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# *For the dawn of a new millennium* Human Rights Education

A Conceptual Framework for Transforming Paradigms

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Commission  
des droits de la personne  
et des droits de la jeunesse

(Illustration: Marie-Denise Dorey)

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# SYNOPTIC TABLE

Topics	Objectives	Synopsis	Points to Ponder
1- Why Teach Human Rights?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To recognize the importance and urgency of teaching human rights</li> <li>To discuss the necessity of transmitting human rights values and notions through human rights education</li> </ul>	Students as global citizens of the next millennium have the daunting task of addressing complex issues of human rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why teach human rights?</li> <li>Where is the best place to introduce human rights education?</li> <li>What is the position of such education in relation to the moral rules of religious, political and cultural beliefs?</li> </ol>
2- What are the Goals of Human Rights Education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To present the aims of human rights education</li> <li>To identify some of the major learning outcomes</li> </ul>	Cognitive, affective and behavioural objectives are related to the goals of conscientisation, empowerment and transformation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do these objectives seem pertinent to you?</li> <li>Can you modify or enrich this list of objectives?</li> <li>Which objectives are more suitable for the primary, secondary, post-secondary levels?</li> </ol>
3- Approaches to Human Rights Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To examine a variety of approaches which may facilitate the implementation of human rights education</li> <li>To evaluate the advantages or disadvantages of these approaches</li> </ul>	Global and development education, civics, prejudice reduction or anti-racist education, moral education, human rights advocacy and media literacy are among the approaches examined.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which conceptual framework seems the most appropriate in your case?</li> <li>If you were to develop a multi-dimensional approach, how would you frame it?</li> <li>Is there not a risk of "politicisation" and "indoctrination" with regard to the approach to human rights education? How would you avoid this?</li> </ol>
4- Human Rights Curriculum: Shaping Ideals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To discuss the content of human rights education</li> <li>To determine the areas in which the insertion of human rights content is most appropriate</li> </ul>	Human rights curriculum involves the teaching of the content and application of international and national human rights instruments, the mechanisms of protection of human rights, the major concepts underlying these instruments, paths for their subject integration, and the development of bias-free materials.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does human rights education fit into the curriculum?</li> <li>At what age would you begin?</li> <li>What are some of the more controversial issues?</li> <li>How would you integrate human rights into an already overloaded curriculum?</li> </ol>



Topics	Objectives	Synopsis	Points to Ponder
5- Living the Idea: Human Rights Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— To examine some of the teaching strategies of human rights education</li> <li>— To establish the importance of creating conditions conducive to the transmission of human rights education, through the "hidden curriculum"</li> </ul>	The notion of the democratic or "just community school" is examined. Child-centred, interactive, team-teaching and cooperative learning strategies in heterogeneous classrooms are discussed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your understanding of the "democratic school"?</li> <li>2. Is this idea applicable in your situation? What are the possible roadblocks?</li> <li>3. Some adults may feel that this model cedes too much "power" to the student. What is your view?</li> </ol>
6- Teachers: Conceptual Architects of the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— To examine the role of the teacher in human rights education</li> <li>— To determine the nature and content of teacher training, both pre-service and in-service</li> </ul>	Many teachers share concern for human rights but lack the training to inform their teaching. The content of this training and the teacher's role are presented for analysis.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What basic and in-service training should be available to teachers?</li> <li>2. What are the obstacles which teachers must overcome?</li> <li>3. What role, if any, should teachers play in the implementation process? How can they truly become agents of change?</li> </ol>
7- Afterthoughts: Where do we go from here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— To discuss the challenges which lie ahead in the field of human rights education</li> <li>— To formulate a plan of action for the implementation of human rights education</li> </ul>	In order to prepare the groundwork for the implementation of human rights education, institutions must train the trainers, create appropriate materials, develop new methods and mechanisms of evaluation, and share experience and expertise.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the major challenges which lie ahead in the field of human rights education?</li> <li>2. What are the major obstacles? What are the major strengths and how can they be incorporated?</li> <li>3. What are the steps to take in a plan of action to implement human rights education?</li> </ol>
List of Materials			

## *Topic 1:*

# *Introduction: Why Teach Human Rights?*

*Human rights are based on the increasing demand of the world's population for a decent, civilized life in which the inherent dignity of each human being will receive respect and protection. We do not speak merely of our physical needs when we talk about human rights. We mean those conditions of life which allow us fully to develop and use our human qualities of intelligence and conscience and to satisfy our spiritual needs...*

*United Nations. (1980). Questions and Answers on Human Rights. p.2.*

## *Objectives:*

1. To recognize the importance and urgency of teaching human rights
2. To discuss the necessity of transmitting human rights values and notions through human rights education

Students of today have the daunting task of being the global citizens of the next millenium. They will need to possess the appropriate tools to address complex local, national and international issues in informed, thoughtful and creative ways.

Human rights affect us on a daily basis — in schools, in everyday exchanges with employers, with landlords, with government, as well as before the courts. Beyond our borders we are affected by the events which occur in other parts of the world because these events may have an effect on world peace. While the perspective and effects of human rights might be global or world-wide, they touch us individually in virtually every aspect of our ordinary lives. We are not alone, but interconnected and interdependent. We are involved, whether we like it or not, in the world and its problems. We are all players in the local, national and international fields.

Teaching human rights is an attempt to reduce and transform these global principles to manageable size. Human rights education is founded on the universality of the search for human dignity. International peace and justice are inseparably bound to the development of an informed and human rights conscious citizenry, necessary to maintaining a society free from intolerance, racism, sexism. A foundation of trust and participation in the political system can be strengthened in a country where human rights are respected and weakened where they are violated. To be effective citizens, to equip students with the necessary tools to play the most effective role in society — as consumer, producer, parent, member of a religious group, — these are some of the compelling reasons for teaching human rights.

The school environment is often the stage where events that seriously threaten human rights may occur. Following the adult model, students may resort to violence in order to resolve conflicts. The one who hits the hardest has the best chance of imposing his or her will. Unfortunately, the model that adults have created for children through the media (some films may contain as many as 200 murders) or the political arena may only too readily be imitated by young people in their daily behaviour.



Through the study of human rights, young people gain a new sense of empowerment and discover a way to win respect and self-respect. They learn to express their opinions even when they might not be popular, but more importantly, they learn that exercising rights requires respecting the rights of others, and carries with it certain responsibilities. Figure 1 captured the essence of this discussion.

**Figure 1**



**Communication (1975) by Jackson Beardy**

There are three birds here and the number three contains the first odd and even number, thus it contains opposites. "Communication" means a union of understanding among opposites or diverse creatures. Were creatures literally the same there would be no need for communication in the ordinary sense... Only difference makes union and communication necessary. Far from going on to stress trinitarian notions, Beardy makes sure there are four eyes, four tail feathers, and five feathers in each wing... the symbolic wings look like a stylized nest and the birds fit into the indentation like young ones in their nests.

*It is one thing to have heard and read something,  
that is merely to take notice;  
it is another thing to have understood what we have heard and read,  
that is, to ponder.*

*Martin Heidegger. (1971). Thinking. Modern Philosophies of Education.*

## *Points to Ponder*

1. Why do you think it is necessary to teach human rights?
2. Where is the best place to introduce human rights education? In schools? In N.G.O.'s? In labour unions? In government? In the armed forces? In religious institutions? In the media? Why?
3. What is the position of such education in relation to the moral rules of religious, political and cultural beliefs? What is the actual and potential ethical coherence of such education in your country of today and tomorrow?

# *Notes*

## *Topic 2:*

# *Motivate, Activate, Liberate: The Goals of Human Rights Education*

*The immediate task of human rights teaching and research should be to prevent or substantially decrease violations by... awakening in individuals, groups, people and government an awareness of the meaning, content and value of Human Rights... to internalize reverence for Human Rights.*

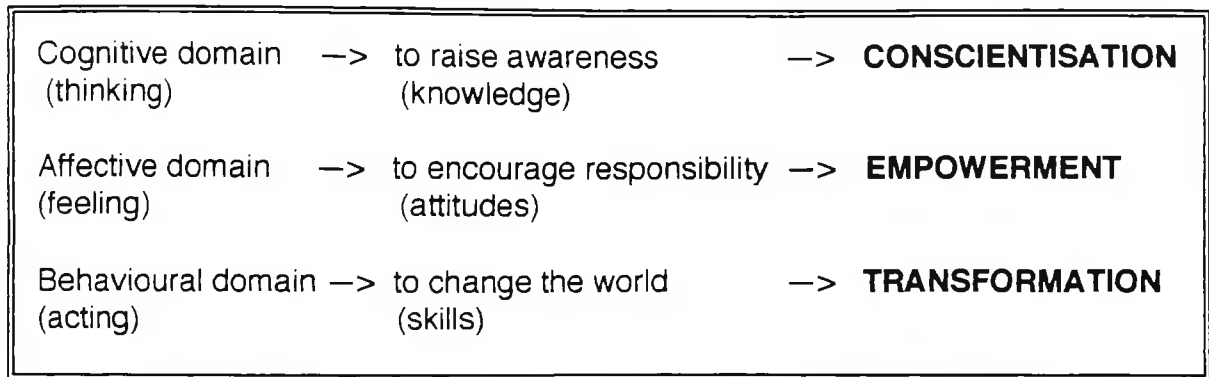
*The late Jose Diokno  
Philippines Human Rights Lawyer*

## *Objectives:*

1. To present the aims of human rights education
2. To identify some of the major learning outcomes

The very broad goals of human rights education may be seen on a continuum and represented as follows:

**Figure 2**



Fortunately, contemporary human rights education can draw inspiration from a fine tradition. Quite some time ago the educator Celestin Freinet<sup>1</sup> advocated education based upon respect for human rights. This pedagogy, which has contributed towards forming several generations of responsible citizens, is still very relevant to our own needs.

International organizations have also convened a number of meetings and discussions on the topic of human rights education. The first step in their research was to define objectives. The International Congress on Human Rights Education, held in Vienna in 1978, enunciated the following guidelines:

*"Human rights education and teaching must aim at:*  
*(i) fostering attitudes of tolerance, respect and solidarity inherent to human rights;*  
*(ii) providing knowledge about human rights, in both their national and international dimensions, levels, and the institutions established for their implementation;*  
*(iii) developing the individual's awareness of the ways and means by which human rights can be translated into social and political reality at both the national and international levels."*<sup>2</sup>

1. Freinet, Celestin. (1972). The Modern School in France. (our translation). Maspero: Paris.

2. Unesco. (1980). Human Rights Teaching. in Teaching and Learning about Human Rights. Council of Europe, Vol. 1, No. 1.



Let's take a closer look at some of the objectives of human rights education:

## **1. Cognitive Objectives — Conscientisation:**

### Understanding basic human rights concepts

Students derive these important concepts from the study of historical and current events, as well as from statutory instruments (laws, international covenants and charters) - in both their actual form and in simplified versions of the texts. From this conceptual base they are better able to assimilate and use this mass of information to deal with issues of discrimination and conflict.

### Knowledge of historical developments

Awareness of historical events which shaped the struggle for the attainment of human rights, is essential to understanding more profoundly the issues and problems which form the tradition of human rights. The institutions of slavery and apartheid are key elements for study and discussion. In a very real sense, history synthesizes experience for the students, opens them to the world that surrounds them and helps them realize that there can be viable solutions to human dilemmas.

### Knowledge of human rights legal documents

Adapting human rights instruments to the age-appropriate and academic level of students enables them to become familiar with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and other instruments of international and national law. They will know how to employ them and exercise their rights.

### Knowledge of human rights institutions and mechanisms of protection

The struggle to protect human rights has been and still is the object of civil strife in many parts of the world. It is important to relay information on the existence and workings of the United Nations, national human rights commissions and other international, national and local organizations.

### Knowledge of some major infringements of human rights

Students learn that there is no country currently exempt from violations. Prisoners of conscience, infringement on freedom of the press, exploitation of children, exclusion of handicapped persons, and sex discrimination occur on a scale that is world-wide.

### Global awareness

As they progress in their study of geography, history and society, students come to realize that human rights education encompasses a vast body of knowledge and cuts across many disciplines. They are awakened to the notion that the protection of human rights is vital to ensure peace both at home and abroad. By becoming aware that we belong to a world in which nations are interconnected and interdependent, they acquire a sense of global awareness of the importance of human rights, international solidarity and cooperation.

## **2. Affective Objectives — Empowerment:**

### Developing a sense of empowerment

Throughout history, the concept of human rights has emerged as a means of resisting the arbitrary nature of totalitarian powers. Human rights assert the dignity and liberty of all individuals confronting state power. This is one of the underlying messages that students come to understand when they study the struggles of others to assert their right to be free from the arbitrary and unreasonable exercise of authority.

### Appreciating the rights of others

Educators often note that the first reflex of students is to assert that they have rights. Consequently, we must draw the students' attention to the universal character of human rights, and underline that all human beings possess the same basic needs and therefore possess the same basic rights. We must also point out that exercising human rights unilaterally creates injustices for others. For example, the right to exercise one's own freedom of expression implies respect for the right of others to voice their views and ideas as well.

### Developing acceptance of differences

To truly succeed in transforming attitudes, the educator should begin by confronting those prejudices which already prevail. What is the value of an abstract understanding of human rights if it does not lead to changing students' daily behaviour? Throughout the teaching process students should be permitted to express their views which may reflect prejudice and then be encouraged to examine the consequences of their attitudes - that they do not reflect the facts, for example, or that they damage the victims of prejudice. Then students should be encouraged to seek out alternative ways of thinking. To achieve this end, a classroom climate favourable to the exchange of ideas is a must. An atmosphere of respect and openness is perhaps the most important factor in helping the student develop new attitudes while at the same time reinforcing his or her positive ones.

### Showing empathy for those who are denied rights

The study of human rights inevitably evokes feelings of concern and outrage as students reflect upon the human condition. Learning about human rights should not be limited to the cognitive domain and treated coldly as we have often learned to do, for example, in our response to newscasts. We must express our outrage at certain facts and events and demonstrate concern and empathy for victims of human rights abuses. Students learn to take the interests of others into account when considering solutions to conflicts and proposals for change. Seeing the problem through

the eyes of another helps to instill a democratic sense of judgement. Students should also be encouraged to think positively about the issues raised by the problems of discrimination or violence. They should be shown that individual effort can help to change attitudes and that no such effort is in vain.

### **3. Behavioural Objectives – Transformation:**

#### Developing critical thinking skills to identify prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination

Learning to combat stereotypes and prejudices involves developing critical and objective thinking. Instead of resorting to preconceptions, students become accustomed to observing the behaviour and attitudes of others as well as their own. They can then be encouraged to use judgement in formulating their own personal opinions. They develop skills of multi-source and multi-perspective data collection, analysis, detection of bias and prejudice and reaching a balanced conclusion. Honing the skills of perception, reasoning, judgement and decision-making is a life-long learning process.

#### Adopting methods of peaceful conflict resolution

Human rights provide a basis from which to build alternate, less conflictual kinds of relationships among people. Discourse is preferred over overt aggression. New kinds of solutions are found to situations of open conflict between individuals. Students learn to dialogue, mediate, provide alternatives, and manage anger and animosity. The ramifications of this kind of training are positive in that schools generally witness a diminution in the incidence of conflicts.

### Social skills

Students learn to live together with human beings who are different with regard to ethnic background, ability or disability, learning styles, or religion, communicating and interacting in a manner respectful of others. Integration and acceptance of diversity become the norm.

### Accepting responsibilities

The rights of individuals in a free and democratic society are inseparable from the related notion of personal responsibility for one's acts. For every right there is a responsibility. This dual aspect of personal liberty – a right and a responsibility – has been inherent and fundamental to all doctrines of rights. We must all govern ourselves and place limits upon our acts when they would damage the interests of others. Human rights education stresses the importance of responsibility, while teaching students to value the tradition of freedom which they have inherited.

### Practising democracy

Understanding the democratic process is an essential prerequisite to ensuring full participation in society. The school and classroom are excellent arenas in which to practice basic principles of democracy. Through democratic discussion and decision-making, students themselves can determine the rights and responsibilities that are to be respected in the classroom by way of a Class Charter, for example. It becomes a concrete way of ensuring that human rights are not just a subject of theoretical knowledge, but rather a standard of conduct in their daily experiences.

### Applying human rights instruments and mechanisms

Students learn that they can have access to institutional mechanisms for the protection of human rights, and they also learn how to use them. When a right is not protected by a law (there are many of these rights) they learn to use other means at their disposal. Expressing an opinion, organizing a petition, writing to the newspapers, are types of recourse that may ensure the respect and promotion of human rights.

*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.*

*Martin Luther King Jr., 1958*

## *Points to Ponder*

1. Do these objectives seem pertinent to you?
2. Can you modify or enrich this list of objectives? Give examples.
3. Which objectives are more suitable for the primary education level? Which are better geared toward the secondary education level? Post-secondary?



# *Notes*

### *Topic 3:*

## *Approaches to Human Rights Education*

*What curiosity, that delicate  
little plant, needs more than  
anything, besides stimulation, is  
freedom.*

*Albert Einstein*

## *Objectives:*

1. To examine a variety of approaches which may facilitate the implementation of human rights education
2. To evaluate the advantages or disadvantages of these approaches

Human rights education is neither a substitute for religion nor a special form of moral or ideological training. It is geared to developing a critical attitude in respect to controversies and exchanges of views.<sup>3</sup> Its aim is not to enunciate a set of "revealed" principles, but to encourage people to compare their opinions and beliefs on the basis of mutual respect.

There are a number of approaches that are conducive to the transmission of human rights concepts and values. They include, among others:

#### Global and Development Education Approach

The rationale for this approach is to create a sensitivity to human rights concerns and crossboundary, transnational issues. It focuses broadly on how individuals and societies relate to the world's physical conditions, human institutions, social and economic systems, and interconnecting world problems and developments. This approach aims to promote international understanding, cooperation, peace and a commitment to sustainable development. It does not conflict or supersede local or national education. It merely extends them so that they more adequately mirror the world today. Former U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar noted the inextricable link between development and human rights,

*"Without development there cannot be full realization of human rights, while at the same time development without human rights would be hollow."*

#### Social or Civic Education Approach

Many school systems employ this approach as preparation for citizenship and social responsibility. Students are trained to become active participants in a democratic society. The content includes a study of participative democracy, system of government, and electoral process.

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3. Teachers' Seminar on 1789 / 1992. Council of Europe. p.14

### Prejudice Reduction or Anti-Racist Education

This approach equips students to recognize and challenge prejudice and racial discrimination. It is measured by more equitable results in curriculum, staffing, assessment and placement, as well as in changes of behaviour.

### Moral Education Approach

The learner is introduced to the principles, ideals and related formalized codes of conduct, to which human rights agreements belong.

### Legal Approach

This involves the study of the major contemporary human rights agreements from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* onward. Many of them, like the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, serve to implement in detail what is stated more generally in the *UDHR*. These and other documents gain importance in the eyes of students as they study at the same time the violations of human rights which induced nations to reach these agreements.

### Human Rights Advocacy Approach

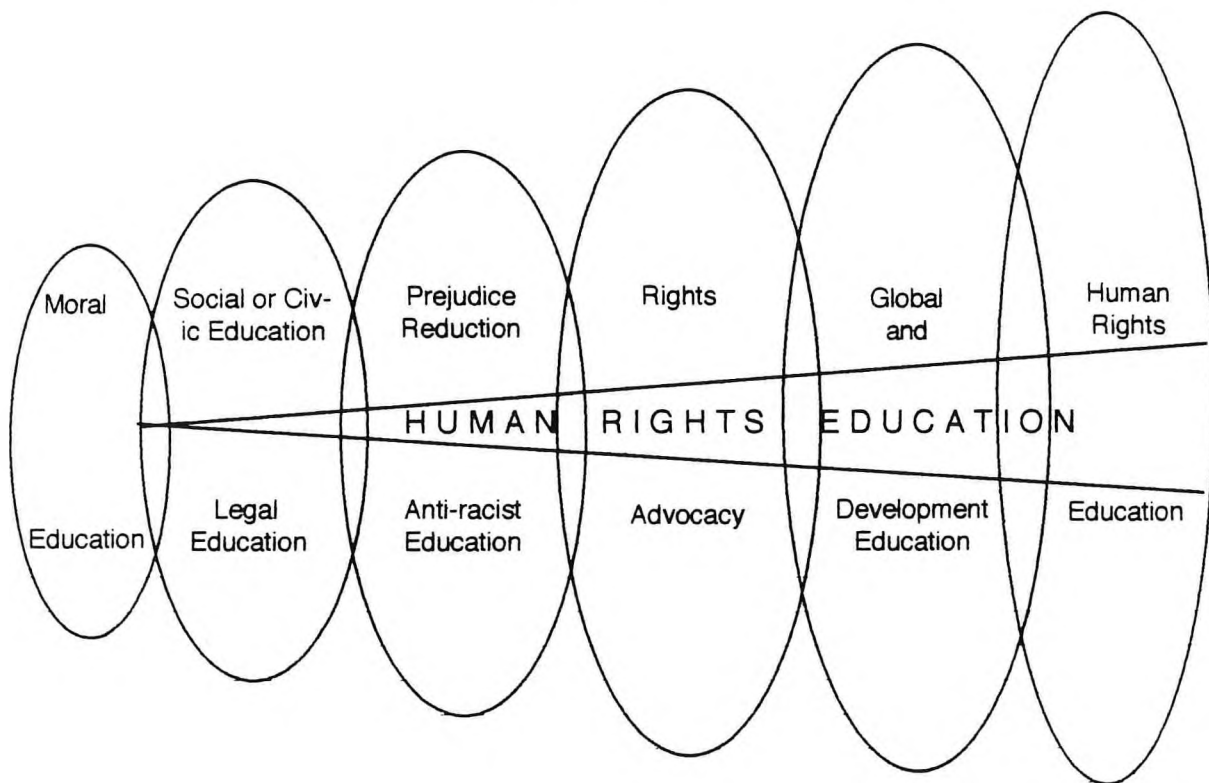
The groups which by peaceful means systematically seek strict adherence to human rights agreements provide another important dimension to human rights education. One of the organizations which systematically verifies accusations of human rights violations is Amnesty International. It focuses on prisoners of conscience, people whose political and civil rights have been removed and are persecuted and imprisoned because of their convictions. Through letter-writing and publicity campaigns, sending missions and trial observers, and publishing special reports, these organi-

zations work to gain rights and freedoms for individuals or groups of people as well as educate the general public about the problem at hand. Defence for Children International is another example. The curriculum may be interwoven with forms of national and international support and action constituting an on-going feature of school work.

### Media Literacy Approach

Mass media education, media literacy, or tele-literacy is an essential component of any human rights education program. This approach develops in the individual the ability to select and analyze information conveyed in the media. It engages students in the practice of critical thinking, reinforcing the skills involved in the independent expression of opinion, clarification of issues and ideas, search for facts and evidence, and evaluation of the consequences of various messages and actions.

**Figure 3**





*As very small children we receive an education which is very different from white children, ladinos. We Indians have more contact with nature... So we think of the earth as the mother of man, and our parents teach us to respect the earth. We must only harm the earth when we are in need. This is why before we sow our maize, we have to ask the earth's permission.*

*Menchu, Rigoberta. (1993).  
I, Rigoberta Menchu, An Indian Woman in Guatemala. p. 56*

*The earth is not ours to possess. We borrow it from our children.*

*Native North American saying*

## *Points to Ponder*

1. Which conceptual framework or approach seems the most appropriate in your case?
2. If you were to develop a multi-dimensional approach, how would you frame it?
3. Is there not a risk of "politicisation" and "indoc-trination" with regard to the approach to human rights education? How would you avoid this?

# *Notes*

## *Topic 4:*

# *Human Rights Curriculum: Shaping Ideals*

*Telling lies to the young is wrong.  
Proving to them that lies are true is wrong...  
The young know what you mean.  
The young are people...  
Forgive no error you recognize,  
it will repeat itself, increase,  
and afterwards our pupils  
will not forgive in us what we forgave.*

*from "Lies"*  
*Selected Poems*  
*Yevgeny Yevtushenko*

## *Objectives:*

1. To discuss the content of human rights education
2. To determine the areas in which the insertion of human rights content is most appropriate

Now that we have examined the "why" of human rights education, let's look at the "what" and "where". It is generally agreed that human rights education, if it is to be effective, should permeate the school curriculum. There are numerous opportunities for this to occur. It should not however be so scattered over several school subjects as to be too diffuse and superficial.

Here are some proposals for content and paths for its integration. Divided into three parts, they include:

- **human rights instruments**, which comprise the legal framework, both international and national, and the mechanisms for the protection of human rights
- **major concepts**
- **subject integration**

#### Human Rights Instruments

##### International Instruments

- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted by the United Nations on Dec. 10, 1948
- *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, adopted on Dec. 16, 1966
- *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, adopted on Dec. 16, 1966

These together form the *International Bill of Human Rights*. There are also general conventions which have been adopted at the world or regional level:

- *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*
- *Arab Charter on Human Rights*

There are conventions directed toward the protection of certain rights in particular or distinct groups of people:

#### Specific Conventions

- *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- *International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination*
- *International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*

Other documents deal with a vast array of issues:

- genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity
- slavery, traffic in persons, forced labour
- torture
- indigenous peoples, minorities
- workers
- education

In addition, a "third generation" of rights includes the rights to peace, to a healthy environment, to self-determination, etc.

#### National Instruments

These are the Human Rights Charters, Bills, Acts or Codes as well as other pertinent laws, as the case may be.



## Major Concepts

At the risk of omitting certain concepts, the following representation provides some of the most essential:

The concepts are arranged in a circular pattern, starting from the top and moving clockwise:

- Justice
- Peace
- Fairness
- Reciprocity
- Integration
- Responsibility
- Solidarity
- Accommodation
- Interculturalism
- Cooperation
- Equality
- Democracy
- Respect
- Dignity
- Acceptance

Figure 4

### Subject Integration

Human rights concepts and values can be taught through almost any subject. Some lend themselves more readily to a more substantial integration of human rights content than others.

**History** classes should relay the attempts of humankind to secure human rights both at the international and national levels. They should describe the various struggles for the recognition of the rights of women, workers, youth, the poor, minorities, aboriginal peoples, and handicapped persons, among others. The attainment of civil and political rights, the abolition of slavery, national freedom from colonialism and the dismemberment of apartheid would feature among the more illustrious chapters of curriculum guides and manuals. Discussion about the life and times of human rights advocates like Mohandas Gandhi, René Cassin, Martin Luther King Jr. and Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Aung San Suu Kyi (Myanmar), Ken Sero Wiwa (Nigeria) and Carlos Belo and Jose Ramos Horta, to name but a few, would figure prominently.

**Civics or Social Studies** class is an opportune arena in which to define the principles of good citizenship and effective membership in a democratic community. This is a prime occasion to map out a Charter of Rights for the classroom, building a sense of belonging, responsibility, commitment, and empowerment.

**Language Arts or Literature** provides a wealth of themes, characters and dilemmas from which to examine human rights implications while at the same time exercising written and oral skills. Though much of the reading lists are already prescribed or mandatory, there is always room for creative treatment. Journal keeping, critiquing the media from a human rights perspective and letter writing campaigns would allow for relating school work to the daily lives of students.

**Fine Arts, Music and Drama** are subjects areas which probably present the greatest possibilities for the treatment of human rights content. These classes may be turned over to creating poster illustrations of

the articles of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, learning songs of peace and social justice, or writing and performing plays of human rights relevance.

These classes may prepare the commemoration of important human rights days like January 15, Martin Luther King Day; March 8, International Women's Day; March 21, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; June 5, World Environment Day; August 6, Hiroshima Day; Nov. 20, International Children's Day; December 10, International Human Rights Day.

**Geography**, especially if it is to encompass human geography, should promote acceptance of differences and interest in reaching out to people around the world. It is here that the protection of the environment, food growing and distribution, and movements of people are explained and discussed.

**Social Science** or **Humanities** lends itself more directly to a comprehensive handling of human rights issues. The role of the individual, the family, the community and the larger society may all be analyzed within a human rights context.

Other subjects like **Mathematics** or **Chemistry** may have a more distant relationship to human rights education, but the practice of teaching is a social one. The way in which we teach is also a component of human rights education, to be treated in the next section.

The challenge is always to implement curriculum enrichment as opposed to curriculum "overload".

### Bias-free Materials

The need imposes itself to select appropriate materials and revise textbooks to eliminate bias and stereotypes, especially with regard to females, handicapped persons, members of minorities, and so forth. They

should figure in a wide variety of roles and functions both within the text and in graphic representations: as decision-makers, principal agents of their own destinies, and so forth, not just as victims. The new contents should be conceived through an interdisciplinary approach permitting critical reflection of reality.

It is important to look for errors of "commission", as well as errors of "omission". Outright censorship is not the appropriate technique for dealing with stereotypes or prejudice in teaching materials. Sometimes they are better handled in forthright classroom discussion than by either suppressing the text or expunging the offensive passages. Teachers should use their own discretion.

### Curriculum Change and Implementation

Curricular change usually means social change. It must be "teacher-owned" for its implementation to be effective. Change of a meaningful and widespread sort can occur if the true agents of change, teachers, sense both a personal and professional stake in the proposed change. This grassroots approach is based on the assumption that all staff should be involved in the steps of curricular development. It also advocates the involvement of parents, students and members of the community.

*Real education consists in drawing the best out of yourself.  
What better book can there be than the book of humanity?*

*Mohandas Gandhi, 1934*

## *Points to Ponder*

1. How does human rights education fit into the curriculum?
2. At what age would you begin? Which concepts and activities are appropriate for the early primary grades? The later primary grades? The early secondary grades? The later secondary grades?
3. What are some of the more contentious and controversial issues? How should they be handled?
4. How would you integrate human rights education into a curriculum that is already overloaded?

# *Notes*

## *Topic 5:*

# *Living the Idea: Human Rights Education Methodology*

*I hear and I forget.*

*I see and I remember.*

*I do and I understand.*

*Chinese Proverb*

*Tell me, and then again show me,  
so I can know.*

*Zora Neale Hurston, 1939*

## *Objectives:*

1. To examine some of the teaching strategies involved in the methodology of human rights education
2. To establish the importance of creating conditions conducive to the transmission of human rights education, sometimes referred to as the "hidden curriculum".

## Reading:

Roberta Snow, John E. Mack, Lucile Burt. (1985). Teaching About Human Conflict: What Are the Possibilities? in Social Education. National Council for Social Studies, September, p. 488-489.



It is not only the content of human rights education that is important, but the methods and conditions by which it is transmitted. In this sense, cognitive and affective learning are inextricably linked. The life of the educational enterprise or institution must itself reflect the principle of respect for human rights in its treatment of the child, working methods, organization and procedures. The democratization of school life involves a transformation of the very ethos of the school, imbuing it with the values of democratic living. Implicit in this statement is the role of the school as blueprint for life in a democratic society.

Sometimes called the "hidden" or "informal" curriculum, "how" we teach can be as influential in the process of socialization as "what" we teach. Examples of this come into play on a daily basis in rules and regulations, both written and unwritten, which govern behaviour. When viewing a school play, for instance, older students are asked to give up the front seats as not to block the view of the younger and smaller students.

If students who learn about democratic principles in a social studies or civics class then realize that those same principles are disregarded in their own school life, they might conclude that this is all just "doublespeak", another example of a double standard or "do as I say, not as I do". Kohlberg's notion of a just community school<sup>4</sup> represents a rectification of this disparity between words and actions by providing students with a real democratic say in the everyday running of the school.

### The Democratic School

The characteristics of a democratic, human rights school life model may be identified as follows:

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4. Kohlberg, L., Wasserman, E., Richardson, N. (1978). The Just Community School. The Experience of the Cambridge Cluster School.

- **CHILD-CENTRED:** The pupil is viewed as an active member of the school community. Inquiry is encouraged. Albert Einstein, or as one Canadian physics class fondly calls him, "Uncle Al" urged that the important thing is not to stop questioning. Students can also take leadership roles in problem-solving and decision-making at school. Mechanisms for conflict resolution which train and employ student peer mediators, support for student councils, establishment of classroom councils of democracy, and development of classroom charters of rights are some of the means which empower young people to practice democratic life. To facilitate the process, some Quebec classrooms have set up Friendship Circles, thereby literally "reorganizing the furniture". Instead of sitting at desks arranged in rows, students and teacher are seated in a circle on the floor. Inspired by Native tradition, this practice enhances discussion and visibility and eliminates unnecessary hierarchical obstacles.

Child-centredness does not diminish the role of the teacher. In fact, the role is expanded within this context to encompass role model, agent of change, and "conceptual architect of the future". Teachers must show students how to implement rights in their own classrooms. Not only student-student relations but teacher-student as well as administrator-student relations must conform to the principles of human rights if students are to accept the validity of the concept.

- **GROUNDING IN DAILY REALITY:** The classroom becomes a living environment, reflecting the social, political and economic situations of the country. It should afford the safety and freedom to exercise critical thinking skills, apply theory to practice, discuss controversial subjects, consider a wide range of world views and guard against all forms of discrimination. This is translated throughout the school by way of its rules and regulations and policies to counter sexism, racism and exclusion. This also means that students of all abilities are integrated and that services to students with special needs are appropriately adapted to their needs.

Students may be encouraged to undertake human rights projects which may impact on the life of the school and community. These projects may be educational campaigns utilizing any number of means of communication such as audio-visual presentations, poster or art exhibits, public

service television or radio announcements, debates, newspaper or magazine publications, music festivals, advocacy campaigns, to name a few.

- **INFUSED WITH COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES:**

Student team-learning and coaching under teacher supervision, known as cooperative learning, has an excellent research base. It can foster peer acceptance and cooperation. In heterogeneous classrooms, which most often are the norm, students of different backgrounds and talents learn to collaborate in mixed ability, flexible groupings. They remain individually accountable for their learning and assume responsibility and ownership for their own effort and behaviour. This strategy also facilitates the integration of handicapped students into regular classrooms. Students become engaged in "learning to cooperate and cooperating to learn".

- **INTERACTIVE:** The classroom climate should facilitate discussion, exchange and debate. Students learn not only by listening, but by experimentation and action. Role-playing, simulation exercises and drama may help students identify and empathise with others.

- **COLLABORATIVE:** Teachers and resource personnel should view education as a collaborative enterprise. Developing a needs assessment, planning content and schedules, producing materials and preparing evaluations may become collective exercises. Team-teaching also allows for the sharing of strengths and talents in the delivery of educational services. Participation and input from parents, mentors and other members of the larger community are invaluable aids.

### Pedagogical Methods and Techniques

Human rights education calls for a great variety of pedagogical techniques ranging from frontal teaching to student-designed projects. There are several reasons for this. Among them are the desire to make human rights lessons as stimulating as possible for the students, to adapt to the various teaching styles of teachers and learning styles of students and of course to offer a programme that allows for a range of choices.

However, there is another more basic reason for employing a variety of techniques. Human rights education not only deals with the acquisition of historical information and a certain amount of basic knowledge about how the legal system works, but also involves the study of attitudes, peaceful conflict resolution, empowerment, global awareness and aspects of democracy.

- FRONTAL TEACHING

Frontal teaching is undoubtedly the most widespread form of teaching. It consists primarily of presentations by teachers, questioning of students and some limited formal exchange.

For many teachers this method provides an efficient way to convey concepts and information. When it is misused, it makes students dependent, fearful and rigid. However, the teachers whom students most appreciate are often those who are skilled "lecturers". Students like their colourful and well-structured presentations. Through questions and discussions they can stimulate students to express their points of view and to explore new avenues.

- SOCRATIC DIALOGUE

The role of the instructor is that of a guide who, by questioning, helps the student to examine and clarify his or her own views and opinions and to develop sound reasoning. It is believed that all people possess knowledge within themselves and that the role of the teacher is to help individuals draw it out rather than have them serve as mere receptacles. The Socratic method of dialogue may be used effectively to conduct such activities as discussion groups, tutorial groups or seminars.

It is a very effective strategy to demonstrate inconsistencies. It can be used to illustrate to students that their opinions have contradicted a human rights principle that has already been agreed upon, by using an article of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* or the Classroom Charter as touchstone or basis. It can also serve to generate self-insight without putting students on the defensive.

- DISCUSSION

Certain exercises rely only on discussions in the form of debate, exchange of opinions or decision-making sessions. This is the case in the development of the Class Charter. They are very useful in encouraging students to articulate and express their opinions to others. In this manner they succeed in evaluating and re-evaluating some of their attitudes which may be discriminatory or simply dismissive as regards others.

The discussion format is equally useful in encouraging students to form opinions on such complex and thought-provoking issues as Native rights, child abuse or sex-role stereotyping.

- ROLE-PLAYING, SKITS AND SIMULATION

It is often more stimulating to learn through role-playing. Skits may serve as vehicles to convey certain messages or to deal with delicate subject matter.

A simulation activity involves participants in a hypothetical situation or setting that is based on a simplified but operating model of the "real world". The participants are called upon to react to a specific predicament, process, or problem that has been singled out for emphasis in the simulated social environment or setting.

This instructional method tends to build upon and further the development of the student's imagination, ingenuity, creativity and ability to "think on one's feet". Participants must assess the situation, consider alternate courses of action and modes of behaviour and test decisions regarding the matter under consideration.

- BRAINSTORMING

This technique is generally used to "get the ball rolling". The purpose of brainstorming is to generate a wide range of ideas by releasing the creative potential in individuals.

- RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION

Dividing the class into research teams helps students to deal with many more topics during the relatively short time period. In addition, the research reports in the form of presentations or skits heighten their level of motivation.

- EXAMINATION OF CASE STUDIES

The examination of case studies is one of the most important techniques to illustrate new concepts, to introduce controversial subjects, to inform students about rights violations, and to foster critical thinking.

- VOTING AND DECISION-MAKING

Group discussions and decision-making votes are practical ways to experience democracy and learn about human rights. The Charter of the Class conceived through this process must then be respected.

- JOURNAL-WRITING

One way to help students work out their thoughts over the complexities and paradoxes of human rights issues is to keep a journal. It gives them a chance to be self-reflective about problems that may not have easy answers or solutions. The journal is a private document and it is suggested that it not be graded, but discussed with the teacher.

*When the 'word' is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into... verbalism... If action is emphasized exclusively to the detriment of reflection, the 'word' is converted into activism.*

*Pedagogy of the Oppressed  
Pedro Freire*

## *Points to Ponder*

1. What is your understanding of the "democratic school"? What would you need to do to achieve this?
2. Is this idea applicable in your situation? What are the possible roadblocks?
3. Some adults may feel uncomfortable with this model in that it cedes too much "power" to students. What is your view on this?

# *Notes*



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# Teaching About Human Conflict: What Are the Possibilities?

ROBERTA SNOW, JOHN E. MACK, LUCILE BURT

**A** GREAT MANY teachers deliberately avoid controversial issues in the classroom. Yet most of them acknowledge that conflict and controversy play an essential role in a free society whose citizens are charged with solving political problems. Moreover, controversy is engaging to most students. So why are these matters avoided?

Perhaps the most prominent reason for avoiding sensitive issues, particularly questions involving human rights, is that they are filled with complexity, paradox and often puzzlement. Bringing up troublesome subjects in the classroom may force students to confront grim or disturbing realities. As adults, we do

not want to scare or unnecessarily worry our young people. In addition, discussions of such topics require that teachers face with their students the fact that there are no simple solutions to improving the world's condition. This makes many educators uncomfortable. Looking into the dark side of human nature confronts and disturbs the idealism with which children and adolescents view the world. Finally, many human conflicts involve images of death, a taboo subject in our culture.

Many teachers, however, have found useful ways to address important social and political questions without unduly scaring younger students or making them feel hopeless

or cynical. By not raising these questions in our classrooms, our silence signals an attitude of resignation and powerlessness, a sense that nothing can be done by ordinary people to affect our government's direction.

More research is needed to study how students are affected by school experiences related to the teaching of human rights questions. An informal gathering of evidence, however, shows that teachers who handle these issues sensitively and thoughtfully have outstanding results with students.<sup>1</sup> This article presents some guidelines to help teachers bring critical controversies into their

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<sup>1</sup>Educators for Social Responsibility: classroom experiences, 23 Garden St., Cambridge MA 02138.

classrooms, delineates some developmental concerns and shares the experiences of educators from across the country.

The following guidelines grow out of the work of many educators who have tried to incorporate issues related to education for social responsibility over the past three years.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Listen.* Teaching about political problems requires understanding the young people's concerns and questions. Students are frequently relieved to be able to voice their thoughts and to see that their peers share some concerns. Giving students time to ask questions that will help them make sense of the world signals a validation of their thinking.

One significant technique for indicating openness and listening to youngsters, starting with the upper elementary or middle school grades, is journal keeping or reflective writing. Daily, students write about their experiences and understanding of the issues. The journals can help them ask questions and take part in self-reflection that may not have answers or conclusions. Helping young people live with their unanswered questions is difficult—educators are trained to have or want answers, and students look to us for guidance.

2. *Acknowledge discomfort.*

Teachers have found that students appreciate adults who are willing to reveal their own struggles in teaching and understanding difficult issues. Together with our students, we feel the discomfort inherent in facing the unpleasant parts of human behavior.

3. *Provide entry.* After teachers listen carefully to students' concerns, they may understand some of the problems that interest young people. It is better to provide a context for involvement in human rights problems and to help students find their own points of entry than for the teacher to enlist students in her or his own particular issues or causes.

4. *Introduce images cautiously.*

Because information about human rights frequently reveals sordid details, the teacher should prepare students for learning these facts. Psychologist Gerald Koocher cautions us that entire pre-high school classes should not be exposed to horrifying images. While some students may be prepared, a class's developmental readiness is uneven. If any students are ready, independent research projects provide them an opportunity to seek out information.<sup>3</sup>

5. *Encourage participation.* One way to move beyond feelings of cynicism and despair is to become active on behalf of one's beliefs. Students can be encouraged to work for social change, and some schools are providing academic credit for community or social service projects. During the school year, teachers may encourage students to develop an action project and use the class for support and feedback. The action components have involved such projects as:

- working with elderly people
- cleaning up community garbage and creating a long range plan to address the problem
- getting doors put back on girls' bathroom stalls
- keeping a popular course on the curriculum when it was scheduled to be dropped.

6. *Find your own entry.* Ideally, education for social responsibility in addressing human rights questions should involve rethinking priorities and school structures. Informal conversations with students, independent research projects, attending to the teaching moments that provide for further discussion can begin involving students in education for social responsibility. It is important to start somewhere and not wait to implement a whole unit or course.

A teacher reflects:

I always thought that the problems were so big that if you didn't devote your life to them it wasn't worth doing anything.

Now I realize you don't have to be Mother Theresa to teach about world hunger. Every small step adds up.

7. *Establish support.* Teachers have found it useful to request that in-service time be given for these topics. Meeting with other teachers on the faculty or in a professional organization gives a sense of support and community to the struggle to improve teaching techniques.

Actual practice in teaching about basic human needs and rights depends partly on students' developmental readiness. We chose concrete examples of appropriate and successful activities for three age groups to demonstrate the range of subjects that can be included in human rights teaching and to encourage teachers to implement their own lessons.

<sup>2</sup>Conversations with psychologist Gerald Koocher, Children's Hospital, Boston, MA, May 1985.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

## Topic 6:

# Teachers: Conceptual Architects of the Future

*So any citizen... who figures himself as responsible - and particularly those of you who deal with the minds and hearts of young people - must be prepared to "go for broke". Or to put it another way, you must understand that in the attempt to correct so many generations of bad faith and cruelty, when it is operating not only in the classroom but in society, you will meet the most fantastic, the most brutal, and the most determined resistance. There is no point in pretending that this won't happen...*

*The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world himself, to make his own decisions... To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way he achieves his own identity... The obligation of anyone who thinks of himself as responsible is to examine society and try to change it... This is the only hope society has. This is the only way societies change.*

*"A Talk to Teachers"*  
in  
James Baldwin

## *Objectives:*

1. To examine the role of the teacher in human rights education
2. To determine the nature and content of teacher training, both pre-service and in-service

## **Readings:**

Sebaly, Kim. "Education about Human Rights: Teacher Preparation". in Human Rights Education. ed. Norma Bernstein Tarrow. Pergamon Press, p.207-214.

Pettman, Ralph et al. (1986). Teaching for Human Rights: Pre-school to Grades 1-4. Australia Human Rights Commission. Canberra.

Human rights education should not be the sole reserve of specialists, but the domain of all those who are involved in the educational enterprise. The teacher ought not adopt a distant or neutral attitude when it comes to educating students about human rights. Who, for example, would accept overtly discriminatory behaviour towards a student in the classroom? Generally speaking, human rights education should involve teachers actively. They are required to convey information, concepts and values.

On numerous occasions, students are asked to undertake research, to debate controversial subjects and to express their opinions. Sometimes, these opinions may be tainted with prejudices and stereotypes acquired from the adult world. The teacher's role is to maintain an atmosphere of confidence and fair-mindedness, which is by its nature vital for class discussion and to develop student awareness. The teacher should avoid contradicting students and imposing his or her own viewpoint upon them. Constructive persuasion is preferable. Sometimes it is necessary to accept the fact that students will refuse to modify their attitudes. The teacher can try again when another opportunity arises. Probably the most important task of the teacher is to stimulate inquiry.

Despite the fact that human rights education is by its nature not a neutral study, nor a subject which can be taught without discussing basic and deeply held beliefs, it should not ever be a platform for teachers to express their personal agendas. Instead the opinions of the students should take precedence. The role of the teacher is not to convince them of a particular viewpoint, but rather to allow all opinions to be expressed and to disclose through examples and classroom study exercises, the consequences of prejudice.

Teachers should have the independence they need to feel free to deal with controversial issues. They may feel little confidence about their knowledge of human rights. Many share concern for human rights but lack the training to inform their teaching. Pre-service and in-service training should be considered a global activity and a continuous process. The priority should be given to the teaching of methods which can lead and develop in the student the capacity of thinking, questioning, formulating and resolving problems and improving the student's ability to apply this knowledge.

## Training

Special training for teachers remains a central and crucial obstacle. On-going teacher education is the key to success. The essential elements of such training are:

- familiarity with international and national human rights instruments and with the mechanisms for the protection of human rights
- preparation of the teacher as "agent of change", enabling him or her to incorporate new contents into the curriculum
- introduction of methods conducive to the transmission of human rights values and adapted to local situations
- access to resources, ie. audio-visual, computerized, research findings and statistics, etc.

Much of this should be action-oriented and develop in the teacher the ability to teach mixed-ability, flexible groupings. Teachers should be trained to "think human rights", making them sensitive to situations in their own classrooms or sections in their own textbooks which are appropriate for the insertion of human rights content. This includes the way teachers handle everyday disagreements, interpersonal problems and divergent ideas. In-service training programs should be based on situations arising from classroom experience.

Teachers should also be trained in how to work in multidisciplinary groups through team-teaching. This includes the preparation of teaching strategies, evaluation of the process, adjustment and adaptation of lesson plans, problem-solving, self evaluation and feedback.

## Teaching Tips

The following may prove useful to teachers in assessing human rights issues.

- A pose of objectivity has its pitfalls. A teacher can easily be led into supporting every opinion even if it is based on untruth or is clearly unfair. In promoting the underlying principles of human rights, it is necessary to challenge prejudiced opinions.

- Show openness in acknowledging discomfort. A teacher may not be comfortable in dealing with particular issues or the controversy arising from them. By acknowledging a teacher's own discomfort or the discomfort of students, young people will appreciate that an adult is willing to reveal his or her own struggles with difficult issues and may feel relief that at least their frustrations with the controversial issues are legitimate.

- Be attentive. It is important to allow students the opportunity to voice their opinions, even though they may be based on false information. It encourages them to think things out. It is better to express an opinion than not to become involved at all. By recognizing the right of expression, trust begins to develop and participation increases. By listening and understanding the concerns and questions of young people, a teacher is better able to direct a meaningful analysis of the human rights issues involved.

- Provide an entry for students' concerns. After listening carefully to students' concerns, teachers can use the students' experiences as the focus for a look at human rights. It is better to have students involved than to be directed towards issues or causes selected by the teachers for which students have little interest.

- Introduce images cautiously. Teachers may incorrectly assume that young students are ready for the treatment of extreme violations of human rights. Graphic depictions of torture may not only confuse children but may create undue fear. For those students whose development allows them to make appropriate use of disturbing images, individual research projects of their own choice may be encouraged.

- Encourage students to get involved. Becoming active on behalf of one's beliefs can be very exciting and rewarding. By encouraging students to work for social change through activities such as drawing up plans to make the school accessible to persons with physical and sensory disabilities or making the community a more attractive place in which to live, young people may feel they can make a difference.

- Show involvement. Take advantage of opportunities to reinforce human rights goals. Informal conversations with students and independent research projects contribute in small ways to the success of human rights.

- Draw out learning rather than impose knowledge on students. The goal of developing empathy in students for common humanity cannot be achieved simply by giving information, but requires an appeal to students' feelings about justice and fair play.

- Stress similarities. Trying to understand people of diverse cultures through the use of unusual or exotic customs emphasizes dissimilarities to the point that students may infer that somehow the human characteristics are also different. Students are less likely to reject cultural diversity if common features of humanity such as physical needs or love of children are stressed.

- Use humour. Humorous and creative illustrations capture the imagination and maintains the attention of young people. Whenever possible, students should enjoy the activities. To a large extent, human rights is a celebration of humanity.

- Emphasize good news. Students may get discouraged with the numerous cases of discrimination and other human rights abuses. Whenever possible, emphasize the accomplishments that have been made.

- Establish parental and community support. Share your ideas about human rights education with other teachers. Parents and the community are able to provide tremendous support in expertise and participation in tackling human rights issues.



*To teach is to learn.*

*Japanese proverb*

*It takes a whole village to educate a child.*

*Nigerian proverb*

## *Points to Ponder*

1. What basic and in-service training should be made available to teachers, administrators, inspectors? By whom?
2. What are the obstacles which teachers must overcome in order to teach human rights? How can these problems be resolved?
3. What role, if any, should teachers play in the implementation process? How can they truly become "agents of change"?

# *Notes*

## *Readings:*

Sebaly, Kim. "Education about Human Rights: Teacher Preparation". in Human Rights Education. ed. Norma Bernstein Tarrow. Pergamon Press, p.207 – 214.

Pettman, Ralph et al. (1986). Teaching for Human Rights: Pre-school to Grades 1-4. Australia Human Rights Commission. Canberra, p. 4 – 5.

## CHAPTER 12

# *Education About Human Rights: Teacher Preparation*

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### Introduction

Since the adoption of the *UN Charter* (1945) and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), there has been no shortage of recommendations that teachers should be better prepared to develop human rights perspectives and skills among their students. The increasing recognition of the universal right to learn about human rights is making human rights education a vital part of international education activities throughout the world. Publications, seminars and international conferences have supported teacher educators in their attempts to discover how to include more teaching about human rights in their programs. They have also given guideposts to educators exploring the meaning of schooling and teacher education in the rapidly emerging "global village."

This chapter presents a survey of efforts by different nations, largely through the UN system, to introduce human rights in the education of prospective and inservice teachers, and highlights some of the conceptual and procedural issues that have emerged from them. It also examines some of these issues from the perspective of the author's experience of using human rights as a central theme in a graduate course in comparative education at his university. The chapter concludes with reflections on different meanings international human rights have in the civic learning of teachers in different countries, and explores possible implications for teacher education reforms.

### Issues in Teacher Education for Human Rights

Preparing teachers in all fields to teach for international understanding has been a predominant theme in the activities of the UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) since its inception in 1946 (UNESCO, 1949; Willcock, 1962; Serden, 1962; Domnitz, 1965; Scotney,

UNESCO has provided a forum for Member States to express and share contrasting concepts of international education and information about programs and achievements. Although peripheral in most national teacher education efforts, how to prepare teachers to understand and appreciate other cultures in a human rights context has been central in UNESCO programs.

To help close the gaps between various UNESCO initiatives and activities undertaken by its Member States, UNESCO adopted an integrative instrument on education for international understanding in 1974: *Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*. Adopted during a period of increasing awareness of conclusive international economic and social changes, it reflected shifting emphases in interpretations and conceptual linkages between traditional civil and political rights and the economic, social and cultural rights (UNESCO, 1973). The 1974 Recommendation established the first international criteria and priorities for teaching about human rights that would activate international, regional and national efforts to accomplish them.

"Teacher preparation," Section VII of the Recommendation, reveals its scope and the comprehensive range of tasks it is thought that teacher education institutions need to undertake to achieve the goals noted in the long title. Besides teaching preservice teachers to commit themselves to the ethic of human rights and the aim of changing society toward more complete fulfillment of human rights goals, preparation programs would help future teachers learn to:

- appreciate the fundamental unity of mankind; to instill in others an appreciation of the riches of diverse cultures.
- acquire a basic interdisciplinary knowledge of world problems and problems of international cooperation, and how to work in solving them.
- take active part in devising international education programs, educational equipment and materials.
- comprise experiments in the use of active methods of education and techniques of evaluation.
- develop aptitudes and skill to continue their training; experience teamwork and interdisciplinary studies, and knowledge of group dynamics.

Preservice teachers would also study different experiments in international education, especially those in other countries, and have opportunities for direct contact with foreign teachers. The Recommendation also addressed the need for inservice education for administrators and other school personnel.

Within this context UNESCO led or co-sponsored a series of activities to

promote the implementation of the Recommendation. Among the publications which resulted from these and other UNESCO meetings, and which have particular relevance to teacher educators, are the *UNESCO Handbook for the Teaching of Social Studies* (Mehlinger, 1981); *Frontiers of Human Rights Education* (Eide and Thee, 1983); and *Teaching for International Understanding, Peace and Human Rights* (Graves, Dunlop, Torney-Purta, 1984). Although of less direct relevance to professional educators, UNESCO's college-level text on human rights, *The International Dimensions of Human Rights* (Vasak, 1982) is of interest for the analysis it provides on the way human rights are viewed from African, Latin American, Asian, and Eastern European perspectives. Human rights traditions and problems in teaching about human rights are also explored in numerous regional and national reports (Australian National Advisory Committee for UNESCO, 1972; O'Connor, 1980; Tay, 1981; Haavelsrud, 1983; Dougherty, 1984; Lister, 1984; Starkey, 1984, 1985).

In both UNESCO and national reports, the most frequently noted shortcoming in efforts to advance human rights teaching, at all levels and in all fields, is the lack of well-qualified teachers. The following profiles of issues and prescriptions for successful human rights teaching reveal some of the basic challenges teacher education institutions in any culture would face if the promotion of international human rights were to become a primary goal in their work.

### *Different Concepts of Human Rights*

Each region, if not each country in the world, has its own way of defining human rights and interpreting human rights questions (Georgeoff, 1968; Charmant, 1979; Margocsy, 1979; Dinsdale, 1980; Donnelly, 1982; Pollis, 1982; Coomarswamy, 1982; Kovalenko, 1982; Kartashkin, 1982; Eide and Thee, 1983; Eide, 1983; Senarclens, 1983; Tomasevski, 1983; Tchakarov, 1982; Yamane, 1983; Welch and Meltzer, 1984). Each country presently views the current pattern of human rights teaching outside of its region as "subversive" (Yamane, 1983; Eide, 1983). Developing nations tend to view human rights teaching as subversive when objectives do not emphasize peoples' rights, indigenous values and institutions, and barriers to economic growth caused by their dependencies on western democratic or Marxist-Socialist nations. Socialist nations stress the importance of economic, social and cultural rights standards and the duties of individuals inherent in state actions to protect rights in these areas. The failure of human rights teaching to emphasize the fundamental inalienable character of civil rights, and the perceived shift to a consideration of "people's" rights under UNESCO leadership, has led the United States and Great Britain to withdraw from the organization altogether, and to encourage other Western states to follow their lead.

### *The Content of Human Rights Teaching*

Closely related to issues that result from different interpretations of human rights are questions about what constitutes the cognitive and affective content of human rights that prospective teachers should learn. One approach, influenced by the lead taken by faculties of law throughout the world, emphasizes the juridical basis of human rights. The documents, resolutions and the interpretations given to them in the context of the historical, philosophical, and legal traditions of different societies are emphasized.

The social science approach to human rights content draws relationships between rights statements and major contemporary problems and international events. Teaching about human rights is closely associated with development, peace and disarmament education and specific topics of human rights violations; e.g., apartheid, racism, colonialism, terrorism, and poverty and starvation (UNESCO, 1978; UNESCO, 1982; UNESCO, 1983).

Emphasis in successful programs is also given to affective content. Tolerance, mutual respect, commitment to the proposed new international economic order, special empathy with the most desperate victims of human rights violations, yearning for human rights, objective "human-centered concern" are but a few of the affective objectives that different projects recommend that students should learn (Churchill and Omari, 1981).

### *Methods of Human Rights Teaching*

In addition to acquiring the skills to foster critical thinking, beginning teachers would need to learn numerous methods thought to be critical in human rights teaching. They should learn how to lead and participate in open discussion; involve students in the creation of curricula; establish classroom climates conducive to equal participation by all students; encourage expression of opinions about social and economic problems and government's actions to resolve them; emphasize student opportunities to exercise judgments and solve problems (Kidd, 1968; Leming, 1982; Torney-Purta, 1983).

Teachers would learn about the need for a staged introduction of human rights concepts from preschool through adulthood; and how at each stage to connect them with personal situations and experiences.

### *Organizational Support for Human Rights Teaching*

Most observers have pointed out that human rights teaching is usually limited to one specialist or enthusiast. To enlist more primary and secondary teachers in the effort, several organizational issues must be re-

Participation and cooperation must pervade the climate of the school and teachers must be given the freedom to teach. Appropriate materials, books and opportunities for foreign study must be available to all teachers (Graves, Dunlop, Torney-Purta, 1984).

### *Research Issues and Human Rights Teaching*

Not only should teachers learn how to share their experiences of human rights teaching, including evaluated classroom experiences, but they should also know how to conduct studies that would lead to a better understanding of the relationship between different categories of human rights, economic development, disarmament and peace. Through their researches, they should also be able to help understand how catastrophic social, economic and political events affect their teaching; e.g., terrorism, refugees, unemployment (Yamane, 1983).

### *Human Rights in a Comparative Study of Education*

The course described below evolved in response to the renewed challenge to appraise the meaning of citizenship in American life, to devise a new conception of the civic mission of American education and to establish pilot programs for developing new models of teacher education (Jones, 1985). The project was also undertaken to stimulate faculty and student awareness of the human rights movement since 1948, and to consider its potential contribution in the effort to make civic values central in the education of teachers (Butts, 1982).

The participants were experienced teachers, administrators, counselors, and educators in various non-school settings. Two of the classes met once a week for ninety minutes, for fifteen weeks, and one met for twenty sessions during a five-week summer term. The course evolved in a somewhat different manner each time, but in each class students worked to overcome an initial indifference to the study of human rights, acquired knowledge of basic human rights documents and their educational provisions, formulated education rights questions and applied them in different case studies. The readings and course materials outlined in Appendix A were essentially the same for each group.

Images of the "global village" provided the starting point for the classes. It was assumed that if we are living in a global society, then human rights are a plausible and perhaps necessary framework from which to evaluate the educational performance of different nations. Most of the examples of contemporary global linkages and dependencies were drawn from the teachers' experiences. Films and tapes also reinforced the connections that were drawn, and introduced the human rights issues that were implied. "Rabbinowitz" provided for international child ( )



focussed on the lost educational opportunities of twelve children from different regions of the world and the consequent loss of talent and creativity to their families and communities. Roger Rosenblatt's brief television essay on the death of strangers near and far was useful in considering questions about the limits of responsibility for human rights violations in places physically and psychologically distant from one's culture. The essay, originally broadcast at the end of a nightly news hour, probed the meaning of human rights through deaths in Nazi concentration camps, the suffering of homeless people in Washington, DC, famine victims in Ethiopian and Sudanese villages and refugees in numerous societies. "One Word of Truth," a dramatization of Alexander Solzhenitsen's Nobel Prize speech, explored similar themes and examined the role of artists and writers in revealing the unity of human values.

Charles Humana's *World Human Rights Guide* (1984) provided the class with an indispensable starting point for discussing formal human rights documents and the theoretical issues of universality and indivisibility of rights. In the initial version of the *Guide* (1984) seventy-five countries are ranked on their adherence to fifty human rights standards, and summary ratings for thirty-two others are included in Humana's classification. The ratings and background data on each ranked country are provided on two facing pages of text. His survey of the limitation of his classification, which is based solely on the Civic and Political Covenant, introduced students to the distinction between the two UN Covenants and the background of their adoption.

Humana's rankings encouraged teachers to raise questions about human rights formulations, when and how they were devised, and how they related to one another. The study of regional accords, especially those sections that detail various aspects of education as a right, led members of the groups to discuss the way rights are variously defined by countries with different political and social priorities. Conditions which led to the proposal and adoption of particular education rights and records of which nations had signed, ratified or voiced support for the general agreements were also appraised.

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and both UN Covenants provided the basis for devising criteria by which to compare and judge the educational performance of different nations. Categories of education rights, established to clarify what they meant in the context of educational systems, are outlined in Appendix B. The three major categories were, the *rights of access* to a country's educational system; the *freedom to learn* certain things in the formal system; and the *right to control* the process of education under certain conditions. Qualifications, similar in form to those used by Humana, were devised to test the common standards for vulnerable groups or different subjects.

By the middle of the term students began to focus their study of education

rights in different country settings, working in some cases individually and in others as members of a team exploring the background of a single nation. Western-democratic, Marxist-socialist and non-aligned nations were represented in both individual and group efforts. Collectively students drafted questions they thought should be asked to determine the education rights performance of a country. In drafting the questions, students were instructed to consider possible rankings of the countries studied, using a format similar to that adopted by Humana. More films on the countries selected for study were shown to the entire class.

The questionnaire (see Appendix B) devised by the classes generated the most discussion of any procedure in the course. After using it to organize information about the educational systems being studied, students criticized the questionnaire's tendency to reflect the more cognitive aspects of education rights. They did not think the questions they had devised revealed what actually occurred in schools, what opportunities were given, what concepts were learned, and what students, parents and teachers thought about their educational rights.

The process of drawing up the questionnaire did focus attention on each education right and the almost limitless number of questions that could be raised about how education occurred under these descriptions. It also led students to a more thorough search of source material about education in different societies. UN documents, UNESCO reports, World Bank Studies and the reports of numerous regional educational organizations helped students to become aware of discrepancies in various encyclopedic surveys of education and in some monographic literature as well. Feelings of inadequacy in responding to questions about countries for which they had little knowledge and appreciation also increased their desire to meet people from or to visit the countries they were studying.

### *Observations on Education Rights and Teaching Human Rights*

Evidence that knowledge about human rights increased as a result of the course was apparent from the personal statements prepared at the end of it. All students felt that they had been inadequately prepared to study other cultures and were generally unaware that there were explicit statements of international human rights. Their initial resistance to study human rights in light of their present occupational commitments and professional specialisms was overcome mainly through the elaboration of the educational rights questionnaire. Many discovered in the process that the ultimate rationale for many of the duties they regularly performed could be traced to various human rights provisions.

Several students resisted relinquishing the stereotypes they held of other countries and their educational systems, even after their analyses. This was particularly so in the cases of the Soviet Union, which received relatively

high rankings by students; Japan, which received numerous critical comments; and India, which was discovered to be among the leading industrial nations in the world with a complex modern system of education in most urban regions. There was reluctance on the part of most students to be critical of the US educational performance on different rights questions. This became a central issue in one class when a foreign student selected the United States for study and presented some of her findings.

Perhaps the most difficult question for participants in the comparative class was caused by the discovery that human rights are variously defined according to different political and economic traditions in the modern world. Recognition that different nations have had shifting perspectives on human rights during the past 40 years underscored what some accepted as the dynamic character of human rights.

Five tentative conclusions about teaching human rights through comparative education might be useful in a consideration of some of the broader issues of teacher education reform outlined in the first part of this chapter.

—Carefully structured sessions to explore the concept of the “global village” in light of personal local experiences, are prerequisites to making the study of broad human rights concepts believable and worthwhile to experienced educators, pursuing rigidly structured degree programs.

—Examination of human rights documents and interpretations of human rights traditions in different societies is required, especially if balanced interpretations of education and other rights are to be compiled. The comparison of education rights performance reveals as many differences within nations as between them.

—The use of a valid comprehensive human rights ranking system is an effective means to introduce human rights and stimulate questions about their meaning in different societies. The compilation of a ranking system for education rights may be a critical pedagogical tool.

—Human rights may be an essential element of professional education, especially in institutions where students are trained for specialization in such diverse areas as health, mental retardation, vocational education, media, administration, adult education and reading. It may be unethical *not* to have human rights education for teachers.

—Human rights performance in one area (e.g., education) may increase or decrease the observance of human rights in other areas (e.g. political participation and health services). The determination of course syllabi and teaching methods for human rights should focus on the conceptual framework of the particular discipline, but it should also lead students to see connections with other domains of human rights inquiry.

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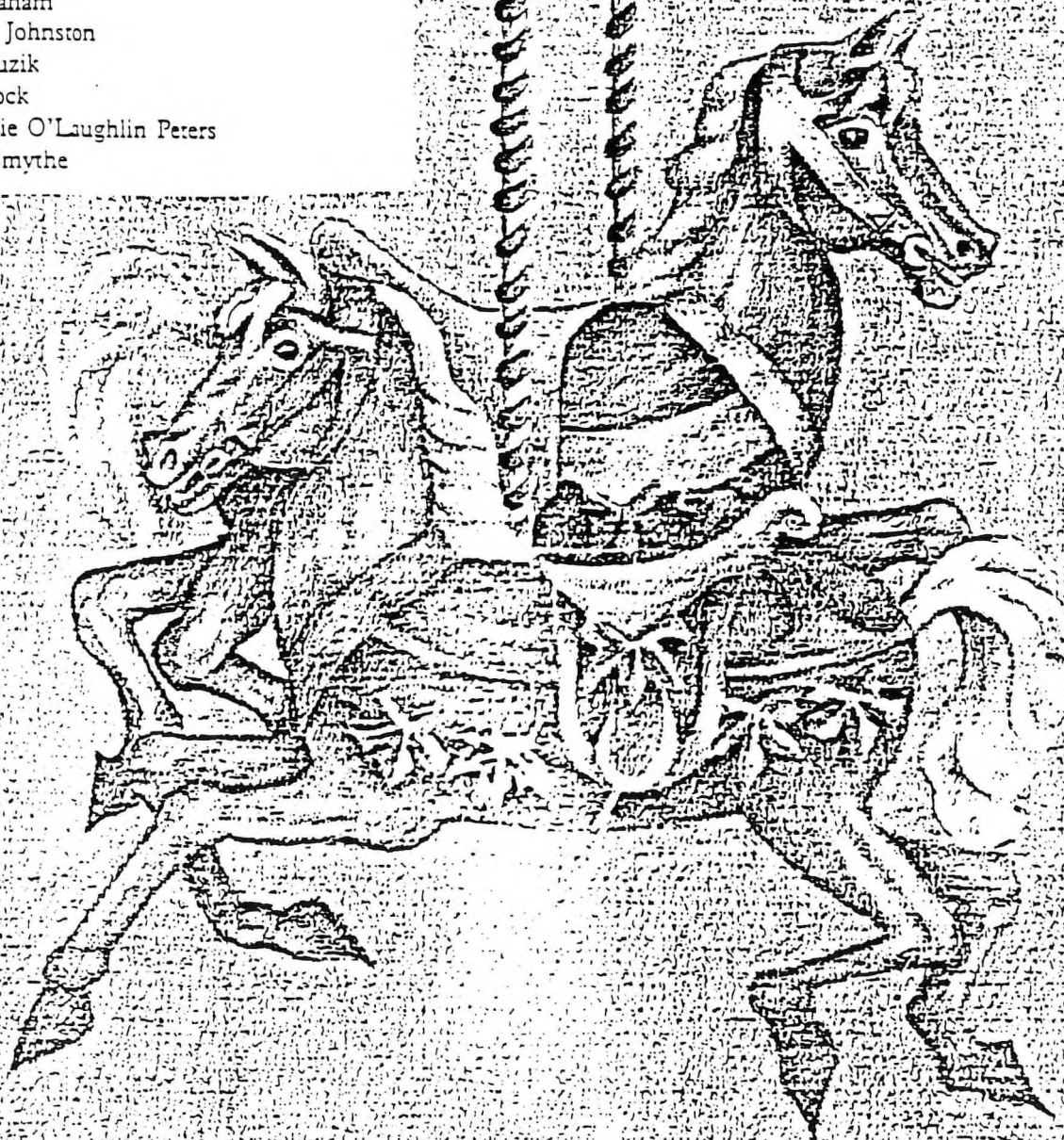


Human Rights Commission  
Education Series No. 2

## Teaching for Human Rights: Pre-school and Grades 1-4

Ralph Pettman  
*with*

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## THIS IS TEACHING, NOT PREACHING

A feel for justice, freedom, equality, and well-being is not to be had by cognitive means alone. This is the difference between teaching *about* humane values, and teaching *for* them.

What is the teacher's proper role in values education? Talking with children *about* the importance of fairness, for example, is not the same as initiating activities or practising classroom or school procedures that provide the *direct experience* of fair as opposed to unfair feelings and behaviour.

And yet, to intervene so overtly may be more than a teacher feels he or she can justify in his or her role as an objective educator, determined not to preach.

The first thing to be said is that although objectivity can be achieved with effort and practice, value neutrality is not attainable, even if it were desirable. Classrooms and schools are steeped in human values, and these may not be very humane ones. It would be sad if children were to learn more at school about hypocrisy and power, than moral autonomy and the difference between bad and good. This might make for obedient subjects; it would not make for morally literate citizens.

The fact that neutrality is unattainable does not, however, mean that teachers have, or should have, a licence to try and indoctrinate their students with their preferred values.

(The word 'try' is used because students, at least older students, usually have a good idea of what their teachers believe, make allowances for it, and do not necessarily see it as a problem. Students spend as much, if not more time studying teachers, as teachers spend studying them; and it may be fair comment to say that teachers who try to convert their pupils to a particular point of view are open to the charge not only of indoctrination but also, in a society like ours that is so saturated with competing information, of wasting students' time.)

Given all the above, how *should* a teacher best proceed? Since values are taught regardless, whether effectively or not, they might as well be 'good' rather than 'bad' ones. This is something teachers, administrators, parents and children can all agree upon. But what is 'good' and 'bad'? What is 'right' and 'wrong' in this regard? There will be active disagreement about any comprehensive answer, no matter how much values discussion and clarification goes on, since in pluralist societies like our own, different people hold and express different opinions and beliefs. That is important in itself.

However, there is also active global agreement, and has been for nearly forty years, over a list of basic standards applicable to all—namely, the *Universal declaration of human rights*. A teacher who works from this list, its core values, and the feelings that inform those values, cannot fairly be accused of political indoctrination.

The doctrine of human rights and responsibilities is a multi-coloured umbrella that teachers can erect over the whole range of value debates. It provides a comprehensive set of principles, that cover every important issue area in a concrete way, that is not only affirmative but also universally endorsed. It was the first attempt in secular terms to articulate the basic entitlements of each and every human being, regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin or disability, and is part of an extraordinary experiment in civilising humankind. It deserves the widest pedagogic respect. It has made it possible, for the first time, to teach for humane values 'objectively'.

The second important factor has to do with how you teach. If, irrespective of course content, you teach in such a way as to foster the human dignity of all those in your classroom, then children will learn to value themselves and to respect others simply because *you* do. At its simplest, this means avoiding situations of structural hypocrisy, where what you do is at odds with what you say: 'Today we are going to talk about freedom of expression; be quiet in the back row', for example.

There is much more to it than this however. Schools may be highly hierarchic and autocratic. They may mirror to some extent the societies in which they sit. And yet the human rights doctrine is profoundly egalitarian. If the values and feelings that sustain it are to reach the students in an effective fashion, then ways have to be found to foster the active participation of all concerned. Involving parents, grandparents, school personnel and the students themselves from the very beginning, will allay many misplaced fears, allow you the opportunity to explain what is being done, and win the help of everybody concerned in planning what to do, how to do it, and why. Letters home, school meetings, the negotiation of classroom rules and responsibilities, considering the whole school and its curriculum in the light of what is to happen, are long-tested, democratic, and highly successful ways to begin. They also allow you to reach through the classroom out into the community in ways that can be highly beneficial to both. And they are *open* ways, that do not provide set answers, nor pre-empt change.

*Topic 7:*

*Afterthoughts:  
Where do we go from here?*

*To know is nothing at all;  
to imagine is everything.*

*Anatole France*

*Education is a ladder.*

*Manuelito of the Navahos*

## *Objectives:*

1. To discuss the challenges which lie ahead in the field of human rights education
2. To formulate a plan of action for the implementation of human rights education

The purpose of this final section is not to provide cut-and-dried answers to complex questions. Answers must be tried out as part of the educational process. This will no doubt give rise to further questions and challenges, the flow of which may seem unending. The purpose rather, is to spark off a rich debate.

Certain elements of consensus can be achieved across cultures and national boundaries. For the sake of discussion, let us posit the following contentions:

- What seems essential is that human rights should be universally regarded not only as an ideal attainment but also as a counterweight to the abuse of power by any state, regardless of its economic, social or political nature.
- Human rights are not based on certainties or immutable facts. That is what gives them their strength, their dynamism and their capacity for renewal.
- The daily practice of human rights calls for a great deal of caution and vigilance, as well as conviction and commitment.
- The seeds of human rights consciousness must be sown across broad segments of society and planted with careful attention among youth.
- The formal education sector provides fertile ground for human rights education to occur.

In order to prepare the groundwork, human rights institutions must:

- train the trainers
- assure means to provide pre-service and in-service training to educators
- create appropriate materials and revise existing materials
- innovate with new methods
- develop mechanisms for evaluation
- network and share experience

*Over the bleached bone and jumbled residue of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words: "Too late"... We still have a choice today: non-violent coexistence or violent coannihilation. This may well be mankind's last chance to choose between chaos and community.*

*Martin Luther King*

## *Points to Ponder*

1. What are the major challenges which lie ahead in the field of human rights education? How can they be addressed?
2. What are the major obstacles? What are the major strengths and how can they be incorporated?
3. What are the steps to take in a plan of action to implement human rights education?

# *Notes*



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