



HRE Workshop Agenda
August 2, 2014, 9a.m.-12p.m.
HRW Conference Room
11500 West Olympic Blvd., #540
Los Angeles, CA 90064
310-477-5540



Goals:

1. Create a local HRE collaborative community to share HR resources, curricula, and methods, and create opportunities to observe HRE best practices in all subject areas.
2. Gain ideas and resources to infuse HRE into your classroom and school community.

Materials:

1. UDHR and CRC Passports
2. [HRW World Report 2014](#)
3. [STF Annual Report](#)
4. [NCSS HRE Endorsement](#)
5. HRE Resources by Subject
6. [Video](#) of Nancy Flowers' Presentation
7. ["Be The Change"](#) Music Video
8. Participants' Bios

Agenda Items/Discussion Points:

Welcome, Introductions, Workshop Goals. (Pam Bruns)

This is the beginning of a collaborative effort to infuse HRE across the curriculum. We will share in person, online and on the phone. We want to find out what resources you need as well as document what you've done so that we can share with an ever-growing HRE community.

Why We Must Have HRE. (Students Linda Gordon and Natalie Geismar)

Linda Gordon: As co-president of Santa Monica High School STF, I planned and executed presentations, events and even teacher workshops to get HRE into my school. When talking about why we need HRE in our classes, I bring up the impact the STF Human Rights Mobile Libraries in Darfuri refugee camps in Chad have on students in the camps. After the Mobile Libraries launched, there was a meeting in a camp where UN officials and camp residents discussed cutting funding for education. At the meeting, a boy stood up, said he had learned about his rights (in the mobile libraries) and demanded his human right to education be protected.

HRE is essential in providing a strong foundation of morals and beliefs, as well as a place where students can participate in an advocacy network to protect human rights. Through HRE students become global citizens and learn human rights are universal.

The experiences I've had working in human rights have changed my life. It's given me a course to follow. There are thousands of students who didn't have access to programs like STF and they are still in the dark. There could be many so more young people that go on to make great change.

Natalie Geismar – Many students are in the dark about human rights. At a recent human rights advocacy course at Duke, I helped create a fictional organization called HRE50, aimed at getting HRE into every American school. During our final presentation, we asked the 160 program

participants if anyone had taken a class on or been exposed to human rights. Not a single hand went up. It makes me sad because I wasn't surprised or expecting to see anyone raise their hand.

Through my participation in programs like STF, I have become more accepting of the world around me. I've found within myself a voice that can truly enact change. HRE should be incorporated into all curricula. If you're unaware of the world, how can you ever take action? Denying kids a human rights education is denying them access to the world. I'm frustrated with the way things are but I'm hopeful for the way things can be. I don't think it'll take another genocide or terrible war in the US to make HRE a standard, but it'll take people like you.

What is HRE? (Special Guest: Nancy Flowers)

Watch [video of Nancy Flowers' presentation](#)

HRE can be organized into three categories:

1. Education *about* human rights: content, what you teach
2. Education *in* human rights: methodology, how you teach
3. Education *for* human rights: goals, why you teach

Content/What you teach:

- Unlike many values-based lenses that are largely abstractions, HRE has a core of norms and standards that are codified in international law: the **human rights framework**.
- The foundation stone is the [UDHR](#): A major accomplishment of the 20th Century
 - “Universal” because it transcends the man-appropriated boundaries of a state.
 - “Declaration” is the weakest form of an agreement, not legally binding.
- The evolving human rights framework is based on the UDHR foundation
 - Examples of conventions, legally binding international law:
 - [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (1966) – supported by Western countries because it focused more on individual rights.
 - [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (1966) – Former Soviet states focused more on the collective. The US still hasn't ratified this covenant.
 - Example: Under this covenant, health care is a human right. As we've seen with the fight around Obamacare, the US government does not agree.
 - [Vienna Declaration](#) (1993) – the UN decided the world should not be divided on social, economic, civil and political rights. Human rights are **indivisible, interdependent and interconnected**.
 - Can you name inhumane acts?: [genocide](#), [slavery](#), [torture](#), etc.
 - Can you name vulnerable populations?: [refugees](#), [children](#), [women](#), [disabled](#), [minority](#), [prisoners](#), [LGBT](#), etc.
 - These conventions didn't just happen; they evolved because the people they focus on stood up and asked the UN for help with the leadership of groups like HRW and Amnesty International.

Methodology/How you teach:

As teachers, you know when a classroom meets certain standards. You can't teach human rights without teaching in an environment that respects students, teachers and school community. “How you teach is also what you teach.”

- This is not an abuse model but recognition of rights as a way to live together. There is respect for the human right of everyone in the community, learners, teachers, parents.
- Recommended:
- [Taking the Human Rights Temperature of Your School](#)
- [Human Rights Friendly Schools](#) – Amnesty International=

Goals/Why you teach: Both aspirational AND practical

- Suggested reading: Paolo Freire's "[Pedagogy of the Oppressed](#)."
 - An educator is "anyone who raises awareness about an issue and precipitates change through verbal discussion or artistic discourse."
 - Handout: [7 Steps for Creating a Socially Conscious Global Community](#)
 - Any individual can engage in these seven steps and thus, become an educator.
 - Every time an individual goes through these seven steps, s/he becomes more empowered as an educator.
 - Every time an educator inspires someone else to start his own 7-step transformation, then that educator is redistributing his power.
 - The redistribution of power to other individuals starts a cycle in which more individuals become involved and are inspired to pass on what they have learned.
 - When an individual redistributes power by educating others, s/he contributes to the creation of a socially conscious community sensitive to human rights.

Goals of HRE for our students and our schools

- Three things to give to your students:
 - Human rights values –
 - Values not linked to culture, nation, faith or ideology; but are universal.
 - Values are evolving, not written in stone or delivered by the divine.
 - They may contradict home values but are generally recognized.
 - Confidence – Human rights goes beyond the sense of right or wrong.
 - Faith – Students have to believe in them. They have to be open to question.
- Students become concerned, involved citizens of the world and of their home communities, not just by-standers. They use critical thinking to analyze problems.
 - Transformation – not everyone will be an activist but at least they know there is a possibility to look at things, analyze and make change.
- Suggestion: Give a copy of the UDHR to every graduate.

Q and A with Nancy Flowers.

Q: Has the discourse related to international covenants boiled down to economic systems and the values that go with them? Is this why there isn't really any movement?

- A: It depends on with who this discourse is. Almost every religious denomination in the US has endorsed the children's convention but the political climate isn't there.

Q: How do you deal with the idea that human rights threaten the established power structure and order?

- A: The teacher must become a learner and yield the power of the teacher. Yes there is some resistance, but it depends on how vested it is in the context of the people. So many of the values in the UDHR are universal about dignity, equality, and nondiscrimination. The practice is where it gets hard, not the idea. You have to work these things out on your own, as a school, as a community.

Q: How do we deal with human rights values when they are directly at odds with home values?

- A: You have to work it out on an individual level depending on the level of sophistication and age of the student. We're not saying parents are wrong but that there are different sets of values to acknowledge. Start with awareness and that there is more than one way to think about anything.

Q: Are there any examples you can share with us that are the moments where it feels like a critical point of dialogue and reflection for transformation based on Freire's theory?

- A: During a series of seminars for high school principals in Palestine the discussion of

corporal punishment came up. While female principals were ready to end corporal punishment, the male educators said students don't understand anything but violence so they can't keep order if they don't use violence. After a debate, they listened to each other and came up with a solution.

- Scott – The discipline of the school should respect the dignity of all and not just the individual child. Respecting only the individual child can take all the power away from the people who are responsible for the safety of everyone.
- Nancy N – Another example can be STF's effort to include HRE classes in the Hart District in Santa Clarita Valley. It is a conservative area and the idea of the UN is not something most people politically support. Through a number of meetings and the students bringing STF issues to campus, teachers began asking these same questions. There have been a number of schools with intense racial issues, lawsuits, etc. and now they are going beyond empowering students with rights to focus on what it means to be a "Hart District Student" in terms of values. They are seeing the values of the UDHR go beyond the political party lines and beyond the initial feeling of threat. Now it's about educating teachers and students about their rights. They are doing a good job of opening that door to HRE by focusing on the values first and not being so concerned about how different they are from home values, but seeing them as universal. Now we're at the point where we need education of the teachers.

- Nancy F: The students who have a voice in these adult forums come informed. They know something and are not just being tossed about by the latest fad.

Q: How can I institutionalize this work so it's systemic as it goes through phases? I'm concerned about the obstacles when changing the schools' structure and culture, especially the potential gap between the aspirations and the reality of the school and what that means in terms of change. How do we do it so that even though the students are powerful, the work doesn't die with them or the interested administrator?

- A: Teachers didn't learn human rights in school, in preparation to be teachers, so they have to be taught. Teachers are accustomed to having the power and authority in the classroom. It's finding a way to blend these efforts.

Anecdote: While in Peru, I worked with middle and high school aged domestic child laborers. We went into the wealthy schools where 85-90% of the students had child laborers working in their homes. We asked the students who had heard the term human rights and every one of them knew what human rights were and could list the articles of the UDHR.

- Q: How did they make the psychological connection that the child laborers have these same human rights as the rich students? Was there a disconnect with home values?
 - A: We brought child laborers dressed in the same clothes as the students and they presented to the rich kids. The connection was made by seeing the laborers looking exactly like them and talking about how they lack the right to play and other basic rights the richer children enjoy.

Q: Are there models of best practices internationally?

- A: The Council of Europe has published [an online a list](#) of best practices from around the world. Latin America, namely Chile, Argentina and Costa Rica, have creative HRE. The Philippines has HRE in the national educational standards. Canada has good resources too.
- Jasmina – The Organization for Security and Incorporation in Europe did a lot of HRE in Bosnia that students start in kindergarten.

Q: The empathic education and empathic learning movement is growing. What are your views and how this fits with HRE.

- A: I left education before that movement got big so I can't speak too much on it. The one

thing that's different is HRE has a body of codified, international agreements and standards giving it teeth. There will be a difference in what each country can provide but there is a standard based.

Q: Do you know anywhere that assesses HRE standards?

- A: This is a great gap. There is so much not quantitative. There are graduate programs in HRE and hopefully someone can do a dissertation on it. If the methodology is to have awareness and sense of responsibility, you can assess what they feel is their responsibility.
 - Pam – Felisa Tibbitts (HREA) may have an assessment of a project in Ireland.
 - Zelda – Kids have a sense of the concept of rights and responsibility, at least on a personal level. One student was so stressed about finishing his homework he drew a line between understanding his homework to his future family's security to affording a coffin when he dies. This understanding goes back to the concept of rights as universal and goes deeper, finding ways to value each other in a smaller or larger community.
 - Jueun – rights/responsibility=1
 - Scott – if people understand they have a right to something, we should default to human responsibilities instead of just focusing on the individual rights.

Statement: Civil rights tell the government what it can't do and back the government off. Economic, social and cultural rights tell governments to provide for those who can't do it themselves. It's a different approach to what a government is for.

Statement: (Natalie) From a student perspective, I like the idea of teaching collective responsibility rather than just teaching rights and saying now it's your turn to act on them. You need a spectrum where students need to understand what their rights are and how they can be incorporated into daily life.

- Q: What about asking in what way are human rights being violated in our school or in LA?
 - A: It depends by school and individual. Students at my school could say there is no injustice and not take the time to dig, or they could be more perceptive and recognize they need to delve deeper into what's going on in their community. It's the tiny things you don't realize until you receive an HRE and you see there are still issues.
 - Linda – I always ask this question in the beginning of a presentation, "What are ways you think your rights are violated?" We had an incident where a student was trying to get into the bathroom when it was locked. He told the janitor he had a right to use the bathroom and I got called into the office to defend my HRE presentation. Students sometimes take information in a different way than the teachers wanted. We're talking about a change in power structure and it's built into the way a teacher presents HRE to the students. If the teacher is secure and talks about the rights and responsibilities of the teacher, that helps establish a balance of power with the students. You have to be prepared for the one student who is going to buck authority.

New Jersey Standards / Integration Guide and You (Special Skype Guest: Bill Fernekes)

This is an effort to include HRE in the New Jersey State Social Studies Standards. There is a lack of incentive, will, commitment and personnel to make this effort a state-wide discussion. We're working around the state's Department of Education and creating a guide on how to help teachers integrate HRE on a daily basis into the classroom with the help of HRE USA. We're using social studies as an entry point but they are applicable across curriculum and standards.

In NJ, there are three large scale strands for social studies education: Global Studies and World History, United States and the World, and Active Citizenship. A positive about the standards is that within the US history and the world history components, there is a "human rights and government" subtheme. Standards are divided into four subsets and human rights are included in

all of them. There is existing evidence of some commitment to human rights, which means there is an overt statement that it's important but we have to identify what's actually going on in the classroom. When you look at the component of the indicators you'll see the content. There are activities and topics that come up in post-World War II discussions, such as refugees, and Holocaust and genocide education. It's important that they are in there but it can become, "we talked about it and it's over, no study is necessary."

The design of the guide will be elementary, middle and high school model lessons that will be something we'll have classroom teachers create. They will be prepared, critiqued and shared with a national group of educators who will review the lessons and then field test in classrooms. Once completed, they will be included in the guide. There will be prep material, rationale and show state standards, common core, and literacy and C3 framework relationships. The resource guide will include print and electronic material, as well as a section on student activism. The guide will take 18 months to complete. We're developing the team of writers and it'll be eventually available on the HRE USA website as PDF and Word document.

Q and A with Bill Fernekes:

Q: What will be involved in field-testing?

- A: The authors will test in the classrooms and assessment will occur as follow up. Example: ESL lesson that examines a simplified version of the UDHR and looks at the degree to which the students understand their rights.

Q: How do you go about assessing where you're at as a community and where do you go with it? How do you do it within each department?

- A: "[Taking the HR Temperature of Your School](#)" is extremely effective. Students assess the degree to which the rights listed in the UDHR are realized. The Council of Europe has developed a guidebook to assessing the degree that schools have democratic governance. These are helpful to set a baseline. There are a couple issues when assessing by department: decide whether HRE should be discipline specific or done in discipline specific ways along with a broader initiative done in systematic ways. Example: every school has a justice system, how does it operate, what are the underlying values? That has nothing to do with the departments but dealing with the fundamental values of what constitutes justice. If looking at science curriculum, there are ethical issues related to HRE for integration. Using the excuse there is too much content in a subject area doesn't make sense. It's about how to structure content and find entry points to make it a comfortable activity and get meaningful and powerful topics into the curriculum. Train teachers on human rights, and then give them the freedom to make the choices of how to include HRE.

Q: What guidelines are there for the pitfall of political divisiveness and for steering the conversation towards "this is a human issue not a political issue?"

- A: You'll never get past the political nature but you should say we can handle a legitimate discussion that has direct relationship to the quality of life of people.

Q: Are there instruments one can use for in-class HRE assessment of students? Not content but indicators that are used to assess students in looking at what human rights values are taught?

- A: Give students a list of 10 rights and ask which rights they believe are essential for the conduct of a democracy. This list should include rights that are in the UDHR, and some from the US Bill of Rights. They must defend their position regarding their top three selections from the list. It forces them to talk about their priorities and develop arguments regarding what rights are essential for everyone to have. You can also create a scale where students to make judgments about core values related to human rights—the students read

statements and then use “strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree,” and you can collect and tabulate that data as a baseline for comparison after you’ve taught a unit dealing with human rights. It’s important to keep the focus on student experience and let them establish who they are, creating a climate for the open exchange of views while educating them about the international framework and contemporary human rights issues.

Report on breakouts to develop HRE plans and identify needs.

Math – Finding avenues to include HRE in math can be easy as we have data that can be graphed to see relationships. We need to investigate data and adapt it to each subject. Incorporating HRE can be difficult, as most math teachers don’t have a wealth of knowledge of human rights. We must get the math department educated on human rights and social justice issues. Content to specific levels is important, for example, Algebra 1 versus Calculus. If the data isn’t linear, the algebra students might not be able to make the connections we want.

- Sean – Another struggle is how to balance what needs to be tested and what we have interest in teaching or including through HRE.

Science – We have the same struggles and strengths as math. We need to investigate where teachers get trained on how to deliver content. Role playing, professional development, and modeling scenarios would be helpful training mechanisms.

- Zelda – We need a safe place for teachers to work out the funk before we’re with students. Being comfortable with the process will be vital when we start to incorporate the human rights lens. There should be support across the subjects. I’m fascinated with the math and science perspectives for HR and social justice. While teaching about the power of language I tell them about when Einstein wrote his theory of relativity. It sat on other scientists’ desks for a while because they didn’t want to give a “Jew” a voice. Students think about how everything has language, whether spoken or written. This is one way teachers work across subjects to include HRE.

Social Studies – We discussed the importance of empathy and getting students to emotionally connect to the work, using sources and material that makes it an intellectual thought process. It’s problematic that students can become bleak over the prospects and we need to think about achievements in human rights and going beyond the negative.

English – There are obvious HRE connections in literature, and creative nonfiction allows you to talk about any field of writing and look at issues of human rights. We also discussed how implementing a developmental human rights program at the middle school would pave the way for expansion throughout the subjects.

- Luthern – Ayana will trace the history of human rights through literature and important international documents, from the Magna Carta to the US Bill of Rights.
- Teddy – I will include human rights, environmental sustainability and equality as a theme in 10th grade. We will start the year with the UDHR and look back to review how things got to where they are today.
- Susan – Tom Liachas has a curriculum that’s been developed on this already.

Music – Music is a universal way to communicate; it can get students involved in thinking about the issues. There is a wide range of human rights music; you can find a song for any skill level and students can learn the background associated with the human rights movement.

Unfortunately it takes time to learn to play music. It might not be plausible to sacrifice time to learn the human rights issues associated with the song.

- Anecdote: Scott asked students how they want the music class to work. They came up with their own rules and framework for the class. When they thought about their behavior through their own lens, they got through more class material.

- Suggestion: Develop an online resource for music teachers that had premade repertoires focused on human rights and was divided up by age or skill level.

Closing comments:

Linda – I’ve seen kids walk into a classroom with low expectations because teachers can be burnt out and it takes a lot of effort to teach. It’s inspiring to be here with you and know that these ideas will have an effect on students. As you’re talking about the payoff, I’m thinking about the Einstein example. The specific anecdotes will stick with you. I hope you’ll be able to reach other teachers not in this room and know that students will appreciate it and look forward to you sharing something personal and connecting with them.

Pam –We hope to pair up a public school or collection of public school teachers. We hope you’ll share materials and best practices.

Nancy – I’m so happy to see people doing this work in this country.

Scott offered the “[Be the Change](#)” music video to close the event.

Submitted by Kristin Ghazarians