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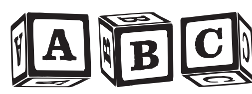

Teaching Human Rights

Practical activities for primary and secondary schools

United Nations
New York and
Geneva, 2004

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Foreword

ABC: Teaching Human Rights - Practical activities for primary and secondary schools talks about us as human beings. It talks about the process of teaching and learning the significance of the inherent "dignity and worth of the human person" which is the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, preamble). And it talks about the rights that belong to us all.

These are not just lessons for the classroom but lessons for life – of immediate relevance to our daily life and experience. In this sense, human rights education means not only teaching and learning *about* human rights, but also *for* human rights: its fundamental role is to empower individuals to defend their own rights and those of others. This empowerment constitutes an important investment for the future, aimed at achieving a just society in which all human rights of all persons are valued and respected.

This booklet is a practical contribution by my Office to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), during which Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, professional associations, all sectors of civil society and individuals have been especially encouraged to establish partnerships and to concentrate efforts for human rights education. The Decade provides us with a global common framework in which we can work together; indeed, the realization of human rights is our common responsibility, and its achievement is entirely dependent on the contribution that each and everyone will be willing to make. I hope that this booklet and other initiatives based on it will lead many individuals who work as teachers and educators around the world to be positive agents of change.

I wish to extend thanks to the individuals and organizations who supported my Office in the preparation of this booklet, in particular Ralph Pettman, who developed the first 1989 edition; Nancy Flowers, who worked on the revision and updating of that edition; and Margot Brown, Felisa Tibbitts and the UNESCO Division for the Promotion of Quality Education, who provided useful comments and suggestions for improvement.

Sergio Vieira de Mello
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
March 2003

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

Using *ABC: Teaching Human Rights*

ABC: Teaching Human Rights aims to serve as a user-friendly tool for human rights education and a multi-coloured umbrella covering a number of basic human rights areas. It offers practical advice to teachers and other educators who want to foster human rights awareness and action among primary and secondary school children, including suggestions for developing learning activities. It is not meant to place an extra burden on an already overloaded curriculum but to assist in infusing human rights issues into subjects already taught in schools.

There has been much research into how children and young people develop judgements as they grow. Not every class member may be able to grasp fully every human rights principle: pressing students to understand right from the beginning may pre-empt the honest expression of what they think or feel and may even halt further progress. This booklet assumes that all human beings benefit from the chance to explore rights issues, and that by the age of ten years or so, students given such a chance have a capacity for lively and profound reflection far beyond that usually expected. The suggested activities require few extra materials. Instead they call on the richest resource all teachers have to work with – their students and their experiences in everyday life.

Chapter One lays out principal human rights concepts and the fundamentals of human rights education. It reviews basic content and methodologies and elaborates on participatory techniques.

Chapter Two is intended for primary school teachers, offering suggestions for nurturing younger children's sense of their own worth and that of others through materials that evoke the human rights principles of human dignity and equality.

Chapter Three contains activities for upper primary and secondary school students that are of a more sophisticated nature and deal with current issues.

The activities in **Chapter Two** and **Chapter Three** are intended to give students a more profound awareness and understanding of human rights issues around the world and in their own classroom and community. They aim at stimulating independent thinking and research and building skills for active citizenship in a democracy. It is also important for students to enjoy the activities. It can be better to abandon or interrupt an activity if students put up too much resistance.

Each activity is followed by a reference to articles of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, two United Nations instruments that are introduced in **Chapter One** and reproduced respectively in **Annex 1** and **Annex 2**. The references aim at highlighting the provisions that served as a source of inspiration for each activity; however, the activities may not necessarily reflect the full scope and extent of the rights contained in the above-mentioned instruments, as recognized by international law. **Annex 3** contains a brief introduction to the terminology used in this body of law.

ABC: Teaching Human Rights is one of the many resources available worldwide for furthering human rights education with schoolchildren. It can be a starting point for further research and study on the subject with a view to developing culturally appropriate materials at all teaching levels, and can be used in conjunction with or supplemented by other materials developed by local actors (governmental agencies, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations and other civil society entities), to which teachers and users in general may also turn for assistance and support.

A selection of other classroom resources produced at the international and regional levels is included in **Annex 5**; other materials, including various documents mentioned in the text, can also be obtained from, inter alia, the organizations mentioned in **Annex 4** and their local offices.

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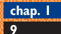
Chapter One

Fundamentals of Human Rights Education

Human rights may be generally defined as those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings. Human rights and fundamental freedoms allow us to develop fully and use our human qualities, our intelligence, our talents and our conscience and to satisfy our spiritual and other needs. They are based on humankind's increasing demand for a life in which the inherent dignity and worth of each human being are accorded respect and protection. Their denial is not only an individual and personal tragedy but also creates conditions of social and political unrest, sowing the seeds of violence and conflict within and between societies and nations.



The development of the human rights framework

The history of human rights has been shaped by all major world events and by the struggle for dignity, freedom and equality everywhere. Yet it was only with the establishment of the United Nations that human rights finally achieved formal, universal recognition.

The turmoil and atrocities of the Second World War and the growing struggle of colonial nations for independence prompted the countries of the world to create a forum to deal with some of the war's consequences and, in particular, to prevent the recurrence of such appalling events. This forum was the United Nations.

When the United Nations was founded in 1945, it reaffirmed the faith in human rights of all the peoples taking part. Human rights were cited in the founding Charter as central to their concerns and have remained so ever since.

One of the first major achievements of the newly formed United Nations was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR),[1] adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948. This powerful instrument continues to exert an enormous impact on people's lives all over the world. It was the first time in history that a document considered to have universal value was adopted by an international organization. It was also the first time that human rights and fundamental freedoms were set forth in such detail.

There was broad-based international support for the Declaration when it was adopted. Although the fifty-eight Member States that constituted the United Nations at that time varied in terms of their ideology, political system, religious and cultural background, and patterns of socio-economic development, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights represented a common statement of shared goals and aspirations – a vision of the world as the international community would like it to be.

The Declaration recognizes that the "inherent dignity … of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" and is linked to the recogni-

[1] For the full text and simplified version of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, see annex 1.

tion of the fundamental rights to which every human being aspires, namely the right to life, liberty and security of person; the right to an adequate standard of living; the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution; the right to own property; the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the right to education; the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and the right to freedom from torture and degrading treatment, among others. These are inherent rights to be enjoyed by all inhabitants of the global village (women, men, children and all groups in society, whether disadvantaged or not) and not "gifts" to be withdrawn, withheld or granted at someone's whim or will.

Eleanor Roosevelt, who chaired the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in its early years, emphasized both the universality of these rights and the responsibility they entail when she asked:

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.[2]

[2] Eleanor Roosevelt, "In Our Hands" (1958 speech delivered on the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998, Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, called it "one of the great aspirational documents of our human history". It has served as the model for many national constitutions and has truly become the most universal of all instruments, having been translated into more languages than any other.[3]

The Declaration has inspired a large number of subsequent human rights instruments, which together constitute the international law of human rights.[4] These instruments include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), treaties that are legally binding on the States that are parties to them. The Universal Declaration and the two Covenants constitute the International Bill of Human Rights.

The rights contained in the Declaration and the two Covenants have been further elaborated in other treaties such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), which declares dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred as being punishable by law, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), prescribing measures to be taken to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life, education, employment, health, marriage and the family.

Of particular importance to anyone involved with schools is the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[5] which lays down guarantees of the child's human rights. Adopted by the General Assembly in 1989, the Convention has been ratified by more countries than any other human rights treaty. In addition to guaranteeing children protection from harm and abuse and making special provision for their survival and welfare through, for example, health care, education and family life, it

[3] For more information on the Universal Declaration, including the text of the UDHR in more than 330 languages and dialects, see http://www.ohchr.org or contact the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

[4] For a brief introduction to international human rights law terminology, including some words used in this chapter such as "treaty", "convention", "protocol" and "ratification", see annex 3. For a full overview of international human rights instruments, see http://www.ohchr.org or contact the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

[5] For the full text and summarized version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, see annex 2.

Chart of the Principal United Nations Human Rights Instruments

International Bill of Human Rights Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948				
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966		International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966		
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

accords them the right to participate in society and in decision-making that concerns them. Two Protocols to the Convention have recently been adopted, the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000).

Promoting human rights

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights have become central to the work of the United Nations. Emphasizing the universality of human rights, Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated on the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration that "Human rights is foreign to no country and native to all nations" and that "without human rights no peace or prosperity will ever last".

Within the United Nations system, human rights are furthered by a myriad of different mechanisms and procedures: by working groups and committees; by reports, studies and statements; by conferences, plans and programmes; by decades for action; by research and training; by voluntary and trust funds; by assistance of many kinds at the global, regional and local levels; by specific measures taken; by

investigations conducted; and by the many procedures devised to promote and protect human rights.

Action to build a culture of human rights is also supported by United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and funds such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and by relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Other international, regional and national bodies, both governmental and non-governmental, are also working to promote human rights.

At the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna, Austria, in 1993, 171 countries reiterated the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, and reaffirmed their commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They adopted the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which provides the new "framework of planning, dialogue and cooperation" to facilitate the adoption of a holistic approach to promoting human rights and to involve actors at the local, national and international levels.

The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)

Not least of these activities to promote human rights is human rights education. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration, the General Assembly has called on Member States and all segments of society to disseminate this fundamental document and educate people about its content. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights also reaffirmed the importance of education, training and public information.

In response to the appeal by the World Conference, the General Assembly, in 1994, proclaimed the period 1995 to 2004 the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. The Assembly affirmed that "human rights education should involve more than the provision of information and should constitute a comprehensive life-long process by which people at all levels in development and in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies".

The Plan of Action for the Decade provides a definition of the concept of human rights education as agreed by the international community, i.e. based on the provisions of international human rights instruments.[6] In accordance with those provisions, human rights education may be defined as "training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes and directed to:

(a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;

(c) The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups;

[6] Including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 26.2), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 13.1), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 29.1) and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (sect. D, paras. 78 82).

(d) The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society;
(e) The furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."[7]

The Decade's Plan of Action provides a strategy for furthering human rights education through the assessment of needs and the formulation of effective strategies; the building and strengthening of programmes and capacities at the international, regional, national and local levels; the coordinated development of materials; the strengthening of the role of the mass media; and the global dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The process of human rights education in schools

A sustainable (in the long term), comprehensive and effective national strategy for infusing human rights education into educational systems may include various courses of action, such as:

- The incorporation of human rights education in national legislation regulating education in schools;
- The revision of curricula and textbooks;
- Preservice and inservice training for teachers to include training on human rights and human rights education methodologies;
- The organization of extracurricular activities, both based on schools and reaching out to the family and the community;
- The development of educational materials;
- The establishment of support networks of teachers and other professionals (from human rights groups, teachers' unions, non-governmental organizations or professional associations) and so on.

The concrete way in which this process takes place in each country depends on local educational systems which differ widely, not least in the degree of discretion teachers may exercise in setting their own teaching goals and meeting

[7] See United Nations document A/51/506/Add.1, appendix, para. 2 – available at http://www.ohchr.org or by contacting the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Familiarization of children with human rights concepts - A step-by-step approach

Levels	Goals	Key concepts	Practices	Specific human rights problems	Human rights standards, systems and instruments
Early childhood					
Pre-school and lower primary school Ages 3-7	• Respect for self • Respect for parents and teachers • Respect for others	• Self • Community • Personal responsibility	• Duty • Fairness • Self-expression/listening • Cooperation/sharing • Small group work • Individual work • Understanding cause/effect • Empathy • Democracy • Conflict resolution	• Racism • Sexism • Unfairness • Hurting people (feelings, physically)	• Classroom rules • Family life • Community standards • Universal Declaration of Human Rights • Convention on the Rights of the Child
Later Childhood	All the above plus:				
Upper primary school Ages 8-11	• Social responsibility • Citizenship • Distinguishing wants from needs, from rights	• Individual rights • Group rights • Freedom • Equality • Justice • Rule of law • Government • Security	• Valuing diversity • Fairness • Distinguishing between fact and opinion • Performing school or community service • Civic participation	• Discrimination/ prejudice • Poverty/hunger • Injustice • Ethnocentrism • Egocentrism • Passivity	• History of human rights • Local, national legal systems • Local and national history in human rights terms • UNESCO, UNICEF • Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
Adolescence	All the above plus:				
Lower secondary school Ages 12-14	• Knowledge of specific human rights	• International law • World peace • World development • World political economy • World ecology	• Understanding other points of view • Citing evidence in support of ideas • Doing research / gathering information • Sharing information	• Ignorance • Apathy • Cynicism • Political repression • Colonialism/imperialism • Economic globalization • Environmental degradation	• United Nations Covenants • Elimination of racism • Elimination of sexism • United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees • Regional human rights conventions
Youth	All the above plus:				
Upper secondary school Ages 15-17	• Knowledge of human rights as universal standards • Integration of human rights into personal awareness and behaviour	• Moral inclusion/exclusion • Moral responsibility/ literacy	• Participation in civic organizations • Fulfilling civic responsibilities • Civic disobedience	• Genocide • Torture • War crimes etc.	• Geneva Conventions • Specialized conventions • Evolving human rights standards

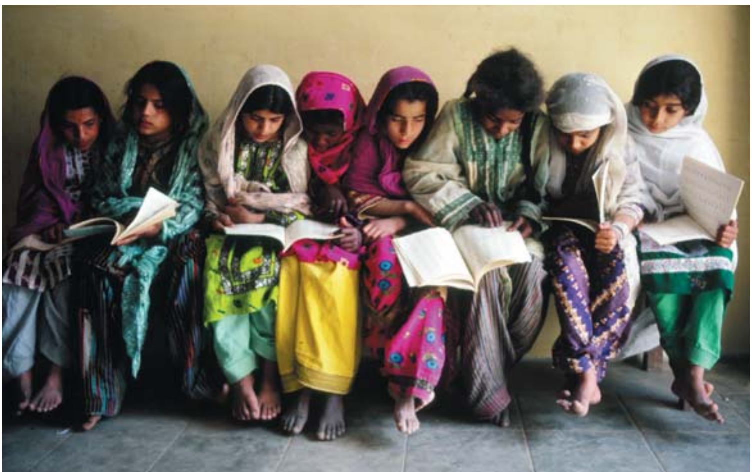
them. The teacher will always be the key person, however, in getting new initiatives to work. The teacher therefore carries a great responsibility for communication of the human rights message. Opportunities to do this may vary: human rights themes may be infused into existing school subjects, such as history, civics, literature, art, geography, languages and scientific subjects, or may have a specific course allocated to them; human rights education may also be pursued through less formal education arenas within and outside schools such as after-school activities, clubs and youth forums.

Ideally, a human rights culture should be built into the whole curriculum (yet in practice, particularly at secondary level, it is usually treated piecemeal, as part of the established curriculum in the social and economic sciences and the humanities).

In the classroom, human rights education should be developed with due attention to the developmental stage of children and their social and cultural contexts in order to make human rights principles meaningful to them. For example, human rights education for younger children could emphasize the development of self-esteem and empathy and a classroom culture supportive of human rights principles. Although young children are able to grasp the underlying principles of basic human rights instruments, the more complex content of human rights documents may be more appropriate to older learners with better developed capacities for concept development and analytical reasoning. The table on p. 17 reflects a matrix proposing the progressive introduction of children to human rights concepts depending on their age. The proposal is not meant to be prescriptive but only to provide an example, which was developed and discussed by human rights education practitioners gathered in Geneva in 1997.

Content for human rights education

The history of human rights tells a detailed story of efforts made to define the basic dignity and worth of the human being and his or her most fundamental entitlements. These efforts continue to this day. The teacher will want to include



an account of this history as an essential part of human rights teaching, and it can be made progressively more sophisticated as students mature. The fight for civil and political rights, the campaign to abolish slavery, the struggle for economic and social justice, the achievement of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two subsequent Covenants, and all the conventions and declarations that followed, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child – all these topics provide a basic legal and normative framework.

The core content of human rights education in schools is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These documents – which have received universal recognition, as explained above – provide principles and ideas with which to assess experience and build a school culture that values human rights. The rights they embody are universal, meaning that all human beings are entitled to them, on an equal basis; they are indivisible, meaning there is no hierarchy of rights, i.e. no right can be ranked as “non-essential” or “less important” than another. Instead human rights are interdependent, part of a complementary framework. For example, your right to participate in government is directly affected by your right to express yourself, to form associations, to get an education and even to obtain the

necessities of life. Each human right is necessary and each is interrelated to all others.

However, even taught with the greatest skill and care, documents and history alone cannot bring human rights to life in the classroom. Nor does working through the Universal Declaration or the Convention on the Rights of the Child, pointing out the rationale for each article, teach the meaning of these articles in people's lives. "Facts" and "fundamentals", even the best-selected ones, are not enough to build a culture of human rights. For these documents to have more than intellectual significance, students need to approach them from the perspective of their real-life experience and grapple with them in terms of their own understanding of justice, freedom and equity.

Teaching *about* and *for* human rights

Research has shown that some upper primary and secondary school students sometimes suffer from a lack of confidence that limits their ability to socialize with others. It is difficult to care about someone else's rights when you do not expect to have any yourself. Where this is the case, teaching for human rights could require going back to the beginning and teaching confidence and tolerance first, as proposed in Chapter Two of this booklet. The trust exercises, in the same chapter, can be used with any group and help to establish a good classroom climate, which is crucial for human rights education. These activities can be repeated (with suitable variations) to settle students into activities that require group cooperation. They can also foster the human capacity for sympathy, which is fragile and contingent but nonetheless real, and confirm the fact that no person is more of a human being than another and no person is less.

Already implicit above is the idea – central to this booklet – that teaching *about* human rights is not enough. The teacher will want to begin, and never to finish, teaching *for* human rights. For this reason the largest part of this text consists of activities. These create opportunities for students and teachers first to examine the basic elements that make up human rights – life, justice, freedom, equality and the destructive character of deprivation, suffering and pain – and then to use them to work out what they truly think and feel about a wide range of real-world issues.

The focus of human rights education is not just outward on external issues and events but also inward on personal values, attitudes and behaviour. To affect behaviour and inspire a sense of responsibility for human rights, human rights education uses participatory methodologies that emphasize independent research, analysis and critical thinking.

Rights and responsibilities

For the basic principles of a human rights culture to survive, people must continue to see a point in defending them: "I have a right to this. It is not just what I want, or need. It is my right. There is a responsibility to be met." But rights stand only by the reasons given for them and the reasons must be good ones. Unless people have the chance to work out such reasons for themselves – and where better than at school? – they will not claim their rights when they are withheld or taken away, or feel responsibility to defend the rights of others. We have to see for ourselves why rights are so important, for this in turn fosters responsibility.

It is, of course, possible to proceed the other way around: to teach for human rights in terms of responsibilities and obligations first. But again, teachers will want to do more than tell students what they ought to be doing. To bring these ideas alive, they will create opportunities for students to truly understand and accept such social responsibilities. Teachers and students will then have the principles and skills required to resolve the inevitable conflicts of responsibilities, obligations or rights when they arise.

Because these points of conflict can also provide useful insights, they should be welcomed. They make the teaching of human rights dynamic and relevant. Conflict offers the sort of learning opportunities that encourage students to face contrasts creatively, without fear, and to seek their own ways of resolving them.

Teaching and preaching: action speaks louder than words

The fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child have virtual global validity and applicability is very important for teachers. By promoting universal human rights standards, the teacher can honestly say that he or she is not preaching. Teachers have a second challenge, however: to teach in such a way as to respect human rights in the classroom and the school environment itself. For learning to have practical benefit, students need not only to learn about human rights but to learn in an environment that models them.

This means avoiding any hypocrisy. At its simplest, hypocrisy refers to situations where what a teacher is teaching is clearly at odds with how he or she is teaching it. For example: "Today we are going to talk about freedom of expression – shut up in the back row!" In such circumstances, students will learn mostly about power, and considerably less about human rights. As students spend a good deal of time studying teachers and can develop a good understanding of teachers' beliefs, a teacher who behaves unjustly or abusively will have little positive effect. Often, because of a desire to please, students may try to mirror a teacher's personal views without thinking for themselves. This may be a reason, at the beginning at least, for teachers not to express their own ideas. At its most complex, hypocrisy raises profound questions about how to protect and promote the human dignity of both teachers and students in a classroom, in a school and within society at large.

The "human rights climate" within schools and classrooms should rest on reciprocal respect between all the actors involved. Accordingly, the way in which decision-making processes take place, methods for resolving conflicts and administering discipline, and the relationship within and among all actors constitute key contributing factors.

Ultimately teachers need to explore ways to involve not only students, school administrators, education authorities and parents in human rights education but also the whole community. In this way teaching for human rights can reach from the classroom into the community to the benefit of both. All concerned will be able to discuss universal values and their relation to reality and to recognize that schools can be part of the solution to basic human rights problems.

As far as the students are concerned, negotiating a set of classroom rules and responsibilities is a long-tested and most effective way to begin (see the activity *Creating classroom rules* in Chapter Two). Teaching practices that are compatible

with basic human rights provide a consistent model. In this way a sports or mathematics teacher, for example, can also teach for human rights.

Dealing with difficult issues

Sometimes controversial and sensitive subjects come up when students begin to examine human rights. Teachers need to remain constantly alert to student discomfort and potential disagreement. Teachers should acknowledge that human rights necessarily involve conflicts of values and that students will benefit from understanding these conflicts and seeking to resolve them.

Sometimes teachers meet resistance to human rights education on the ground that it imposes non-native principles that contradict and threaten local values and customs. Teachers concerned about resistance from administrators should meet with them in advance, share goals and plans for the class, and explain about the United Nations human rights framework and related educational initiatives (such as the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education). Encourage administrators to visit a class – they may themselves benefit from human rights education!

Pedagogical techniques for human rights education

The techniques suggested below and their application in the activities offered in Chapters Two and Three illustrate how teachers can engage students' empathy and moral imagination, challenge their assumptions and integrate concepts like human dignity and equality into their everyday experience of people, power and responsibility. These techniques have proved especially appropriate for human rights education because they encourage critical thinking, both cognitive and affective learning, respect for differences of experience and opinion, and active engagement of all participants in ongoing learning.

A Brainstorming

This technique can be used to seek solutions to problems that are both theoretical and practical. It requires a problem to be analysed and then solutions to be developed. Brainstorming encourages a high degree of participation, and it stimulates those involved to maximum creativity.

Following presentation of a problem, all ideas in response to it are recorded on a board or chart paper. All responses are recorded; no explanations are required and no suggestions are judged or rejected at this stage. The teacher then categorizes and analyses the responses, at which stage some are combined, adapted or rejected. Finally the group makes recommendations and takes decisions on the problem.

Examples: "Message in a bottle" (p. 50); "Words that wound" (p. 64); "Identifying some 'minority groups'" (p. 73); "Housing" (p. 86); "Energy" (p. 88).

B Case studies

Students in small groups work with real or fictional cases that require them to apply human rights standards. Case studies should be based on credible and realistic scenarios that focus on two or three main issues. The scenario for a study can be

presented to students for consideration in its entirety or "fed" to them sequentially as a developing situation (the "evolving hypothetical") to which they must respond. This method encourages analysis, problem-solving and planning skills, as well as cooperation and team building. Case studies can be used to set up debates, discussion or further research.

Examples: "A journalist has disappeared!" (p. 51); "Packing your suitcase" (p. 54); "When is 'old enough'?" (p. 65).

Creative expression

The arts can help to make concepts more concrete, personalize abstractions and affect attitudes by involving emotional as well as intellectual responses to human rights. Techniques may include stories and poetry, graphic arts, sculpture, drama, song and dance. Teachers do not need to be artists themselves but to set engaging tasks and provide a way for students to share their creations.

Examples: "A 'Who am I?' book" (p. 35); "The lifeline" (p. 36); "Me on the wall/ground" (p. 36); "Letters and friends" (p. 39); "Wants and needs" (p. 45); "What does a child need?" (p. 46); "Promoting children's rights" (p. 46); "They're all alike" (p. 70).

Discussion

Many techniques exist for stimulating meaningful discussion in pairs, small groups or the whole class. To create an environment of trust and respect, students might develop their own "rules for discussion".

Discussions can be structured in a variety of effective ways. Some topics are appropriate to a formal debate, panel or "*Fish Bowl*" format (i.e. a small group discusses while the rest of the class listens and later makes comments and ask questions).

Other topics are better suited to a "*Talking Circle*" (i.e. students sit in two circles, one facing outward and the other inward. They discuss with the person sitting opposite; after a period the teachers asks everyone in the inside circle to move one place to the right and discuss the same topic with a new person). Personal or emotional topics are best discussed in pairs or small groups.

To engage the whole class in a topic, the teacher might use techniques like a "*Talk Around*" (i.e. the teacher asks an open-ended question like "What does dignity mean to you?" or "I feel happy when ..." and each student responds in turn).

A lively method of representing discussion graphically is the "*Discussion Web*". Students sit in a discussion circle and speak one at a time. As they do, they pass a ball of yarn along, letting it unwind in the process. Each person keeps hold of the string whenever it passes through her or his hands. Eventually the group is linked by a web of string, clearly showing the pattern of communication that has gone on within it.

Examples: "A circle for talking" (p. 35); "Me and my senses" (p. 37); "Wishingcircle" (p. 37); "Planning for a new country" (p. 43); "Being a human being" (p. 50); "Beginnings and endings" (p. 51); "Equality before the law" (p. 59); "The right to learn your rights" (p. 82).

Field trips/Community visits

Students benefit from the extension of school into the community, learning from places where human rights issues develop (e.g. courts, prisons, international borders) or where people work to defend rights or relieve victims (e.g. non-profit organizations, food or clothing banks, free clinics).

The purpose of the visit should be explained in advance, and students should be instructed to pay critical attention and to record their observations for a subsequent discussion or written reflection following the visit.

Examples: "Councils and courts" (p. 57); "Who is not in our school?" (p. 80); "Food" (p. 84); "Health" (p. 88).

Interviews

Interviews provide direct learning and personalize issues and history. Those interviewed might be family and community members, activists, leaders or eye-witnesses to human rights

events. Such oral histories can contribute to documenting and understanding human right issues in the home community.

Examples: "Councils and courts" (p. 57); "Once upon a time" (p. 68); "Speakers on disability" (p. 79); "Speakers from the business community" (p. 93)

Research projects

Human rights topics provide many opportunities for independent investigation. This may be formal research using library or Internet facilities or informational research drawing on interviews, opinion surveys, media observations and other techniques of data gathering. Whether individual or group projects, research develops skills for independent thinking and data analysis and deepens understanding of the complexity of human rights issues.

Examples: "Packing your suitcase" (p. 54); "Child soldiers" (p. 54); "Humanitarian law" (p. 55); "Councils and courts" (p. 57); "An International Criminal Court" (p. 61); "Identifying some 'minority groups'" (p. 73); "Food" (p. 84); "Work" (p. 87); "Energy" (p. 88).

Role-plays/Simulations

A role-play is like a little drama played out before the class. It is largely improvised and may be done as a story (with a narrator and key characters) or as a situation (where the key characters interact, making up dialogue on the spot - perhaps with the help of the teacher and the rest of the class). Role-plays have particular value for sensitizing students to the feelings and perspectives of other groups and to the importance of certain issues.

Role-plays work best when kept short. Allow enough time for discussion afterwards: it is crucial for children to be able to express themselves about feelings, fears or understandings after such activities, to maximize possible benefits and dissipate negative feelings, if any. Teachers may need to discourage students from becoming their role. Participants should be able to step back from what they are doing, to comment perhaps, or to ask questions. Other members of the class should be able to comment and question too, perhaps even joining in the role-play.

Variations on role-plays include mock trials, imaginary interviews, simulation games, hearings and tribunals. These usually have more structure, last longer and require more preparation of both teachers and students.

Examples: "My puppet family" (p. 38); "Summit" (p. 53); "Councils and courts" (p. 57); "Sorts of courts" (p. 59); "Working life" (p. 90); "A model United Nations simulation" (p. 95).

Visual aids

Learning can be enhanced by the use of blackboards, overhead transparencies, posters, displayed objects, flip charts, photographs, slides, videos and films. As a general rule, information produced on transparencies and charts should be brief and concise, and in outline or list form. If more text is required, use hand-outs. However, visual aids can be overused and should never substitute for engaged discussion and direct student participation.

Evaluation

Information content and levels of understanding of the students can be tested in standard ways. However, assessing attitudes and attitude change is much harder because of the subjective nature of the judgements involved. Open-ended questionnaires given at repeated intervals are the simplest, but the impressions they provide are fleeting at best.

It is equally difficult to evaluate whether the human rights climate of the school community has improved. However, if indicators for success are carefully defined and evaluation is done on a regular basis, changes in the school environment can be monitored and responded to.

Engaging students in drawing up checklists to assess individual, classroom and school community practices in human rights terms can be an important learning activity (see "Taking the Human Rights Temperature of Your School", p. 97).

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