-event curriculum offered to middle school, high school, and college students, please email classroom@onearticleperday.com or call 617.744.5159.

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