

Human Rights Commission  
Education Series No. 3

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# Teaching for Human Rights: Grades 5-10

Ralph Pettman

*with*

Cohn **Henry**

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ISBN for Education Series: 0 644 05112 4  
ISBN for this volume: 0 644 05327 5

*Cover Illustration:* Rocco Fazzari  
*Graphics:* John Gregory

Published in the International Year of Peace

Typeset in Australia by Union Offset Co. Pty Ltd, Canberra  
Printed in Australia by Watson Ferguson and Co., Brisbane

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## Foreword

This is the third volume in the Human Rights Commission's Education Series. The Series is designed to provide resource manuals for human rights educators.

This manual is for upper primary and secondary school teachers (Grades or Years five to ten). It is a revised version of *Teaching for human rights: activities for schools*, and like that book provides many and varied activities, grouped under a number of issue-headings, for exploring a comprehensive range of human rights questions.

In 1985, more than 150 teachers and schools took part in a Commission program, run Australia-wide, to develop resources and strategies for teaching for human rights. This was the first program of its kind in the world. About 120 of the classes involved were upper primary and secondary ones. Suggestions from the reports made by the participating teachers have been collated here, and in addition, edited versions of fifteen reports have been appended in their entirety. These describe how a number of teachers approached their tasks in detail.

The most important finding of the program was a general, not a specific, one however. Over and over again it was shown conclusively that it *is* possible to teach for humane values in an objective way. This is a finding of extraordinary significance and one the Series amply documents.



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## Chapter One

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### What this manual is (and what it is not)

Human rights are very comprehensive. They cover a wide range of specific issues. At heart, however, they ask one simple question: what can I, as a human being, ask of others because I am that—a human being? The complementary side of this coin, of course, is: what can others ask of me by sole virtue of our shared humanity? To claim human rights is to accept their converse—human responsibility.

This manual provides practical activities for teachers in upper primary and secondary schools who want to foster a respect for human rights. It replaces the first edition of *Teaching for human rights: activities for schools*, by Ralph Pettman, though there is no sadness about the passing since the original version was meant to be quickly superseded. We expected to develop and change it in response to advice from teachers, students, parents and other people who had used it and seen it being used. And this is what has happened. However *Teaching for human rights*, in this new edition, is not the end either. It is simply a new starting point, albeit one step further along the way.

#### **TEACHING FOR AND TEACHING ABOUT**

Central to this manual is the finding that teaching *about* human rights is not enough. Teaching *for* human rights is essential to be effective. Students will want not only to learn what human rights are, but why they should respect them. What students *do* will be crucial in this regard. Herbert Kohl's advice here is to:

Think about and then live human rights in the classroom before you teach them. This implies that the question of students' choices, their rights to free expression and to a vote on things that affect their lives as well as their access to friends and to what they want to learn must be thought through. Compulsion in the classroom must be considered in the light of human rights. You have to live what you teach or it will seem nothing more than a teacher's or adult's game, a scam, a model for cheating the world. And your students will be very good at picking up the game from you and running it on others.

I am not advocating that students take over or that they should be able to do anything they want whenever they want. I am, however, advocating that a classroom in which human rights are discussed in a serious manner has to be one in which the students have the rights under discussion. Make the topic a part of the everyday life you share with your students and you will be in a decent position to enlarge your collective vision and look at human rights in the world.

(Herbert Kohl, 'Human rights and classroom life' (September 1985) *Social Education*, 499.)

Actions speak louder than words. That is why the main part of the text consists of activities. The activities are meant to provide experiences, to create opportunities for students and teachers to work out from the basic values that inform specific human rights principles—values to do with justice, freedom, equity, and the destructive character of deprivation, suffering and pain—what they truly think and feel about a wide range of real world issues. (See further

D. Wolsk, *An experience-centred curriculum*, Educational Studies and Documents no. 17, UNESCO, 1975.) This is moral literacy, i.e. the educated capacity for making responsible and rightful judgments. It is not only vital to human survival, but makes everything else done at school, like learning to read and write and reckon, more relevant and effective too.

Close reference is made to the United Nations *Universal declaration of human rights*, so that what is done can be assessed in the light of the ideas and sentiments it lists. It is important to note that these have received near universal recognition.

## TEACHING NOT PREACHING

The fact of virtual global agreement about the principles contained in the United Nations Declaration is a teacher's first defence against any charge of indoctrination. By working with precepts that have been so widely endorsed—in principle if not in practice—for so many years now, the teacher can honestly say that he or she is not preaching.

A second defence against the charge of indoctrination is to teach in such a way as to respect human rights in the classroom and the school environment itself.

This means avoiding *structural hypocrisy*. At its simplest, structural 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—stop talking in the back row!" Students will learn a good deal about power this way, and considerably less about human rights. Students are not foolish and they spend a good deal of time studying teachers—probably more than teachers spend studying them. They understand the contradiction when a teacher professes justice and respect for others and yet treats them unfairly and disrespectfully.

Such a skill can have unexpected results. It can make it difficult for a teacher to have *any* effect, since students who have developed a good understanding of what their teachers believe can make the kind of allowances for these beliefs that prove very frustrating in practice. This can work both ways. They can treat what is taught with dumb insolence, for example. Or because of the desire to please, they may try to mirror a teacher's personal views, without thinking for themselves. These can be good reasons, at the beginning at least, for not expressing your own ideas. The students will work these out anyway in time, which is why it is important to subject *your* opinions to the same truth criteria as their *own*.

At its most complex structural hypocrisy raises profound questions about how to protect and promote the human dignity of both teachers and students in a place called a classroom, in a place called a school, within a society at large. On the one hand, schools are often highly hierarchic. They mirror most societies in this regard. On the other hand, the human rights doctrine is an egalitarian one. This calls upon teachers to involve all concerned—students, parents, school administrators, education authorities, and ancillary staff where possible—in the process of deciding what to do, how to do it, and why. There are many potential tensions here between the way schools are and the way they might be.

Ian Lister has proposed the following guidelines for a human rights school.

The standards he suggests are tentative ones, nevertheless they are a good set of starting points for any school community that would live by humane principles. Like human rights themselves they represent good intentions. Although aspiration is always likely to outstrip achievement, they are standards worth striving for:

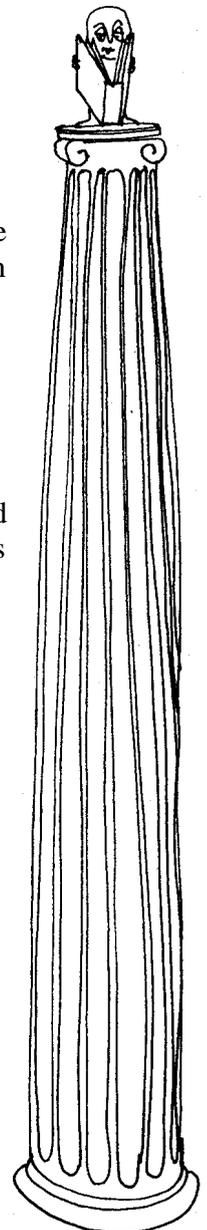
Some brief guidelines for the Human Rights school:

- (i) its general structures and practices will reflect a concern for the procedural values which underpin Human Rights—freedom, toleration, fairness and respect for truth and for reasoning;
- (ii) it will respect the rights and fundamental freedoms of all its members, including the students, acknowledging that the members have these rights and fundamental freedoms by virtue of their common humanity;
- (iii) all are entitled to these rights and freedoms because of their common humanity, and there will be no discrimination against anyone on grounds of race, religion, social class or gender. In particular, the Human Rights school will regard and respect children and women as part of common humanity. It will guard against 'unconscious' or 'unintentional' racism and sexism;
- (iv) no one in the school should be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- (v) any punishment must be preceded by due process and a fair hearing;
- (vi) everyone will have the right of freedom of opinion and expression, and of peaceful assembly and association. Students will be able to form, and belong to, issue-related groups which respect the ideals and procedures of Human Rights;
- (vii) the education practised by the school of Human Rights will be directed to the full development of the human personality, and will show a concern for brain and hand, and for intellect and emotions;
- (viii) through its structures and its curriculum, the Human Rights school will promote understanding, tolerance and friendship between people of different national, ethnic or religious groups and a concern for the maintenance of peace. It will help its students to acquire the attitudes and skills necessary to facilitate peaceful social change;
- (ix) it will recognise that everyone has duties and obligations, as well as rights and freedoms, and that these will include duties to the community and obligations to respect the rights and freedoms of others;
- (x) It will be aware of the relationship of rights and freedoms and duties and obligations, and that the relationship between the rights and freedoms of one (or of one group) and the rights and freedoms of another (or of another group) may be contentious issues. The Human Rights school will not be without—or seek to be without—conflicts and issues, for they are an essential element in political and social change.

However, the Human Rights school will have the procedures to enable conflicts and issues to make a productive and positive contribution to its reformation, and a dialectic to facilitate its own development.

(Ian Lister, *Teaching and learning about human rights*, School Education Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1984.)

Debney Park High School in Melbourne has documented very closely one thorough-going experiment of this kind and what is more, has published the results. Its booklet and video are highly recommended, and are available directly from the school, or the Richmond Education Centre, 123 Church Street, Richmond, Vic. 3121. As a practical manual on how to proceed, they speak volumes.



Where possible, an open forum should be held involving all the people mentioned above. This can solve many potential problems, and win many firm supporters. Teaching for human rights can reach out in this way beyond the classroom and into the community to the benefit of both. All concerned will be able to discuss the difference between objectivity and value neutrality. Though neither is possible in theory, schools *can* foster decent values rather than destructive and deceitful ones in practice. Members of school communities will usually appreciate the chance to take part in this process. An important consideration in any educational program that takes human rights seriously, in other words, is recognition of the rights of parents in particular to be involved in the education of their children. Increased parent participation in school affairs is one logical avenue through which to approach increased respect for human rights.

Keeping school materials constantly under review, the curriculum itself, and your own classroom practice, is crucial. As far as the students are concerned, negotiating a set of classroom rules and responsibilities is a long-tested and very effective place to start, and an example is given in the text. Any teaching practice that is compatible with basic human rights, however, will be a model of what the doctrine means. This enables a mathematics teacher, for example, to teach for human rights even though the subject matter he or she is teaching may have little to do with real-world human rights issues. By being conscious of how she or he attends to her or his students; by ensuring that one category of students is not given more access to scarce resources than another; by encouraging responsibility and mutual regard; a mathematics (or physics or any other teacher) can show that fairness, non-discrimination and tolerance are just as important in that specialty as they are in social studies or the humanities.

## **ARRIVING AT MINIMUM STANDARDS**

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights did not arrive by accident. It was argued for by those convinced that a concrete list of basic criteria common to all value systems worthy of the name was both possible and necessary. The list, where not universal, is potentially so.

This manual views human rights not as a new system that seeks to replace those already so widely regarded in the world, but rather as an on-going attempt to define a minimum standard without which human dignity and decency are destroyed. As such, the human rights doctrine can demonstrate the strengths of all other existing value systems.

The history of the human rights doctrine tells a detailed story of the attempts made to define our most fundamental entitlements. These efforts continue to this day. You may 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 become older and more able to understand it. The early fights for civil and political rights, the campaign for the abolition of slavery, the fight for economic and social rights in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, the struggle against twentieth century fascism, World War II and how it finally prompted a *Universal declaration of human rights*, two consequent Covenants, and all the

regional Conventions and Charters that followed this lead—all these events provide vital information.

A history of human rights legislation can be very difficult to bring alive in the classroom however. This is particularly so when it is presented as an historical one-way street. The same applies to teaching human rights as preferred standards *per se*, working through the Universal Declaration for example, while pointing out the rationale for each article (with illustrative examples from the real world, perhaps).

'Facts' and 'fundamentals' are not enough, even the best-selected ones. Students will want a *feel* for these things and the real life questions they raise if they are to have more than passing significance. Hence the importance of having students exercise their own sense of justice, freedom and equity.

How can this be done? Here is one example: 'Imagine', you say, 'that it is your job to draft the basic principles for society as a whole. The society includes you, though (and this is the catch) you don't know what kind of person you are. You might be male or female, young or old, rich or poor, disabled in some way, or living as a member of any contemporary nation, race, ethnic group, religion or culture that is not your own. You simply don't know. Now—what do you decree?'

To perform this classic exercise is to arrive at one's own declaration of human rights. It has to be done honestly, or students may simply repeat what they say they 'know' without reflection. It may demand more empathy and imagination than is available at the time. But the point is clear. It can prompt some hard thinking about what 'human' means. (This is not as obvious as it may sound. The whole history of human rights has been, in part, the extension of the mantle of humanity to cover more and more people not considered wholly 'human' before. To treat a person as a thing and not a human being; to use people as means to other ends rather than as ends in themselves; this is to deny the essential spirit of the doctrine.) It can prompt some hard thinking also about the difference between right treatment and wrong treatment, between good behaviour and bad.

## THINKING THINGS THROUGH

While the basic principles of human rights do receive the sanction of the world's main religions, they are secular concepts and will survive only if people continue to see a point in their doing so. They need to be constantly defended, refined, and reviewed. Rights-talk is strong talk, because rights-claims are strong claims. 'I have a *right* to this. It is not just what I want, or need. I am entitled to it. There is a *responsibility* to be met.' But rights stand upon the reasons given for them, and because rights-talk is strong talk, the reasons must be good ones. We have to have the chance—and where better than at school—to work out such reasons for ourselves, or we will not claim our rights when they are withheld or taken away, nor will we feel the need to meet legitimate rights-claims made upon us. We have to see for ourselves why rights are so important, for this in turn fosters responsibility.

It is always possible to proceed the other way around: to teach for human rights in terms of responsibilities first. But again, this can't be done as a litany if

students are to see their point. Another way to begin is to challenge students to consider something they could actually do in their classroom or in their school to improve respect for human rights. In one primary class where this was tried, students initially suggested things others should do. However, when pressed to offer suggestions about what they *themselves* could do, either individually or in groups, they came up with ideas such as:

- I could say less, and give others the chance to say more;
- I could have more to say; I could give my opinions in discussions like others do;
- I could be friendlier to more people;
- I could stop putting others down;
- I could do more to help my class run better; I think I leave it all up to Mr C. [the teacher] when I know I could do more.

Students (and their teachers too) might prepare private contracts, implement their action plans for a week, then share their plans and discuss the difference their changes have made to the classroom's or school's quality of life. By such means students can be brought to see that it is they in part who make, and can contribute to remaking, the institutions in which they live.

Teachers and students then *practise* these principles. This is more than merely mouthing or mimicking them. We also need practice in the skills we require to resolve the problems that occur when responsibilities conflict, or rights conflict, as they often do.

These points of conflict are growth points. They are welcome because without them human rights would not be dynamic. They would become static and stereotyped. They would become formal and inappropriate, and they would die. As it is, we are never short of controversies.. We should expect them, and provide the sort of learning opportunities that encourage students to face them creatively.

## **IN PRACTICE . . .**

This manual is a multi-coloured umbrella that covers a number of basic issue-areas. It is not meant to be an extra burden on an already overloaded curriculum, but a way of suggesting different emphases, of integrating subjects that may already be taught there, and perhaps, most importantly, of initiating practical studies of how people presently treat each other in school, and how they might strive to improve the quality of their lives.

It covers twelve basic human rights issue-areas. Each issue-area has been defined in terms of particular questions, and the activities below are keyed to these questions. In doing the activities, the questions get raised, answers are discussed, and this leads back to the human rights involved. You may want to develop other activities or other issue-areas. You will certainly find other ways of using the ones suggested here.

Ideally human rights should be negotiated as the basis for the whole school curriculum—overt and covert—but in practice, particularly at secondary level, they are often treated piece meal, as part of the established disciplines within the social and economic sciences and the humanities. Treating human rights on 'Tuesdays after lunch' may be better than nothing at all, but it is not ideal.

Democratic classrooms in democratic schools have established procedures for moving from teacher-directed to student-initiated enquiry, and democracy lies at the heart of human rights. Some schools that took part in the Human Rights Commission's 1985 program were able to turn themselves entirely around in line with documents like that of the United Nations *Declaration of the rights of the child*. They were the ones that learned most about humane values and humane behaviour. This is ideal.

The activities suggested below will work differently at different school levels and, of course, every class is different, even from one moment to the next. Those who have already used these activities have said that decisions they made in advance about what would not work at their level or with their students were usually wrong. This is worth keeping in mind. It suggests that the only reliable way to know whether an activity is useful or not is to start it up and run it for a while. Experimenting with teaching activities may produce surprising results. You won't know until you try.

The text has been arranged as simply as possible as a narrative. A deliberate choice was made not to use the sort of course book formula favoured by curriculum designers: statement of objective(s), preparation, procedure, discussion, and variations or follow-on activities. Experience with the first edition of these materials has shown that the outlines provided below are suggestive enough and sufficient for teacher purposes.

With limitless resources, units of human rights work could have been written for every subject area, at every grade level, specific to all local curriculum needs. Short of this however, there will always be a place for manuals like the current one that try and show what can be done in a more general fashion. Manuals have a short shelf-life anyway. What is important is the process of curriculum development. Carried on by students and teachers together, this can keep curricula relevant, while giving all concerned direct experience in human rights practice.

There has been much research into how children develop their judgments as they grow, and due note has been taken of it. Not every class member may be able to reach the level of awareness human rights feeling and thinking requires straight away. Pushing students too hard, particularly at the beginning, may also pre-empt honest expression of what they think or feel, and stop further progress. This may mean seeming acceptance by the teacher of some highly bigoted or offensive views. If this strategy is part of a process of encouraging students to feel comfortable about saying what is really on their minds, however, it will only be temporary.

This manual assumes that all human beings benefit from the chance to explore rights-issues, and that by the age of 10 years or so students, given such a chance, have a capacity for lively and profound reflection far beyond that usually expected and supposed. The need for extra materials has been kept as simple as possible, and it is trite but true to say that the richest resources a teacher has to work with are his or her students and their experiences in everyday life. Exploiting these resources successfully shifts the focus from teacher-directed to student-initiated enquiry, and has invariably proved an education in itself.

One last word: this manual is an ideas book. It is a beginning, not an end. It is offered as a resource to those working in all disciplines. It can be, and it has

been, taught as a course, since there is a conceptual sequence built into it; however most teachers will mine it for what seems applicable to their current needs. Hopefully, in doing so, they will begin to see how useful human rights teaching can be as a framework for values education. What else is comparably comprehensive, specific, affirmative and globally agreed?

## Chapter Two

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### How to begin

#### SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIAL RESPECT

In upper primary and secondary school, no less than in pre-school and lower primary classes, teaching for human rights should aim to foster feelings of self-worth, and social tolerance. These feelings may be fragile and contingent but they are nonetheless real. The teacher's 'teaching personality' is critical, since if it is not a caring and open one, it will contradict the spirit of all that follows, and render it mostly meaningless. By the same token, a supportive approach that praises rather than blames, will make every activity, even ones not specific to human rights teaching, meaningful. There is no place for dogmatism or violence.

The first step in improving respect for human rights *has to be* establishing secure, open, and supportive relationships in the classroom. In the words of one British teacher, this means:

1. Establishing and valuing the knowledge and opinions which students already have—about fairness, laws, freedom, other countries, and authority.
2. Getting students to trust and respect others—to feel confident that by expressing their opinions they will not be made to feel foolish.
3. Giving students a sense of initial self-confidence through the successful completion of simple tasks e.g. listing questions about rights which a series of photos raise; making a poster illustrating part of the Universal Declaration.
4. Adopting a problem-centered and action-oriented approach to the subject by focusing on "problems to be solved" rather than "problems which overwhelm us"
5. Giving students a measure of responsibility for designing and managing the rest of the course.

(R. Richardson, 'Learning in a world of change: methods and approaches in the classroom' (1979) 9 *Prospects*, adapted from 187-9.)

Exactly the same resolutions came from one of the teachers involved in the Commission's 1985 Schools Program. She said:

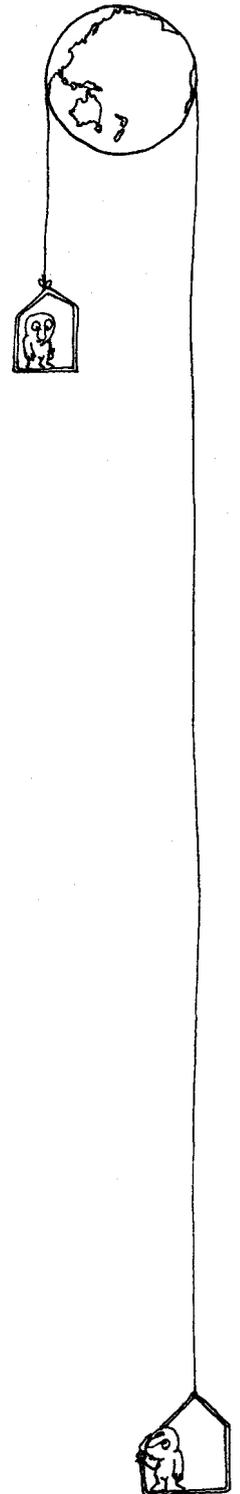
I asked who'd ever felt silly or embarrassed contributing verbally in the class. This opened a real floodgate of comments. Every child could think of at least one incident when they had felt this way. The most common conclusions were:

1. If you say something that is obvious to another child or the teacher and they make fun of you, you feel stupid.
2. Sometimes people who don't get on with you make fun of whatever you say, so you don't want to say anything.
3. Often you are afraid to give your real opinion, if it is different from the majority of the group, in case you are made fun of.

After this we all agreed that even if we didn't agree with someone else we would respect their opinion in discussions and try to think of a good way of saying our opinion on our turn to speak. So we were ready to give it a try!

#### ROLE-PLAYS

Some of the activities that follow are role-plays. Teachers not used to this technique need not fear. A few guidelines will allow you to use it successfully,



although regard will need to be given to the feelings of individuals and the social structure of the class. A role-play about ethnic conflict, for example, will need to account for the ethnic composition of the class itself.

A role-play is like a little drama played out before the class. It is largely improvised. Having set the scene with the basic ideas, you may want to allow time for those chosen to take part to think about what they will say (individually or in groups), or you can proceed at once to enact it. This can be done as a *story* (with a narrator, and the key characters taking up the thread where appropriate) 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).

Whatever approach is taken, it works best to keep any single scene short, and allow for discussion afterwards. You will want 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, and members of the class should be able to comment and question too; even join in the role-play if it helps. Often roles will need to be changed so that students get a feel for how different actors respond in a given situation.

## BRAINSTORMING

This technique is also used. It means asking the whole class to think about something, and writing down everything they suggest, no matter how improbable. There are three basic rules: explaining the topic, accepting any suggestion at all that comes to mind, and disallowing criticism while the brainstorm is going on. Do try to get the class to think of more ideas, even when everyone says they have finished.

## ARRANGING THE CLASS

How the class is arranged and organised will provide many practical opportunities for sharing responsibility, demonstrating trust, and soliciting opinions about the best way to conduct classroom affairs. Working out together the way the classroom community should work will always provide readily available opportunities for realising participatory democracy. The degree of teacher direction must always be measured against the need to provide students with practical experience in promoting their own education. Learning to be responsible means being given and accepting responsibility; learning trust requires being trusted; and making wise decisions means taking part in meaningful decision-making as a group.



That isn't to say that teachers should not intervene. It is the teacher, for example, who will often be the one who will need to talk with the students and try to facilitate their personal friendships while helping the more isolated ones find support and a sense of place. This is a familiar problem and, like many others, is never completely solved. There are no ready-made, non-authoritarian formulas for democratic behaviour. We need to recognise and work on the fact that many classroom problems are trying and difficult, their solution often requiring all the sensitivity and ingenuity teachers and students can muster together. It is the mustering together that will matter most in the end, though.

Some difficulties can be caused unintentionally. The exaggeration of ethnic, social or gender differences is one of these. Younger children are often asked to line up, but unless you avoid getting them to do so in groupings that reinforce obvious differences (in mixed-sex classes, the boy/girl one for example), the practice can have negative side-effects. You can deliberately choose other attributes to line children up by, so as to break down any obvious patterns of discrimination (one line for children with pets at home, and one line for those without', for example). Or simply allow them to move in groups. With an upper primary group, try the following activity:

Children sit in a circle on chairs, or in set places. One person stands in the middle of the circle (the teacher to start with). The teacher says something like: 'People wearing belts'. These people then have to change seats with someone else who is wearing a belt at the time. The person in the middle also has to find a seat. Whoever is left without a place to sit down gets to be the next one in the middle, and has to choose the next attribute. Children will quickly see that they can be similar and different in many ways.

An interesting ending is to choose a more intangible attribute, such as: 'People who are happy/kind'. The activity usually breaks down at this point because it is harder to identify such attributes at a glance. Discuss how such attributes are usually recognised.

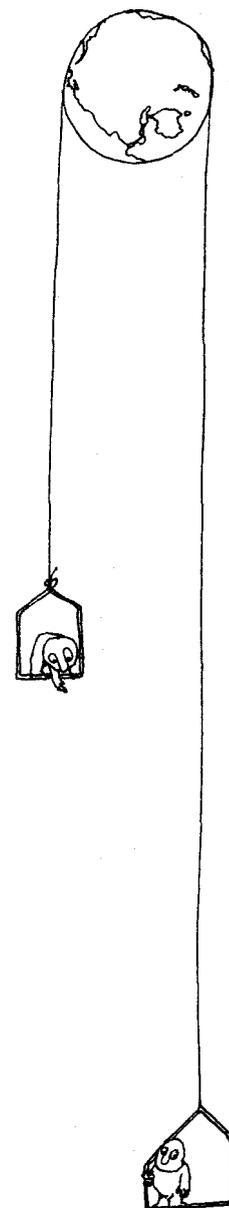
## DEALING WITH CONFLICT

It is always necessary to develop a consistent strategy with the class for dealing with *conflict*. Social conflicts arise all the time. There is, however, at least one successful routine that eventually allows people to deal with many of them without outside help. It is outlined below. Used consciously with a class over a period of time it can become second nature, and a prime skill for life. You will want to experiment with it for yourself before accepting such claims as valid. It has been used with all age groups.

The main thing as a teacher is to try and remain open to conflicts, rather than closing them off with one of the many means available for doing so. Aim to emphasise the positive approach: 'Here we have a problem. Let's think of some ways to solve it.' This way students learn that thinking about a problem can often suggest a solution in itself.

More systematically, the way to proceed is as follows:

1. Identify the problem and acknowledge it (i.e. stop any physical or verbal aggression; ask the students involved to stay and discuss their behaviour together).
2. Get a description of what happened (i.e. ask the students involved, and any bystanders, about the events that took place. Give everyone a turn to speak without interruption. Touch, where appropriate, can also ease feelings of anger or guilt.).
3. Explore a range of alternative solutions (i.e. ask those directly involved, plus bystanders, how this problem can be solved. If the students draw a blank, offer some solutions yourself—preferably more than one but not too many. Explore how more than one fair solution may often exist. Encourage the



- students to think of the physical and emotional consequences of these solutions and recall past experiences of a similar nature.).
4. Choose a course of action (i.e. seek a mutual decision using one of the fair solutions).
  5. Carry out that action (i.e. get acceptance of the decision and a commitment to monitor the consequences. If a student is unhappy after a trial time go back to step 3—exploring alternative solutions—and work through to another fair solution.).
  6. Follow it up (i.e. with puppet play and stories with younger classes, role-plays and discussions with older ones). Recall other such incidents and compare them.

(Adapted from Rosemary Milne, *Moral development in early childhood*, Ph.D. thesis University of Melbourne, 1984, pp. 300-47. Her detailed description of this sequence-in-action is invaluable.)

This is no more than common sense but used regularly and conscientiously it can become habitual. Students can also learn to use it without any help, and where they do, it can work wonders.

## COMBATING RACIST OR SEXIST NAME-CALLING

Some conflicts cannot be dealt with in this way however. What, for example, should be done about racist name-calling or derogatory and discriminatory comments of any other kind? Take the case of race. One group of advisers recommends the following procedure:

Act immediately. Do not side-step the issue with a response like 'All people are alike' or 'color doesn't matter'. Such statements deny obvious differences and may suggest that such differences are something to be ashamed of or that the adult is not concerned about the feelings of the victim. First, strongly criticize the racist behavior and make clear that it is definitely unacceptable. Be firm yet supportive with the child who did the insulting; you can say something like, 'I will not let you use that word. It hurts people's feelings too much. It is wrong for you to call names.' Offer clear support to the insulted child [where there is one] and do not criticize this child for showing anger, fear or confusion. Help [victimized] children to realise that negative responses to their appearance, language or race are due to a racist society. The incident may have been provoked by a controversy unconnected to race. If so, help the children settle the non-racial part of their argument [use the method previously described for this]. Discuss such incidents with parents and staff, and encourage parents to reinforce any of the school's anti-racist practices. Remember that because of societal racism, such incidents will occur again and again; try not to be discouraged. Consistency in dealing with such behavior is of the essence.

(*'Childcare shapes the future'* (1983) 14, 7 & 8 *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin* 13-14.)

Again, you may want to try this procedure and find out for yourself how it works in practice. It is a strategy that can be used at all school levels (and outside school as well). It can be applied to any kind of discriminatory behaviour, such as sexism, or intolerance of people with physical or intellectual disabilities.

It should be remembered that racism and sexism are usually present in children by the age of four. Human rights teaching is remedial from then on. A

teacher can be part of the problem or part of the solution, and should know the difference between the two.

Racial, national, and ethnic diversity in the classroom should be celebrated at every opportunity. Including multicultural perspectives in the curriculum while exploring the qualities that define our common humanity and unite us all (joy, fear, and how we have habits, for example) can provide plenty of impromptu material. Anti-sexism teaching is also imperative, and is explored as an issue-area below.

Care should also be taken to encourage the class to look after any students with disabilities in such a way as to foster their individual autonomy and responsibility.

It remains only to emphasise the importance of classroom climate, and the need for a participative and co-operative one (even when this means more noise!). If you are stuck at any point, do ask the students. Clarifying with their help what it is you are trying to do will determine the means of doing it. Ends do not justify means; they provide them.

## TRUST-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

The following activities can be used with any age group. They will place most students in situations of unfamiliar dependence. Surviving the risks involved makes for trust, and a group better prepared to enter into what follows.

The teaching situation itself can be used to help here since it represents a range of not-always-easy relationships; and facilitating those relationships fosters trust. Putting students at ease involves:

- explaining what is to happen and why
- explaining unfamiliar words and ideas (concepts)
- providing information (and not only just about specific activities)

Try to reserve fifteen minutes of the day with your home class for discussing news items from the press, radio, TV, or local talk. This will provide many opportunities to look at human rights issues in a less fraught or formal way. It can be an education in itself.

### (a) **Blind trust**

Divide the class into pairs. Have one student blindfold the other (closing eyes is enough, but blindfolds are better) and have the sighted member of the pair lead the 'blind' one about for a few minutes in silence. *Take care* to stop students being silly, since the idea is to nurture trust, not to destroy it.

The walk should be an easy one, though, with enough space and flat ground, can include skipping or running outside. The 'leader' of the pair should try to provide as wide a variety of experiences as possible, for example, getting their 'blind' partners to feel things with their feet or fingers; or leaving them alone for a minute.

After a few minutes have the participants reverse the roles and repeat the process so that the 'leader' is now the led, and the 'blind' partner is now the sighted one.

Once the activity is over allow the students to talk about what happened. Discuss how they felt—not just as 'blind' partners, but their feelings of responsibility as 'leaders' too.

This can lead not only to a greater awareness of what life is like for people with sight (or hearing) disabilities, but to a discussion of the importance of trust in the whole community. This can lead in turn to a discussion of world society and how it works, and how it can fail to work too. (This activity can be applied to any school subject. Suggestions are given in D. Wolsk, *op. cit.* The suggestions are very good, and show how any activity can be adapted to any part of the curriculum.)

### (b) Feeding

Another trust exercise is for students to break into pairs and for one to try to feed a quarter cup of water and a biscuit or bits of rice, bread, etc., to the other (who is lying down as if paralysed). This can take some time, and *take care* that the feeders do not hurry and choke their charges. After a while, swap roles.

Students who are self-conscious and find this activity a bit difficult at first have often changed completely by the time it comes to swap over. Allow for some mess, since students can become so involved they hardly notice it.

Discussion can not only highlight the plight of people who *are* paralysed, and the feelings of those who care for them, but deeper understanding of what helplessness of any kind is like.

One teacher described her experiences with an upper primary class in the following way:

#### Houses and fortresses

The children were asked to draw two houses—the first one where people trusted their neighbours and the second where they did not.

This was an excellent way of stressing the feeling of trust in the outside community. Many houses in this area have aluminium shutters, security doors, high fences, dogs etc. A good discussion developed as to why they were there and whether they were necessary. Much discussion took place on houses in other countries, and the Aboriginal house of long ago.

## WORKING OUT SOME CLASSROOM RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Since this next activity has a direct effect on classroom climate, it can be a very significant one. Just how significant? Consider this teacher's testimony:

I repeatedly found myself protecting the children's rights by asking their opinions, giving them choices and allowing a greater amount of freedom. Small things maybe. Things like access to the toilet, eating lunch early if needed, choosing who to sit with, being able to move seats if friendships weren't working out, allowing entry to the room when it was too wet or too hot. These added up to a shift of power towards the children. They felt more in control of their environment and I trusted them not to abuse it. This trust and responsibility ensured I had enough control for my classroom teaching. The language of the classroom became:

'Is it alright to . . . ?

What do you think?

Do you need more time to finish?'

The language of power and control was not needed, as trust and responsibility for each other developed on both sides.

Working out some rights and duties together is a clear demonstration of a teacher's willingness to involve students in how the classroom is run, and her or his own trust in all its members. It also makes students think about what rules are desirable and what are possible in class, how they might be observed, and the teacher's own role in having to hold the ring.

In practice, this can be done a number of ways: as a brainstorm (paring down the results in subsequent discussion); in small groups that then present their findings to a plenary session of the whole class; or as individual assignments that the teacher collates for class consideration later.

Below is a list of basic classroom rights drafted by a sixth grade group in Victoria. It was displayed prominently for classroom reference, and was extensively tested in practice:

1. To speak to the teacher in private about private problems.
2. To be accepted as an individual person.
3. To whisper while working.
4. To eat our lunch at our own pace with a limit of 20 minutes.
5. To have sensible free time after completing our work.
6. To read out things to the teacher without anyone interrupting.
7. To go to the toilet once per session without asking the teacher's permission.
8. To sing, as a class, at least one song every day.
9. To change seats every fortnight when mutually acceptable.

Another list, compiled by the creative arts classes of the Cassady Elementary School in Des Moines, Iowa, U.S.A. reads (in revised form):

1. I have a right to be happy and to be treated with compassion in this room (I have a duty not to laugh at others or hurt their feelings).
2. I have a right to be myself in this room (I have a duty not to treat others unfairly because they are black or white, fat or thin, tall or short, boy or girl).
3. I have a right to be safe in this room (I have duty not to hit, kick, push, pinch, or hurt others).
4. I have a right to hear and be heard in this room (I have a duty not to yell, scream, shout, or make loud noises).
5. I have a right to learn about myself in this room (I have a duty not to interrupt or punish others for expressing their feelings and opinions).
6. I have a right to learn according to my ability (I have a duty not to call others names because of the way they learn).

In talking about this latter list, you might like to discuss these questions:

- What does compassion mean and why don't people like having their feelings hurt? Ask for personal examples—not only of hurt received, but of hurt given too (these examples can be role-played).
- What do you say to someone who wants you to act or to be like him or her? Have you ever been treated unfairly because of your skin colour, how you answer in class, your size or your sex? Have you ever done unfair things like this to others?
- Have you ever felt unsafe at school? How does feeling safe help people learn? Have you ever bullied others, and why?
- Why is it important that everyone be heard? When have you wanted to be heard (that is, to say what you feel or think about something) and not been given the chance? When have you stopped others saying what they feel or think, and how do you think they might have felt about that (this can be role-played too)?

Discussing the above in small groups will allow individuals to share their personal experiences more effectively.

Present a list of your own rights and duties as teacher. Discuss it with the students, and display it next to theirs.

These activities will endorse the principle of equal consideration that is basic to professional educational ethics. Giving students the chance to consider this principle for themselves allows them to share in the socialising process of the classroom in an explicit way. This can have a most constructive effect.

It can also, of course, present problems. What happens when a student decides (as occurred in one trial school) not to pick up other people's garbage from the schoolyard any more; or decides, as also occurred, not to attend aerobics? The authoritarian response to what quickly gets labelled as 'insubordination' is not appropriate in this context. And yet, having to work out solutions *with* students, rather than *for* them, is time-consuming. It requires careful judgments about what is negotiable, about how much objecting is tolerable, about what responses are reasonable, and about who is dodging basic responsibilities. There is nothing unusual about this. It simply means that order achieved by consensus, rather than control, is more open-ended. It will always seem messy to those used to more authoritarian ways.

One good starter is to solicit what students say they 'want'. This list may be very long and include items that are extravagant or unrealistic. But don't worry about that for the time being. From this list ask them to choose what they think they really 'need'. If they are honest, they should end up with something shorter and much more trenchant. Finally, ask them to choose from their 'needs' selection what they think they have a 'right' to expect, as members of a group that includes others and a teacher. Ask *why* they have chosen as they have. Choosing what is 'right' defines what is 'wrong', and what (in the class context) good behaviour as opposed to bad behaviour might be.

Where this activity has been tried it has proved important to be realistic about 'wants', 'needs', and 'rights'. Having recorded all the 'wants', 'needs' and 'rights' students suggest, you may have to say something like:

In the best of all possible worlds we might be able to have an Olympic-sized swimming pool and a water slide, and you might have the right to attend school only when you wanted to. But for now those things are just not possibilities. So let's talk about what we really can have and can do in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Let's be realistic about the changes we actually can make.

Once a list of basic rights and duties is agreed, have it displayed for classroom reference.

Two things can pose problems: students or the teacher may break the rules; and/or the classroom rules may not be compatible with the rules of other teachers or the whole school.

In the first case, more discussion is called for. This can require careful consideration of what is negotiable, and why things are going wrong. Do remember that order achieved by argument and agreement is always harder to get, but it is more of an education.

In the second case, students may just have to accept being treated differently. Alternatively, you and they can argue, where appropriate, for the process to be repeated school-wide.

Some of the tension that students have experienced in schools where teachers and students have not been able to reach a genuine working agreement on how they should be treated by each other, comes through in the following letter. It is a reminder that negotiating rights and responsibilities will place burdens on both students and staff that they may find it hard to shoulder. It is a sober warning about raising, then disappointing, students' expectations.

Dear Dr Pettman

At our College we are doing 'Human rights'. I am in Grade 8 and our class hasn't been coping with this subject very well. In Term 1 our class wrote up a class charter for the teachers to accept and follow. By Term 2 it was accepted by the teachers, and the teachers then gave us their charter. This went smoothly until the second week when our class started violating the teachers' rights as well as the class's. To try to solve this problem we formed a Human Rights Committee. Then some of the teachers started violating our rights as well. Some of the members of the committee tried to talk to the others in our class but they wouldn't listen. Could you please give us any ideas to help solve our problem. It would be much appreciated.

Teachers who have really worked hard at devising an operational set of classroom rights and responsibilities have invariably been surprised at how long the negotiation process has taken. One junior high school teacher wrote that it took over six weeks finally to arrive at a class charter. The original two hours she had set aside for the task was nothing like enough.

Another teacher also described a similarly lengthy period of negotiation. He added that the experience of prolonged negotiation had made his students very conscious of the difficulty that those who drew up the *International bill of rights* must have had.

## **WRITING YOUR OWN UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Having arrived at some classroom rules, it is a natural step to consider the same sort of thing on a universal scale.

### **(a) Planning for a world community**

Ask the class to imagine it has the job of planning the rules for the whole world community. As planners, they do not know who they will be when they join that community themselves; whether, that is, they will be male or female, rich or poor, young or old, disabled in some way, or a member of any particular race, ethnic group, culture or religion.

Again, this can be done in practice as a whole class; or in small groups, or as individuals who report back later. And the same sequence from 'wants' to 'needs' to 'rights and responsibilities' will help define the minimum human standards that are being sought.

### **(b) The *Universal declaration of human rights***

The results of the previous activity can be compared with the text of the Universal Declaration, as proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948. (The text is given below, in both the original and in a plain language version that runs parallel, so students can see what was written in their name by those who tried, a generation ago, to make a comprehensive and concrete list of the same sort.) What differences are there? Who left out what?

## **The Universal declaration of human rights (1948)**

### *Plain language version'*

### *Original text*

#### **Article 1**

When children are born, they are free and each should be treated in the same way.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

#### **Article 2**

Everyone can claim the following rights, even if they are:

- a different sex
- a different skin colour
- speak a different language
- think different things
- believe in another religion
- own more or less
- were born in another social group
- come from another country. It also makes no difference whether the country you live in is independent or not.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

#### **Article 3**

You have the right to live, and to live in freedom and safety.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

#### **Article 4**

Nobody has the right to treat you as his or her slave and you should not make anyone your slave.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

#### **Article 5**

Nobody has the right to torture you, that is, to hurt you.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

#### **Article 6**

You should be protected in the same way everywhere, and like everyone else.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

#### **Article 7**

The law is the same for everyone; it should be applied in the same way to all.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any incitement to such discrimination.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from an English translation of a French text prepared for the World Association of the School as an Instrument of Peace by Professor Massarenti, University of Geneva.

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<i>Plain language version'</i>	<i>Original text</i>
<b>Article 8</b> You should be able to ask for legal help when the rights your country grants you are not respected.	Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.
<b>Article 9</b> Nobody has the right to put you in prison, to keep you there, or to send you away from your country unjustly, or without a good reason.	No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
<b>Article 10</b> If you must go on trial this should be done in public. The people who try you should not let themselves be influenced by others.	Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.
<b>Article 11</b> You should be considered innocent until it can be proved that you are guilty. If you are accused of a crime, you should always have the right to defend yourself. Nobody has the right to condemn you and punish you for something you have not done.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.</li><li>(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.</li></ol>
<b>Article 12</b> You have the right to ask to be protected if someone tries to harm your good name, enter your house, open your letters, or bother you or your family without a good reason.	No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.
<b>Article 13</b> You have the right to come and go as you wish within your country. You have the right to leave your country to go to another one; and you should be able to return to your country if you want.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.</li><li>(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country including his own, and to return to his country.</li></ol>

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*Plain language version'**Original text***Article 14**

If someone hurts you, you have the right to go to another country and ask it to protect you. You lose this right if you have killed someone and if you, yourself, do not respect what is written here.

- (1) Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
- (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purpose and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 15**

You have the right to belong to a country and nobody can prevent you, without a good reason, from belonging to another country if you wish.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

**Article 16**

As soon as a person is old enough, he or she has the right to marry and have a family. In doing this, neither the colour of your skin, the country you come from, nor your religion should matter. Men and women have the same rights when they are married and also when they are separated. Nobody should force a person to marry. The government of your country should protect your family and its members.

- (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
- (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

**Article 17**

You have the right to own things and nobody has the right to take these from you without a good reason.

- (1) Everyone has the right to own property.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

**Article 18**

You have the right to choose your religion freely, to change it, and to practise it as you wish, either on your own or with other people.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

*Plain language version'**Original text***Article 19**

You have the right to think what you want, to say what you like, and nobody should forbid you from doing so. You should be able to share your ideas also with people from any other country.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

**Article 20**

You have the right to organise peaceful meetings or to take part in meetings in a peaceful way. It is wrong to force someone to belong to a group.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

**Article 21**

You have the right to take part in your country's political affairs either by belonging to the government yourself or by choosing politicians who have the same ideas as you. Governments should be voted for regularly, and voting should be secret. You should get a vote and all votes should be equal. You also have the same right to join the public service as anyone else.

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
- (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedure.

**Article 22**

The society in which you live should help you to develop and to make the most of all the advantages (culture, work, social welfare) which are offered to you and to all the men and women in your country.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realisation, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organisation and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

**Article 23**

You have the right to work, to be free to choose your work, to get a salary which allows you to live and support your family, and to be helped not to lose your job. If a man and a women do the same work, they should get the same pay. All people who work have the right to join together to defend their interests.

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

*Plain language version'**Original text***Article 24**

Each work day should not be too long, since everyone has the right to rest and should be able to take regular paid holidays.

**Article 25**

You have the right to have whatever you need so that you and your family do not fall ill, go hungry, or go without clothes and a house. You and your family also have a right to be helped if out of work, ill, or old, or if your wife or husband is dead, or you do not earn a living for any other reason you cannot help.

The mother who is going to have a baby, and her baby when it is born, should get special help. All children have the same rights, whether or not the mother is married.

**Article 26**

You have the right to go to school and everyone should go to school. Primary schooling should be free. You should be able to learn a profession or continue your studies as far as you wish. At school, you should be able to develop all your talents and you should be taught to get on with others, whatever their race, religion or the country they come from. Your parents have the right to choose how and what you will be taught at school.

- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.
- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

*Plain language version'**Original text***Article 27**

You have the right to share in your community's arts and sciences, and any good they do. Your works as an artist, a writer, or a scientist should be protected, and you should be able to benefit from them.

**Article 28**

So that your rights will be respected, society must work so as to protect them both at home and worldwide.

**Article 29**

You have duties towards the people you live among. It is they who allow you to develop your personality. The law should not take anything away from human rights. It should allow everyone to respect others and to be respected.

**Article 30**

In all parts of the world, no society, no human being, should take it upon herself or himself to destroy the rights which you have just been reading about.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

- (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realised.

- (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
- (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

### (c) Children's rights

Students might like to consider whether there are rights and responsibilities that apply more specifically to them, not just as people but as *young* people—as young adults or children. What might it be wrong to do (or not to do) to someone just because he or she happens, at that point in time, to be 'a child'. The United Nations *Declaration of the rights of the child* (1959) defines some basic standards of this sort, most of which students will probably be able to work out for themselves. Along with rights to a name, a nationality, social security, special care if handicapped, love and understanding (preferably from parents), education, recreation, and all of these regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, opinion, or national or social origin, there are some rights students may not get on their lists. For example, Principle 8: 'The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief; Principle 9: 'The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He (sic) shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form . . .'; and Principle 10: 'The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination . . .'. So students can see what has been written in their name as essential for a happy childhood, the text of this document is given below. As with the Universal Declaration, a summary version in plain language is provided parallel.

### *Declaration of the rights of the child (1959)*

#### *Plain language version*

#### *Original text*

#### **Principle 1**

All children have the right to what follows, no matter what their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, or where they were born or whose child they are.

The child shall enjoy the rights set forth in this Declaration. Every child, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.

#### **Principle 2**

You have the special right to grow up in a healthy and normal way, free and with dignity.

The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.

#### **Principle 3**

You have a right to a name and to be a member of a country.

The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.

*Plain language version**Original text***Principle 4**

You have the right to good food, housing and medical care.

The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end, special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.

**Principle 5**

You have the right to special care if handicapped in any way.

The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.

**Principle 6**

You have the right to love and understanding, preferably from parents and family, but from the government where these can't help.

The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall, wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and, in any case, in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security; a child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family and to those without adequate means of support. Payment of State and other assistance towards the maintenance of children of large families is desirable.

**Principle 7**

You have the right to go to school for free, to play, and to have an equal chance to develop yourself and to learn to be responsible and useful.

The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society. The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents.



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<i>Plain language version</i>	<i>Original text</i>
	The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right.
<b>Principle 8</b> You have the right always to be among the first to get help.	The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.
<b>Principle 9</b> You have the right not to be harmed and not to be hired for work until old enough.	The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form.
<b>Principle 10</b> You have the right to be brought up in a spirit of peace and friendship.	The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

In some countries there are even television advertisements about children's rights. Students might like to make up some advertisements for themselves. Small groups could dramatise these for the class as a whole.

Regional divisions of UNICEF may have posters and other materials that could be of use, and their central address is: Development Education Unit, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Palais des Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland; or 866 United Nations Plaza, 6th Floor, New York, New York 10017, United States of America.

#### **(d) Connections**

In any of the discussions above, if you have arranged the class (or the small groups into which you may have divided them) into circles, provide each group with a ball of woollen yarn. Students should then speak one at a time, and when they do, they should pass the ball along, letting it unwind in the process. Each person keeps a hold of the string at the point at which it passes through his or her hands, every time this happens.

Eventually the group is linked by a web of yarn, which will clearly show the pattern of communications that have gone on within it. More assertive members will be holding more of the thread points than others.

Can everyone see their community at work?

## Chapter Three

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### Some basic human rights issue-areas

Human rights tries to define minimum standards for the decent conduct of human behaviour. It is a comprehensive attempt to propose globally accepted criteria by which to judge whether a community is civilised or not. Its overall objective is to achieve a peaceful world order, and the maximum enjoyment of life for all. It tries to do this by raising basic questions, for example, about how a community treats its most vulnerable (or least powerful) members. What follows are ideas and suggestions for investigating a number of important issue-areas. This manual identifies twelve such areas:

1. protecting life—the individual in society
2. peace and disarmament
3. development and the environment
4. government and the law
5. freedoms of speech and belief
6. freedoms to meet and take part in public affairs
7. economic development and well-being
8. social and cultural well-being
9. discrimination by colour or race
10. discrimination by gender
11. discrimination by minority group status
12. discrimination by disability

A handful of activities are outlined under each heading. In many cases you will be familiar with other materials that can be plugged into the main-frame this manual provides.

If you concentrate on only one or two issue-areas—peace and disarmament, for example, or world development, or prisoners of conscience, or minority peoples, or anti-racism, or anti-sexism—then it is important to cast what is done in the context of the whole human rights rationale. Students will then be able to see that what they do is only one part of a general approach that covers many other things. Too often one issue-area appears to be isolated from others of a similar sort and unrelated to the broad principles involved. It becomes the tail that wags the human rights dog. As a consequence people can fail to recognise their common purpose. Used as suggested, however, the general and the particular draw strength from each other. The general will provide breadth while the particular will provide depth.

Since *all* the issue-areas only represent particular ways in which the core values (justice, freedom, equality and well-being) are found at work in the world, they are centrally related. Though labouring away in diverse lots, teachers who specialise in different aspects of human rights teaching are really working side-by-side. They need not see themselves in competition with each other; they are, or should be, co-operating with those doing human rights work elsewhere.

This is clearly visible if you spell out the sequence involved:

<i>Feelings</i>	<i>Values</i>	<i>Action</i>
self-esteem empathy	justice freedom equality well-being	Lists of specific principles e.g. the UN Declaration of Human Rights; the Rights of the Child etc.

To foster a humane world, we need to foster the appropriate feelings. This task begins at birth. If people do not have a sense of self-worth and a sense of identity with others they are not likely to value justice, freedom, equality and wellbeing. If they do not (following through the sequence above) subscribe to these core values, then they are not likely to act in the diverse ways that human principles prescribe in practice.

Teaching for the fundamental feelings of self-esteem and empathy/sympathy cannot begin too early. Feelings are skills and specific feelings have to be taught for in a very active fashion if they are to become an effective part of a student's emotional, moral and behavioural vocabulary. Any time spent specifically at work on self-esteem and empathy exercises is time well spent, and the more the better.

Later on, as their awareness grows, students can address more directly human rights values and human rights principles. Older students (and even adults) who suffer from a lack of self-esteem and social sympathy have to return to basics—to kindergarten as it were—to have these feelings fostered. A sense of self-worth and a sense of social sympathy are essential to all that flows from them. Where students *do* have these feelings, then you can reverse the sequence and begin (with due regard for analytic capacity) by examining human rights principles *per se*. You might ask, for example, why these principles rather than others? In answering such a question you will inevitably start moving back along the sequence above, exploring the values that determine such principles, and finally the feelings that inform the core values concerned.

## 1. PROTECTING LIFE—THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY

To establish a clear sense of humanity as a composite of individuals, the teacher can explore with students the concept of what being 'human' means. This work should confirm the fact that no person is more of a human being than another and no person is less. We are human beings first. We are male or female, black or white, or whatever else, only second.

Individuals are social beings; we have a personality, but everything else we learn to be happens as a consequence of our living with others. Hence work about the individual is work about society too, for all individuals live within society.

### (a) Being a human being

Place a convenient object (an inverted waste-paper bin for example) before the class. Suggest that it is a visitor from another part of the universe. This visitor is curious to learn about the beings who call themselves, in so many languages,

'people'. Ask for suggestions that might help the visitor identify any of us—'human beings'—should it meet more later in its travels.

One teacher who has tried this activity describes the way he went about it as follows:

We began with a whole-class discussion of what a human being is. I introduced an 'alien', or robot figure made of boxes and foam and asked the children to explain to him what a human was so that it wouldn't go around talking to lamp posts, etc. After initial discussion about having arms, legs etc., I insisted that a Myer's dummy was human if their definition was right. After discussion we still found that an orang-utan at the zoo fitted the 'human' category, as it was being defined. All these points started a vigorous and enthusiastic discussion about human characteristics. This part of the lesson was excellent.

### **(b) The Council of the Universe**

This is another version of the same idea. Explain to the class that it is (for the purpose of this activity) now the 'Council of the Universe'. The current Council plan is to clear our sector of space for space-farming. However, a Council rule forbids this if there is a species of thinking beings in the area of the universe to be cleared. Council officers have reported some evidence that on a small planet called 'Earth', in a distant sun-system in one of the galaxies involved, there might be one such species. A transport beam has been sent. It has picked up three specimens of this species (they call themselves 'students') from a thing called a 'school', and it is the Council's job to find out how advanced they are. Choose three children (with due regard for personal sensitivities)—perhaps even include yourself—and put them in front of the class (Council). The Council has then to find out if this species can justify its existence, its right to be alive. Should humanity survive, or should it be cleared away? (If particular students dominate the questions or answers, appoint a Council Chairperson, or adopt that role yourself. The Chair chooses the questions and who should answer.)

### **(c) Message in a bottle**

Yet another variant is to ask students to plan what they should put about humanity in a capsule to be sent into space. Suggest, perhaps, that students live in a time (10 years in the future?), when signals have been received from a place 'out there'. The United Nations is going to send information in a special ship.

It is the students' job to choose what to send: music? (which sort?) models of people? (how dressed?). Brainstorm solutions as a class, or set the activity as a small group project or an individual one (students can ask parents and others what they think).

The questions at issue here: 'What am I?', 'Who are we?', are profound. The activities above should provide an opportunity for students to begin to establish a sense of themselves as human beings. This is crucial if they are ever to see themselves as human agents, with a responsibility to humanity in all its many and varied forms. Defining what is human in general helps us to see what might be inhumane in particular.

This done, it is time to move on to 'rights', since defining what is right in general likewise allows us to see what might be wrong in particular, and thus where our duties—our 'responsibilities'—lie.

**(d) Beginnings and endings**

At the teacher's discretion, and depending upon her or his own confidence in dealing with such issues, the class can look at the right to be alive as argued for at each end of an individual's biological history.

Where does 'life' begin (somewhere on the wheel of incarnation and reincarnation? at conception? when the fetal heart-beats start? the point at which the fetus can survive? or at birth?) The answer assists in determining whether social sanctions can be placed upon birth control, and if so, what sort. This in turn will affect attempts to control population size, and the pressure of growing numbers of people on our ecological environment (number is not the only issue, of course, since high consumers create more pressure than low ones).

Should the right to be living ever be taken away, either by the self (suicide) or by others (murder, war, capital punishment, or mercy killing)?

These are difficult questions. This does not mean that, with due regard for the age grade, they should not be discussed. Where there is no prescribed solution (in religious terms, for example) finding answers means arguments about treating human beings in humane ways. Given the opportunity students are often better at this than is commonly supposed.

Not everyone feels confident or comfortable about dealing with such complex questions. Some teachers find them too hard to handle. Those who have used the life activities are typically those who have built up mutual trust and regard between parents, teachers and students. If you are unsure of where to begin this might be the best thing to do first. What follows will then depend on the group.

**(e) 'Maria has disappeared!'**

People are social as well as individual beings. They lead their lives in society with others, and society protects them. Often, however, it does not. As embodied by the State or rather, those governing in its name, society can turn against the individual in very unprotective ways. Provide the class with the following details:

Your name is Maria. You are a journalist. You wrote a story in your newspaper that made someone in the government angry. The next day the police broke into your home and took you away. You were beaten and put in a room alone. No one knows where you are. No one has offered to do anything. You have been there for ten months.

Maria has been deprived of a number of her basic rights. Using the Universal Declaration, ask the class to work out specifically which ones these are (Articles 3, 5, possibly 8 depending upon local laws, 9, 11(1), and 12).

Ask each student to draft a letter to the Minister of Justice concerned, or an open letter to Maria herself.

More senior classes can find out what can be done under local law in cases like this, or through local branches of international human rights organisations (such as Amnesty International), or the United Nations Human Rights Commission. In the latter case, communications are written (or telexed) to the Secretary, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Centre for Human Rights, Palais des Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland (Telex 28 96 96; telephone 34 60 11). They list the full name of the abducted person, the date of the disappearance, the place, and a description of the

circumstances (such as who is thought to be responsible and what has been done locally to seek a remedy).

Herbert Kohl's advice may be once again worth taking:

The best way to approach human rights on a larger scale is through a person and a story. Think of somebody you care about whose rights have been violated, some case that makes you want to act and makes you want to cry. If you do not know any such case, look for one. Unfortunately, you are sure to find many. When you have finished this research, start from the most personal, moving case you know.

The understanding and defence of human rights is certainly a moral issue, but moral issues are intimate and personal issues at their core. You cannot be divorced from what you teach or how you teach. Every time you say something about history, or make a judgment about someone's performance, or teach or refuse to teach a controversial subject, you make a statement about who you are and about your place in the world.

When you have chosen your starting point, find other people and places where the same problem has existed or still exists and use this material to develop a broader perspective on the problem. Move from the personal through the anecdotal to the more universal definition of the problem. This will probably involve research (Amnesty International is a generous source of case studies, national studies and similar information). Research is a wonderful way to renew excitement about teaching. All the unexpected discoveries that a seemingly focused search uncovers provide continual enrichment of one's teaching repertoire.

(Herbert Kohl, 'Human rights and classroom life' (September 1985) *Social Education*.)

This might also provide an opportunity to introduce students to other Amnesty-like organisations, such as the Minority Rights Group.

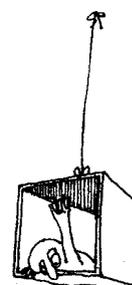
Contact your local Amnesty branch, perhaps, and organise a letter-writing hour, along with its members. Students, other teachers, and parents can then have the opportunity to be involved together in taking up the cause of a prisoner of conscience, even if only temporarily.

## 2. PEACE AND DISARMAMENT

The *Universal declaration of human rights* was written in response to the awful events of World War II. Everything depends upon Article 3: 'Everyone has the right to life . . . : Universal moral literacy of the kind this manual tries to promote should make it much harder for war to happen and for the sort of genocidal slaughter that took place during the last world war to occur again.

Genocide (the deliberate killing of whole peoples) is not new. However, the technology of our nuclear age has made this possible on a much greater scale than ever before. Over us all hangs Nemesis—the daily threat of thermo-nuclear suicide, since we now have on Earth destructive power the equivalent of three tonnes of conventional explosive per man, woman and child. The 'right to life' has taken on a meaning it has never had before. Immense armories of terrifying weapons stand ready at the touch of a button to eliminate everything.

Since underdevelopment can only fuel the sort of resentments that lead to war, and perhaps nuclear war, development issues and human rights are inextricably inter-linked. The same is true for peace issues. Without peace it has



been said 'development is impossible; without development human rights are illusory; without human rights peace is violence': The linkage is not as symmetrical as this formula makes it sound, since if we acknowledge the fundamental right to be alive—and hence the right to peace and development, which are the obvious prerequisites to staying alive—then it is the 'human rights' doctrine that overarches all. Peace and development, in their many aspects, are subsumed by the basic right of survival. However, the human rights doctrine can only be sensibly discussed if these issues are discussed as well, which means that in practice a comprehensive approach to teaching for human rights of the kind this manual provides *is* teaching for peace and development (and the sort of environmental awareness that is basic to both).

This is not to discourage teachers giving special attention to 'peace' or 'development' (or the environmental issue-areas related to them) if they want to. Indeed, given the basic right to human survival, this is recommended. However, education for peace (development is looked at in the next section) starts with teachers and students learning to realise those feelings of empathy and social tolerance basic to human rights, and respect for persons and their cultural differences. It involves helping students to develop negotiating skills, to resolve conflicts in peaceful ways, and to take action *with others* to solve social problems—in their own classrooms and schools. The last is particularly important since students often leave school with a sense of helplessness and lack of control over their lives. One objective, then, is to develop each student's sense of agency (which can lead very quickly back to questions of self-esteem).

Education for peace also requires learning activities designed to further students' understanding of the issues and the processes involved. It will, for example, explore the arguments for and against nuclear deterrence, evaluate the use of violence in self-defence, and trace the relationship between military spending and human deprivation.

### **(a) Negotiation**

Begin discussing the sorts of questions students want to know something about, such as:

- Why do teachers treat students differently?
- Why isn't smoking allowed in school?
- What do teachers really expect from us?
- You might find it possible to negotiate some of the work students do, and how they do it, through a process of sharing your responsibilities.

### **(b) School-level action for peace**

Schools often need to be made less stressful and more peaceful. A number of teachers involved in trialling the Human Rights Commission's curriculum materials during 1985 were active participants, for example, in the effort to find alternatives to corporal punishment in their schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Rene-Jean Dupuy quoted in S. Marks, 'The interrelationships between human rights, peace, disarmament and development education', in *Human rights education*, report of a conference sponsored by the United Nations Association, National Union of Teachers, and others, 10 December 1981, p. 2.)

One of those who took part in a lengthy process to change discipline policy and practice in his school wrote:

The formulation of a student management programme commenced mid-way through second term and involved twenty or so workshops—some, but not all, in school time. The objective was to produce an alternative discipline structure which would acknowledge the phasing out of corporal punishment and offer all concerned a better working and learning environment. Student survey and counselling, and teacher in-servicing is an on-going process. By now (the end of 1985) a framework is in place; teachers have been reminded of the benefits of positive classroom approaches; and students have contributed to a rights and responsibilities code.

### (c) Student research

Try involving students in collecting (asking two or three people to start with), organising, and reporting back to the school community (in a special news-sheet in the weekly suburban or town newspaper perhaps, or on a large news wall) the community's own answers to such questions as:

- How could this school be made more peaceful?
- What will the future be like?
- What are our enemies?
- Should toy-shops be allowed to sell war toys to children?

Older classes may tackle questions like:

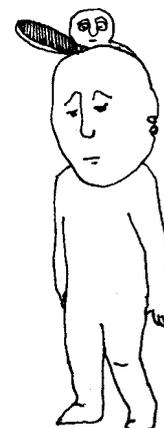
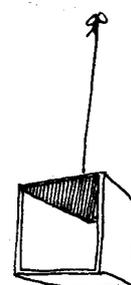
- Should Australia stay in alliance with the U.S.?
- Should this school be declared a nuclear-free zone?

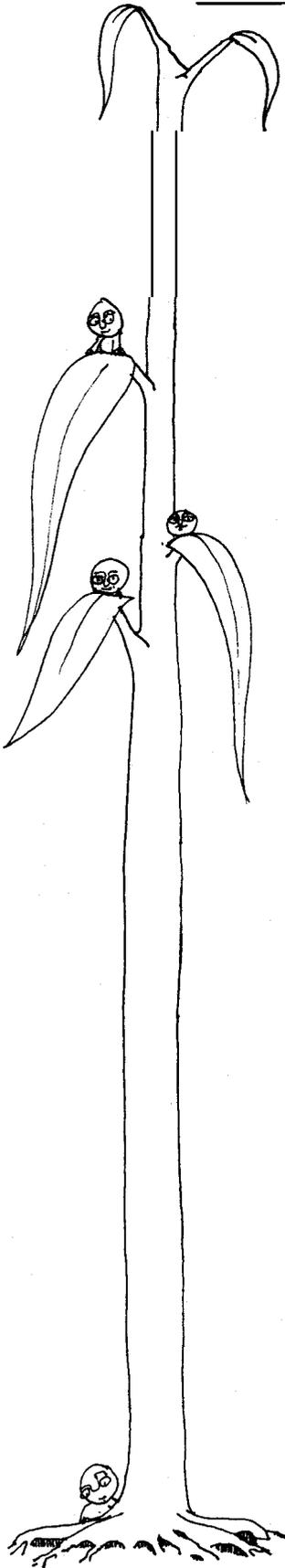
Presumably, complex issues of this sort would also be set in some sort of context, rather than treated in an *ad hoc* way.

It is important to see this procedure as an information service to the school (and possibly the wider) community about the views held by its own members. Some questions may involve further information gathering, and even action. For example, if there were parents and students who did not believe that toy-shops should sell war toys, they may be asked to say what they thought should be done. They may then do something.

### (d) Crisis

The following activity is a complex one, and may require a good deal of background work first. It can have quite exciting outcomes however. Write a scenario for an international crisis, set in the not-too-distant future. If the students have not been involved in the writing already, show or tell them the details, and then divide them into teams, representing the countries implicated and the main political figures. Set aside three periods of perhaps half-an-hour each, either in sequence or on separate days. One half-an-hour of the activity represents a full day in 'crisis'. Allow the students to do some research on 'their' country's pattern of foreign responses. Begin 'day one' by reading out a 'morning' news bulletin that brings the crisis to a critical point. Students then move about the room and engage in diplomatic bargaining to try and deal with what is going on and avert war. They can learn a lot very quickly about how hard it is to get agreement in a climate of suspicion, having poor information and with disaster imminent.





The teacher keeps a close eye on the clock, feeding in further news bulletins as she or he sees fit. Try shortening the last half-an-hour to increase the pressure on participants as they work to resolve matters. Compare what happens (where resources permit) with any one of the major international crises that have occurred over the last two or three decades.

**(e) Peace**

The following activity is deceptively simple. Teachers at several levels have reported interesting results however. Pick a fine day if possible. Pose the question: 'In a world of suspicion and mistrust with the perpetual threat of wars, both big and small, before us, why do you think peace is important?'

Invite the students outside to somewhere pleasant. All have to shut their eyes for three minutes or so and lie on their backs without talking.

Resume class.

**(f) Summit**

Like the 'Crisis' activity, this is more one for senior students who have had the chance to work on the background material involved. Role-play a summit discussion between the leaders of two or three great powers about how to achieve better arms control, and a reduction in the level of nuclear armaments. Stage a classroom debate on the topic, with groups working together as the countries involved, trying to make strategic arms limitation more effective. Compare (where resources permit) the discussions that led to the *Partial test ban treaty* (1963) or the *Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons* (1970). Do emphasise that despite our human nature, people *have* worked together in ways that allow us to live together without violence. Explore how this is done (e.g. agreed standards; an impartial body to turn to when aggrieved).

**(g) Local Nobel peace prize**

Organise your own local Nobel peace prize to coincide with the international event. Find out the criteria used, and consider how they might apply to your award. Plan a ceremony (invite the local press) and honour the person in the school or school community who is considered to have done the most to promote peace.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

For students in parts of the world that are materially poor, the issue of development (and its environmental dimensions) is the same in principle, but very different in practice, from that issue as faced by students in more wealthy ones.

Even though you are more likely to be teaching relatively privileged students (in global terms at least) you will want to foster their responsiveness to claims for development, self-reliance, and self-determination, and to provide practical examples of how to facilitate such claims, not only internationally, but near at hand as well.

You may want to begin by reminding students that 'development' is usually defined as improving the quality of people's lives. That should lead to questions about what might actually be done to improve the quality of the lives of the

people in the school, such as: Could we do something to make life less stressful for newcomers to the school? Could we make it possible for those who have not been so academically successful to enjoy greater success? Could we make the cleaner's job less difficult?

You might also think about education for self-reliance and the extent to which students have opportunities for:

- managing their own learning
- teaching others
- managing day-to-day affairs
- being involved in building maintenance and improvement (e.g. repairing school furniture)

Opportunities for community work might also be provided, especially if students can be put in touch with local development organisations such as tenants' unions, unemployed people's co-operatives, hospital auxiliaries, consumer rights groups, and migrant resource centres.

Other activities follow (the necessary resources are quite widely available now e.g. see back copies of *New Internationalist*, and its superb annual calendar).

### **(a) Food**

Ask students to keep a record of everything they eat and drink in a day. Analyse what they learn in terms of what their bodies need to survive and to grow (carbohydrates, fats, proteins, minerals, vitamins and water).

Choose one meal and trace its ingredients—where they came from, and how they came to hand.

Choose something from the daily diet—preferably something a bit unfamiliar—that grows readily nearby, and have the class, in pairs, grow an example of it in a can or pot or school garden. Work out why some students have more success with their plants than others; invite someone with a good knowledge of gardens or crops to talk to the class about plant care; where resources permit start a class garden that all students can work in, and share the produce; hold brainstorming sessions to discuss possible improvements, for example: Is the method of cultivation the most suitable? Are there other ways of controlling pests? Could you be growing useful plants that would do well that are not used locally? How could the system of sharing the work be made more efficient and co-operative? Is there waste? What songs and dances would celebrate what is done?

Parallels could be drawn between the class work and the situation in other parts of the world, or at other times. A city school might try and arrange with a country school to exchange visits.

### **(b) Water and health**

Fresh water is very scarce in the world, and is getting scarcer as people use more. Have students, as a home project, fill a medium-sized container with water, and use only that for a day to drink from, to wash in (both themselves, their eating utensils, and their clothes), to give to their animals and plants, or to use for play. Do this yourself.

Discuss how you all fared and what you did to make your share go further. Discuss what you would do if this were really—as it is for many of Earth's people—how you had to live every day.

Water carries wastes, and organisms that cause diseases. Sanitary water management (both supply and disposal) is essential to communal well-being. Have the students—singly or in small groups—research the water supply and disposal system of their school, and suggest how it might be improved. This can be done for the whole community too, or even the whole world.

### **(c) Housing**

Houses directly reflect such things as local climate and geography; family structure and status; cultural and religious preferences; and the availability of building materials. Brainstorm with the class a list of all the things that a house should do. Have students design (preferably in small groups) a dwelling that does these things, but one that is not like the homes built locally (though one that could be made there nonetheless). Have each group describe and explain the features of what it has designed. Or have groups work on the way in which local house designs might be modified and improved to conserve resources like water and power, and to minimise pollution.

### **(d) Population**

In many parts of the world, the effects of population growth are very clear. In other areas it is still less obvious. The impact of this phenomenon is universal however. Many statistics show how crowded our world is going to get in the next thirty years if present trends continue, and what this will mean in terms of pressure on the environment, and competition for resources. It is important for students to ask:

- Why do people have children?
- What responsibilities do parents have to their children?
- How many will be appropriate for themselves, as parents, when they grow up?

Draw a circle on the ground—not very large. Have the whole class cram into it, and conduct a lesson there. Or give a class using only a quarter of the space in which this is normally done.

### **(e) 'Rich man, poor man' lunch**

One teacher tried the following as part of a senior course on world development issues:

We had a 'Rich man, poor man' lunch, to experience the difference between having too much to eat, and too little. Students drew raffle tickets, with the value of \$2, \$1, 50c and nothing; they used these to 'buy' lunch. We sat everybody in the same room and allowed all students to choose from the selection. (The exercise would work better in the future if different kinds of food were provided for each group, and each group was without access to any other group's food. 'Helping yourself' was rife, which spoiled the effect somewhat.) The discussion after the lunch indicated that students had appreciated the experience. We also invited students from neighbouring high and private schools to the lunch, and aired and discussed some of their prejudices about each other. This included their perceptions of each other and how they felt about these.

### **(I) Work**

As the world economy changes, so does the nature of the world's work. With industrialisation has come urbanisation. Fewer people now live in the country and grow food, and many more work in secondary and service industries in cities, where they are employed by others and not themselves. This kind of work is different from labour on the land, and creates different patterns of consumption as well as production.

It is not so long ago, of course, that conditions in rural Australia were not unlike conditions today in many countries of the 'Third World'. The early chapters of Albert Facey's *A fortunate life* provide some striking similarities, one of which was the advantage of having a large family (children were needed to do the tedious work that had to be done to make ends meet). Australia has changed since then—but so has the world. *All* countries are developing countries, in the sense that they must continue to integrate their agricultural, industrial, educational, financial and trade policies if they are to maximise the productive capacity of their people. They must do this now as members of a world economy, however, and this makes the problem local and universal at the same time.

Investigating work is something many students will be doing as part of their daily lives. Bringing a wide range of working and unwaged people into the classroom from the community to talk to students is a good way to broaden their perceptions; better still is to be able to take students into different work environments so that they can see what is involved. Ask the students whom they want to meet or where they want to go.

Many projects for individual or group study also suggest themselves: patterns of employment locally, nationally and internationally; how 'work' is changing at one or all of these levels; what effect it might be having on education; and how 'workers' organise to protect their rights, for example.

### **(g) Energy**

Doing anything takes energy. The more you do, the more you need. Brainstorm with the class the sources of energy used in the school (for example, sunlight to see by; the food in the students). Trace where it comes from and how it gets to those who use it. Which ones are 'renewable' resources? What are the environmental effects?

This can also be done for the home, the suburb, the state, the country, the region, or the whole world.

Set group projects to design—even build—devices which can provide energy for the community. What is available locally that can be used for this purpose: wind, water, fossil fuels, wastes?

## **4. GOVERNMENT AND THE LAW**

Human rights are moral claims. We can make moral claims regardless of whether or not they are laid down by law. We can say, for example, that all human beings are morally entitled to be free from arbitrary arrest, or unemployment, or racial discrimination, regardless of whether or not a law has been passed that endorses these freedoms.

Laws embodying human rights, however, give moral claims more force. They may fail to do so even then, of course, since laws are not always obeyed, and governments do not always do what the law says they will. In countries where rights have been made into laws, we still need to know if these laws are being put into practice. But making moral claims into legal rights is a first step, and this is where politicians and judges, and those who make agreements that a number of governments promise to obey, are so important.

It can be a very significant first step, since laws not only give formal sanction to moral claims, but can also have an important educational effect. They define what a society officially thinks it is proper to do, and they provide a specific expression of the standards it thinks should be endorsed. They are there for all to see, and they stand—in principle at least—above the leaders as well as the led.

This said, we should remember that the process can, and does, go astray. It is readily corrupted. The mighty tend to create the morality convenient to their cause and, with might, they are in a position to make laws to match. This does not make them right, however; merely powerful. This is why we need always to ask about laws: for whom, to do what, for how long?

### **(a) Councils and courts**

Laws are made by politicians and judges at many levels of the state and interstate system. For students to understand in a clear and concrete way what is 'the law', who makes it, and why; they need to see for themselves law-making in action.

Wherever possible arrange for the class to visit some regional or central chamber of the country's political system—in session—so that students can watch its members at work, making law by *legislation*. Discuss the three questions posed above.

Likewise, arrange a visit to a law court to see not only laws being administered, but also decisions being made that set *legal precedents*. (You might be more tempted to arrange such a visit after reading what happened in one school where this was tried. The day the students were in court a number of homeless men were being charged with vagrancy. Many of the students were shocked by the mechanical and insensitive way in which the 'criminals' were treated; others wanted to know why so little account was taken of the fact that they had nowhere to live. The visit was a real eye-opener for most of the visitors.)

Another effective teacher-designed activity involved students compiling a booklet called 'Your rights' for people in their local area. It included student-researched and written sections on 'Consumer's rights', 'Your rights if arrested', 'The rights of "P" plate drivers' and 'The rights of the unemployed'.

If visits are not possible, organise the class into a model of a political council, and have them debate a contemporary political issue. Also arrange them into a formal court and have them adjudicate a local or national case at law. Watch the media for suitable examples, or make them up. Encourage the students to find suitable examples themselves.

To introduce an international dimension, have the class research the decision-making processes of the United Nations, and the issues current there. Also review some cases brought before international commissions and courts, that may set precedents of their own.

The following is one example, adapted from recent proceedings of the European Commission and Court of Human Rights:

Mrs X has a child attending secondary school. On one occasion the child, aged 14, received a few strokes of the cane as a punishment from the school principal. A doctor found that the caning had produced weals (one over a foot long). The child was in discomfort for several days. Mrs X complained that the caning constituted degrading treatment or punishment within the meaning of the relevant human rights Convention [note also Article 5 of the Universal Declaration] and that, by the use of corporal punishment, the government involved had failed to respect Mrs X's right as a parent to ensure her child's education and teaching in conformity with her philosophical convictions.

After considering the evidence given by both sides, the Commission was able to get a settlement. This consisted of a payment of money by the government involved to Mrs X, and the dispatch of a circular letter by the central authorities to local educational ones stating that the use of corporal punishment might in certain circumstances amount to a treatment contrary to the Convention. (Adapted from *Decisions of the European Commission and Court of Human Rights* and the Committee of Ministers, Council of Europe, *Yearbook of the European Convention on Human Rights*, 1981, Martinus Nijhoff, the Hague, 1983, pp. 402-4.)

You may also wish to invite a local politician and/or legal person to talk to the class about the three questions posed at the beginning of this activity, and three more: Why are laws obeyed? How is 'justice' done? How is 'fairness' achieved in government and the law? Personal accounts by well-chosen speakers under well-prepared conditions can be more vivid and memorable than months of more abstract and general work.

**(b) Sorts of courts** The formal court above that the students may have seen, or constructed for themselves, is not the only way this kind of human activity can go on. Try arranging the class into a much more informal court with the 'disputants' in the middle, their 'friends' and 'family' close at hand, and the rest of the class in a circle around them as a 'village'. Appoint a 'magistrate', but put this person outside the circle, as someone to be turned to only when the locals want an outsider's opinion. Have the disputants put their cases, in turn, allowing everyone to argue all the time, making jokes, elaborating points, taking part. The discussion should continue until an agreed verdict is reached.

The issue 'at issue' is one students can initiate and negotiate. Discuss afterwards how the 'law' worked. In both the formal and the informal cases, note how (depending on the issue) it may not be possible to find someone obvious to blame, particularly when each party has reasonable points to make.

**(c) Equality before the law** Article 7 of the Universal Declaration begins: 'All are equal before the law . . .

This is a statement of human principle. It is not, however, always observed, nor does it necessarily reflect human practice. *Animal farm*, the famous story by

George Orwell of the farm where all the animals were equal, but some were more equal than others, is a graphic parody of this fact. What can be done to foster the

rule of law, when law-making is done by those with power, and as such, protects the powerful more readily than the powerless?

Describe to the students the following episode:

You have just come into the class. You begin the lesson and say 'Today we are going to talk about the right to privacy. What is that! Is that a note? I want to see it! Read it out to the whole class! You refuse? Well then we shall see about that!' The offending student is marched off to confront the school principal.

Set up a role-play between the 'student', her or his 'friend', and a sympathetic 'parent'. Or where appropriate, between the 'principal', the 'student' and the 'teacher'.

This simulates one outcome of structural hypocrisy, i.e. where what is done is at odds with course content. After the role-play is finished, brainstorm ways in which the 'student', as the relatively powerless one, might have handled the situation, faced as she or he was with those in a more powerful position, but as someone who still wanted to establish the importance of the underlying principle: the right to privacy.

Inequality before the law can also be discussed at the school level by recalling any examples students can provide of different penalties being applied for committing the same offence.

At a state or national level it is possible to investigate such questions as whether, for example, it is true that a disproportionate number of Aboriginal people are imprisoned in some areas, and if so, why? Is it true, too, that a disproportionate number of poor people are imprisoned in Australia, and if so, why?

At an international level, try the following simulation:

Country 'A' has accused Country 'B' of arbitrarily arresting two of its citizens. The persons involved have been on holiday, and there can be no good reason for holding them. 'Their papers are not in order' the 'Bs' say, and 'until we establish their innocence, we are going to assume they were up to no good'.

Role-play the meeting of two officials, one from each of the countries involved, with the two people themselves. Follow the role-play with a discussion of what the official from Country 'A' and the tourists, as the 'powerless' ones in this situation, could otherwise have done to convince the official from Country 'B' of the need to respect articles 8, 9 and 11 of the Universal Declaration.

## **5. FREEDOMS OF SPEECH AND BELIEF**

Freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of thought, are central to the human rights doctrine. They are defined by Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration. They assume it is better to let people find things out for themselves and have their own say, rather than bottle them up by more or less authoritarian means.

The freedoms of speech and belief sometimes come into conflict with other rights. The use of such freedom to harm human beings for something they cannot help, for example, such as their skin colour or ethnic origin, has led to much debate about which right should prevail. We may never be relieved of our responsibility to think or say the truth as we understand it, and yet we have no

right either to incite hatred toward other human beings. This bears careful consideration.

The freedom of speech and belief has obvious implications for classroom life. It can require teachers to make personal changes that may not be easy. This is how one self-critical teacher describes the difficulties she went through as she learnt to give her students greater freedom of expression:

I had such a difficult time in the early weeks biting back leading questions or prompting the children. I feel I have learnt to value more what the children are saying. Further, I learned that my estimation of where a discussion should be going leads to dominating tactics that smother the children's interest, and this situation should be avoided.

The children enjoyed the equality of input during discussions, and I certainly learnt the benefits of listening to what they were actually saying.

In a school in Quebec, Canada, students argued that freedom of expression included the freedom to express oneself through one's clothing. They wrote the following recommendations; about dress and clothing for their school community to consider:

We propose the following course:

1. encourage the whole school community to reflect on the important symbolic function of dress and clothing accessories and the rights they touch on;
2. recognise clothing as a means of exercising freedom of expression;
3. agree to set as a limit to this freedom of expression the same limit as for any other right: *respect for the rights of others*. It should therefore be agreed to ban any clothing or clothing accessory that contains, in the context, a message that is discriminatory, defamatory, obscene (that is, containing a clear attack on the dignity of others) or blasphemous, or that encourages violence;
4. when regulations prescribe required dress, such as for gym or shop work, etc., ensure that the relation between the need for that particular type of clothing and the hygiene or safety standards intended to be promoted always is clear, and indisputable;
5. ensure that the regulations are always applied equally to all: for example, that there are the same requirements for girls as for boys (and vice versa), for 'good students' as for those considered 'troublemakers', for the students in any ethnic and cultural majority as for those belonging to minorities . . .

In this area, as in others, a real education in freedom and responsibility has a better chance of being achieved in negotiation and the search for consensus.

(Stepane Dulude, (December 1984) 2, 4 *Parlons droits*, *Newsletter about the Promotion of Rights in School*, 5.)

How might these proposals contribute to determining the standard of dress in your school?

### (a) What do you believe?

Everyone has beliefs and opinions. We mostly take them for granted. We rarely reflect on how we happen to have them.

Begin by labelling the four corners of the room 'yes', 'no', 'sometimes', 'not sure'. Tell the students that you are going to read out some general statements to them and that after each one they are to move quickly to the corner labelled with the answer they prefer. They should not stop to think.

Emphasise that you are not concerned for the moment with rights or wrongs. You are only interested in finding out about opinions and beliefs.

Read the following list at a pace that prohibits reflection. They are only suggestions—add more if you want to make the activity longer:

- All fruit is delicious.
- It would be better if teachers were more strict.
- Girls are smarter than boys.
- We're all the same under the skin.
- Old people are smarter than young people.
- Students with disabilities should be able to go to any school they like.
- Rich people are more important than poor people.

Note how the composition of the corner groups changes after each statement. Point out that though there have been overlaps, no two people have agreed on everything. At this stage, proceed to the next activity.

### **(b) What do you think?**

Repeat the above activity, only this time allow time for reflection. Encourage students to think about which corner they want to go to, and to discuss the statements among themselves before they decide. Encourage students not to go to a corner just because friends have gone there. Emphasise that it is still acceptable to use the 'not sure' corner. Discuss 'conformity', and the importance of thinking for oneself. Join in this time yourself.

### **(c) Frames of reference**

Beliefs and opinions vary depending, for example, on the context, and whether we like what we see or not. This is reflected in our choice of words. We may talk about people we know, for example, as either 'worried about what others think of them', or 'humble' and 'not self-righteous'; either 'very ambitious' or 'very keen to improve themselves'; either 'submissive' or 'prepared to co-operate'; either 'dishonest' or 'indirect' or 'sensitive toward other people's feelings'; either 'less prepared to change things' or 'more tolerant'; either 'less aware of individual rights' or 'more selfish'.

Get students to think of other dichotomies of this sort (e.g. more sentimental vs more affectionate; more naive vs more cheerful; more slavish vs less afraid of hard work). (Note how this list was developed to discuss national culture by R. Dore, 'The Japanese personality', in G. Wint (ed.), *Asia: a handbook*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969, p. 495.)

Have them list in the most positive way they can five qualities about themselves they really admire. Put these into a negative frame of reference, so that the same things become hurtful instead of praiseworthy. Then do the reverse, first listing in as negative a way as possible qualities they do not particularly like about themselves, and then using mirror words that make the list less offensive.

### **(d) Words that wound**

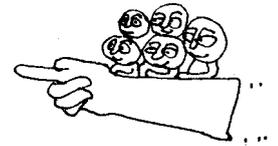
What limits should be placed on what we can say about our thoughts and beliefs? Should we always be able to say whatever we like?

Extending the previous activity, have the class brainstorm a list of hurtful comments; ones that they know can cause distress. Then choose a few of the worst ones.

Since changing frames of reference may not be enough, it may be necessary to confront statements as they stand.

Break the class into groups of five or six if possible. Someone in each group should read the first statement. The group must simply accept that this is a comment that has hurt somebody. They are not to question whether *they* think the statement is hurtful or not. Have them discuss why the hurt person might have been made to feel so bad; whether people should be allowed to say such things regardless of their effects; and what to do about it when it happens.

Repeat for each statement.



Here is a brief account of how one child was wounded by words, then healed by a sensitive and sensible intervention on the part of her teacher:

A new girl joined the grade, an Indian child from Fiji, of the Hindu religion. She dressed differently, was a little overweight, and in the first few weeks didn't speak very much. It was difficult to judge her standard of English. Everything went smoothly for her in her new school until I was absent on sick leave for one day. A group of boys pushed and shoved her around in the playground and in the classroom made faces at her, calling her 'Hare Krishna'.

On my return another girl related to me what had happened. The boys were asked what they had done and why. None of them knew what 'Hare Krishna' was—just 'funny people in Melbourne', who they thought dressed like Indians.

This incident showed many things apart from the apparent racism. Most newcomers \_\_\_\_\_ are subjected to some hassle. When it was discussed as a class everyone knew they had been silly and most saw they had been led by the group. This was made easier because, due to the Human Rights program, we had the language needed to discuss the incident in terms of human rights, responsibility, trust etc. We had a framework of ideas within which to discuss it. The boys were able to write down why they had done it and in this way apologise. Some children were able to suggest how the new girl could have reacted. Surprisingly, because of this incident, the new girl found a place in the classroom. She began to speak English fluently (a lesson was taught to me never to underestimate the ability of children) and her relationship with me developed into a loving and trustful one.

Similar events crop up in any school, although not all of them are brought to such a happy conclusion. All the same, they are a reminder that improving respect for human rights is a constant challenge in the daily life of schools and classrooms. Unless it is possible to change our own schools and classrooms, to make them better places for human beings, there will always be something at odds about trying to improve respect for human rights 'over there'.

### (e) The teacher as tyrant

What does it feel like to be told what to think or believe, and not to have *any* chance to decide such things for yourself, or to have a say?

Tell the class that last night you—the teacher—became a tyrant. As a consequence, for the whole lesson there will be no questions, and the students have to do exactly as they are told without complaint. If they have something to say, they cannot speak or write it, but have to indicate their request in gesture.

As a tyrant, it is up to you to teach the 'New truth', regardless of what they might otherwise think or believe.

Among the important features of the 'New truth' are the following:

1. The earth is flat—in fact, it is slightly saucer shaped, and when you go 'around the world' you are actually moving along a curved course within that saucer. Satellite photos and pictures from the moon are fakes.
2. All children should be seen and not heard—they are basically horrible little people and have to be taught their place in society as inferior beings.
3. School is always wonderful, and every teacher, as a tyrant, is wonderful too. Because of their new power they have become the most beautiful, handsome, clever, brave, exciting people in the whole world and all children are overjoyed to have the chance to sit in class and be told everything that is True.

The teacher can elaborate other statements—the more preposterous the better—and should then proceed with a normal lesson, under the most strict conditions possible.

Call a halt and discuss what has been happening and how the students feel.

Note that of all the activities in this collection, this one has produced the most diverse effects.

One of the teachers who has tried it wrote the following:

I went out of the room briefly, re-emerged, slammed the door, screamed out that there had been a teacher's take-over and that things were going to be different. I insisted on marking each child's hand with an orange cross. I made the children repeat ridiculous statements after me because they were the new truths, for example: 'Children are dirty smelly creatures!', 'The world is flat!', and 'Worms are delicious to eat!' and so on. I insisted on silence, and sent out of the room anyone who disobeyed. Some children who didn't know whether or not to take me seriously began 'to be afraid'. I called a stop. The children seemed relieved to be reassured that it was only an activity. We discussed what had happened, why I had done it and how they had felt.

The children thought it was a huge joke, and wanted me to do some more of the same, or try it on the class next door. They seemed to understand that I had wanted them to experience a loss of their freedom of conscience, opinion and expression. Their feelings included puzzlement, surprise, shock, and doubt, even to the extent of fear.

Personally, for me to attempt such an 'acting' role-play was extremely difficult, and emotionally draining. If I was a more accomplished actress, I feel I could have developed the situation until I had successfully intimidated almost every class member. Unfortunately, I could barely resist the temptation to burst into laughter, which was certainly noticed by a couple of the more perceptive class members. Still, a valuable learning experience for all of us.

(Michelle Michie in Human Rights Commission, *Teaching, enacting and standing up for human rights*, Occasional Paper No. 9, AGPS, Canberra, 1985, pp. 23-4.)

On the other hand, another teacher in a different school suggested that this activity, and others like it, should be removed from the manual at once. You will judge for yourself what is appropriate to your own situation. Note, however, one other teacher's comments on this score:

I was reluctant all along to use 'the teacher's coup d'etat' activity feeling it was a little unnecessary, and doubting my own ability to 'carry it off'. However, feeling the impetus of the whole programme was slowing down for the children and myself, I decided to do the role-play. The impact was at times devastating for the children and overall quite unnerving for me. It took some time to fully 'deprogramme' the children and for them to see the real meaning of the activity. It was, on reflection,

necessary to do—and for all of us. From then on all activities were seen and discussed in a new light. This was indeed the peak of our programme.

This account suggests that good class rapport is essential for the activity to succeed, since confusion is part of the point of it, and this has to be handled with great care. You may find it difficult to conceive of doing such an activity without practice, and without having built up your own confidence first. As two of the teachers above discovered, however, it can be well worth trying.

One variation is to get another teacher to play the 'tyrant'. That would still mean, of course, your making time to debrief students about what had been done to them, and in terms of understanding oppression, why.

**6. FREEDOMS TO MEET AND TAKE PART IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS** How does a community maintain itself as such? In part, by its members meeting together and organising their affairs. The freedom to do these things makes communal involvement possible and community itself actual. The basic principles are defined by Articles 20 and 21 of the Universal Declaration. Their systematic denial will stop a society from mining much of its richest resource—the skills and talents of its own people.

Habits of communal *participation* can be fostered throughout a student's schooling. Opportunities for community *service* inside and outside the school can become the basis for a life-long contribution to social and political affairs. One teacher writing on this issue has argued that:

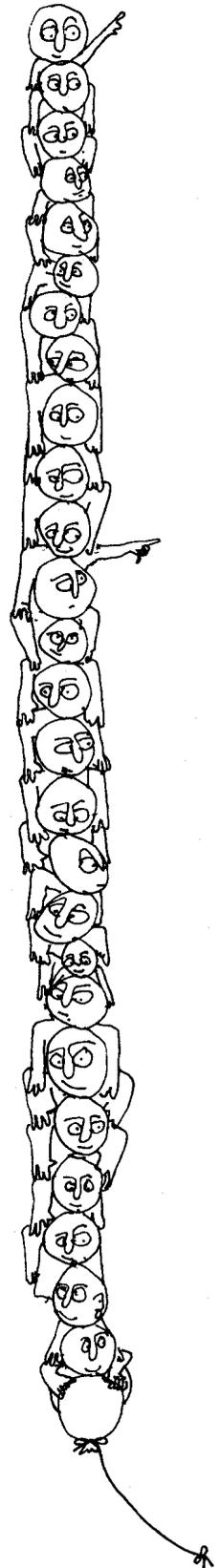
Schools should be directed to allowing young people the opportunity to learn that they have the ability, the right and the power to organise and unite to influence events in their lives.

Some of the suggestions he has made about how this might be done include:

- establishing student councils
- involving students on policy committees, education committees and other school committees
- negotiation between teachers and students of school and classroom rules
- regular reports to students from Administration, union branch etc.
- involvement of students in seminars and in-services aimed at developing curriculum etc.
- community investigations and surveys
- assistance of students in organising submissions for funding
- students organising excursions, visits to potential employers
- students organising their own work experience
- inter-school visits arranged by students to discuss programs and ideas
- organisation of study periods for seminar students

(*Victorian Teacher*, 3 August 1984, p. 29.)

Many schools already have student councils that allow participation in their affairs, though the adult hierarchy usually limits what can be done in practice. You might want to consider how autonomous students think the student council is in your (their?) school. Would you agree with the teacher who said that 'the students' involvement in SRC activities has taught them more about rights and obligations than any set of contrived classroom exercises?'



A sense of how it feels to work together for something worthwhile may also be had from the following class activities.

### **(a) A Human Rights Society**

In suggesting that the class form a Human Rights Society (HRS) the teacher can initiate a number of relevant tasks that allow students to:

- define the purpose of the HRS in more detail
- hold a competition for a Society symbol
- make individual membership cards that carry this logo
- organise office-bearers
- put up a special notice-board for HRS activities
- find out about other human rights societies—nationally and overseas—with whom the class can liaise; send for their publications
- display these where the class can use them
- begin holding meetings—the first could discuss the right of freedom of association itself: 'Why organise?', 'Why seek a say in how one is governed?', invite a guest speaker—perhaps to lunch
- invite other guest speakers—local politicians, issue-specialists, area-specialists—to give short talks and hold discussions
- hold a Human Rights Society Inaugural Dance or Festival
- set up sub-committees to meet and to research particular tasks, for example:

One group could compile a list of people who have helped make human rights happen and could try and get pictures of them to put on a Society notice-board or around the walls (with a short statement in each case why they are there); another group could approach other classes with offers to speak to them about particular human rights issue-areas, explaining why the Society was formed, what it does, and offering associate membership; where resources permit, the Society could also publish a regular newsletter.

### **(b) A Human Rights Conference**

A small Human Rights Conference was organised in Adelaide on 12 August 1985 by two Year 7 teachers. They invited parents from the two schools involved as well as students to participate in the following program:

- 9.45 Getting acquainted: 'Special Data'
- 10.00 Amnesty International—Speaker
- 10.45 RECESS
- 11.05 Freedom from Hunger—Speaker
- 12.00 Role plays and reports: 'Teacher for a day'
- 12.30 LUNCH
- 1.20 Film—Big *Henry and the Polka Dot Kid*  
Do question sheet with pen pal
- 2.00 Trade Union Training—Speaker
- 2.45 Thank you time

In their review of the conference they wrote:

The parents' responses were all very positive and we felt very pleased with the overall result. The children were wonderful too and both classes got on very well together . . . [we were] gratified at their enthusiasm and apparent understanding.

You might try organising a similar conference in your own locality and see how it works for you. Better still, suggest that students organise their own.

### (c) Bugs

The converse of private citizens participating in public affairs is the intervention by public authorities in private affairs. How far should governments be able to reach into the private lives of ordinary people?

Before the school day begins, tape small cardboard dots under desks and chairs and around other parts of the room. When the class enters tell them that the room has been 'bugged'. Allow them to conduct a brief search, and collect the 'bugs' found at the front of the room. Inform the class that they can't be sure all the 'bugs' have been found. They must assume that *every act and word, done or spoken*, is being watched and listened to *at that moment* by the principal. All conversation is also being recorded, so that parents, too, can see and hear everything. (One teacher who did this activity numbered the dots. The class became quite paranoid when it could not find the whole series, and began questioning her as to whether she had really planted a complete set, that is, whether or not she had deliberately left some numbers out. They were somewhat disconcerted to find at the end that she was telling the truth, and that they had not trusted her.)

Suggest that there is a file held by School Authorities on every child. Everything each student says and does will be put there. Constant trouble-makers will be sent to Special Schools for appropriate discipline.

Conduct the usual class under these conditions.

At a later moment, allow students to search again to find more of the hidden surveillance devices.

Discuss at the end how it feels to be 'watched' like this. How free are citizens to find out what the authorities have on file about them? What are the students' rights with respect to access to school files and student report cards? What happens when there is no communal trust?

Telephone tapping is sometimes permitted under strict conditions and there are arguments that can be made in the interests of the individual and society in defence of it; during the investigation, for example, of well organised criminals. Some students could be interested in investigating such procedures; when they are legal, for example, and what the conditions and circumstances are that are used to justify such surveillance? The Attorney-General's Department might supply the information needed.

## 7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

The Universal Declaration contains a number of articles that affirm the rights of human beings to a decent standard of living. Whether it is realistic to make these claims in any particular case or not is a matter of resources, and where they exist whether the government will use them this way. Where they do not, the right to economic development can be paramount. This has both national and international implications.

The world's resources (its physical and industrial assets and its disposable wealth) are distributed unevenly. Why is this so? Any adequate answer would have to describe and explain the geography and the history of world society and

of its political economy as a whole (as well as that of the parts). This is a complex task, more appropriate to senior students, and even then better done by concrete means, using case studies and particular examples.

We are in the middle of an Industrial Revolution. That revolution reaches everywhere. It is arguably the most significant series of events in the written record of human affairs. Because it is happening now it can be hard to see. We take it for granted, or it may seem too abstract to have much effect. The effects are profound, however, and no-one knows what they will lead to.

The mass production of goods by machines began about two hundred years ago. This made possible new patterns of social, economic and political power. These were quickly extended across the world in the search for markets, for sites to send surplus people, for sources of supply for raw materials. The political struggles this started have not stopped.

There is a basic difference between those who have the capacity to start or foster such a process, and those who must sell their work for a wage. The latter are less powerful, which always puts them at risk. Their standard of living is dependent upon others, and this can lead to repression. To illustrate what it means to have only your labour to sell in circumstances where unemployment is high, invite some people who were young during the Depression to recount their experience of working and finding work during those hard times. Invite others who suffer this plight today to tell what it feels like. The rights to economic well-being describe what *any* society should provide for those who live in it, up to and including world society as a whole.

Conceptual language is particularly important here. It is an interesting exercise to study the concept of 'charity' for example, as it moves from being a simple response to begging, to the less demeaning idea of something that is given to the 'deserving poor' (who are supposed to be duly grateful for what they get), to that of *social security*, which can be claimed as of right (without the recipient feeling apologetic, or like someone seeking favours).

At a global level, social security means the world's poor and deprived having a right to expect our assistance; and our feeling *an obligation* to share our wealth with those in need.

The idea of minimum standards is how right is defined, and it has inspired many to work for the good of others and for opportunities for all human beings to live decent lives. The struggle in Australia for a 'basic wage' makes a good historical case-study in point. There are many others however.

### **(a) Rich and poor**

Role-play the following situation: 'Three people are sitting next to each other in an airplane. One works for the government of a poorer country, and is going to a conference on world food supplies. Another, who works for the government of a relatively rich country, is going to a meeting of international financiers to get a loan to help cover his or her country's growing economic debts. Another is a teacher, who is interested in the whole problem of world development. He or she has just been taking a short course on 'Aid, Trade, Arms Production and World Justice', given by an international non-governmental organisation. They begin to argue about what countries should do to promote human well-being.'

### **(b) Working life**

Describe a place—a factory perhaps, or a plantation or farm—where the workers have decided to make a number of requests to the owners or managers. They want more of a say in how the place is run. They also want better wages, better provision for when they are ill or get injured, more attention to the issue of safety, the chance to set up an education programme to improve their skills, and longer rest periods.

Form the class into two groups: workers and officials. Have them negotiate, each side either sending delegates who report back, or talking face-to-face.

Repeat the encounter but reverse the roles so that the class-half that were workers before become the officials now, and vice versa.

*The Kibbutz on Tall Grass Mountain* is an inspiring story of how people changed their own lives and broke the economic and social shackles that bound them. It is a film worth finding, as is *Sahela*, a story of rural poverty and development action set in Bangladesh.

### **(c) Speakers**

Invite someone involved in development issues to speak to the class, perhaps under the auspices of its Human Rights Society. Follow this up by assigning class groups to study aspects of what was discussed—geographic areas, specific sections of the community, special issues that affect all (such as modernisation, bureaucratisation, urbanisation and changes in cultural values).

### **(d) Serving the world**

Encourage the class to contact local branches of United Nations bodies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), or the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for posters and materials you might use. There are non-governmental organisations too which could help and have materials. They often enjoy receiving letters from students and schools. Try also the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). (UNICEF: 866 United Nations Plaza, 6th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A. FAO: Via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100, Rome, Italy. UNDP: 1 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.)

Teaching for student awareness of world development issues has been widely recognised as a legitimate issue-area for many years, and there are centres for world development education which provide books of their own. One example is *Learning for change in world society* (World Studies Project, London, 1979. Postal address: One World Trust, 14 Palace Chambers, Bridge Street, London SW1A 2JT). Another collection of useful ideas is the manual by S. Fisher and D. Hicks, *World studies 8-13: a teacher's handbook*.

Divide the class into six groups or so. Each group writes one proposal for an aid project (a new well perhaps, or someone to go and train as a medical helper, or someone to come and advise on improving production methods). Projects are presented to the whole class. Divide the class into new groups, each of which must decide—as if it were an aid committee—to which project it is going to give its (very limited) funds. In making such appraisals, the distinction between *relief aid* (which is given to communities to help them recover in the short run from a

disaster of some kind) and *development aid* (which is more long term and looks to reducing or eliminating poverty's basic causes) is paramount. A number of important questions are also pertinent, e.g.:

- Will the aid help the majority or a minority of those affected?
- Will it tackle symptoms or causes?
- Will it use local ideas and materials or outside experts and resources?
- Will it be judged successful by locals or outsiders?

See also Ian Lister, *op. cit.* p. 24. Lister highly recommends a source book for teaching about the 'rich world/poor world' divide and 'one world' development efforts by Nance Lui Fyson, *The development puzzle*, Centre for World Development Education, 1979. Also excellent is *World concerns and the United Nations: model teaching units for primary, secondary and teacher education*, United Nations, New York, 1983.

### (e) The other foot

Put to the class the following picture of a possible world future:

We are running out of basic resources like fuel and food, clear air and water. Inequality is getting worse. Rich living is only for the very few. Time has come for big changes. What are they to be?

The poor argue for the importance of large, strong families and against people living as individuals; they see rich living as wrong; they see agriculture and raising animals as more important than industrial factories making luxury goods.

The rich want to keep what they have. They run the governments and the armies. They see change as needed only where it means preserving the kind of life they are used to.

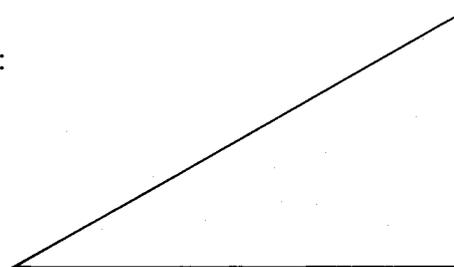
Conditions get worse, and in one part of the world the poor overthrow the rich. Those who were once well-off in this region have to give up their goods and live like everyone else—in one room for each family (or outside even), with one set of clothes, very basic food, and water only available from communal taps.

Divide the class into two halves: the old-poor and the new-poor. Then divide the class into small groups, with some members of both sectors in each. Have the old-poor explain to the new-poor how they shall live. The new-poor listen, and can suggest alternatives.

Reverse the roles, so that the new-poor become the old-poor, and vice versa. The students who have now become the old-poor explain to the new-poor how they could have prevented the problems that beset them all, and how they intend conducting relations with the rest of the world. The new-poor listen, and can suggest alternatives.

### (f) Probable, possible futures

Give students a diagram like the following:



Call the horizontal line 'the probable future' and invite students to write or draw what they think the probable future is likely to be. Next call the sloping line the 'future as we would like it'. Invite them to draw or write about that. Next identify the gap between the two and invite them to draw or write about what they need to do by themselves and with others to make the future more like the way they want it to be. Then talk about their ideas, and the possible actions that could be taken. Where this is a realistic option, initiate some such action.

## 8. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WELL-BEING

Human beings do not live by bread alone, and wherever possible provision should be made—as the Universal Declaration decrees—for people to rest, learn, worship as they choose, share freely in the cultural life of the community, and develop their personalities to the full.

School will already be giving students access to the arts and sciences and the world of learning in general, and 'human rights schools' will be teaching these using multi-cultural, non-sexist examples from many places and epochs.

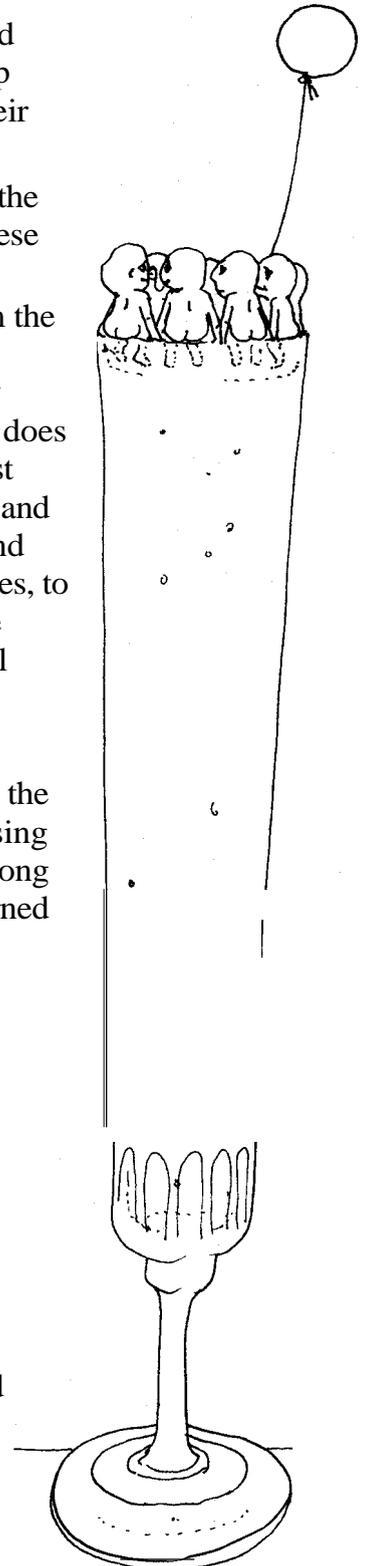
Much of a person's sense of individual and social well-being is derived from the family, and this issue-area provides an opportunity to look at this particularly important community unit in rights terms. The Universal Declaration specifically endorses the family, and deliberately seeks to protect and promote its welfare. It does not specify, however, what it means by the concept. Families take the form most relevant to the society in which its members live, and the various socioeconomic and cultural forces at work there. In turn they give those forces practical definition and pass them on. They range, as a result, from single-adult units in separate enclaves, to highly extended kinship systems that embrace whole communities. All forms are 'natural' and 'fundamental' (in the language of the Declaration), since they are all involved in nurturing human beings, though this may not have been what the original writers of that Declaration had in mind.

The whole issue-area is a very general one, and practically any activity in the whole school curriculum is relevant. The way to begin perhaps is by discussing the process of education itself. Education (as opposed to schooling) is a life-long affair and truly comprehensive, since every generation's culture must be learned again in every detail if it is not to disappear. The technology, the system of government and law, the values and religious beliefs; all must be passed on or lost.

### (a) Once upon a time. . .

Invite a grandparental person (as a guest of the class Human Rights Society perhaps) to come and talk to the students about what they were taught at school, and whether it served them well in later life.

Ask how they would foster the full development of the human personality; what they have learned about strengthening respect for human rights and freedoms; how they would further understanding and mutual respect between different human groups and nations; and what they believe makes for justice and peace.



**(b) Family**

Have the students map their family, as it stands at the moment. Where possible compare these maps to draw out any differences in family structure there might be. Discuss how this reflects differences in family practices. What were the family maps of people like 200 years ago—both the settlers and the Aboriginals? (The ABC has a series of films called *Families: alike and different* which is about a number of families—one each in Mexico, Japan, the Philippines, and other countries—performing familiar everyday tasks. The narration is done by a child belonging to each family. It is very engaging viewing for upper primary classes.)

**(c) Painting the street**

Where resources permit, paint a mural—a 'human rights' street lined with 'human rights' shops—in bright colours for all to see. (An activity devised by the artist Mirka Mora.)

**9. DISCRIMINATION: AN OVERVIEW**

No person is more of a human being than another and no person is less. Essentially we are 211 equal, and equally entitled to our human rights.

Equal, yes, but not identical. A fact which leads people to draw lines across the human map and to draw attention to differences they believe to be important; lines that distinguish between an 'us' and a 'them'; lines that not only create separate groupings, but suggest that 'we' (or 'they') are better, and that 'they' (or 'we') are worse. This is discrimination. It stops people from seeing that they are human beings first, and anything else only after that.

The most common line highlights gender. Since it coincides with a biological dichotomy built into our species itself, it can be very hard for people to see past such a difference to our deeper identity. Being different in *some* ways does not make us different in *all* ways. Having different bodies, in other words, that do different things does not mean that our lots in life should be different too.

On top of the gender line lie many others. The most pernicious is that of colour or race. Again, the fact of a *particular* difference is repeatedly *over-generalised* in such a way as to hide our common humanity.

As a teacher, these issue-areas (and others to do with disability, ethnic origin, minority group status, and perhaps also age) cannot be avoided. Human equality, and the life-chances and life-choices it promotes, do not just happen. Equality has to be taught for—which means (in curriculum terms) exploring stereotyped attitudes and prejudices (including you own), helping students to understand that they can be competent and caring regardless of race and sex, and providing appropriate and accurate information.

There are no formulae; no magic lesson plans. It is a process of questioning that never ends. There is a basic need to inform yourself about these issues; their socio-economic and political history; and how they work. You will also need to monitor your expectations in some way—perhaps using a diary—since when a teacher expects less, students learn less, in a self-fulfilling way.

Discrimination has both individual and social dimensions: it is both personal and institutional.

The *institutional* dimension can be at work even when no-one is particularly aware of it. For example, people who are poor can provide fewer educational opportunities for their children. When many of their children fail at school, they may be labelled by the education system as less suitable students, and be given even less opportunities, not more. Consider also the case where people count the number of leaders or politicians and discover that many more of them are male than female. This is then taken as evidence that women do not, as a rule, make good leaders or politicians, and therefore should not be educated in a way that encourages them to think so. School subjects are organised, and teachers teach, so as to restrict this opportunity. Most girls will then learn to fail.

These are vicious circles (descending spirals over time). They are enforced by double standards such as: '*He* likes to chat, while *she* is a gossip'. Sometimes plain ignorance is at fault. Mostly, however, attitudes like these are enforced by systems of great political and bureaucratic power, which can take a good deal to explain, and a good deal to change.

Taking part in a campaign to promote one of these human rights issue-areas is the most effective way of learning what is required, but this may not (depending upon your circumstances) be possible. Where it is possible, it is highly recommended.

As a general strategy you may be prepared to investigate your own practices, and students their own practices, first of all. That may then lead on to investigations of possible forms of discrimination within the school. As an example: in five schools that took part in a project on combating prejudice, teams of approximately five students went about finding answers to the question, 'Does it make a difference to have a non-English speaking background if you are a student in this school?' They wrote personal histories, interviewed other students, and sought the opinions of their parents and other members of their families. Then all the teams pooled their information. Originally most students felt that ethnic background made no difference to their education. Later they were less sure. As a result of their study, these student researchers were able to make over fifty recommendations about what could be done to improve the educational opportunities of 'ethnic' students.

There are many questions students might investigate in a similar fashion, such as:

Does it make a difference to be a girl (or a boy),  
OR

a newcomer,  
confident and independently minded,  
non-academically inclined,  
a member of a one-parent family,  
regarded as 'bright' or 'capable'.  
working part-time while being a student,  
from the country,  
in this school?

The *personal* dimension (and its social sources) can also be explored through the following activities.

**(a) The two box trick**

Take two small boxes the same size and fill one with stones and the other with sweets. Wrap the first box (stones) in an attractive way. Wrap the second (sweets) as unattractively as possible. Put them before the class as gifts, but allow the students to choose only one. The same can be done with record covers. Depending on the class level, this activity will need to be adapted accordingly.

A class that does not see through the trick will usually vote for the obvious option, with the obvious result—a lesson in false expectations.

Use this activity to discuss other times students might have chosen a 'book by its cover' and anticipated things on little information, that turned out to be untrue. How does this apply to the ways we pre-judge people? How readily do we change our minds when we learn more? (The person who prefers prejudice at any price is called a *bigot*.)

Good examples can be role-played.

**(b) All 'As' are `Bs'**

Pre-judgment is *prejudice*. We think we know more about things than we do. We over-generalise, sometimes to positive effect, sometimes to negative effect, but always inaccurately.

Ask students to choose a quality about your own character that they like; then ask them to name the colour of your eyes. Write these down: 'Our teacher is friendly. Our teacher has black eyes', for example. Over-generalise these statements so that they read: 'All black-eyed teachers are friendly'. Is this true?

Write some more: 'Student X comes from Antarctica. Student X is untrustworthy. All Antarcticans are untrustworthy'. This can be adapted to your own grade level and used to point out the false logic being used in many social instances every day.

**(c) Fat people are very thin**

Over-generalisation is not just a matter of false logic. The false logic is fuelled by *stereotypes*, which are fixed images (originally metal plates used in printing) that the user puts onto reality in a pre-set way.

Give the class the following list of people and their attributes (or any others you think are appropriate):

- |                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. fat people          | 1. are very thin               |
| 2. old people          | 2. are dishonest               |
| 3. young people        | 3. are all old                 |
| 4. wise people         | 4. are grumpy and useless      |
| 5. politicians         | 5. don't respect adults enough |
| 6. very nervous people | 6. are jolly                   |

Have them match the pairs. Point out, where the matching confirms the usual stereotype, that this is what has happened. Stereotypes stop us seeing the world as it really is. It you believe, for example, that fat people are usually jolly too, you have an image of a group of people that is too general to be true since, like the rest of humanity, only some fat people are really jolly. It is a lazy way to think, and it makes for a closed mind. It is 'labelling behaviour'. We make labels in our minds, or we learn them, and we stick them onto whatever we see. The labels end up telling us what to think and feel, and how to behave. Much as they

may save us bother, give us easy answers or quick ways of dismissing people, or make us feel better, perhaps, by helping us to fit in with the group, they are still labels. They are not the real thing.

There is one caution about the 'fat people are very thin' activity. At least one teacher who tried it felt she was introducing students to stereotypes they were previously unfamiliar with, and fostering negative attitudes as a result. One variation that may overcome this difficulty would be simply to provide a list of descriptions of people *without* providing the attributes, or to provide the attributes without identifying the people they are often associated with. This would let students arrive at their own perceptions of the characteristics they attribute to various categories of people (or the people they associate with various attributes). This way the strategy might avoid giving students new stereotypes and, at the same time, allow you to determine stereotypes and prejudices they already have.

Role-play an incident where, for example, a sad, fat person meets a thin, jolly one.

In confronting stereotypes, there is always the danger of encouraging them. Any grain of truth there may be in a stereotype, however, is just that—a grain.

#### **(d) Know your potato**

Ask the class about occasions they may have heard such expressions as 'They're all alike, aren't they', or 'That lot are all the same'.

Give each student a small stone, or some other regular object like a potato, and ask them to make friend with it—really get to know it. Ask a few to introduce their new friend to the class, to tell a story about how old it is; whether it is sad or happy, and how it got the shape it is. They can write essays on the subject, or songs, or poems of praise.

Put all the items back in a box or bag and mix them up together. Tip them out and have the students find their 'friend' from among the common lot.

Point out the obvious parallel: any group of people seem to be alike, at first, but once you get to know them, they are all different, they all have life-histories, and they are all potentially friends. This means, however, suspending any stereotypes (like 'rocks are cold and hard and indifferent') long enough to get to know them. It means not pre-judging them.

#### **(e) Spot the difference**

Present the following statements:

1. I like teachers because they are always kind.
2. I like the fact that some teachers are kind to me.
3. Teachers are a kind lot.

Discuss which is the stereotype or fixed image (no.3), which is the prejudice or pre-judgement (no.1), and which is the statement of opinion (no.2). The difference between no. 1. and no. 3 is the difference between a set conception of something, and the value connotation subsequently placed upon it. A set conception may already include in it a value judgment of some kind and this does blur the distinction. It is still worth making however. Discuss how all of them (as mental frames of reference) will make it harder to appreciate teachers not

only as kind and caring people, but as cross ones too! They all predetermine 'the facts'.



## 9. DISCRIMINATION—COLOUR OR RACE

Racism is the belief that there are mixed-sex human groups with particular (usually physical) characteristics that make them superior or inferior to others. Racist behaviour can be overt, such as treating some people worse (or better) because of the colour of their skin; it can be covert, and is seen in the way a society systematically advantages or disadvantages those groups with key characteristics over time; or it can be both.

Racist behaviour produces racial discrimination, which ranges from simple neglect, or the avoidance of those believed to be different and inferior, through harassment and various degrees of forced integration, to exploitation, exclusion and wholesale murder.

Racial discrimination is a stereotype or a prejudice turned into social action. It can be direct (in any of the forms above) or indirect (in the form of *scapegoating*—which means placing the blame on someone else when it should fall on others or yourself).

There is one *positive* form of discrimination. Where a group has been disadvantaged in one of these ways for some time, promoting the basic human rights of its members may not be enough to remedy the wrongs. Special efforts may have to be made to break the cycle of negative discrimination and despair. Without special efforts, equality of opportunity is not likely to have any real meaning. This is the point of so-called 'affirmative action'. The success of such efforts, of course, eventually removes the need for them.

A good reference at this point is the *International convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination*.

### (a) Scaling acceptance: colour

Propose a number of 'us/them' statements, such as:

1. I don't think I like 'them'.
2. I don't mind 'them', but I wouldn't have any living near me.
3. I wouldn't mind if some of 'them' lived near me.
4. I'd like to live with 'them'.

'Them/us' thinking stops people enjoying human differences and learning how we're all the same regardless.

Now list the range of skin tones that humans have, e.g. pinko-grey, white, brown, black, ivory, in-between.

Finally, ask each student to identify the number of the statement above that corresponds to how he or she might feel about people with skin colours other than his or her own (anonymously, if preferred). Alternatively, use the four corners of the room, asking for a 'yes', 'no', 'sometimes' or 'not sure' assessment in each case (see Freedom of Speech: 'What do you believe?', p. 41). Collate the results to get a picture of class values. (Adapted [as were a couple of the general activities on discrimination] from D. Shiman, *The prejudice book*).

Skin colour is one of the most arbitrary (least reasonable) ways of discriminating between people that humankind has ever devised. Where students

lack colour acceptance of any kind, ask them to plan a multi-racial society where they are destined to live, without knowing in advance what their own skin colour will be. Point out that they already live in a society of this kind—the world one, if not the local one.

The same activity can be run with a list of national or cultural names (other than those represented in the class).

### **(b) The non-racist classroom**

There are many ways of making a classroom a place of acceptance and of multi-racial celebration. Where cultural factors influence a student's responses allow for them (how much eye contact he or she finds comfortable, for example; how receptive he or she is to group learning strategies; his or her style of dramatic play or story-telling). Where there is racially-based friction in the class, deal with it; do not dismiss it. Do learn yourself, and teach your students, how to recognise the way the media, even the school-books, may reinforce racism. Study the stories of famous people who have fought against discrimination. Study the contributions made by people from all parts of the world to the common stock of human knowledge and experience. Introduce as much cultural diversity as possible into the curriculum (without trivialising, that is, without reducing other cultures to 'funny foods and folkdances'). Ask parents or other relatives or friends to help in this regard. Invite people of other races or colours who are active in community work to speak to the class about what they do. In a mixed-culture class, know students' names and their correct pronunciation.

The value of bringing students in touch with people who have experienced racial prejudice first-hand, was recognised very clearly by one teacher who took part in the Commission's 1985 Schools Program after he took the time and made the effort to organise some personal encounters of this kind. He commented:

The two most successful activities were the South African teachers talking about the life of non-whites in South Africa, and Tony C. talking about Aboriginal people. Tony was brought up on a mission about 20 miles outside of town. He gave both sides of the story, and that made him a good speaker to have.

**(c) Outsiders** Arrange the class by eights or tens into tight circles. Have the students interlock arms, then have one student play the role of the outsider trying (without violence) to get in. Give all the students the opportunity to feel locked out.

## **10. DISCRIMINATION—GENDER**

Article 2 of the Universal Declaration proclaims the validity of the rest of the document 'without distinction of any kind'. It goes on to make specific mention of a number of labels that are used to draw arbitrary lines between peoples. One of these is gender, and there is good reason to be specific, since sex discrimination ('sexism') remains the most pervasive of all the sources of social injustice.

Sexism, like racism, is built into the basic structure of society, and it involves every aspect of culture and power. It is also reflected in people's attitudes, which further foster the phenomenon. The assumption that human gender can be used

to define respective life choices and chances can be so automatic that it can seem to those (both male and female) who have never looked at it, as something beyond question.

Schools may play an important part in promoting or combating sexism. In mixed-sex schools, a disproportionate amount of resources will often go to male students, and redressing the imbalance can be tantamount to pushing uphill against pointed sticks. It is not impossible to make significant progress, however, as the following episode shows:

Early in the year, the girls decided it was unfair that the boys always took the cricket equipment out. It had been issued to Grade 6, but the girls didn't ever have a turn. One day the equipment was grabbed quickly by some girls and taken into the yard and a game began. The boys were horrified and very hostile. After recess, we tried to discuss it reasonably but failed. The boys argued that they didn't want girls playing with them as girls were too slow and didn't know how to play properly. This of course quite missed the point as the girls only wanted the equipment. Some boys became more and more heated; some others saw that this wasn't what the girls wanted (to play with the boys) and suggested a compromise. One boy lost his temper and stormed to the school gate (fortunately he didn't leave the grounds).

This episode showed various things about the grade. The girls had previously been very subdued in Grade 5, but were now firmly demanding what they saw as their rights. Earlier on, apart from the obvious sexist remarks, the class had shown that they could not discuss an issue like this in a rational manner. There were only a few boys and girls who were able to listen to the other side and modify their stance. By the end of the year, however, the children were responding better to differences of opinion. Good discussions could be held on many areas. Many slowly learned the techniques of listening, modifying their information, and speaking their mind. Some were not ready to learn these skills, but the program might make it easier for them to do so in later years.

**( a ) T i m e** If you teach a mixed-sex class, of roughly equal numbers, have one of the students time how long you spend in one lesson interacting with female as opposed to male students. Add up the results (students might repeat this experiment with other teachers).

Design compensatory practices, such as requiring one female question for every male one (where this reflects the sex-ratio in the whole class). Note the *quality* of your answers. Are they open for boys; closed for girls? Do they lead 'out' or 'in' for everyone? Do you tend to say 'yes' or 'no' to answers from girls, and something more evocative to the boys?

**( b ) A class reunion** Arrange with the students for the class to hold a reunion, as if thirty years have passed. They must chat about what they have done since they left school. Attend yourself (suitably antique).

Are there differences (in mixed-sex classes) between what the boys have done and the girls? In single-sex classes, have the boys had careers only? Have they mostly talked about political and technological changes? Have the girls mostly talked about families and domestic concerns?

Invite some grandparental people to talk about the male/female roles they were expected to play in their day.

**(c) What's a 'boy'? what's a 'girl'?**

Ask the class to think of as long a list of human character traits as possible (e.g. humility, arrogance, sense of fun, gentleness, need for affection, sense of adventure).

Take each one in turn, asking the class to decide whether it is more of a 'boy' trait, more of a 'girl' trait, or whether it applies to both equally (i.e. it is a 'whole cultural' one).

If stereotypes emerge, discuss with the class which ones seem the more positive or the more negative, and how such stereotypes affect what they think girls and boys are able to do in real life. (An abbreviated version of D. Shiman, *ibid.*, pp. 74-5.) Are they fair?

**(d) What's a 'man'? What's a 'woman'?**

Ask the class to think of as long a list of adult tasks as possible (e.g. caring for children, cooking food, gardening, farming, fetching firewood, running businesses, being police, being teachers, making music, being doctors, being priests).

Take each one in turn, asking the class to decide whether it is more of a man's task, or more of a woman's, or whether it applies to both.

If patterns emerge, discuss whether they fairly reflect what *either sex is capable of doing*.

**(e) Expectations**

Read the class the following:

Two judges are sitting together after dinner, talking about their work. 'What about this chap in court today?' one says to the other. 'If you were me, how would you decide?'

'You know I can't answer that', comes the reply. 'Not only did his father die five years ago—but he's my only son!'

Ask the students if this makes sense. How could the second judge say 'my son'? After all, the father of the man mentioned is already dead.

There *is* a sensible answer of course: the second judge happens to be the man's *mother*.

Does this solution come as a surprise? Did any of the students expect judges to be only men? If so, why?

**(0 Who's who?**

In the books the students encounter at school (or any media they monitor at home) have them check:

- whether there are the same number of references to males and females
- whether the girls are shown as brave decision-takers, who are physically capable and adventurous, creative, more concerned with what they can do than how they look, and interested in a wide range of careers
- whether the boys are shown as humane, caring people, who can be helpful, who express their emotions, who are keen to learn homemaking and child-rearing skills, who are free of the fear that others might not think them 'manly', and free of the feeling that girls are inferior

- whether the men and women respect each other as equals
- whether the men take an active role in the home
- whether the women take an active role outside the home, and if so, as other than teachers, nurses or secretaries, or unpaid or poorly paid labourers

### **(g) The non-sexist classroom**

Most of the suggestions made for the non-racist classroom can be adapted to promote a non-sexist one as well. Seek help from wherever possible in breaking down stereotypes; never allow exclusion based on sex; and respect traditional views, but present yours clearly and with conviction. Always ask: What is fair? Does anyone deserve to be treated like that? Acquaint students with the *Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women*. Be optimistic.

Media studies (advertisements in particular) provide good material, and a close scrutiny of the school curriculum and of current texts is also advised. Does 'history' give serious attention to the role of women as well as men? Does 'economics' discuss women in the labour market (both at home and outside the home)? Does 'law' look at women and property? Does 'government' look at female under-representation? Does 'science' give due weight to what women have achieved? Are girls encouraged to excel at mathematics? How sexist is the teaching of 'literature', 'language', and the 'arts'?

## **12. DISCRIMINATION—MINORITY GROUP STATUS**

The concept of a 'minority group' is mixed up with the concepts of 'ethnicity' and 'race', and when it is, earlier activities are relevant here as well. The term is a loose one, and has been used to describe indigenous peoples, displaced peoples, migrant workers, refugees, and even oppressed *majorities* (as in South Africa). Common to all these groups is poverty and a dire lack of power. A minority group ceases to be a 'minority group' once it becomes strong enough. (N. van der Gagg & L. Gerlach, *Profile on prejudice*, p.5.)

The members of minority groups are entitled to their human rights as individual human beings, but they usually claim certain rights as members of a group as well. Depending on the particular group, these might include claims for self-determination (cultural and political), land, compensation (for dispossession), control of natural resources, or access to religious sites.

### **(a) Identifying some 'minority groups'**

Brainstorm with the class a list of contemporary 'minority groups'. (National and international non-governmental organisations working in this area can provide many concrete examples, and much information—particularly about the more disadvantaged ones.)

Senior students can do case studies to find out about the size, locale, history, culture, contemporary living conditions and key claims of specific 'groups'.

### **(b) Speakers**

Invite members of particular 'minority groups' to come to talk, perhaps under the auspices of the class Human Rights Society. Care needs to be taken to avoid

stereotyping and tokenism. Students can examine these issues as they discuss any questions of justice, freedom and equity involved.

### 13. DISCRIMINATION—DISABILITY

Practical work in the community outside the school with people who are physically or intellectually disadvantaged in some way is much the best approach if students want to understand the issues involved. Here is a description of what happened when one group of students visited a sheltered workshop:

With one of my Year 10 groups in March-April, we took 'Intellectually Handicapped' as a topic. I followed the basic outline which the students suggested after showing the video, *Don't think I don't think*, and after doing a role-play, they suggested we visit a sheltered workshop. A visit was arranged, and we were there for nearly three hours. Out of my eight years of teaching it was one of my most rewarding experiences. It was good for the students too. Rewarding for me because I observed the students really exert themselves to reach out in an understanding way to others. Often these were the students who have also been in trouble over the last few years in school. Since that visit, myself and other staff have seen a change in the way they react to others in class and around the school. That's the reward for me and also for them, I feel. It's more than just surface behaviour-change; I really believe they learned something at school.

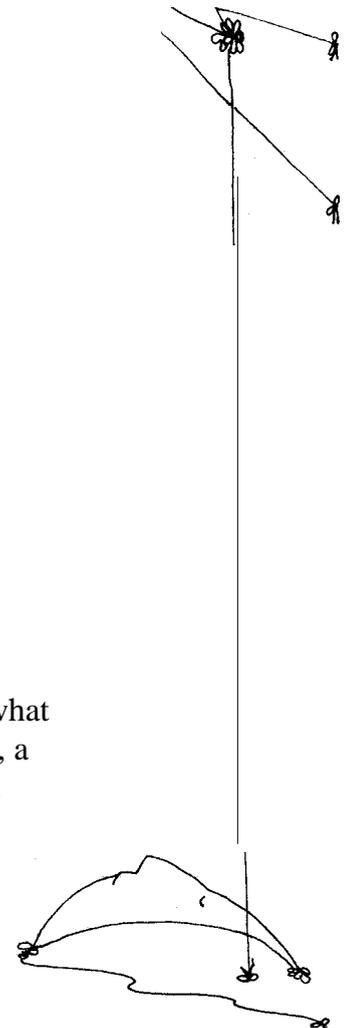
Another group of students who visited a special school gave the following responses when asked to write down what they had learned from the experience:

- I learned that these children are just like me.
- I learned not to be afraid to play with these children.
- I learned not to call them names.
- I enjoyed riding their bikes.
- I learned that these children are like us, but part of them is different.
- I learned that the people at that school aren't dumb.
- I learned that they are like us in most ways.
- I learned not to say `spaz1
- I learned how to act around mentally disabled people.
- I enjoyed meeting new people that I thought were different, but weren't.
- I learned to like handicapped kids.

Such positive reactions were not, of course, achieved without careful planning, thoughtful preparation and good timing.

#### (a) Speakers

Invite people with particular disabilities to speak to the class, perhaps under the auspices of its Human Rights Society. They can explain first-hand some of the difficulties they encounter, some of the things they have learned as a result, and what their specific rights-claims might be. At a recent conference on 'mental retardation', a group of people *with* intellectual disabilities came and took it over. They then read out one such list. 'We are humans first' it began, 'and disadvantaged second'.



**(b) One school for all** Have the class examine the school and its environment and work out how accessible it is to people with particular disabilities; someone in a wheel-chair, for example. (Are there ramps? Easy access toilets?) Students who have tried getting about in a wheel-chair for part of a day, or with their eyes covered, or their ears blocked, have spoken of their increased awareness of some of the difficulties others face. How do you call to someone who lip reads (*not* with the light behind you, and not all at once). Can you sign-talk with your hands? What could your school do to promote the *Declaration on the rights of disabled persons*, and the *Declaration on the rights of mentally retarded persons*?

Another testimonial:

I found after a few months that both students and their families displayed a much higher degree of interest when investigation turned to the rights of handicapped people. I felt that this emanated from initial 'face-to-face' encounters with disabled people and talks/discussions with speakers from societies and support groups concerned with disabled persons. While interest level was at a high, it was decided to make the 'Rights of the Disabled' the main thrust of the Human Rights program. Since June the program has included talks from disabled people, from support groups, visits to sheltered workshops, and special education units, simulation activities, writing away for resource material, videotapes borrowed from support groups. Children from all grade levels have become intensely aware of the plight and rights of the disabled. What had appeared to be a program destined to benefit a small percentage of the students has become a most worthwhile social study. It now appears possible to move on to the original aims of promoting an awareness of the social situations of communities in other places of the world. It appears that the original objectives were too wide. We had attempted to 'walk before we could crawl'.

### **(c) Drama**

A number of relevant plays are now available. The best of these depict the plight of people with disabilities in ways which inform, entertain, and touch students' hearts. 'Stronger than Superman' is one of the best.

### **(d) Responsibilities**

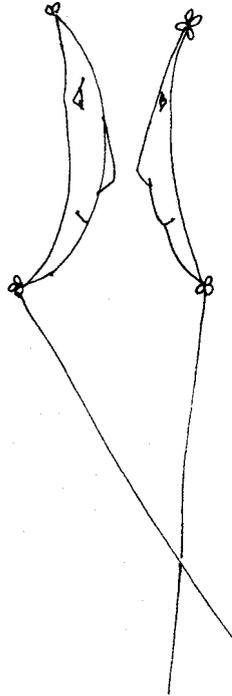
The following is an extract from a letter from a nurse educator at a Victorian hospital:

It is the plight of the person who has suffered significant disability from cerebral vascular accident that concerns me most. To my knowledge, this group was not even mentioned during the 'Year of the Disabled'. It is because there are so many of them, that most are admitted to long-term care institutions where staff ratios are such that the majority receive very little more than essential physical care. Is it because they cannot talk, cannot write to papers/parliamentarians, cannot march (some can't even scratch themselves), cannot form pressure groups, hire a crowd etc?

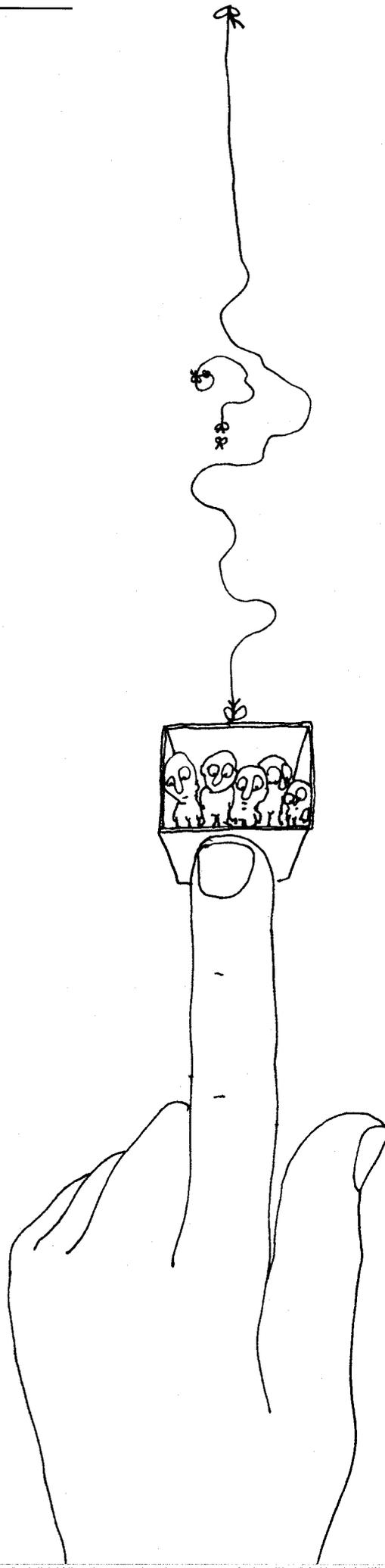
Many years ago, I nursed a woman in her late sixties who had a CVA, who was unconscious for some hours after which she 'woke up' to find she was paralysed down her right side, incontinent, and unable to speak or to communicate in any way. Some four months later when she had recovered enough to speak, she could not describe adequately her horror at the fact that her mind was working 'normally', imprisoned in a body over which she had no control, and through which she could not communicate. I felt it pathetic that this lady was so grateful to those of us who had 'spoken to her and treated her like a person'. Surely everyone deserves that! We

had a lady in our nursing home area who lived for nearly twenty-five years after her CVA and during that time her entire vocabulary consisted of 'Din-din'. Over the years, the nurses learned to translate the various tones into meaningful messages, however one could see the distress on her face when she saw a 'new' nurse on the Ward—another person who would have to learn her own specific language. These two women were among the lucky ones. Most don't regain abilities.

Where does one begin to educate the public/health-care-planners that these are real people with real rights? Perhaps we will never reach that goal—as most cannot even communicate to vote in elections.



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### Evaluation

Try to think about curriculum work like this as a recommended way of life for students, teachers, parents, ancillary staff and others or, more simply, as a set of suggestions about how people should spend their time together. If you can regard the following educational proposals like that, then you have the key to their evaluation. Evaluation will then raise questions about quality of life, and answering such questions will require collecting a variety of judgments. Students will have views to offer; so will colleagues, parents, visitors and others who were affected by or witnessed what went on.

Evaluating will then involve putting together a portfolio of evidence which portrays what happened as what was planned was put into practice. Later that evidence will make it possible to draw justified conclusions about effects.

Information you might want to collect in a portfolio of evidence could include:

- records of students' reactions
- brief student questionnaires
- notes of interviews
- comments from class discussions
- photographs taken during activities and while on excursions
- notes on reactions from parents
- brief summaries of reactions from colleagues
- excerpts from your own diary
- examples of students' work

The purpose of systematically gathering evidence about practical effects might be:

- to get a balanced account of reactions of members of the school community to your efforts to improve respect for human rights
- to help you know if you are improving your skill at handling controversial issues in the classroom
- to monitor attitude changes
- to give an account to the broader school community (parents and friends) of your results
- to determine whether or not what was done led to a better understanding of, or a greater concern for, human rights issues on the part of the students and other members of the school community
- to know what activities to repeat next time and what to change
- to demonstrate how goal-based, descriptive assessment of this kind works in practice

What purpose you have in mind will determine what evidence you choose to use from your portfolio. Unless you are reasonably thorough and consistent about keeping track of what you do, however, you may find you have little more than your own personal impressions and recollections to go on. Having evidence about a variety of judgments will enable you to check the accuracy of your own judgment.

Extracts taken from the portfolio of evidence of one teacher (he called it his 'journal') who took part in the Human Rights Commission's Schools Program for

1985 are included below. The teacher who compiled this portfolio was particularly systematic in recording what happened. In the selection which follows you will find examples of:

- a child's written work
- Likert scales which were used to solicit children's responses to various activities
- a record of a parent's reaction to the work her child was doing at school
- a record of the teacher's observation of his students during an activity
- extracts from a summary of a staff meeting

These examples indicate the kind of evidence you might gather yourself.

### *Incident (1)*

In order to get the message (about what we were doing) home to the parents involved, the children were asked to go home and ask their Mum and Dad what they thought their rights were.

Some interesting things came up like: 'being able to watch *Sons and Daughters* in peace', and 'being able to go to the toilet without being disturbed' and 'not having to wash up after cooking the meal'.

One child's report on this activity read:

Parents' Rights: One Saturday I asked my parents about their rights and these are some of the rights they told me.

1. watching TV without kids yelling
2. not to be woken up in the morning by noise
3. not to have to cook on Mother's Day
4. not to work on other special days

Some of them I agree with. I agree with all the numbers 1, 3 and 4 because after work they need to have a rest and watch TV in peace. They don't have to work on special days because they are holidays. I agree with all of them except number 2, because we have to make some noise and I have to practise my trumpet.

When the students were asked to give their impressions of what they had done, one filled out the response sheet as follows:

### **I enjoyed this lesson**

a lot hardly at all

4                      3                      2

'I enjoyed it because it was fun and interesting'

### **In this lesson I learned** ED

a lot hardly anything

5                      3                      2                      1

'I learned my Mum is fair'

An interesting aftermath of these lessons was that one Mum came to me and complained that now her son is continually demanding his rights. I tried to explain that rights and responsibilities go together and that perhaps her son had not grasped this. Perhaps more later?

### *Incident (2)*

Following a role-play about avoiding arguments I suggested to the children that they might like to go and talk to someone in the class who they didn't normally talk to. After a few grumbles we paired off and in all but one case, the conversation flowed.

The class was so pleased with this activity that they want to do it again! Some prejudices *can* be broken down easily.

### *Incident (3)*

At our November staff meeting I informed the staff about the human rights program I had been running in the classroom.

Some teachers were worried that it was another subject that we had to teach but I showed them how many activities could be fitted into existing subject areas.

One teacher was worried that it was all a communist plot to undermine our society; I tried to explain that there was no justification for that!!

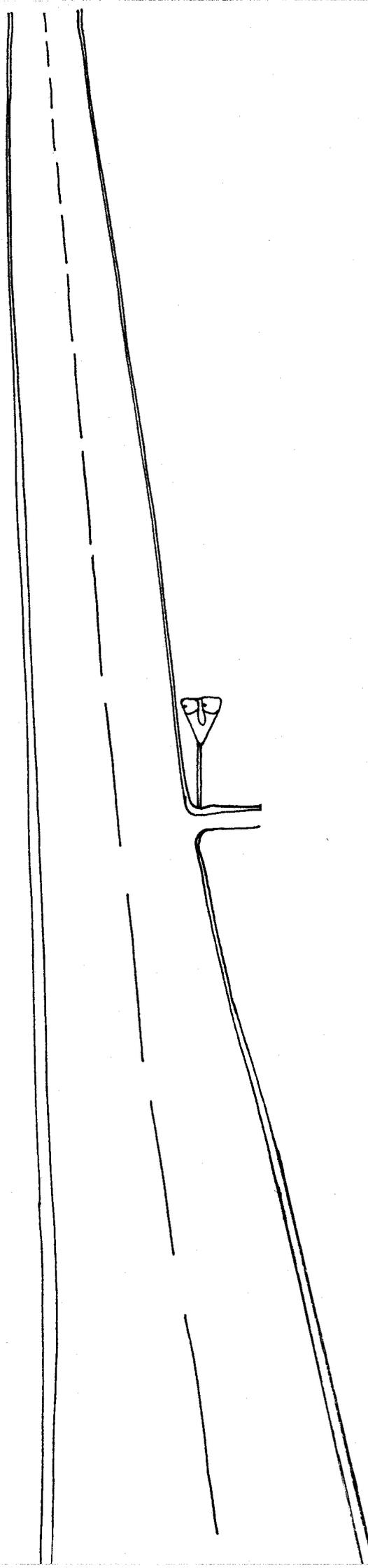
Another teacher summarised a number of the ways she gathered evidence as follows:

In order to ensure accurate evaluation of class sessions, my own impressions were written down as soon as the session had ended. I wrote these impressions at the end of my lesson plans. I tried to be honest in my evaluations, of both myself and the children. I believe I achieved this. If a lesson did not achieve the original aims, I stated so in my evaluation. On the other hand, if the lesson was successful, I wrote so, and tried to find reasons for such success.

On three occasions I asked children to fill out questionnaires, asking children if they enjoyed the lesson and if they learnt anything. There was a scale from 1-5, and they were to choose the number which explained their feelings. Lines were provided, if they wished to explain their feelings further. Most of the children filled all of these lines. I gave the children the option of leaving the sheet anonymous but most of the children preferred to write their names on it. I believe that these questionnaire sheets give the teacher a much greater understanding of what the children gained from the session.

The questionnaire sheets were used for the preliminary sessions on 'Blind trust', 'Children's rights' and 'Who are you'. These sheets proved to be very valuable. I also produced an evaluation sheet for the preliminary activity, 'Who are you', where I recorded the contribution of members of the class. This became very valuable for later sessions, as I was made aware of the children who were dominating the conversation.

Current thinking on evaluation and assessment is different in the different education systems, as one would expect. There is, however, a general shift these days away from 'testing' towards the sort of approach discussed above. The pendulum could swing back at any time. You will have your own idea regardless of how best to assess what is going on, and the mix of student versus teacher, 'objective' versus 'subjective', goal-based versus discursive evaluation strategies relevant in your case. There is no shortage of advice on these issues. Since human rights teaching covers such a wide range of subjects in content terms, and is as much a process as a product anyway, advice is only relevant in the light of what you are trying to do. This may change as you go along e.g. you may start by looking at a specific human rights issue, only to discover that to do justice to that issue you have to look at how you teach, your classroom relationships, and whole school policies. 'Evaluation' and 'assessment' will change then, too.



## Appendix I

### Suggested reading list and other resources

#### General

##### *Social literacy.*

A social education curriculum development project for Years 5 to 8 i.e. upper primary and lower secondary classes; it is conceptually oriented with a language program built in. Available from 87 Clarendon Road, Stanmore, N.S.W. 2048 (02 569 1057).

ROGERS, E. *Thinking about human rights*. Lutterworth, London, 1978.

BRANSON, M. & TORNEY-PURTA, J. (eds). *International human rights, society and the school* (Bulletin No. 68). National Council for the Social Studies, Washington, 1982.

GRAVES, N. et al. *Teaching for international understanding peace and human rights*. UNESCO, Paris, 1984.

LEVIN, L. *Human rights: questions and answers*. UNESCO, Paris, 1981.

WOLSK, D. *An experience-centred curriculum: exercises in perception, communication and action* (Educational Studies and Documents No. 17). Unipub for UNESCO, New York, 1975.

KIDD, S. *Some suggestions on teaching about human rights*. UNESCO, Paris, 1978.

*Human rights teaching*. Occasional Bulletin. UNESCO, Division of Human Rights and Peace, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.

ABRAHAMS, H. *World problems in the classroom* (Educational Studies and Documents No. 41). Unipub for UNESCO, New York, 1981.

LISTER, IAN. *Ruching and learning about human rights*. School Education Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1984.

*Human rights*. United Nations, New York, 1983.

A compilation of international instruments.

*United Nations action in the field of human rights*. United Nations, New York, 1983.

PETSINIS, MARY et al. *Human rights: Debney Park High School*. PEP Schools Resource Program, Debney Park High School, Vic., 1986.

'The learning process'. (1984) 5, 2 *World Studies Journal*.

Connell, R. et al. *Making the difference: schools, families and social division*. George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1983.

#### Self-esteem

CANFIELD, J. & WELLS, H. *One hundred ways to enhance self concept in the classroom: handbook for teachers and parents*. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1976.

WATSON, HUGH JAMES, et al. *Structural experiences and group development*. Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra, 1981.

#### The individual in society

*Teaching and learning about human rights* Amnesty International British Section Education Project. Amnesty International, London, 1983.

*The all-Australian calendar book: a guide to the days of significance in our multicultural society*. Hodja Educational Resources Cooperative, Richmond, Vic., 1986.

Address: 135 Church Street, Richmond, Vic. 3121.

## *Peace and disarmament*

*World concerns and the United Nations: model teaching units for primary, secondary and teacher education.* United Nations, New York, 1983.

MACY, J. *Despair and personal power in the nuclear age.* New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, 1983.

## *Development and the environment*

FYSON, NANCE LUI. *The development puzzle.* Centre for World Development Education, London, 1979.

FISHER, S. & HICKS, D. *World studies 8-13: a teacher's handbook.* Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1985.

*Learning for change in world society.* rev. edn. World Studies Project, London, 1979.

*The least developed countries and action in their favour by the international community.* United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, New York, 1983.

## *Government and the law*

TAN, LYN. *Let's look at law.* Butterworth, Sydney, 1985.

## *Discrimination*

SHIMAN, D. *The prejudice book.* Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, New York, 1979.

*Human rights: respecting our differences.* Teacher's manual and student's manual. Alberta Human Rights Commissioner, Edmonton, 1978.

'Childcare shapes the future'. (1983) 14, 7 & 8 *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, 6-17.

*Register of women in non-traditional occupations.* ACTU Working Women's Centre, [Melbourne, n.d.]

CHAMBERS, BARBARA, & PETTMAN, JAN. *Anti-racism: a handbook for adult educators* (Human Rights Commission Education Series No. 1). AGPS, Canberra, 1986.

*Combating prejudice in schools project.*

Publications in this series are available from Richmond Community Education Centre, 123 Church Street, Richmond, Vic. 3121. They include:

*Bibliography, Identifying issues and implementing strategies, Interim curriculum materials guide, Thinking about prejudice, Newsletters.*

Please note: Given the breadth of the human rights doctrine, there are resources in a wide range of disciplines that will be relevant. Students respond strongly to audio-visual material, and where facilities exist for using them, local education libraries and a number of United Nations agencies can supply examples. Some international addresses are provided in the text. The Human Rights Commission provides a video called *Talk Back* which explores human rights issues in an Australian context; plus a video for schools containing two films—one (*Don't think I don't think*) about the rights of people with mental disabilities, and the other (*Fair enough*) about three episodes in a high school girl's day where her human rights are not respected.

## Appendix H

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### An edited selection of teachers' reports from the 1985 schools program

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#### YEAR 5

##### **Why trial this program. . . Teaching for Human Rights?**

I initially read about the Human Rights Program whilst browsing through the paper early in the 1985 school year. It immediately caught my attention by sounding relevant to a number of concerns I have had over the last few years about teaching and where we are heading.

I have been fortunate enough to have had the experience of working in a school, over the last six years, where the emphasis has been placed on 'talking over' problems, listening to both points of view in an argument and trying to consider the rights of everyone involved. For the last two years I have worked in the senior section of the school with a group of children I know well and who have overall, above-average academic ability. I guess I found myself looking for avenues of getting this group thinking about other things related to the world—the future and ways to deal with future uncertainties, and to try and see things from different points of view.

The Human Rights Program sounded like just the thing! I thought it might relate to real life situations more than much of what is normally dealt with in schools.

After receiving the kit and resources I felt sure that there were many components that were exactly what I'd been looking for; a few others I felt a little more dubious about. I felt that we had 'plenty to gain' but 'little to lose', and so off we went with many interesting problems and issues ahead to look at.

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<sup>1</sup> Any reference in the reports that follow to the teaching manual, *Teaching for human rights: activities for schools*, is to the first edition, which this publication supersedes.

### Structure

I work in a two-teacher Year 5 unit and initially I planned things with my colleague of Term 1. However, due to two teacher changes, I ended up working mainly by myself with the materials in Terms 2 and 3!

Initially, after deciding that we would be using the Human Rights Program in the unit, we timetabled a slot for it in the unit timetable between recess and lunch on Fridays. As this timetable was up in the unit before the materials arrived, quite a bit of interest was generated, with many students asking what was 'Human Rights' and so on. Some students were *really* interested.

I guess we did consider it to be a completely new unit of the curriculum, fitting in with the idea of a Social Science theme, to a certain extent. We introduced it to parents, at a parent-teacher information night, as a new unit of work. However, as time went by, we were really surprised at how many different things from other areas of work that term tied in with the human rights ideas being considered. Hopefully examples of this will be evident in the section on 'implementation'.

### Those involved

After viewing the materials I decided that it would be better to work with one group of children all the time, rather than the whole unit (sixty-three), in order to keep some continuity and to 'follow things up', whenever possible. I decided to make this group my *home group* because:

- (i) We all knew each other really well (I'd taught most in Years 1 and 4); and
- (ii) With teacher changes imminent in the unit, it seemed to be the most sensible idea.

Although initially only I and my unit colleague were involved in the program (I should add the principal was supportive right from the start), other teachers soon began to express an interest in what it was we were doing. Staff were interested in displays and work we had in the unit (e.g. charts of students' and teachers' rights) and those who had the children for band and other subjects found the group behaving in a very 'reasonable' manner. (More on that later.)

In second term I led an in-service activity for our staff on the program and my experiences to that stage. A lot of interest has been generated, with a number of staff trying the introductory sections with their groups.

### Setting goals

When I initially entered the program my only real 'goal' was to find an area of work that would be a challenge and would relate to real-life situations. After working with the materials for a while and after being asked for information by our staff, I did sit down and really consider which goals I thought might be attainable, both for myself and the students. Here is the list of goals (or *objectives* if you like!) that I came up with.

*Why do this program . . . 'Teaching for Human Rights'?*

- The things to be gained will be of value to 'real-life' situations.
- It will help to build a feeling of cohesion in the class.
- It will help develop group discussion skills.
- It will help build a respect for other people's opinions.

- It will help language development by:
  - helping with clarity of ideas
  - formulation of own ideas
  - investigation of both sides of 'arguments' and questions
- It will provide us with more insight and background into world events.
- It will promote consideration of others, both in and outside our unit.
- It will provide an outlet for the discussion of problems.
- It can give a feeling that students' opinions do count and that they can understand and discuss real 'adult' problems.
- It will provide opportunities to look at problems or situations where there is no *one* or *right* answer.
- We will have to face the difficulty of finding solutions to problems no-one can agree on.
- It will promote logical thinking, and problem-solving strategies.

Whilst I'm sure there are many other achievable goals, these were the main ones I felt we were working towards. It struck me that in fact, the goals related to any curriculum area can be met or enhanced in one way or another through teaching for human rights. Certainly there should be no difficulties justifying it educationally in any arena!

### **Obstacles encountered**

Overall I felt there were difficulties, and probably the ones we encountered could be overcome with a little more experience with the teaching materials. Main ones were:

1. *Unrealistic teacher expectations.* Although I was often pleasantly surprised by the student outcomes there were times when I expected too much. The concepts at times were very difficult for the children to come to grips with (10-11 years age range). At times discussions led us in circles and you felt 'have we achieved anything?'. It is probably best not to have set expectations of the children's understanding of topics, but rather work on the discussion and reasoning skills and see how you go.

2. *Repeating others' views and opinions.* Another problem encountered initially was that the children tended to give views and opinions that were the ones they'd heard at home. It took a number of weeks and all the introductory activities to break through this and get them really thinking.

3. *Time.* It took me much longer than I thought to work through activities. Some lessons in the manual looked short, but if they captured the children's interest we tended to extend them for a week or two. A great deal of time was needed just for discussion and listening to each others' ideas and presenting work and so on. Often it was necessary to 're-cap' on what we'd been doing if there had been a considerable break since the last lesson (e.g. due to holidays or excursions).

4. *The format of some materials.* A few things I trialled were too difficult for the age group and had to be re-worded or worked around e.g. the wording of the *Universal declaration of human rights*. We spent some weeks looking at this and the children worked in small groups to present their own version of what each right meant, to the rest of the group.

### **Teaching strategies**

During the course of the program I tried to vary the lesson format as much as possible. I did, however, try to include at least a small-group discussion for ideas sharing, with every new idea.

Serious group discussion was best achieved in our 'quiet room', where we always sit in a circle. The children soon came to settle down and really participate well once we got into this format and were free of other distractions. I tried to limit all discussions to no more than twenty minutes, to keep concentration at a maximum. We did however have some really 'successful' discussions that ran by themselves for over half an hour.

Whenever possible I had a 'practical' activity to help get interest going. Sometimes it was a role-play or research in small groups then reporting back to the group. Some times we played a 'game' and had a discussion later. Some times we went to a play (e.g. Green Thumb Theatre), watched a related TV or video program (such as *Behind the News*), checked the news, worked from newspapers and magazines, displayed art work or poetry or shared stories, or tried to solve a problem or answered open-ended questions (e.g. group or individual work).

Overall the main model I used could be summarised as input (whole group)—activity (whole group, small group or individual)—reporting back and discussion (whole group). This allowed the children a range of activities and didn't strain their attention span.

### **Implementation**

In the following section I will provide some fairly detailed reports of the first few sessions and then provide comments on the more successful lessons and the most difficult lessons I encountered.

#### *Sessions 1 and 2*

This began with the whole group withdrawing to the quiet room. I said that I had a little story I would like to read to them and that I wanted them to think if any of the things in the story had ever happened to them, or if they had heard of such things happening to anyone else. I then proceeded to read the small, black and white *Human rights for human kind: a handbook* to the group. I modified the language in some sections as I read to make it simpler for them to understand.

In the discussion that followed most children showed that whilst none of the things at issue had actually happened to them they could think of incidents (nearly all from the news) of such things happening to other people. One thing that did come out at this stage was that the children felt all these terrible things were sure to happen in the countries that they see at war on TV each day. No consideration seemed to be given to at home, in Australia.

As things were grinding to a halt I then explained that whilst we on our own might not be able to change things in the 'outside' world, they were all old enough to discuss some of these things. I emphasised that there were not always 'right' or 'wrong' answers and that sometimes they would probably disagree strongly with what someone else said, but that that was O.K. I felt that all of this was necessary at this stage as the children were pretty unsure about what was really required of them, and seemed to be wanting to 'please me' rather than really stretch their minds to see what they thought.

Next I explained that we would play a game. We went outside and with blindfolds played the trust game on page 21 of the *Teaching for human rights* lesson book. This was, of course, greatly enjoyed. We then returned to the quiet room and discussed how it had felt etc. Most felt that it was hard to really 'trust' the person not to lead you into a tree etc. Some felt that their partners hadn't provided enough guidance and should have verbally told them what was coming up.

After this discussion I tried to relate it to trusting each other in a conversation situation. I explained that I didn't want to 'run' the discussions all the time, but how could we avoid everyone talking at once and people missing out altogether. After a number of suggestions, most children felt that they should still have to put their hand up to speak to avoid chaos. Next I asked who'd ever felt silly or embarrassed contributing verbally in the class. This opened a real floodgate of comments. Every child could think of at least one incident when he or she had felt this way. The most common conclusions were:

1. If you say something that is obvious to another child or the teacher and they make fun of you, you feel stupid.
2. Sometimes people who don't get on with you make fun of whatever you say, so you don't want to say anything.
3. Often they were afraid to give their real opinion if it was different from the majority of the group in case they were made fun of.

After this we all agreed that even if we didn't agree with someone else we would respect their opinion in discussions and try to think of a good way of saying our opinion on our turn to speak. So we were ready to give it a try!

Next I asked that if there were such things as human rights, what rights did they think they had as students in our unit. This drew a blank response and I really had to prompt them with a few joking comments, like 'How would you feel if suddenly you were never allowed to have lunch any more?' 'Is that fair?' etc. As the children got on to the idea I asked them to write down at least two things each, together with the necessary duty or behaviour we all needed to adopt to ensure that they would occur. All went well with this, most children showed in their lists that they really understood, although the types of rights listed ranged from those that benefited all, to the more trivial, though, perhaps, no less valid type. I promised to make these up into a big list for next time, and also promised to get together with the other teacher to make up a list of what we felt our rights in the unit were. A copy of these is set out below.

#### *Children's rights in Unit 4*

1. I have the right to be able to say something to the teacher, that might be obvious to others, without being teased or laughed at.  
(I have a duty to listen to other's comments without teasing that person.)
2. I have a right to be heard.  
(I have a duty to listen to others, on their turn.)
3. I should be able to put my things in my locker and know that they are safe.  
(I have a duty not to touch other people's possessions without the owner's permission.)

4. I have a right not to be picked on or worry about getting hurt by someone who doesn't like me.  
(I have a duty not to hurt others or pick on people I don't get on with.)
5. I have a right to a recess and lunch break.  
(I have a duty to try and get my work done during lesson time.)
6. I have a right to a turn at different games and activities in the unit, and to have some free choice times.  
(I have a duty to finish set tasks and use free time properly.)
7. I should be able to speak quietly to friends when I come in from lunch or recess, and at other times in the unit.  
(I have a duty to stop talking and listen when the teacher wants to speak, and to not yell or disturb others when talking.)
8. I should be able to choose which sport I would like to do.  
(I have duty to participate fairly in that sport.)
9. I have a right not to lend my equipment if I don't want do.  
(I have a duty to have all my own equipment.)
10. I have a right to be treated equally as others in the unit.  
(I have a duty to be fair to others and act reasonably.)
11. I have a right to give my explanation of arguments that I might be involved in and to be treated fairly; also time to 'cool down' if necessary. (I have a duty to tell the truth, even if 'in the wrong' so that people will always believe me.)
12. I have a right to choose and play with my own friends.  
(I have a duty to behave reasonably with my friends.)
13. I have a right to discuss things with the teachers privately if I need to.  
(I have a duty to respect others' privacy during talks.)
14. I have a right to be excused to go to the toilet during class time.  
(I have a duty only to go when necessary.)
15. I have a right to use the library at 1 o'clock and to come straight into the unit on the bell without having to line up.  
(I have a duty to behave appropriately in these places.)
16. I have a right to watch TV and video programs.  
(I have a duty not to distrurb others, while watching.)
17. I have a right to attend camps and excursions.  
(I have a duty to be reliable and give a good impression on these outings.)
18. I have a right to have a turn at playing with class pets.  
(I have a duty to be 'kind' to the animals, help keep them clean and let others have their turns.)

### *Session 3*

This lesson was mainly a time when we went through each of the rights listed on the students' list and decided how much we all agreed on them. As everyone seemed happy with the list, I then showed them the list that my colleague and I had made up for teachers' rights in the unit. I asked if they understood what each one meant and that seemed O.K.

Next I got three children to read the short play, *Three young people speaking*, from pages 26-7 of the manual. (They had already practised the reading earlier in the morning.) The discussion that arose from this was fairly predictable and very

conservative. For example, on the topic of pocket money, all children agreed that you should have to do some type of chores or work to get it or, as one boy put it, 'when you grow up you'll just expect to get everything for nothing and sit back waiting for it and no-one'll give you anything'. One girl did feel however, that it wasn't fair if you were expected to do chores that your parent didn't have to do as she got very angry whenever she had to clear the table away after dinner and her parents just sat there relaxing.

Perhaps the most notable thing so far is that the list of rights that the children compiled for themselves has proved to be a really good way to deal with some children's problems in the unit. For example, when one child had been physically hurtful to another over a relatively minor incident, it was useful to point out that one of the rights we had all decided a student should have was to feel safe at school. Did he remember us deciding that? Yes. Did he still agree with that right? Yes. Had he infringed on the other child's right? Yes. From there we were able to decide on a better way to deal with the situation, should it arise again, without taking away anyone's rights.

#### *Session 4 and 5*

This lesson arose as an idea from my teaching partner after viewing a program called *Behind the News*, that deals with current affairs in a manner suitable for this age group. There had been a lot over the last few weeks about the nuclear arms race, famine, and wars in various countries and so on.

We asked the children to get into groups of three or four. We then gave each group a piece of paper and asked them to go off and do the following:

1. Talk, talk, talk and talk about what you think all the problems in the world today are and make a list of them all in your group.
2. Supposing that you are in charge of the world—complete authority is yours, and you can do anything you want to—make up solutions for each of the problems on your list.
3. Now, keeping in mind how world leaders really do try to solve their problems, make up a list of solutions to the problems on your list. Keep in mind the limitations of individual leaders in the world and think of solutions that you could see working if they were really tried.

The lists that the children thought up were not all that varied. Items listed were the nuclear arms race, atomic bombs, people starving, people getting killed, wars, not enough jobs, crime, countries not getting on with each other, pollution, animals getting killed, species becoming extinct, trees getting chopped down.

It is interesting to note that the thing that seems to worry nearly all of these children is the possibility of there being a nuclear war. Possibly this is so as it is more of a personal threat than any of the other, more removed, world problems.

Solutions given for a person with absolute power ranged from the ridiculous to the feasible. Some were:

1. Drop a bomb on Russia first.
2. Take all the spare food in the world and give it to the starving.
3. Make bombs illegal.
4. Put all the bombs in the world into a space ship, send them into far outer space and explode the lot.

5. Make punishment for crime very harsh, i.e. extermination!
6. Give all the unemployed people jobs cleaning up the world and planting trees.

Most children did seem to realise that in the real way that things are, it was a lot harder to get any real solutions operating, but that we should still try them. Often political reflections from home were voiced regarding world leaders etc. Certainly however, the activity seemed very worthwhile and appeared to tie into the framework of human rights. The discussion groups were very animated and it appears to be a topic that this age group has a lot to say about and can come to grips with, even if no real conclusions are drawn.

### *Session 6*

We now began by trying to decide what made us human so that, having agreed there were human rights, we could decide who should get them. I had my group do activities under the heading 'Who are you?' on pages 29-31. With the activity where the children had to list human attributes in order of importance, I compiled this main list from theirs.

What am I that everyone else is?

1. a mammal
2. a human
3. a living creature
4. alive
5. can breathe
6. a thinking person
7. we are all the same and yet different in some ways
8. male or female
9. child or adult
10. can eat
11. we all have different bodies
12. have a face
13. see, talk, and hear
14. able to do at least one thing
15. have a brain
16. have organs and veins
17. wear clothing
18. can walk
19. have hair

When we first started on the lists the children were putting down any old thing, and it did take a bit of teacher intervention in the form of 'Does everyone see?' etc. to get us started on the right track. Some children found this task extremely difficult and kept asking what they should put. Overall, however, I feel that they did grasp the idea of straining out the criteria that only apply to some people and hunting for more universal statements defining 'human'. This is reflected in some of the statements on the above list.

### *Sessions 7 and 8*

The exercise where the children write a description of a favourite film or TV star without actually saying who it is was very appropriate to this age group. They enjoyed this activity and listened very attentively when each person read out his

or her piece of work. Popular characters were those in *A Country Practice*, *A-Tham*, *Indiana Jones*, cartoon characters and quiz show personalities. This activity was time-consuming and took quite some time to get through all the children in the class as every child wanted to have a go.

#### *Sessions 9 and 10*

This lesson began with the activity where each student must write down five complimentary facts about someone else in the group. This was a good activity and we were able to guess every person, although sometimes more by whose friend was doing the description than the actual description.

We then split up into four groups to prepare short plays of the 'This Is your Life' variety. I should point out however that only three children in my class had ever heard of the TV series and I, and those three children, had to spend time with each group explaining the format that the show might take. It would seem that such programs date very quickly. The children needed extra time to prepare their plays and were all keen to come in at lunch and practise. They presented them to the rest of the unit that afternoon and they had a decidedly slapstick, tongue-in-cheek quality about them. Perhaps the most valuable aspect was the degree of co-operation shown in the groups to get the play prepared in such a short time.

#### *Sessions 11, 12 and 13*

##### *New topic—not in handbook—Nuclear war*

At this stage I received information about a play to be presented by the Green Thumb Theatre from Canada. The play was called *1,000 Paper Cranes*. As it seemed relevant to the spirit of human rights and much of what we had been seeing on current affairs work, I decided to pursue this avenue.

We spent one week looking at the background of the Japanese tradition of origami and paper cranes (children made them). We discussed nuclear war and what had happened at Hiroshima. This discussion generated much interest. I was a little concerned about how the students would deal with the death of Sadako in the story, but we were all keen to go.

The week we went to see the play there was some discussion about the story *1,000 Paper Cranes*, in the unit. The play was excellent, of a high standard and tastefully done.

The follow-up discussion the next week concentrated on the feelings of the characters; the relationship between the boy and his father etc. We then worked through the role-play about the planet CRASMEANI. I felt the children gained a good understanding of the difficulties involved in governments making decisions and the way in which different groups are affected. I thoroughly recommend the activity.

#### *Sessions 14 and 15*

##### *Planning a world community*

Although I followed the idea in the manual for this, I changed it to make it more 'practical' and I feel this was the *most successful* lesson so far. After taking a session to discuss the difference between 'wants' and 'needs' the children made up their own lists of wants and needs.

Next session we cut up all the wants into strips and all the needs. We then placed them all in a big box. I removed quite a few needs slips of paper as they brought them to me, so the box had plenty of wants, but was a bit short on needs. Then we all sat in a circle while one person handed a scoop of paper slips to each child. We then had a trading session for ten minutes where the children had to try and obtain their basic needs through bartering with what they had. It looked like a mad market scene for 10 minutes. At the end of the 10 minutes we stopped and analysed what everyone had ended up with. We had:

- two or three very rich people with all their needs and wants satisfied
- half the group were 'O.K.', but not rich
- four or five people were in a bad way
- four to six people would be dead

This really brought home the 'luck of the draw' idea for how well off your situation is. It generated excellent discussion and seems very apt for this age group.

#### *Another idea that went well*

The children went through magazines and newspapers to find examples of people being dealt with unfairly. Each group had to give an explanation to the group. They mainly chose famine or war articles but there were a few on civil injustice. Although the children tended to agree with the tone in which the article was written there was considerable value for them in having to understand and explain what had happened and if anyone had lost his or her rights and why.

#### **Evaluation**

My own evaluation was mainly of an on-going 'over the shoulder' type but a number of comments can be made:

- The children enjoyed most activities and responded well to the responsibility of discussing 'real-life' matters.
- Consideration for others improved, and discussions concerning problems or behaviour were generally more 'productive'.
- I noticed an increased awareness of current affairs and what goes on in other countries.
- At this age some beliefs and prejudices are so closely allied to parental ones that it is difficult to get a real opinion from children.
- Discussion skills improved, especially willingness to consider new ideas.
- The best activities for this age-group involved role-play or something practical which provided the basis for the following discussion.
- I really got to know the children better and was surprised at the depth of their ideas.

#### **YEAR 6**

In the school involved in this report, three teachers worked as a team. The report describes the Year 6 program. Other sections contained accounts of a Grade 3, and a composite Grade 3/4 one.

## Structure

Three teachers at our school were directly involved in the program.

The first was the Grade 6 teacher. In her early forties, she has had more than a decade of teaching experience and another twelve years away from teaching during her children's early years. At this time she completed her studies for her B.A. and was at present engaged in studies for her Master's degree in Education. The Education Department had awarded her study leave for 1986 to complete her studies. Her field was language.

The second was the Grade 3 teacher. In her early twenties, this was her second year of teaching and her first year based in one class-room. In 1983 she was appointed to the relieving staff and had gained wide experience of a variety of schools in the region. A characteristic of the region is that schools are somewhat isolated from each other so her experience was valued. She had a Diploma of Teaching (Primary).

I was the composite Grade 3/4 teacher. I was thirty-six and had had seven years teaching experience. I came late to teaching, being accepted as a mature age student by my State College in 1975. My children were of secondary school age. I gained my B.Ed. by part-time evening study, in 1984. My special field was Social Science.

One teacher not directly involved in the program made an important contribution. The Vice-Principal provided encouragement and advice from the earliest stages of the program onwards. He assisted in gaining parental approval of the program at School Council level. He also kept the channels of communication open between ourselves and the organisers of the Human Rights Program.

The Human Rights Program was kept separate from existing curricula, or rather, we *attempted* to keep it so. The reasons for this were:

- (a) We considered we were trialling material, not adopting it blindly.
- (b) To incorporate it into existing programs would have been a unilateral decision out of keeping with the consensus model that operates in our schools.
- (c) The evaluation task might be easier if the program was a separate entity.
- (d) We wanted to be able to chop and change rather than conform to a plan that might prove inflexible.

Each teacher worked independently and autonomously; there was no boss, no co-ordinator. Generally one session of human rights per week was the aim. In the case of the Grade 3 and 3/4, we chose afternoon sessions and they followed roughly the same sequence I had drawn up at the start of Term 2. But where I had allowed one week for an activity, it generally took me two. One for the children to take in the experience and a second session for expressing their understanding.

We met weekly. This was a serious lunch-time session where we talked about what we'd done, what the outcomes had been, and how to relate these findings back to the Human Rights Program. Decisions were made after discussion. We were a good team because we were sufficiently different to bring fresh insights to issues, but we shared the same values. We didn't lose sight of the fact that we were testing material that we sometimes found imperfect, illogical, and poorly thought out. By the same token, we were proud that human rights were being

paid serious attention and thought the subject a vital part of the education of children.

To summarise: The structure for testing the human rights material was loose in terms of supervision or control. There was no boss. But we were each accountable to the others at the weekly meeting. The meeting was our support as well as our forum.

*A suggestion:* Where neighbouring schools are involved in the program, strength could be derived from a common group meeting, say fortnightly.

Teachers who are attracted to human rights teaching don't need bossing; they are idealists to begin with but need the companionship of equals.

### *Grade 6 Report*

As the Grade 6 teacher it was a privilege to be involved in trialling a new, innovative program. As the area of values teaching has always been of utmost importance to my classroom, it seemed a natural thing to accept the materials from the Human Rights Commission.

One of my main tasks was to determine which parts of the manual were suitable for Grade 6. I quickly found that the best way into any of the activities was to find a way into the children's existing framework of thinking and develop it from there. The most effective and systematic approach seemed to be units of work concentrating on single themes. This not only organised our work, but meant there was a definite starting and finishing time.

In using the manual with Grade 6 children I tried to place the activities set out into manageable units of work. In this way I would build up a series of activities to convey the message. That meant that new concepts which were introduced were emphasized again and again. The first unit 'Trust' proved most rewarding.

1. This began with a discussion on who we trust. Lists were made—relatives, friends, neighbours, pets, teachers etc. The children were able to make their own personal list.
2. Word games
  - T eacher
  - R everend
  - U nderstanding
3. Discussion about who we don't trust and why:
  - Which people do we trust at school?
  - With this trust sometimes comes responsibility, e.g. bell monitors, library assistants.
  - Who do we trust in the community? Doctors, nurses, fireman, teachers etc.
  - Do we always trust these people? Should we?
4. Trust Walk—Manual p.21
 

We set up the spare room next to our classroom with tunnels made from up- turned chairs etc. Some of the boys and girls had been to an initiation ceremony at Cubs and Brownies and wanted to use this experience in setting the room up. Although this could be a quite dangerous activity, it had some

success in the classroom. No one was hurt, which showed perhaps that children can be trusted to protect each other. The children chose their own partner and this lessened the impact of trust. At the Grade 6 level, especially at the beginning of the year, boy/girl relationships hadn't begun to develop (at least they hadn't in this grade) and I feel to force children to go with people they prefer not to is going against their personal rights. It might be better to draw names out of a hat, but this would need to be decided on and would depend on the grade. This activity could be upsetting to children; if the teacher does not know the children well and feels less than confident that it would work, it could be better to leave it out. It was unclear in this grade what benefits the children received and whether any concept of trust was formed.

#### 5. Statements about trust.

Trust is: man's best friend

believing in someone

that the doctor will give you the right medicine

the truth

a feeling

the shops giving us food

Trust: may lead you to freedom

may sometimes get you into trouble

The children gave this list as a class group. One girl said her mother had told her not to trust anyone but herself.

More statements.

Trust is what you have for a person until they let you down.

Trust is when a person has proven trustworthy.

6. The children were asked to draw two houses. The first one where people trusted their neighbours and the second where they didn't. This was an excellent way of stressing the feeling of trust in the outside community. Many houses in this area have aluminium shutters, security doors, and high fences, dogs etc. A good discussion developed about why they were there and whether they were necessary. Much discussion took place on houses in other countries, and the Aboriginal house of long ago.

7. This unit concluded with children drawing cartoons depicting people who trust each other. Most could not handle this as the concept seemed too difficult, or it may have been the cartoon form that put them off.

Most of the material from the manual was found to be self generating. The activities led on to all sorts of other areas which were only bounded by time and interest. The material saturated all parts of the curriculum and could not be contained as a separate entity.

To evaluate whether the activities changed the children's thinking and behaviour patterns is very difficult to do. If any changes were seen, was it due to the program or to the environment already created in the classroom? I had already introduced such things as self concept activities, awareness of ourselves and others etc. The children had already been 'moulded' into 'my way of thinking' from the start of the year. When I was around, they treated each other fairly well. Whether this was a superficial thing to please a teacher was something that was very difficult to gauge.

However there was very tangible growth for me as the teacher. From using the manual, I repeatedly found myself protecting the children's rights by asking their opinions, giving them choices, and allowing a greater amount of freedom. Small things maybe. Things like access to the toilet, eating lunch early if needed, choosing who to sit with, being able to move seats if friendships weren't working out, allowing entry to the room when it was too wet or too hot. These added up to a shift of power towards the children. They felt more in control of their environment and I trusted them not to abuse it. This trust and responsibility ensured I had enough 'control' for my classroom teaching. The language of the classroom became:

- 'Is it alright to . . . ?'
- 'What do you think?'
- 'Do you need more time to finish?'

The language of power and control was not needed as trust and responsibility for each other developed on both sides.

It is more difficult to evaluate the change in the children's thinking and behaviour. It may be best to try and explain by recounting some incidents that occurred. If the activities in the manual succeeded, it was to create an awareness of the rights of each person and allow real life situations to be dealt with, within this framework of human rights.

Early in the year, the girls decided it was unfair that the boys always took the cricket equipment out. It had been issued to Grade 6, but they didn't ever have a turn. One day, the equipment was grabbed quickly by some girls and taken into the yard and a game began. The boys were horrified and very hostile. After recess, we tried to discuss it reasonably, but failed. The boys argued that they didn't want girls playing with them as they were too slow and didn't know how to play properly. This of course quite missed the point as the girls only wanted the equipment. Some boys became more and more heated, some others saw that this wasn't what the girls wanted (to play with the boys) and suggested a compromise. One boy lost his temper and stormed to the school gate. (Fortunately he didn't leave the grounds.)

This episode showed various things about the grade. The girls had been very subdued in Grade 5, but were now firmly demanding what they saw were their rights. Apart from the obvious sexist remarks, the class showed they could not discuss an issue like this in a rational manner. There were only a few boys and girls who were able to listen to the other side and modify their stance. By the end of the year children were responding better to differences of opinion. Many slowly learnt the techniques of listening, modifying their information, and speaking their mind. Some were not ready to learn these skills, but the program might make it easier for them in later years.

At first the children did not show any interest in the events happening in South Africa (June 1985). They had no knowledge of the situation, even though most said they watched the TV news. The children could not discuss the happenings or share an opinion if they didn't know the events. To counter this, I began asking direct questions, e.g.

- What is apartheid?
- Why are funerals important in South Africa?
- What is Mr Fraser saying about South Africa?

This worked wonders. The children needed a direct focus to assimilate the information. Suddenly they began having opinions about white policemen bashing black people, children being involved in riots etc. Their minds became alert to the issue. After the intense publicity of these riots, suddenly there was a news blackout. Freedom of information became a real issue.

By the end of the year, the Grade 6 seemed an easy going grade, getting on well with each other, not causing too many problems in the playground. On the surface the program seemed to be succeeding, but there were many incidents that raised doubts.

A new girl joined the grade—an Indian from Fiji of Hindu religion. She dressed differently, was overweight, and in the first few weeks didn't speak very much. It was difficult to judge her standard of English. Everything went smoothly for her in her new school until I was absent on sick leave for one day. A group of boys pushed and shoved her around in the playground and in the classroom, made faces at her calling her 'Hari Krishna'.

On my return another girl related to me what had happened, the boys were asked what they had done and why. None of them knew what 'Hari Krishna' was—just 'funny people in Melbourne', who they thought dressed like Indians.

This incident showed many things apart from the apparent racism. Most newcomers are subjected to some hassles. When it was discussed as a class everyone knew they had been silly and most saw they had been led by the group. This was made easier because, due to the Human Rights program, we had the language needed to discuss the incident in terms of human rights, responsibility, trust etc. We had a framework of ideas within which to discuss it. The boys were able to write down why they had done it and in this way apologise. Some children were able to suggest how the new girl could have reacted. Surprisingly, because of this incident, the new girl found a place in the classroom. She began to speak English fluently (a lesson was taught to me never to under-estimate the ability of children) and her relationship with me developed into a loving and trustful one.

Although this incident and others like it took place I feel the growth in the children was great. They were able to discuss issues and listen to each other's point of view. Racism and sexism are still a force in their thinking, but perhaps some seeds are sown for future questioning. Perhaps this is all that is obtainable at primary level.

## **YEAR 6**

This is a report on work done in Year 6 at a rural public school, based on *Teaching for human rights*.

*Class organisation:* There are four Year 6 classes at our school and I was in a position to operate the program in each of the four classes. This provided an enriched environment in which the program could operate and a variety of ideas, approaches and resulting thoughts. It also proved to be fairly exhausting and frustrating in the way that directions taken, progress achieved, and stages reached, jostled with each other and proved hard to keep track of!

The senior classes are divided into four groups:  
 6S—Twenty-seven children of average to lesser ability  
 6L—Twenty-nine children of average to lesser ability  
 6A—Thirty-four children of average to greater ability  
 6M—thirty-two children of greater ability

The letters stand for the four learning areas:

S—Science (social science, natural science, physical education)  
 L—Language (written expression, reading, general language work)  
 A—Arts (drama, poetry, arts and crafts, movement)  
 M—Mathematics (maths, graphs, shapes work, geometry)

The children go as a class to each of these areas once per day, i.e. there are four periods in each day.

My responsibility was for the social area so that I was able to run the program over the whole grade. I tried as much as possible to use material created in other classes to stimulate ideas in a new class. I found it hard to achieve a balance that did not over-influence or pre-empt other new ideas in class with my ideas and suggestions.

*Material used:* Briefly I covered the following topics from the book.

Having said that, you need to take in both the following points:

- Not all classes did all activities due to interest or time.
- I dipped into the book following leads from the classes or groups; in no way did I follow through all the sections.

### **Preliminary activities**

Trust

Rights and responsibilities in class

Three young people speaking

### **Human rights**

Who are you?

—the *Universal declaration of human rights*

### **Human rights and the law**

Do some people get better legal treatment than others?

### **Non-discrimination—review**

What is prejudice? What is stereotyping?

The first nine weeks of Term 3 were given over to this program. The school production took up the later part of the term.

### **Preliminary activities**

#### *1. The Trust Walk*

I found this to be a fascinating exercise; watching the children's different reactions both during the walk and after it. This exercise stimulated a lot of discussion and generally the children were most anxious to know who was leading them around. Their reasons generally led back to the reply, 'If I know who it is, I'll know if I'll be alright or not'.

This activity led on to group and class discussions on categories of people we know and generally trust. A further activity was to list all the categories of people we do not know but need to trust. General conclusions were surprise at the number of people we need to trust but do not know e.g. transport drivers, food growers and packers, bank personnel etc. This list in all cases exceeded known 'trusted' people.

## 2. Rights and responsibilities in class

I started out with a general discussion of 'what a right is' then had the children draft out individually what they thought were their individual rights. As these were finished the children read through each other's work and reached the conclusion that everybody couldn't just have their individual rights. In all groups it emerged that responsibilities go hand in hand with rights.

We moved on to group work to sort out what each of the groups thought that the class (the whole group's) rights were. These were then compiled into one document and discussion began again over responsibilities that went along with each right. This work was difficult and long for the children.

After much work each class had a final draft of 'Class rights and responsibilities'.

I tried to see that these rights were upheld in each classroom for the particular class. I had to make the point that they needed discussion with other teachers before they could be 'demanded' in other rooms. Further we discussed breakdown of rights when there was a breakdown in responsibilities.

This section took up to three weeks in some classes but the very process of coming to group/class democratic decisions was a valuable lesson in itself.

## Human rights

### 1. Who are you?

The activity 'Being a human being' was thoroughly enjoyed by most children. Most children were jumping over each other to add something that could identify 'human beings'.

### 2. Being me

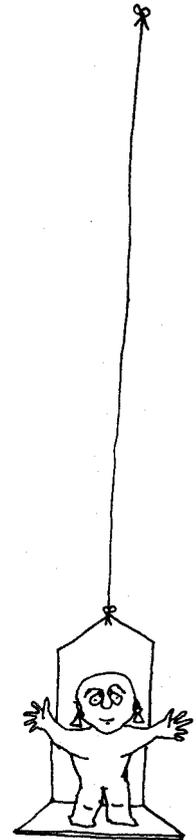
Another enjoyable activity that stimulated a lot of discussion and controversy.

I was actually quite surprised by the depth of answers e.g. 'I am going to die', 'I am imperfect', 'I am unique'.

From here I used similar activities to answer the question 'How am I different from everyone else?' The lists we compiled were much more extensive than the 'sameness' lists and led the children to the conclusion that we are unique, and our differences far outweigh our similarities.

### 3. Sending us to the stars

I diverged a little here also. Groups of children compiled lists of what they considered to be the greatest achievements made by humankind. I emphasised that it was not national groups, but humankind's achievements as a whole that we were interested in.



The group answers were then duplicated so that each child had one. This whole class list was sifted out, removing similar responses and grouping similar responses on the same sort of things.

The list was democratically voted on to create a whole class response ranking from 1 to 10.

One class was devoted to people who have made a great contribution to humankind. I followed this up with a short activity which didn't give them a chance for research. They quickly had to write down the name of a person who they thought had made an outstanding contribution to humankind and why they thought that this was outstanding.

I have noted the names of the people mentioned: Churchill, Wright Brothers, Neil Armstrong (four people), Alexander G. Bell (three people), Julius Caesar, Hellen Keller, Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, Mother Theresa (two people), Ronald Reagan, Benjamin Franklin (two people), Thomas Edison, Bob Geldof, Blaxland, Lawson, Wentworth, Christopher Columbus, Marconi, John Lennon, Farrer and MacArthur, Greenpeace Movement, and Sir Henry Parkes.

The 'American' flavour of this list is in itself interesting. The children shared their responses with one another and all seemed to have very definite ideas.

### **Human rights and the law**

*Do some people get better legal treatment than others?*

I had displayed the *Universal declaration of human rights* in the room. All classes had been through it and each class completed the activity where we indicated on an individual map countries that had ratified the *Covenant on civil and political rights*. The children were generally surprised by the number of countries that had not.

General discussion on laws led one class to compile a list of laws that affected them as children. They reached the following conclusions:

1. there is a really extensive list of different rules, laws, regulations and by-laws that cover them;
2. the list is as great for children as it would be for adults.

### **Non-discrimination: racism**

What is prejudice? What is stereotyping?

I began this topic with the activity 'Tat people are thin'. Only small numbers of children matched the pairs with confidence—others challenged their peers, matching very heatedly. Further discussion led back to our lists of how people are different. I felt that this discussion brought to light some of the things that the children had experienced, thought through, and learned from the program.

### **General evaluation**

I fell down badly in the evaluation area by having the children do one 'lump' evaluation at the end and not evaluating as we went along. I feel that these 'lump' ones were a difficult task for the children and unfair for them to do.

I enjoyed participating with the children in the program. I was surprised at how 'little' we seemed to have covered in terms of what was available and

suggested in the book. However, we really were working at it and I was satisfied that what we did was thoughtful and beneficial.

The general response and its quality assures me that such a unit as 'Teaching for Human Rights' is very suitable for senior primary pupils.

I had such a difficult time in the early weeks biting back any 'leading' questions or prompting the children that I feel that I have learnt to value more what the children are saying. Further, I have learnt that my estimation of where a discussion 'should' be leading is a dominating tactic that smothers interest by the children, and this situation should be avoided.

The children enjoyed the equality of discussion input and I certainly learned the benefits of listening to what they were actually saying.

## YEAR 6

I shall preface my evaluation of what we did with a brief description of my school and its background.

The school in which I teach is classed as 'Disadvantaged' and participates in 'Priority Project Funding' from the Australian Schools Commission. The children are mainly from low socio-economic backgrounds; unemployment amongst families is high, and the family unit is continually under stress and threat; the area has a stigma which has tended to promote feelings among many of the students of low self-esteem and an unwillingness to succeed, so that children do not work at their full potential. Being a success at school is seen as being 'different'.

Looking back over the Human Rights Program I initiated in Grade 6 in 1985, I find myself quite pleased with what we as a group achieved together. At the same time I am somewhat impatient with what we might have achieved, and I am looking forward expectantly to what lies ahead of us in this school in 1986.

The class of thirty-one Grade 6 children I taught in 1985, is a group I had been fortunate to teach in Grade 3 and Grade 4. I feel that the success we achieved as a class resulted from the several years I had had to develop relationships with the children and explore many of the human rights issues, even though we didn't label them as such at the time.

Having the use of Ralph Pettman's superb book, the associated booklets and the video *Fair Enough* as resource materials for the trialling, enabled me to provide not only the children but myself with numerous starting points for class discussions and individual and group research.

Our joint involvement in this program has seen many improvements in my teaching practice; it has enabled me to really look at deficiencies and strengths in my own teaching practices, and also to involve other staff members in similar exercises.

The staff at this school prides itself on practising principles which are vital for the children in the area, and we are justifiably proud of the success the school has achieved in many areas of education. And yet as my class and I embarked on the trialling of the Human Rights Program, I discovered many areas where improvement could be made and other areas which we had not tackled fully, or at all.

Initially in my classroom we undertook several negotiation sessions in which we discussed the rights and responsibilities of children in our classroom in

particular, and in the school as a whole; the rights of their own teacher, me, in our classroom and in the school as a whole; the rights and responsibilities of other staff members, and of their parents. I attempted to show the need for fairness, evenness and balance to be present in their relationships with all these people.

We listed in booklets the children's rights just as we had discussed them, and drew up a blueprint, as it were, for them to live by while they were in Grade 6 with me. Hopefully these would also be a basis for their behaviour in future years. Our class work was made known to other staff members in school assemblies, in staff meetings, and by maintaining displays of children's work on the various topics we covered during the year.

Parents, at first, seemed somewhat apprehensive; they wondered what I was going to unleash on their children. But through parent-teacher discussions, children reporting to parents, questionnaires for parents to complete on various topics as part of the accumulation of facts and opinions, displays of children's work throughout the school, and involvement in community activities, they have most decidedly seen the impact not only on their children but in other areas of the school life as well. Children in my room became quite adept at discussing real issues with teachers and with parents as equals. They have also succeeded, in some cases, in altering quite markedly, some of their parents' behaviour towards them, and have been able to do this without breaking down children's love and respect for their security.

My classroom situation is one area of improvement in my teaching practice. Now children really are free to express their opinions on all conceivable topics without fear of being ridiculed, mocked or embarrassed, and as equals with me. Building up a relevant and meaningful curriculum for Grade 6 children on racism, sexism, the roles of males and females, and discrimination, in co-operation with the children; involving them in the decision-making process; and having them evaluate areas covered; all this has enabled us to enlarge their range of options. A whole variety of activities has been studied in the classroom and these have then been practised at school, at home, and in the wider community. For example, children were able to freely and openly call me by my first name; were able to see me as a human being with strengths, weaknesses, a sense of humour; and to see a genuine desire to practise each aspect of human rights. There were times when I had to step in and become the ogre, but it happened with far more thought about when and why and the choice of issues and punishment.

Two other teachers became indirectly involved and they are planning to become involved in teaching for human rights in their classes this year. Discussions in staff meetings on a formal basis each week, or about incidents during recess, lunch, and after school, have seen most teachers acknowledge the value of my class' involvement in this program. Friction between 'enlightened' children in my room and some teachers not yet convinced of the possibilities of a human rights program, has been overcome without denying and backing away from rights already gained by the children who have worked on human rights in my classroom.

During the year the class has worked through many of the activities in the book and booklets, using them to build up a folder of notes, drawings, newspaper cuttings, newspaper photographs and cartoons, and records of interviews which

they saw relevant to the topics covered. Our school computer network is linked directly to the A.A.P. news and the children were able to call up various topics in full and then compare newspaper coverage with the total item. In that way they could check on bias, non-coverage etc. World leaders were written to seeking their philosophy regarding human rights and asking what value was placed on it in their country. So far Rajiv Gandhi, Francois Mitterand, Robert Hawke and Margaret Thatcher have replied to the children with their views on the importance or otherwise of human rights.

We invited a state politician into our class to speak on the many areas of government responsibilities and their relationship to people's rights. The children were vitally interested in what he had to say and a lively discussion followed. We later made a trip to Parliament House where fuller explanations were given to the children.

I, with several others who were trialling the 'Human rights curriculum', joined Colin Henry in presenting a paper to the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education on 7 November 1985. We called the paper 'Co-operative curriculum dissemination and development: the Human Rights Commission Schools Program', and we spoke of our experiences in putting the program into operation.

This year (1986) I will continue to work on the program in several Grade 6 classes. Hopefully I will refine and develop further my skills and those of the children in tackling the many and varied aspects of human rights. I hope to produce a small booklet which will cover suggested ideas, topics, news gathering areas, and general hints which teachers might use in our school. I am still learning and hopefully by the year's end, I will be able to say that I have made progress in formalising a curriculum which is suitable for me and other teachers in this school and perhaps for other schools.

## YEARS 6/7<sup>1</sup> (UPPER PRIMARY)

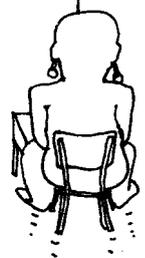
### **The participating teachers and schools**

We trialled the Teaching for Human Rights course together in 1985. This was made possible by the fact that we have been friends for many years and were both teaching Year 6/7 children which meant that planning and programming could be done on a co-operative basis and for the same level. In order to cover as much of the course as possible in two terms, we deliberately chose to do some topics simultaneously in order to compare and contrast our results. Others we treated more experimentally so that we could advise each other on the suitability of certain activities. The close proximity within which we live facilitated the numerous meetings and discussions which were needed during the year and the support and encouragement we were able to give each other was invaluable, especially when at times we felt frustrated or despondent with our progress.

### *The teachers*

We completed our Diplomas of Teaching as mature age students in 1978. One of us was appointed to an outer suburban primary school. During this time she

<sup>1</sup>This is a composite report by two teachers who worked very closely together and at the same level but in different schools.



taught Years 3-7, for the last five years specialising as a Year 6/7 teacher. The other was appointed to an inner suburban primary school where she taught Years 5-7, specialising one year as the Year 7 Language Arts teacher. After teaching for two years, we returned to the local CAE to take up part-time studies and completed our Bachelor of Education in Humanistic Education. This course, with its emphasis on awareness of self and others, values, and basic educational principles, was conducted in a uniquely caring atmosphere. It forced us to re-evaluate ourselves as people, and our whole philosophy of teaching. The course co-ordinator was actually the first person we had encountered anywhere in our training who truly believed in the issues and principles of human rights. It is due to this course that we became interested in trialling this program.

### *Sarah*

**I** am a sole parent and have three children, a boy and two girls. **I** was appointed to the primary school where **I** teach in the year it began and have been involved in the development of what was originally a small school of forty-three students to one which now has an enrolment of 380. This year **I** was given five children with 'specific behaviour problems' but who were not diagnosed as having learning difficulties. Our school has a higher than usual number of children with social problems because its reputation for dealing successfully with them has grown over the years and it has been recommended to parents by the regional education office. **I** was asked to take these children as **I** have had some success in previous years with similar problems and **I** find them a challenge. **I** was aware that these 'problem children' were going to be extremely difficult this year, and **I** felt rather apprehensive about the effects that a course like this one could have on them. Nevertheless **I** decided to proceed because no other method used in previous years had been successful.

Having teenage children of my own has given me personal knowledge and understanding of many of the problems encountered in school. **I** believe that many of these problems stem from the fact that normally students do not recognise the fact that they and their teacher have rights as well as responsibilities. Therefore, the human rights materials gave me a focal point to experiment with the many ideas **I** felt **I** would like to try with my students.

### *Wendy*

**I** am divorced and have two children, a son twenty and a daughter sixteen. Like Sarah, **I** often felt frustrated watching my own children deal with issues about which they had little information in the values/opinions area at school. This, together with the influence of the Humanistic Education course, gave me the incentive to trial this program.

## **The schools and the classes**

### *Sarah*

**I** was fortunate that the original principal appointed to my school believed in staff participation in all policy development. This has resulted in a supportive, co-operative environment which gives teachers the autonomy they need to be innovative, and made it possible for me to trial this course. The majority of the

staff have shown interest in the course, to the extent that some are intending to use it next year.

Our primary school is in a predominantly working class area with few professional people. Single parents would constitute about 25% of the population. Parental involvement has always been encouraged by the staff and is consequently high, which has been helpful in many aspects of my teaching. This has meant that throughout the year the parents have supplied me with feedback on this course, some positive, some negative. My class is comprised of twenty-eight children; there is an equal number of Year 6 and 7 students with an equal balance of the sexes.

### *Wendy*

My primary school is in an insular, upper socio-economic area with a population which is falling. There is no opportunity for expansion as the area is bounded by an airport and the sea. When I was appointed there first, the school had a student population of 650 which is now down to 230 and still falling. The high price of the housing will prevent young families moving in and because of falling numbers we have participated in displacement procedures for the last four years. I have volunteered for displacement for 1986 as I believe I should have experience of a different school for my own professional development. The majority of the staff have been at the school for ten years or more and the school is run on traditional lines with little innovation being attempted. Parental expectations are high and a great deal of support is given to students at home in all aspects of their schooling. Although the emphasis is on the academic in the expectations of our parents, I felt reasonably confident that they would accept the introduction of this course. I am well known to most of the parents by now, having taught other children in most families. I did however attempt to ensure the acceptance of parents by holding a meeting in the second week of term to explain what I wanted to do.

The members of staff have been either disinterested or negative about the course, although the principal has communicated occasional approving comments. He has observed on several occasions that this 'is the best year of 7s we've ever had', and he attributed it to the human rights course. I have a class of nineteen Year 7s and four Year 6s with an even balance of each sex. I was given three Year 7 boys who were considered to be behaviour problems throughout their schooling because I have dealt satisfactorily with others in previous years. They have learning difficulties as well, due I think to their behaviour, but on the whole the class would be above average in behaviour and ability.

## **Curriculum implementation**

### *Sarah*

My school follows the state Social Education course which encompasses three areas of the curriculum; these are Social Studies, Health and Religion Studies. After reviewing the human rights materials it was obvious that I could substitute the human rights activities for the suggested topics in this subject area. At the beginning of each year I spend approximately eight weeks on a 'Self-awareness' program so the human rights section of this course was easy to incorporate. The

second topic listed for Social Education is 'Who makes the rules in Australia?' so I combined 'Human rights and the law' with this over a period of four weeks.

'Indigenous people in change' (Australian Aborigines) fitted well into Non-discrimination/Racism', but our discussions were not confined to Australia. 'Sexism', 'Life', 'Freedom of conscience, opinion and expression', and 'Economic, cultural and social well-being' were covered briefly. They were an integral part of all other topics dealt with and, because of their prominence in current affairs during this year, were constant topics of discussion.

### *Wendy*

My school follows the state 'Learning and living', Social Studies course. The topics suggested in this course and the Health course are so broad in perspective, that I decided to replace them entirely with the Human Rights Program which covered all of the suggested curriculum areas. 'Human rights', which is the introductory topic and includes rights and responsibilities, was dealt with over most of first term. As the concept was so new to the class I found it needed all of that time to discuss, define and implement. However, because of its very nature, it has—like all other human rights issues—overlapped into all the other topics covered. This is especially so as one of my innovations for this topic was to organise a student representative council which has met weekly throughout the entire year, with varying success. I began Non-discrimination/Racism and sexism' towards the end of first term and continued into second, followed by 'Human rights and the law' and 'Life'. Like Sarah, we briefly discussed the other issue-areas as separate topics, but as they too cropped up in the areas we dealt with in depth, there proved to be no need to spend a long time on them as individual issues. This term's topic from the 'Learning and living' guidelines is 'Looking at a continent'. I have chosen to look at Africa from the point of view of human rights as it is so topical, and information and resources are so plentifully available from the media.

Because we were trialling this course, and because it was new both to the children and ourselves, we decided to structure our teaching of the topics from the handbook. This entailed, at first, following the suggested activities in sequence. As we became more confident and learnt from our mutual experiences with successes and failures, we became more selective in choosing what to use. We found that some concepts were readily understood by the students and that we did not need to use the somewhat repetitive activities suggested in the handbook; others needed additional resources to reinforce them. This was one of the areas where our many meetings were invaluable. The feedback we obtained from each other, re class response, interest, and outcomes, helped us to plan and program future lessons. The exchange of information that occurred when we were doing different topics included successful and unsuccessful strategies. Such strategies enabled us to avoid those activities which had been either unnecessary or had failed to achieve their objectives.

Although our observations and results were similar in many ways, we were mindful that the two classes came from different backgrounds. In some instances what failed with one class, succeeded with the other.

## Our goals

Our goals were to help the children become aware that:

1. everyone has rights and responsibilities
2. in some parts of the world people are denied their human rights
3. there are ways in which all of us can help those who are denied their human rights

When planning our program together we decided that we would actively involve the parents as much as possible in this course. We also planned to set up a pen pal correspondence between our classes with the ultimate aim of having them meet later in the year at a conference for human rights which we would organise.

## Strategies used

1. Small group discussions
2. Enquiries
3. Whole class discussions
4. Interviews
5. Guest speakers
6. Student social action
7. Role-plays
8. Students conference
9. Individual reports
10. Projects
11. Media (e.g. films, documentaries, news, newspapers, TV)

## In-depth report on two human rights topics

We decided that this report would be more authentic and helpful if these in-depth accounts were included, just as they were written up at the time in our record books. They are therefore presented as un-edited versions of our daily experiences and reviews, with accompanying comments.

## Sexism by Wendy

### *Lesson 1*

Began this topic by reading old fairy tales, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White*. On finishing, I asked what common factors they had noticed.

Result: The class is now so *aware—whether* or not they are putting what they have learnt into practice, or how long lasting the influence of this course will be, they have certainly progressed in their thinking and have developed a number of observational skills relating to attitudes and values. Almost every student recognised the stereotyped sexism so prevalent in these and other fairy tales e.g.

- All the heroines are beautiful
- All the heroines are helpless
- All the heroes are handsome
- All the heroes are strong
- All the heroines need to be rescued by the strong heroes

I then read some 'Fractured fairy tales' to them—the reversal of roles and upsetting of stereotypes was much appreciated by students. I then asked them to observe at home and playground any examples of sexism that they might see or hear for discussion tomorrow. These are also to be recorded in their books.

### *Lesson 2*

Some interesting reports from students about sexist remarks made at home last night. One older brother's comment that, 'All women are only good for one thing—cooking!' was not well received by the class.

#### *Activity—Class Reunion*

##### *Aim:*

1. To explore the extent of socialisation into sex roles of class members.
2. To test the effect (if any) that the course has had so far on students.

*Method:* as per handbook

*Result:* I have taped the answers but a little difficult to hear.

1. All but three people were married with children.
2. All but three had a boy and a girl
3. All boys and girls had jobs.
4. Seven boys and one girl had fought in a war.
5. All boys had 'typical stereotyped male jobs'.
6. Most boys had excelled at some sport.
7. No girls mentioned sport.

*Review:* I found these results interesting—I had not expected the boys to have discussed marriage and children as much as they did (result of human rights lessons?). Also, as many mothers of these student do not work I was surprised that they all saw themselves working in the future (same question as above). I feel, about many of the activities lately, that the students' awareness of the issues are influencing results. They now know what their responses *should* be and are producing them. I don't know whether I am obtaining convictions or conditioned responses.

\*Meeting with Sarah

### *Lesson 3*

Student Council meeting this afternoon which I also taped, but meeting became so emotional and noisy the tape is useless.

Council read from suggestion box:

Boys and girls sport should be integrated.

*Result:* Emotions ran very high, many agreed, some disagreed. One boy agreed but upset a number of students by making personal remarks, becoming upset and abusing many class members. Eventually I sent him out of the room to cool off—I have never done this before in my teaching career, but felt it was necessary to protect everyone's rights. I feel he may have been upset about something before we began, but he does not wish to discuss it with me. His remark—'When the girls play footy they mess about and don't do it properly'—caused a storm. I suggested to him that this may be because no one has ever taught them football skills—he did not want to acknowledge this as a reason and went on to add that

he would like to play netball or softball. But by this time the meeting had degenerated, he became abusive and I sent him out.

Meeting ended, I calmed Anthony down, brought him back and then suggested to the class that two human rights lessons next week be devoted one to the boys teaching the girls football skills and the second to the girls teaching the boys netball—all agreed enthusiastically.

#### *Lesson 4*

##### *Integrated football skills lesson*

###### *Aim:*

1. To actually give the girls an opportunity to learn the skills needed to play football as they have been showing such an interest at lunchtimes but lack the skills to participate.
2. To make the boys aware of the reasons *why* girls often cannot play football—that no one has ever taught them the required skills, not because they are not capable.
3. To promote integration of boys and girls in a togetherness activity in order to lessen any sexist attitudes, although this class is already practising equality and non-discrimination very well.

*Method:* I paired a boy with a girl and a football throughout the entire class, on oval. Gave a preparatory talk to boys on their responsibility to be patient and tolerant as teachers:

1. 15 minutes to teach/learn how to hold the ball and short pass
2. 15 minutes for handpassing
3. 15 minutes for marking
4. 15 minutes for bouncing—then running/bouncing

*Result:* One of the most satisfying and successful lessons I have ever participated in. The boys and girls worked so well together, every boy was a patient, understanding teacher; every girl did exactly as she was shown, tried very hard to follow instructions and some were quite successful in acquiring some of the skills. The lesson finished on a happy, caring note—both sexes very satisfied with the activity.

*Review:* I think a great deal was achieved during this activity.

1. The boys experienced the difficulty involved in teaching—the frustration involved in trying to convey what they consider to be 'easy' to someone who finds it difficult (in some cases impossible). They discovered the patience and understanding required.
2. The boys realised, by working on a one-to-one basis with a girl who was trying hard to follow their instructions, that shy girls can't play football because they usually have never been taught how.
3. The girls, having learnt how difficult it is to kick, bounce, catch etc., a football have a new admiration for the boys' skills and a new determination to master them.
4. A new camaraderie and togetherness between the sexes. A definite success—hope the netball one is as good!

*Lesson 5*

*Activity from handbook:* 'The Commercial'—sending up of stereotyped advertisements. Students placed in groups and working together—will see results next week.

*Lesson 6*

Today the girls taught the boys netball skills. A repeat of last week— very successful—boys freely confessed 'It's harder than it looks'. The working together and integration of the sexes gratifying to watch. I have noticed at least half the girls in my class playing football at lunch time with the boys.

*Lesson 7*

Commercials shown today.

*Result:* For the short amount of time given to them to organise, students presented quite interesting 'send ups' of ads that are sexist e.g. 'Cold Power', 'Marlboro', 'Rita the Eta Eater', 'Fab II', 'Ponds'. Everyone enjoyed the activity.

*Lesson 8*

*What's a boy? What's a girl?*

*Aim:* To see what, if any, stereotypes of boys and girls emerge.

*Method:* followed from handbook

*Result:* Class provided with large list of personal characteristics. When I asked them to allocate them to male, female etc. there were some surprised looks and mumblings, but no actual objections—which I found disappointing. I stopped them half way through as it was consuming so much time and conducted a survey of results. I was very pleased that three boys in the class had put each one in the 'both' column. As we reviewed results, I received many objections from students; they had not wanted to do it as it was 'stereotyping'. I asked why they had gone ahead and done it and was told, 'Because you are our teacher and we didn't want to argue with you'. I told them I was disappointed they hadn't but they had had the option of using the 'both' column and only three had done this. The remainder had put the 'passive' qualities in the girls and the 'positive' in the boys.

*Review:* Disappointing—I had hoped their convictions would be stronger by now. However it led into good discussion based on points on p. 134 of handbook. This proved fruitful and they contributed many reasons why stereotyping is destructive to individuals, groups and society.

\* I have arranged for an elderly lady from a local nursing home to visit the week after next to talk to the class on differences in expectations of females when she was young.

\* Meeting with Sarah re results of activity so far.

I have decided not to do any more of the suggested activities in the handbook except for the class keeping a diary of 'examples of sexism' they notice for a week, as they are so aware of the topic now that further work seems pointless. They see through situations that I attempt to present and they are falling flat.

### Lesson 9

Two ladies from a local Nursing Home visited class today both 86 years of age, born in 1899. Each student had prepared questions to put to them on topic of 'Sexism'. I also had prepared thirty questions. This was a disappointing session from the aspect of sexism, although the class enjoyed the visit. Neither of the women understood the concept of sexism and were both so socialised into their sex stereotyped roles, that they did not understand the bias of the students (nor my) questions. They both vehemently denied that they had ever been discriminated against because of their sex, nor had they ever felt unequal to men. They did however, unwittingly, reinforce some of the ideas we have discussed. In answer to a student's question 'Do you agree with Women's Liberation?' they answered, 'Oh yes, it's a wonderful thing! A further question, 'Do you think it is good that women have more freedom?' one answered 'Oh yes, but not too much—we didn't have all these broken homes when I was young! The rest of the session became a history lesson with the ladies telling the class what it was like to live through the wars.

In discussion with the class afterwards, some of the more aware students observed that the above answers were contradictions to original statement—'How could they think Women's Liberation was a good thing if nothing had been wrong before?' I was pleased that this had not gone un-noticed. Also, 'Why *relative* freedom for women and not men?' On reflection, a woman in her late fifties or early sixties would have been a better choice I feel. Growing up post World War I, she would have experienced the dual values system that operated from then more than these who fully accepted the status quo.

This is book week and all energies will be directed towards that—no actual activities planned for this week.

Sexism diaries handed in—some interesting observations by most students including:

1. Ads depicting women as sole homemaker
2. Ads directed solely at men for garden and building requirements
3. TV shows containing sexist situations
4. Sexist statements from parents, grandparents etc.  
'boys don't cry'  
'girls are gentle'  
'a woman's place is in the home'
5. All female checkout assistants
6. No female managers in supermarkets
7. Male dominated TV sports and radio programs
8. Evening TV live shows, all male presenters

### Evaluation of Sexism

In the short term I have observed a noticeable change in attitude from the whole class on sex role stereotyping. Both sexes seem to be very much more aware of this when it occurs and are constantly on the lookout for examples of it, e.g. constantly reporting to me about sexist ads, newspaper articles, statements made at home or at school. In my opinion the activities recommended in the handbook were excellent and I would be happy to use them again next year.

Two positive results I have observed following this topic:

1. A greater social interaction between the sexes in my class than in the other Year 7.
2. A very negative and vocal response to a visiting First Aid teacher who repeatedly chose girls for demonstration purposes and habitually directed questions to girls.

It was clear that she had a problem relating to boys and I could sympathise with her, but after doing this particular topic I could not condone her behaviour, which unsettled the class. The students discussed possible strategies they could use to combat this and agreed that in the next session the girls would sit at the back, the boys in front, and the girls would not volunteer any answers. The result was almost amusing—the teacher obviously felt very threatened, ignored the boys' raised hands and still insisted on girls answering and demonstrating until one brave girl informed her that she was being sexist. It was gratifying to see that both boys and girls were equally concerned about this unfair situation.

In the term the attitudinal changes noticed after this course will depend very much on their experiences at secondary school—I would hope they will retain at least some of the values they have acquired.

#### *Human rights by Sarah*

I have always started the year with a new class by concentrating on a self-awareness program and because the human rights materials arrived three weeks later than expected, these were suitable introductory activities for the topic of human rights. They came from the book *I've got me and I'm glad* by Farnette, Forte and Loss. I will mention the activities the children did but will not go into details.

1. Self collage
2. Percepto graph
3. Feeling puzzled
4. Touching times
5. Negative chains
6. Sensible solutions

The human rights materials arrived and from then on I used the activities from the handbook.

#### *Lesson 1*

Rights and responsibilities.

*Aim:* To focus upon our fundamental rights and responsibilities as human beings.

*Method:* The children organised themselves into groups of three to four to decide what rights they had as members of the class. I wrote my rights while they were doing this. I gave them fifteen minutes to come up with their list. I then blackboarded all their responses, even if they were considered to be unrealistic or inappropriate to me or anyone else. Next we did the same thing for our responsibilities. These lists were to be left on the blackboard so that we could study them and either add to or withdraw from it.

*Result:* It was obvious to me that children knew the correct responses for their responsibilities, though whether they put them into practice or not was debatable.

The other surprising feature was that many of their rights contradicted their responsibilities.

#### *Lessons 2, 3, 4*

Each day we spent time discussing the list of rights and responsibilities. They discovered that many of their so called rights infringed upon others' rights, and each of these were discussed at length. During these lessons many of their rights (which were not really feasible) were removed from the list after a vote had been taken and it was found that only a small minority wanted them. Next I read the 'rights and responsibilities' from the handbook (p. 25) and the questions. This proved valuable because it gave them starting points, so they were able to recall many things that had happened to them. We then discussed my rights and responsibilities. By this time the children had a sound knowledge of why I had rights and could also see my responsibilities. One quite perceptive child stated that in many instances I could not carry out my responsibilities to them as a teacher if they did not act responsibly in class. We spent three weeks discussing, adding to and removing from the original lists. For all concerned, it was time well spent.

*Conclusion:* It seems that students have been made aware of their responsibilities throughout their lives by parents and teachers, because they could list them so readily. However most of the children had never considered that they had rights. These initial lessons have heightened the children's awareness of rights and responsibilities and hopefully this will encourage a co-operative atmosphere in the classroom.

*Review:* When we had finally reached a consensus, we found that the children had a list of rights and responsibilities which really complemented each other. Mine were the same. These were put on special paper and have been an excellent, constant reminder of behavioural expectations and something all of us could refer to when necessary.

#### *Lessons 5, 6*

Prior to this lesson, for homework the children were asked to find out what their parents thought were their rights and responsibilities as parents. These were very interesting and once again parents seemed very much aware of the responsibilities but could not verbalise their rights. Some were unable to do it at all, so the following night the children took their own list of rights and responsibilities home so that their parents could get some idea. This produced a few more which were more appropriate. As a class we looked at the lists supplied by the parents and discussed what they meant and why they were listed. Some were very amusing, some were very confused, but on the whole parents who responded seem to know their responsibilities but were unclear of their rights as parents.

*Thought:* If everyone is so aware of their responsibilities, why is the world in such a mess???

#### *Lesson 7*

*Focal questions:* What are human rights?

What are our human responsibilities?

Who defines these things and how?

*Theme:* Who are you? Being me.

This discussion did not go the way I thought it would. The children found they fitted into many categories e.g. children, female, white etc. which, although they were the same as lots of others in the class, were untrue for others. The discussion then changed direction and we looked at problems they had as children in being able to get their rights. This was a real problem because they had to do what everyone said—parents, grandparents, teachers etc.—because they had no real power to disagree. And if they did try to explain their thoughts most adults thought they were being cheeky.

*Review:* We did not get very far with this discussion. I had to agree with their argument up to a point, but because the session degenerated and they were not listening to each other I stopped it and referred back to their rights and responsibilities e.g. to be listened to and listen when someone is talking. I realise that the children needed a more explicit definition of what is human in order to be able to establish a sense of themselves as human beings.

### *Lesson 8*

*Activity:* Being a human being.

Using a wastepaper bin on the desk, I explained that it was an alien from space and it was curious to know about lifeforms, especially the bi-peds who seemed to speak in so many different ways.

*Review:* This lesson sparked off much discussion about the kinds of groups all over the world and the children often needed me to clarify some of the information they were not too sure of. We covered poor, blacks, women, men and as so often happened in previous lessons, we often became stuck on one topic like 'women' or 'poor' and it became necessary for me to intervene and try to get onto other sections of humanity.

\* It would be possible to spend the whole day in discussions of human rights.

*Conclusion:* We have established a pin-up board of human rights issues and children are to bring these articles to show each other. We will have discussions on these each morning as they are pinned up. I am very pleased with the children's enthusiasm and the parents' too.

### *Lesson 9*

What makes us human?

This was more difficult for them than I imagined and some of the children could not do it well. It was a little like Lesson 7. They mentioned things that were not appropriate and could easily have been characteristics for animals etc. I kept reminding them that they must have on their lists things that only humans can be, but this was just a little too difficult for them. After much talking we finally came up with a list.

*Conclusion:* I would do this lesson differently next time.

*Meeting with Wendy*

I did the activity 'What makes us human' before Wendy and explained my results and how I thought it was not very successful. She decided to do it and had the same results.

### *Lesson 10*

At the beginning of this lesson I asked the children whether they were enjoying the lessons and activities in human rights and was overwhelmed with their response. I asked them then to write down what they thought human rights were, and they came up with a comprehensive list.

*Comment:* I am very pleased so far with students' responses and they seem to be trying harder to be kind to one another.

### *Lesson 11*

Today a newspaper clipping arrived which as a class we believed was extremely sexist. The discussion which developed was one of 'What can we do about it?' We talked about various ways and settled on writing a protest letter to the paper concerned. The class, with some help from me, composed a letter and sent it off. We are watching the paper to see if it has been published.

*Comment:* This was a valuable exercise where we discussed how often girls do not get a 'fair go' and that even worse than this, the girls do not recognise it. I am pleased to note that the children are becoming very aware of unfair treatment of them and are comfortable enough to say so, even to adults. I decided that by this time I should move on to a different topic because enough of the activities from the section of human rights have been covered and I do not want to overdo it. Also so many other topics have been covered, incidentally throughout this time, through the newspaper medium, that some of the situations will not be new to the children. Overall I consider this section of the booklet very valuable; it has been successful in my classroom and I would use this with any class I may have in the future.

### **Evaluation of Human Rights topic**

This topic has proved to be an invaluable learning experience for the children, their parents and me. Although the concept of rights seemed to be new to the students, after we had articulated and listed these rights, it was apparent to me that they were very much more aware of their responsibilities. The same proved to be also true of the parents as their own lists show. It came as a shock to me to discover that I also was more aware of, and could more easily list, my responsibilities, than my rights. Although I had always been aware of the fact that I should have rights as a teacher, I had never verbalised them and made them 'real'. Listing our rights and responsibilities, which had been mutually agreed upon, gave me a point of reference throughout the year and has actually influenced my teaching and methods of discipline. I have found that when I draw their attention to a problem of behaviour, they can readily verbalise the 'right' that they have abused. This however does not constitute a behavioural change, because at this stage they are still infringing on people's rights. It is obvious to me that my expectations at the beginning of the course were too high, and the goal of achieving student self-discipline would need constant and long reinforcement of the values inherent in this topic.

### **Parental feedback**

We have received an enormous amount of both verbal and written feedback from parents about this course, both positive and negative. The majority of parents,

however, have been supportive and in the main pleased with most aspects of the topics covered. On the positive side, parents have commented on their child's heightened awareness of the social environment, a pleasing readiness to discuss issues of areas covered in the topics, and a new interest in current affairs and news. The only negative parental response has been complaints about children insisting on their 'rights' or only recognising their own rights at the expense of other members of the family. Although we accept that this has been happening, we also feel the parents are attributing this apparent change in behaviour to the course, when much of it is normal pre-adolescent development.

### **Decisions/Resolutions**

We both gained far more than either of us anticipated from teaching this course, and it provided *us* with a most valuable and satisfying learning experience. Taking into consideration that trialling any new course must necessarily have its triumphs and its defeats, we feel that the learning that took place in our classrooms was considerable.

We would both be happy to teach the course again next year to any grade of children. Familiarity with the material would obviously diminish preparation and programming time. We have come to the obvious conclusion that a course like this needs to be introduced throughout the school and continued into secondary education, as constant reinforcement in an on-going process seems to us to be essential if it is to have a lasting effect upon attitudinal changes. Because we have experienced the benefits of working together we feel that the Commission should look at implementing support for new teachers next year. This could be accomplished either by releasing an experienced human rights teacher on a part-time basis to in-service schools in the vicinity, or if this is not possible, teachers trialling in schools in one area could possibly form support groups for each other. We feel this is an important point because of the nature of the material. The time involved in planning and programming would offset the negative responses which can sometimes be encountered among staff members and parents.

We feel the course could be improved in the area of visual resources, especially video. We have made use of videos during the course, taping relevant documentaries and films with a strong human rights message. However, because the visual media is so effective, especially in capturing interest at the introduction of topics, we would like to see more resources of this nature included in the kit.

Although we had programmed 'Human rights' to be taught in the previously mentioned curriculum areas, we soon found that it was impossible to confine the subject to those prescribed time slots. Instead, it permeated every subject area and we found that we were really teaching it right across the curriculum—to the extent that we sometimes felt that we were teaching nothing but human rights. In fact some parents even commented that they were receiving the impression from their children that the only lessons they were doing were human rights. This would not of course happen in a secondary school situation, where classes and teachers are constantly changing.

Very early in the year we encouraged children to bring in news clippings dealing with any human rights issue and after discussion these were displayed on pin-boards in the classroom. Due to the fact that they became invaluable points of reference for various topics and have provided a focus for discussions, they

remained displayed until replaced by others. So this board was full throughout the year. The interest these displays created amongst the students made the board an important resource, almost like a human rights text book, to which they constantly referred. We would recommend this as a teaching aid to any new human rights teacher and would definitely retain it as part of our program for the future.

### Students responses to some human rights lessons

On a number of occasions through the year, to gauge the enjoyment/learning of the students, we borrowed the idea below from the Human Rights Commission's Occasional Paper No. 9 by Colin Henry, David Hitchcock and Michelle Michie.

*I enjoyed this lesson*

A lot						hardly at all
	5	4	3	2		1

*In this lesson I learned*

A lot of new things						hardly anything new
	5	4	3	2		1

Below each scale the student included a short reason for number grading the lesson.

Another form of student evaluation we used was an occasional written review of their assessment of human rights to date.

### Human rights mini-conference

On the 14th August, 1985, we held a Human Rights Conference for the Year 6/7 children at Sarah's primary school. This involved a lot of work in planning and preparation, but the benefits far outweighed the work involved.

At first we had difficulty in engaging guest speakers for this particular age-group, because many of the organisations we approached are run on a voluntary basis and can only supply speakers at night, and they are only used to speaking to groups of adults.

However as the date drew nearer we were embarrassed by having more volunteers than we needed! This was also the case when Wendy called for volunteer transport for her children. This resulted in more mothers attending, for interest rather than transport. Overall fifteen mothers participated in activities with the children.

The three guest speakers chosen were ideal, in that they were able to converse on most of the issues covered by us this year. We all appreciated the effort they made to tailor their talks to the children's level of understanding.

The speakers represented:

- Australian Freedom from Hunger
- Amnesty International
- Female fitters and turners from the Trade Union Training Programme

After the conference we were gratified to receive a letter from the first speaker stating that he was so impressed with our teaching of this course that he had spoken for half an hour on a local radio station, mentioning the conference and how we had organised it.

## Our Evaluation

The day was an unqualified success in all areas, e.g. organisation, timing, content, enjoyment, learning, sharing and feedback and we would thoroughly recommend it to people interested in teaching for human rights.

### Resources

Farnette, Cherie et al. *I've got me and I'm glad*. Incentive Publications, Sacramento, Calif., 1977.

Farnette, Cherie et al. *People need each other*. Incentive Publications, Sacramento, Calif., 1979.

Forte, Imogene. *The me I'm learning to be*. Incentive Publications, Sacramento, Calif, 1983.

*Dr Zeuss on the Loose*. 16mm film.

*Big Henry and the Polka Dot Kid* (Learning to Be Human series). 16mm film.

*The Shopping Bag Lady* (Learning to Be Human series). 16mm film.

*The Seven Ravens*. 16mm film.

## YEAR 7

Our school is one for Specific Purposes and caters for children ranging from severely to moderately intellectually handicapped. Its policy is to involve these students, wherever possible, in the outside community. In particular the school tries to place as many students as it can in other schools where they gain invaluable social experience. In line with this policy it was decided to use money from the Human Rights Commission Small Grants Scheme to help the integration of two students into a nearby high school.

The high school's motto is 'We Care' and the staff and students pride themselves on living up to the spirit of the school motto. In addition it has a class of mildly intellectually handicapped (OA) students.

The two students from our school were placed in the class for two days a week. They were supported by a teacher funded by the grant, who liaised between the two schools, as well as devising and implementing relevant programs.

Alice presented as a very quiet, nervous girl who suffered from hemiplegia, a result of extensive brain surgery. She had a lot of difficulty adjusting to the rigours and demands of the OA class. In addition, she is affected by *petit mal* epilepsy.

Geoff presented as a young man lacking in many social skills and confidence. He has Down's Syndrome and difficulty in speaking.

It was decided to link the program with a similar Human Rights Small Grants funded Integration Program run by a local high school OA Class. Consequently we decided that there needed to be some preparation of the whole school population, and in particular the OA class, before these students were placed in the new situation.

The preparation was along the following lines.

## Strategy (1)

### *Whole school approach*

The incoming Year 7 students at the high school were, as part of their Personal Development Program, shown the video on the Human Rights Charter for Handicapped People, *Don't Think I Don't Think*. Discussions were followed by the students drawing up their own charter and then comparing this with the Handicapped People's Charter. Many were surprised at the similarities. The teachers were requested to avoid using the OA class as an example of handicapped children, so that the Year 7 students would be free to form their own opinions.

## Strategy (2)

### *OA class approach*

It was felt that the OA class also needed to use material from *Teaching for human rights* to help foster positive attitudes that would, in turn, help facilitate a supportive environment for the two students from our school, Alice and Geoff.

In particular, it was necessary to give the OA students a positive perspective of intellectual handicap by reshooting the Handicapped People's Charter video to them. The discussions that followed certainly helped to break down some of the students' barriers by showing:

- (a) that handicapped people's aspirations and rights were remarkably similar to their own
- (b) that handicap is a relative term
- (c) that the handicapped needed help and understanding and not just pity

## Comments on activities

1. The rights and responsibilities of the class, the individual student, and the teacher, were discussed and a charter drawn up.
2. The activity on hurtful comments was particularly illuminating. The notion that freedom of speech does not, or should not, mean freedom to hurt or abuse others was at first difficult to perceive. After the hurt was felt, sometimes painfully, when the abuser became in turn the abused, it was not so difficult to understand.
3. The two box trick and variations on it, such as when one student had secretly decorated an L.P. cover of the same record in two ways, also had an effect. The brightly coloured, eye-catching one was priced \$2.00 above the plainer cover. Predictably all but one chose the dearer. When it was discussed, the 'trick' was played on other students and then by students on their parents. The resultant discussions clarified the need not to judge on superficial characteristics, especially when it comes to people.
4. Finally, the outsider activity gave insight and understanding into being prejudiced against.

The above activities were popular with the class and I feel helped the class see that the rights of all people—and not just themselves—were very important and should be basic to one and all.

The bulk of the support teacher's work has been to supervise in the transition of educational and social programs from one school to the other. This initially involved consulting with our own teachers and devising appropriate educational programs to bridge the gap between the classes here and at the high school. The implementation of these programs has led, in particular with Alice, to pleasing progress. Through giving these students real and positive forms of self-esteem, particularly in comparison with the students in the OA class, progress has been made.

The support teacher helped supervise their integration with specialist classes such as P.E., Sport, Music and Home Science. In Alice's case this was necessary as it had to be proved that her form of epilepsy would not present a danger to herself and to others. This was particularly so in the Home Science class.

Geoff needed a great deal of this assistance just to help him to go along to these classes. Throughout the program this proved to be a continuous problem.

One aim was to involve Alice and Geoff in the widest range of activities. This was most successful when they attended the excursion to an art exhibition in the city. Attending the exhibition really did help to establish them as one of the class.

Alice's progress in her academic work, and her desire and ability to participate in class, led to a one week trial at the high school. Its success has led to Alice being enrolled in the OA class for 1986. Unfortunately Geoff did not respond so well, and did not want to be a full-time member of the class. Overall, what we have been able to do with the grant has been remarkably successful with Alice, and partially so with Geoff.

## **YEARS 7, 9, 10**

### **A. Rationale**

A colleague gave me a copy of an advertisement 'Teaching for Human Rights'. He thought that I would be interested, given what he knew and perceived about my educational interests so far in my short teaching career. My reasons for becoming involved in the program were as follows:

1. It gave me a unique opportunity for curriculum development and concentration of my energy in an area of personal and community interest.
2. Also, 'Teaching for Human Rights' could be seen as an integral part of 'Ministerial Paper No. 6' and the 'Frameworks' document.
3. It seemed to link up with a number of influential educational initiatives in schools, e.g. student participation, awareness of girls and non-Anglo-Saxon groups, integration of handicapped students and mature-age students.
4. Our school was moving towards the evaluation and reassessment of its role and educational philosophy in the light of the above initiatives, and hence it was important that rights and responsibilities of members of the school community were thoroughly discussed, brainstormed, criticised and evaluated at all levels.
5. I had access to information and literature that I, and my students, would not have normally seen without a lot of hard work.
6. Finally, the idea of enquiry-learning and encouragement of negotiation with students was a personal liking.

## B. Structure

It was extremely difficult to involve people (especially other staff) in this program. Other staff were not too concerned about the ideas behind Teaching for Human Rights. Reasons for this seemed to stem from their traditional views of education and what should be taught and not taught! Those teachers who were interested in Teaching for Human Rights had already initiated various new ideas in their own teaching but they were unable to share in the program because they were restricted by curriculum requirements within their own departments, time, and of course time-tabling limitations. Unfortunately members of my own Department of Humanities were not in the least interested in incorporating any of the materials and ideas of the Human Rights Program into the Humanities curriculum.

## C. Planning

Even without the general support of my department, I still decided to participate in the Program. Therefore the main classes involved in the initiative work were my own. They included Year 7, 9, and 10 Social Studies.

Other students from other classes whom I had occasional contact with were fleetingly involved. Obstacles encountered included those already mentioned. Others included running foul of the school administration and school rules in trying to escape classroom-based learning activities. In addition there were few resources and keen competition for those few resources the school had. Time and involvement of students in the program reflected an initial negative attitude to school, society and themselves. The place of this program in the school curriculum was in the Social Studies area. But there was scope for this to be expanded not only in content but in process to other parts of the curriculum.

Goals set included development of negotiation skills and the implementation of enquiry-based learning. This involved the development of interpersonal skills such as improving self-confidence and encouraging the initiation of ideas. Then I sat down with my students and discussed the program, and what I hoped we (as a group) could do with it. This proved a little premature when it came to the students setting and defining their own goals. The students were only interested in doing something different, so I left this decision-making idea to a later stage. The one and only area of goals that we were able to set together was a list of classroom rules. These were meant to apply to everyone within the classroom. We moved from there to negotiation of work or activities from week to week. The tentative outline that we came up with ran as follows:

- rules/laws: why they exist, when they protect people, and when they are used against people and why
- power over the handicapped and the mentally ill; definition of these categories of people
- reassessment of where the class wanted to go and how; setting further goals

The only other achievement that the students were prepared to commit themselves to was the possible production of a video expressing their thoughts and ideas about the theme of 'Human rights'.

The students were unsure of what was expected of them and I was also unsure of my exact contribution as a person and a teacher without too much influence. But we tried and struggled! Resources were scarce and I was unsure of

what we needed. So it was very much a process of playing it by ear. It was a struggle to round up enough text and paper, so I went and bought them from the grant money. Books and videos were also hard to come by, so I carefully shopped around to come up with some worthwhile resources. But the most needed resource that we were unable to use was a portable video pack. This was a key issue to the Year 10s in the latter half of the year. We did, however, have access to:

- the Educational Resource Centre of the Royal Children's Hospital, including its film and video catalogue
- the school library and its video collection
- the Equal Opportunity Resource Centre
- trade union materials
- drama notes, plays and poetry both in the written form and the spoken form

#### **D. Teacher strategies**

I attempted to use a number of teaching strategies after much thought, and trial and error. We tried:

- brainstorming
- role-plays
- small-group discussions
- using student facilitators
- watching videos and holding discussions about them
- making drawings and writing newspapers
- facilitating creative writing
- team-teaching on the use of video-cameras and script writing, and other technical media skills

#### **E. Implementation**

With the students I was teaching, the program started to flounder about the third week. It was obvious they were suffering a motivation problem that seemed to afflict all their subjects. So I ran the gauntlet of teaching strategies without much success until I realised how involved they all were with the visual media. Hence in a last bid effort I started to use a number of films to transmit the different themes of human rights. The first film that we watched was *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. I worked very hard using my own personal knowledge of the subject, linking it to what the students knew and didn't know.

Then we went back to rules and how institutions use them. It was here that we arrived at a negotiated code of behaviour relevant to the classroom. The ensuing discussions made the students and me aware of individual rights and preferences against an institutional background such as a school or a psychiatric hospital. The students made very strong connections with the loss of privileges that the patients suffered, especially the loss of cigarettes.

The students worked through a number of questions relating to the film. Then we took time to look at racism, sexism and the problems of the mentally handicapped. Spontaneously the students wanted to put their thoughts into a series of short skits or sketches. They divided themselves into working groups,

pooled their ideas and images and presented the results to the class one afternoon. It was a lot of seriousness and fun.

We moved into the video *Fair Enough* which sparked furious debate about students' rights, teachers' rights, rules and regulations. Again we returned to our list of rights and behaviour code for the class. It underwent some refinement. To provide contrast with the types of issues in the preceding videos, I decided to use *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* which I hoped would broaden the students' views of their environment, political dissension, freedom of conscience and the right to a quality life. A sensitive discussion took place during and after this film. Much attention was given to political dissidents and what it means to us as Australians. We conducted a group session comparing the three videos and films we had seen and what they were about.

In third term I put the idea of doing a class video to the class. It was meant to encapsulate their thoughts and ideas about the year's direction. I suggested that they draw up a list of skills that they would like to learn in relation to making videos and films. The list that they came up with was as follows:

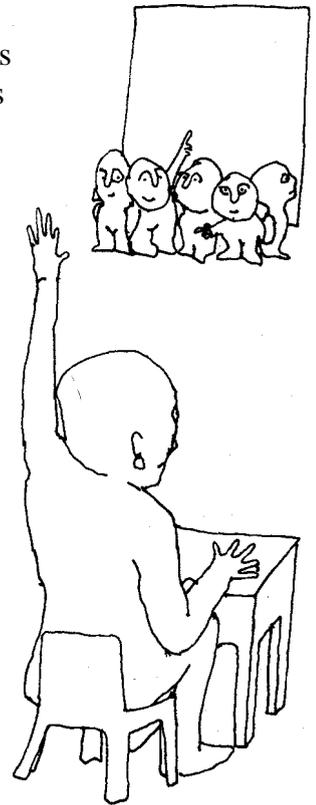
- camera technique
- script writing
- lighting
- sound effects
- titles

The students broke themselves up into groups, brainstormed ideas, and clarified aims and expression. Motivation was high and they worked hard. Topics chosen ranged from student rights to parent-child rights, included sexism and racism.

These students were generally unskilled in written and technical skills. But they responded to this task with keenness in spite of having short concentration spans and poor English skills. Another media teacher and I worked with the students. Planning to film the scripts proceeded smoothly in spite of some very practical problems such as being constantly checked for being out of class when the groups tried to run through their video movements. The other major problem was a very old video camera which defied all efforts to use it at all. There was the possibility of using another school's equipment but the insurance was prohibitive. So as a group we had to reassess what we were going to do. The students decided to finish their scripts which they handed in as final copies. The class was very disappointed at not being able to video-tape their scripts. In spite of the situation, they did not grumble too much.

## F. Summing up

The year has been a mixture of difficulties and of learning. I am pleased with some areas of the activities and materials, and with the general response of my students. The verbal feedback and the written reports of the year reveal that most students enjoyed the ideas and issues raised by the human rights manual when they were related to their own lives. They also realised that change is very slow and people must care for one another in order for that change to begin happening. The personal discussions with my students have heartened me and overcome my fears of being seen as a 'slack teacher' who didn't make her pupils write and allowed them out of class. One incident sums it all up.



The Year 10s accompanied by me were running through locations and camera angles around the school. One scene called for the small students to be shown in the male toilets. So we trooped in to organise the scene. The boys were pleased that the girls and myself came in too! Next minute one of the trade teachers (male) ran into the toilets shouting at everyone to get out and what were the girls doing there, who was their teacher and so on. The students explained that I was with them and what they were doing. He did not appear to believe them and it was only after I had explained that he left in a huff with much disapproval from the group. Then we were approached by the Vice-Principal enquiring what the group was doing out of class again, without a teacher. Again I emerged from the crowd and explained what we were doing. The students were very indignant that I was, so they thought, embarrassed by the 'please explain' stance of some colleagues. They realised that I was as bound by rules and responsibilities as they were!

## **YEARS 7, 8, 9, 10**

### **1. Rationale**

We decided to become involved in the Human Rights Project because we believed it would provide the opportunity for us to further develop courses we had introduced in previous years. We felt that many of the students in the district had fairly narrow views on social issues and that teaching for human rights might be a means altering this situation.

### **2. Structure**

We originally planned to introduce the program across the curriculum and at all year levels. We now see this as a long-term aim. At some levels the programs we introduced were totally new, while in others they expanded and extended current units of work. Most of the projects we did introduce were within the Humanities subjects in the school—History, Social Science, Geography, Legal Studies, Art and English—and at the Year 7-10 levels.

### **3. Planning**

The involvement of both teachers and parents in the project was not as great as had been hoped. Three teachers in the school were mainly responsible for the introduction of the projects. The Year 8 Aboriginal Studies course allowed us to involve many members of the local Aboriginal community. The lack of involvement of parents (other than occasional feedback at parent/teacher nights and informal meetings) was disappointing and probably due to lack of 'advertising' on my part. We were able to co-operate with a city high school in our efforts to provide contact for our students with ethnic groups from which they are isolated in their own community.

As we introduced many varied programs at different levels it will be easier to report according to each year level.

## **YEAR 7**

Discussion of people's rights arose from our study of the traditional life of the Netsilik Eskimos. The freedom of the children in this society was of particular

interest to the students and it stimulated their ideas when I suggested they should set up some 'rights' according to which we could conduct classes.

I initially divided the class into small groups of four to five kids in which they discussed what their 'rights' should be. It was surprising the amount of discussion which eventuated and it took us five lessons to discuss and then fully agree on the final 'rights and duties'.

### **Discipline**

In the event of a student or students breaking these rules the class discusses with the teacher and individual(s) concerned what punishment, if any, is appropriate.

I should mention here that our school is situated in a small rural town (population 2 000) within a wheat growing district. The students are fairly conservative in their views, and very well behaved in class, and we have few, if any, discipline problems. This creates a number of other problems. Many students tend to be rather narrow in their outlook; they have found it difficult to see 'rights' as being different to rules, and are very concerned about the 'discipline' aspect of class behaviour. In some of their comments about rights, many expected them to be enforced by *me* i.e. 'rules' rather than 'rights' which *they* could *demand*. (I continually had to refer students to their rights during the early months.)

Even though the 'rights' agreed upon could seem rather minor they did contravene some general school rules, so an agreement had to be reached with other staff and the Principal and the rights we had agreed to observe were restricted to Social Science classes. I felt that classes ran much better after we had implemented the 'rights and duties'. The kids took them seriously and seemed much more content in that they believed they were being fairly treated. It was pleasing that at the beginning of 1986 the Year 8 students asked to have their Social Science classes conducted according to the 'rights' they agreed upon last year.

We began the year with a 'Who Am I' assignment which was of great value to the students as many come from different primary schools in the district. It not only encouraged them to think about themselves as individuals but also to get to know each other. The 'wanted' and 'missing' posters were of great interest to all school members and allowed them to get to know the new Year 7 students. The posters were displayed throughout the Social Science rooms. On reviewing the assignment we felt that most of the tasks were valuable, however the last task we have decided to omit as it did not really 'work'. We were trying to briefly introduce some knowledge or concept of race—there must be a better way—we are open to suggestions.

Other projects trialled were the 'Trust Walk' which we felt was only mildly successful probably because it was seen as a 'game' and the kids didn't really believe there was anything worthwhile in it. Although they were aware of their fear or lack of trust, in most cases it was difficult with students at this level to relate the activity to any broader aspect of life.

We also studied the UN Declarations of 'Rights of the individual' and 'the child! The students chose one or more of the 'Declared Rights' and designed a collage based on these rights. This was an interesting process especially as I could not for the life of me see some of the relationships students used in their collages.

However, on questioning them and asking them to justify their inclusions, they were able to do so in almost all cases. I found they had applied these 'rights' on many occasions to aspects of their everyday life—teasing, name calling, competition between towns, differing degrees of wealth.

In General Studies, the Year 7 students set about writing and performing their own plays based upon one of the rights in the Universal Declaration of Rights e.g. human rights in the work place, or at school. General Studies classes only consist of about twelve students. I divided the kids into groups of four and they set about writing a scene each for the play. The smaller groups then regrouped; altered names [etc. so](#) that the three scenes linked together into the one play. The students then allotted parts and performed the play. Attempts to video the play failed because of an antiquated video camera which continually stopped mid-scene, and poor technical skills on my part. Unfortunately they in no way did justice to the kids' efforts and talents.

## **YEAR 8**

At the Year 8 level our Social Science course has been planned around the multicultural nature of Australian society. First semester deals primarily with Aboriginal Studies and the second with other ethnic groups which make up the Australian population.

The Aboriginal Studies unit involved the participation of a local Aboriginal Education Officer, and many members of the local Aboriginal community. A one-day excursion was organised to the site of an old Aboriginal mission. The unit ended with a four-day Aboriginal Studies Camp to a National Park. The camp was attended by the Aboriginal Education Officer and other members of the local Aboriginal community, and the archaeologist responsible for the preservation of Aboriginal sites in the Park. The students visited many of these sites. They were divided into 'tribal' groups, under the leadership of two Aboriginal community members for the period of the camp. They participated in corroborees, performing their own dances and songs; in making and using traditional weapons; in preparing and eating tribal food—kangaroo, emu, snake, vegetables cooked in a traditional earth oven; and in visiting Aboriginal art and ceremonial sites. The camp was a fitting end to a particularly successful Aboriginal Studies project. Contact between the students and Aborigines was particularly rewarding as changes in attitude on the part of the kids was marked.

Relations between members of the Aboriginal community and whites in our town is probably fairly typical of a small country centre of this kind—there is little contact at all. The Aboriginal population has a major problem with alcoholism and is always readily criticised by members of the white community, so we really were covering some new ground. It is pleasing to see kids talking to Aborigines down the street—contact has not disappeared. It is also pleasing to note that one member of the Aboriginal community who visited classes last year has returned to school to complete his Year 11.

As part of the study of ethnic groups in Australia the students contacted students of a city high school and traded information about each other in preparation for a trip to the city in August. While there our kids visited the school, went out to tea with the students as hosts, and later a movie.

The contact with the city kids was excellent and the trip as a whole was very successful. We have very few migrants in our community and for some reason prejudice seems to be accepted behaviour, thus the relationships that developed between the city kids and ours were pleasing. Unfortunately there was not enough follow-up to this contact. We had hoped some of the city kids might have visited us. Our kids were thrilled with the inclusion of some of their letters in the city school magazine.

Many of our kids had been quite concerned about their visit to the city and the school at first (in fact a few refused to participate in the excursion, although finance was not the problem), but later they were very happy about the outcome.

Contact seems to be the answer to broadening the kids' attitudes, or lessening their prejudices, so we hope to be able to involve the small Vietnamese, Italian, and Greek communities from a town (40km away) in some activities this year.

We also prepared a small unit on the UN *Universal declaration of human rights* to be used when teachers were absent and students were left with nothing to do. I have included a copy of this below.

### ***The Universal declaration of human rights***

When you copied down the Declaration of Human Rights at the beginning of this unit of work, it was a simplified version of the real Declaration. The United Nations divided these 'rights' into two groups—'civil and political rights' and 'economic, social and cultural rights'. They then asked all countries around the world who agreed with these 'rights' to sign a document (a Covenant) and then attempt to make them laws in their country. Many countries have *ratified* these documents. Some countries have not, for different reasons.

**TASK 1** On the original list of 'rights' you copied into your books decide which you think are 'civil and political rights' (CP) and which are 'economic, social and cultural rights' (ESC). Do this by writing CP or ESC in the margin beside each 'right'.

**TASK 2** I have given you a list of the countries that have signed both the 'civil and political' Covenant and the 'economic, social and cultural' Covenant. On the map provided shade in the countries that have ratified/signed both these documents. (You will need an atlas to assist you.)

**TASK 3** Make a list of ten countries that have not signed the documents. Why do you think they haven't done so? Try to find out why the U.S.A. has not signed them?

**TASK 4** Not all countries 'practise what they preach'. What does this mean? Many countries have signed these documents but do not give people in their countries all these rights. Look through some newspapers and see if you can find some articles dealing with people being treated unfairly or not according to their rights in a country that has signed the Covenant.

In the Ethnic Studies unit the students, among other things, chose a 'country of origin' of some Australian immigrants and researched that country. They wrote to embassies for information, and contacted ethnic newspapers and ethnic organisations for ideas.

## **YEARS 9, 10**

At Years 9 and 10 History replaces Social Science and it is a little more difficult to deal with human rights so directly. However on numerous occasions human rights issues arose and discussion and research followed. I can give you perhaps two examples. At Year 9 our study of 'convicts' led directly to discussion of prisoners' rights and forms of punishment. We attacked the issues of corporal and capital punishment through debates and public speaking. Whenever possible we encouraged play-writing and role-playing to allow students to empathise with particular characters in different historical circumstances, or simply to express their points of view about a particular issue. Our most successful attempt at this was during Year 10's study of conscription in WW I. We went to the local newspapers and read about town meetings of the time concerned with this issue. Each student was then allotted a role to play at a town meeting re-enactment, which we held at the local shire hall. Some of the characters were historical characters e.g. Billy Hughes, Archbishop Mannix, while some were fictitious e.g. a farmer of German descent, an ex-soldier's widow, a local Lutheran Minister etc. Each student was also expected to design and produce a poster expressing her or his viewpoint. Even though this was basically a historical project the issue of compulsion in military service became a real one and was debated enthusiastically by the students. Other examples of where human rights became major discussion points in these subjects were:

- The Gold Rushes—the question of the Chinese on the goldfields led to a study of the substantial Chinese population that lived in our town after the gold rushes—market gardeners, orchardists, tobacconists, opium dealers. The kids found an interesting gravestone at the local cemetery erected to the memory of a white woman by her Chinese friend—in the Chinese section of the cemetery. The racist attitudes of people then and now were discussed.
- Study of the First Fleet—we looked at the multicultural nature of the First Fleeters
- Imperialism—obviously this included its effects on colonised peoples
- 1930s Depression—right of people to work, issues of unemployment and poverty, right to strike, right to food, clothing and housing
- Evictions
- World War II—rise of Hitler, Nazism, racism, Hiroshima, war

Many issues concerning human rights have been dealt with in Geography. The Geography Faculty has outlined them below:

### **YEAR 9**

Study of poverty in the developing world. Distribution, characteristics, causes of poverty. Examination of historical, geographical or political factors which help perpetuate poverty. Examination of how these problems can be resolved.

### **YEAR 10**

Study of the Pacific Islands—history, European influence, current problems. The impact on both native peoples and the environment of European influence.

#### 4. Conclusion

Teaching for Human Rights has certainly altered my approach to teaching, especially within the more traditional subjects like History. By making the students familiar with the UN Declaration at the beginning of the year, I have found it easier to relate historical issues to similar current issues. The students then find the subjects more relevant and are more willing to discuss them.

The 'Rights and duties' that evolved from the Year 7 classes made me aware of certain aspects of my treatment of students that I was previously unaware of, especially when the kids pointed things out to me. Other teachers were also challenged, especially when these 'rights' only applied to Social Science classes. Our Deputy Principal was challenged when asking for *boys* to go and unload some equipment. It is an important issue for students which persists throughout the year. The issue of human rights is something that certainly catches the imagination of students and it was pleasing to hear them mentioned so often, especially by the Year 7s, when participating in the school debating competitions.

We established a human rights noticeboard in the Social Science room which worked well, with students bringing any articles of interest to be displayed. The librarian also supplied a regular collection of relevant newspaper articles.

#### YEARS 6, 7, 9, 10

##### Introduction

With the best of ambitious intentions, I began the program . . .

The most successful and unified lessons were conducted with my Year 7 Integrated Studies class. I see them every day.

Lessons in Personal Development (Years 9 and 10) were unfortunately fragmented. For example, films, resources and specialist speakers had to be accommodated as they became available. Nevertheless, human rights were dealt with.

Things did not work out as well as I had hoped for with my senior class. Towards the end of our second semester (mid June) a teacher and timetable reshuffle made it necessary for me to repeat previous (i.e. other than human rights) topics with a new group of Year 11 students.

Despite these excuses, some work was done, but I don't feel it was adequate. Hence, I would like to continue parts of the program with Year 11.

##### Method (If I may call it so)

As topics and issues and exercises were tried and discussed, I took some rough class notes. Later in the day (or week) I wrote down anything I thought might be significant. What is presented here then, is a summary of the relevant observations and thoughts. Believe me, this report is a miraculous feat of organisation compared to the 'pot-pourried' mess I started with.

To orient my scratchings and memories to the purpose of evaluating the kit, I have not necessarily always included what class did what. To save repeating myself, I have grouped some noted activities under the sub-headings 'Significant successes' and 'Not so good' towards the end of this report. Where appropriate, any observations unique to the exercise, or my own self-indulgent humorous anecdotes are included.

### Summary evaluation

The kit (especially the manual *Teaching for human rights*) is a giant success both from the educational point of view, i.e. its content, and the functional point of view, i.e. its organisation and format.

The manual does have a unique ability in that it can literally be picked up and an exercise used. Some sections though require a definite prior careful read, e.g. 'Prejudice and stereotyping'.

Regardless of any reports of failure you might receive, all of the material involves the kids. What might appeal to one class, working under one teacher's interpretation, might not necessarily apply to another class with another teacher. But, I seriously doubt if there is any aspect of the program that you will find receives popular criticism.

As for anything on-going:

- I have made approaches to senior administrators to arrange for a school review of the Social Literacy program. Hopes are for its introduction into the Year 7 Integrated Studies program at least
- another teacher and I are contemplating the problems in trying to have the human rights kit form the basis of an Other Approved Study (OAS) terminating the Year 11 course next year

### Kit materials

*Video:*

#### *Don't Think I Don't Think*

Initially, kids were quite interested.

Many found the reading of the 'Rights' a little too difficult to understand and too long. (Another film, made in the International Year of the Disabled, called *Stepping Out* was far more successful.)

It was a disaster showing this as an introduction with a small group of mainly Year 10 boys. They giggled and made snide references and comparisons to other people in the class as the video progressed. I eventually had to stop the video.

To be fair, this could well have been my fault. I was idealistically hoping for sympathetic numbing to catch their collective attention, but I got defensive, loud ridicule instead.

#### *Students' rights*

Great! Used as an impetus to class role-plays. These centered on activities trying to show:

- How can your rights be abused?
- How can people misunderstand your intentions?
- How does this relate to real-life school situations?

Simple situations are usually the best. Don't get too involved with your explanations of what you want, as the kids can sometimes interpret this as a kind of 'creative limitation'.

Situation examples:

- blamed for stealing a surfboard that a friend lent you
- going to the school canteen

- told to wash the family car but you want to go to the beach
- help you (as opposed to an adult) get in a shop
- told by an adult to give up your seat on public transport

Detailed example:

A teacher asks a pupil to go to the school canteen and pick her lunch up for her. A salad roll is stipulated. The pupil stands in line and is pushed out by a senior. The student complains, senior laughs and ignores him. Pupil then goes to the side door of the canteen and is abused by the lady-in-charge of the canteen for not waiting in line. The pupil goes back to the line and is eventually served. All the salad rolls are sold. So, the pupil buys a pie. He returns to the teacher and is abused for taking so long and for purchasing the incorrect lunch.

Related issues:

- Feelings and assertive behaviour
- What are the kids rights? How were they abused?
- What should the pupil have done?
- What would you do in a similar situation?

### Significant successes

#### *Blind trust*

Only attempt this after preliminary work on self-esteem and caring for the welfare of others etc.

It is a trust *walk*, not a trust *run*.

Try two people both blindfolded; you may be very interested to observe the co-operation they give each other. (A 'blind leading the blind' idea which works!)

Let the kids know that you are the referee and that you *do* have the right to stop them upon command.

The issue of responsibility, as linked to trust, is easily demonstrated by this exercise.

Give wary people a few goes and have the class notice how these kids eventually (usually) come to trust in successive walks. Note what happens if this trust is ever misplaced.

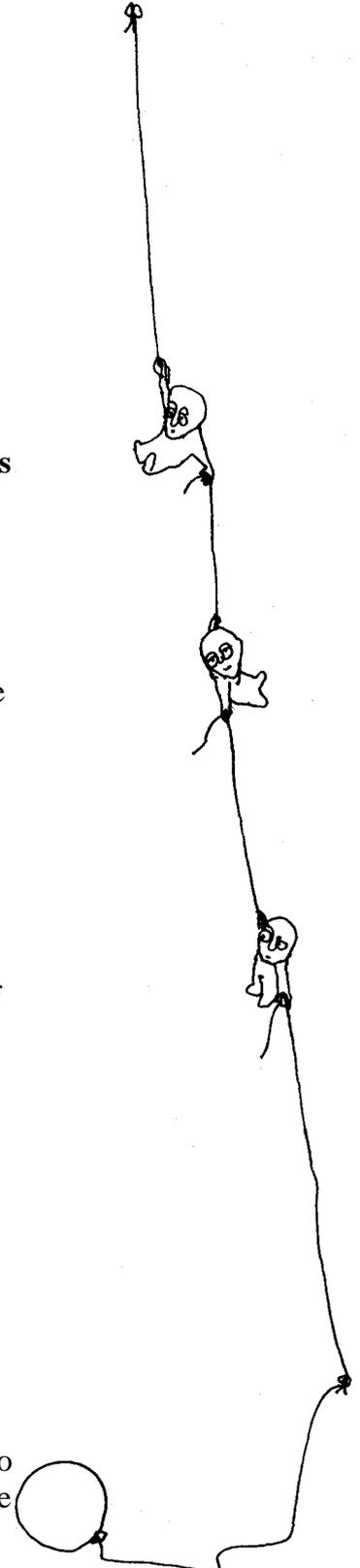
Overall, this is a great exercise that does promote relevant discussion. I especially like it for the responsibility (linked to trust—linked to rights) awareness it demonstrates.

#### *Rights and responsibilities in class*

This was the beginning of a great unit which I will relate in some detail.

Kids asked for anonymous definitions of what is a right. They then brainstormed, as one large group (24) the rights they believe they are entitled to at school. Via a lengthy and loud discussion, these were summarised into areas. Kids also eliminated 'silly ones' themselves.

I was included as having the same rights too. No one right is allowed to conflict with another, e.g. kids can speak provided this doesn't interrupt the learning of others. I did help a little with some of the interpretations.



*Exercise:*

Place two columns beside each 'Class right': 'I have a duty . . . : *and*

'The teacher . . . :

The kids filled this in whilst in small groups. An example:

Right: Freedom of speech

'I have a duty to listen to others and allow them to speak:

'The teacher can fairly choose who is allowed to speak:

Discussion followed.

This exercise led to some enthusiastic interest in the idea of rights. I have since noted class members referring others to the 'Class rights' poster we put up, whenever they feel a right is infringed.

I recommend this as an introduction to the concept of 'rights'.

As a teacher, don't imply any promises that you can't keep. As soon as you do so, you will lose the kids' interest and trust, as far as the meaning of the exercise goes.

*Dictator*

One kid chosen as dictator. He is allowed to choose five friends. The rest of the class are peasants.

Factual descriptions concerning the practices and liberties a dictator can take were explained. Peasants' rights' were likewise considered. Each of the five friends was given a 'gun' (ruler). They were the only ones with this power over others, but they could only use their power on the word of the dictator.

Peasants were asked, 'Do you like the dictator?' Many varied reactions came. From these reactions, the dictator chose those people who he felt should be put in gaol because they might pose a problem. He had to also consider that some had to be left to till the earth etc. These 'prisoners' were totally ignored for the rest of the lesson. (They hated it. Somewhat difficult to maintain their co-operation under these circumstances, but I think it went well.)

Rest of the peasants asked what they wanted to do now.

- Some tried to escape from the room. The dictator's men stopped them.
- Two asked the dictator if they could join his chosen five. One of the original five objected and threatened the dictator. This one was immediately thrown in gaol and the new two accepted. Once in gaol, he suffered somewhat at the mouths and hands of the incarcerated.
- Remainder of the peasants decided that it was best just to sit, talk amongst themselves and bear it.
- Rebellion began when the dictator said that he wanted to look in kids' bags for lollies etc. I stopped the role-play here, using the excuse that this would jeopardise our 'Class Right-6' in a realistic sense. That is, this went beyond the role-play.

We read through copies of the plain-English Declaration of Human Rights and discussed which ones the dictator had broken. He didn't fare well.

## *Rights*

### *My sister*

My little sister, who is five years old, spends her life making mine a misery. According to Mum she does everything she's told. But not where I am concerned, for I must not take her things, she is not supposed to take mine. Although she does. I argue and say I want them back. 'Oh no', says Mum, 'you should not fight; after all, Nicola is only five and you are thirteen: I make the beds and do the washing up, I go to the shops but I don't get any thanks. 'Mind the wet floor, hang up your coat', it wasn't like this before Nicola came.

Do you get more rights when you are older or younger? So what is a right?

1. The standard of permitted action within a certain sphere.
2. Something laid down by law.
3. Something which is morally just or due.
4. Just or equal treatment and fairness in decisions.

### *Hunger*

We side-tracked a little . . . in fact, a lot.

The kids seemed to be more interested in finding out about other countries. So, each kid was allocated a separate country (having an Embassy or Consulate in Australia) and wrote away.

Information received and information gleaned from library reference books was used to create class talks on the individual countries.

My education was caught sadly lacking with several kids—after hearing the South African talk about gold, great climate, lovely place etc., they questioned the speaker about riots seen on TV. This led us into a discussion about images: what a country wants to present to the world about itself might not always be the reality.

### *The beginning*

Within our current Personal Development Course, the school policy includes a very detailed unit on sexual education.

I supplemented the factual approach with this section from *Teaching for human rights*.

The issue of abortion was more hotly debated than any of the issues presented in the book. As one student noted, abortion is . . . kind of the beginning and the ending without allowing anything in between'.

You may find it interesting to note that in a group of sixteen, twelve were anti-abortion; two passed answering the question; two were pro (latter four all being girls).

### *Know Your Potato*

Fantastic!!

A friend made the following suggestion:

Allocate specific kids to bring in specific vegetables. Teacher supplies the mince.

Each kid prepares a short talk claiming why their vegetable is the most important to the flavour of an (anti-prejudice) stew.

Actually cook everything up during a double period and have all the kids eat their prejudices. Might also help to explain the idea of multi-culturalism—each vegetable contributing its own unique flavour or colour to make up the stew. The stew suffers if any one ingredient is left out, etc.

### *Who's Who*

We looked at a selection of *Mad* magazines and *Superhero* types.

Later, I was able to lay my hands on a collection of *True romance* and *Career girl* comics. We all had a field day with these.

The issue of punishment for the girls who don't follow the set pattern of marriage and kids was obvious to all. The kids were highly motivated and interested.

### **Not so good**

#### *Do you see what I see*

— Alien

— Young person lost

Even with a confident kid, the reactions can be damaging. Suggest real care and careful consideration be given to this one well before it is tried. It is not necessarily one of the activities you can just 'pick up and use'.

The kids just could not keep their descriptions from being insulting and hurtful.

#### *Two box trick*

For some reason, the majority of the kids picked the unattractive box straight away. Apparently they were all suspicious of my motives as soon as I asked the question, so they chose the unattractive box.

Therefore, I suggest this activity be done early in any program—before the kids become attuned to the fact that some of the activities to be done might have moralistic points to show.

#### *Fat people are thin*

Year 7 kids weren't all that familiar with the stereotypes. (Might work better with seniors.)

Given the opportunity to come up with an alternative set, a small group decided more parochial examples, e.g. Surfies are real cool.

### **Inspired modifications**

The following activities came about as an immediate response to sections of the kit we were covering in class at the time. They all worked very well, so I offer them here if you wish to use them.

#### *I want to be free*

Have the kids go outside—this is a noisy one. The kids stand around at random within a defined area. Choose one person (near the middle) to yell, 'I want to be free!' Everyone else is directed to reply, 'You can't be free!' Repeat a few times and then ask the chosen one how she or he feels. (Responses were: alone, afraid,

small, nothing.) Ask the class members how they felt. (Responses: loud, bossy, powerful.)

Have the chosen one choose a friend. They link arms and yell, as one, 'We want to be free!' Repeat a few times or gradually increase the size of the middle group at the expense of the outer.

*Discussion:*

Do we need others to help us to be free?

How can others help?

At what stage did you feel happiest; when you had two in the group or three or four etc?

With the group trialled, the point was realised: Freedom can be achieved although it might be a long verbal fight. It can be just as powerful as suppression, but far more benign, as the word spreads. (And I am sure that you can think of a dozen more associations one might draw.)

You might also notice that some kids will resort to physical coercion in the 'name' of freedom. Relate to conflicts of a similar nature evident today.

*Sonar (modification to Trust Walk)*

One kid blindfolded. Everyone else starts up a 'Beep! Beep!' chant. As the blindfolded kid walks from one end of the room to the other, everyone acts as a sonar, increasing frequency of 'Beeps!' as she or he approaches obstacles etc.

You might modify it yet again and have the blindfolded student walk around in search of a small object, rather than walking to avoid objects.

Also a good one to do outside (the class next door is still complaining).

A great lesson in trust as well as co-operation!

*Rocks (Racism)*

The school is approximately 500 metres from the beach.

I took all the class for a walk and asked them to collect one rock or shell each. The only proviso was—they had to particularly like it for some reason. I collected one too.

When we returned we all talked about why we liked our rock/shell. We displayed our items. Three didn't bring back anything. One had a shiny piece of driftwood. I asked these four why they didn't follow instructions and they generally agreed that they couldn't find any they liked. In fact, two became rather sarcastically abusive about the choices of others.

All were asked to bring in their items again the next day. Some forgot, but the driftwood showed up, and the other three all brought shells they had collected the afternoon before, after school.

I asked everyone to repeat their arguments from yesterday. Many forgot. Others thought it boring to repeat anything. At the very least, enthusiasm was 'down' compared to yesterday.

It doesn't take much imagination, I suppose, to see how all of this can be related to racial prejudice: in the end, all of the racial arguments are meaningless—they are boring and silly. We can appreciate everyone for what they are (a rock, a shell or even a piece of driftwood). Even the qualities of description are the same (e.g. smooth, pretty, shiny etc).

For those without a beach, try balloons of different shape and colour.

This exercise was also trialled at a P & C meeting. The participation was fantastic. As a general observation, parents like to be informed. We have a duty to keep them informed. Generally, they love activities that include their *active* participation. (Well, our parents do, anyway!)

Also, get the kids to try to pile them all up so that all balloons are touching another balloon at least. You'll notice that this is impossible to maintain.

Relate this to people/philosophies/nations:

- some group together
- some go their own way
- some may even break down because of the pressure
- but still, they remain balloons no matter what they do or think

### **In conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this evaluation. At times, it involved a lot of difficult organisation within our school system, but, especially in retrospect, it was all worth it. I do not feel my participation has ended. I now have the kit, which is a shared resource, and some Social Literacy materials with which to follow up.

## **YEARS 8, 9**

### **Term 2**

I teach English at a school where more than half of the students come from backgrounds where English is spoken as a second language. Vietnamese, Greek and Italian are the major ethnic groups represented, and there is a simmering racism evident between them. Many of the boys strive to affect a macho image and many girls seem to accept an inferior role as part of their cultural heritage. Overt racism and sexism can also be observed among the 'Australians' and may be of a particularly virulent strain.

The school is inner-city and benefits from funding available through Priority Schools and Participation and Equity Programs. It is through various submissions to the latter that finance has been obtained for resources pertinent to the human rights program. These include two class sets of the *Sexism* handbook and funding for up to twenty class and school magazines. Some of these will be thematic in content and cover topics related to the human rights course. Magazines produced and written by students should prove to be efficient in sensitising staff and students to the pertinent issues.

I first mentioned the human rights course at an English staff meeting—explained the objectives and gave an outline of my second term program. All present were supportive of the principles and of my intention to focus my teaching on human rights issues.

The Senior Master was pleased with my presentation and offered no obstacles to its implementation. No one felt moved to join me at this stage however.

In 1984 the school participated in a school development program organised by the Department. The general staff was involved in a 'needs study' of the school and a results booklet was published citing proposed 'areas of action'. Classroom management and procedures for coping with disruptive students were given most emphasis by teachers at this school. A behavioural management in-service was

undertaken by many. At a recent staff meeting, held after a pupil-free day that focused on discipline, teachers decided on the composition of, and selected, a Discipline Committee. Incredibly it was voted that students *not* be included. I have explained all this as I regard this omission of representatives, from a body that is to decide student welfare, as feudal and autocratic.

That discipline difficulties and class management might somehow be related to the self-concept of students and their thwarted ability to manage their own lives (within negotiable boundaries) as independent, reasonable beings, is given loads of lip-service but little practical chance of proving itself. I am on this committee and will continue to lobby for student representation (and also the abolition of corporal punishment!).

Students are well conditioned to their inferior status and to the dependent condition which this education system nurtures and upon which schools rely for crowd management. Students concomitantly reveal a lack of concern for others and an unwillingness to accept responsibility for their own learning. I decided that a worthwhile way for me to contribute to student welfare would be to teach about the rights of people.

With two terms of Teaching for Human Rights in front of me I determined that there was enough time to allow the program to move 'organically' rather than structure it too far ahead. This approach allowed also for student input and suggestions to be acted upon without much problem. A week at a time seemed convenient.

I had been concerned that the Teaching for Human Rights course be not construed as neglecting the English course but rather be considered a vital and intrinsic part of it. This I believe to be true and I am fortunate in having a departmental environment, that if not supportive at least does not make life difficult.

A mutually supportive and positive classroom climate is of much importance for this Human Rights course. First term was spent cultivating an openness and willingness to share within the class. Much work was done to develop group skills. Many excellent books are now available in this area, some published by the Education Department. A non-threatening environment where students can feel confident to express themselves I feel is pre-requisite for this course, indeed for *any* 'education'. It is not enough of course that students learn to trust the teacher; they need to trust their peers also.

Many activities were reviewed with this in mind. I found that my drama file was of most use here, as 'trust' is also pre-requisite for improvisation and simulation. I would like to note here that trust and the building of it is an area of large concern to me. It is basic to any fruitful relationship and I would be pleased to see much more made of it in any future edition of *Teaching for human rights*.

In an effort to develop further this important intangible, I began second term with activities from *Life skills* by Hopson & Scally—a highly commended resource. (The two volumes with this title contain much of value to a human rights course.) Cards were prepared with incomplete statements that students were asked to finish, e.g. 'I feel unhappy when . . .' Students were asked to consider whether members of their group displayed supportive or non-supportive listening

behaviour—the difference was noted. ('You're blocking!' has become something of a catchcry, and one that is taken note of.)

Questions regarding group work were discussed and ideas from the class were placed on the board under four headings:

1. Giving opinions
2. Listening to opinions
3. Gaining confidence
4. Helping others

Each student chose a category and created a poster with suitable illustrations. These were placed around the room and proved to be a stimulating discussion point for other classes.

The ongoing difficulty of decision-making within a group is tackled every day by these students. Parallels with the wider world are often brought to the surface by students. The need for a consensus and the difficulty of obtaining it are no longer abstractions. There is evident also, the beginning of a recognition that a 'group' is a dynamic entity and somehow greater than the sum of its parts.

I was impressed with the Habermas validity claims that I read of in one of the Newsletters sent to me by the Human Rights Commission. I decided that my Year 9 class could rise to the intellectual challenge, and they did. 'Morality', 'truth', 'sincerity' and 'comprehensibility' were debated and there was general approval when it was suggested that the four relevant questions be applied as needed to group discussions. This topic proved to be an appropriate introduction to Rights and Responsibilities in the class.

A handout was prepared of the 'rights' list of another participating school. The 'duties' as complementing the 'rights' were especially noted and groups were asked to discuss and analyse the list for omissions. Questions on the same handout were then discussed in groups with each member relating an anecdote that illustrated some part of the question. Groups then selected one 'story' and devised a role-play which was rehearsed and presented to the class. These activities were carried out with commitment and intelligence.

With this work behind them, groups then devised their own list of 'class rights'. Many possibilities were written on the board, redundancies eliminated, connections made and wording considered carefully until the list completely reflected every concern of each class member.

The 'playlet', 'Three Children Talking', was enjoyed but students were reluctant to interrupt, despite much provocation from within the script. It was necessary for me to focus on the issues and nudge discussion. Once prompted however, many students wanted to reveal their personal experiences. In future I will have interpretation questions prepared and students will read the play closely *before* hearing it.

By now students had spent three weeks full time on the course and I asked them to write a newspaper article 'Rights under review', wherein they were to air concerns about rights denied in the school. This was tackled with gusto: there was much vitriole regarding a particular teacher notorious for his authoritarian and repressive character. I tried, initially, to steer clear of individuals but they rejected my suggestion that they generalise or speak in the abstract. I told them to take their grievance to the person concerned. (Were things getting out of control?) They told me that they had done this already and had been rudely rebuffed. I

suggested they write a letter which they did. The whole question of repressive techniques and class climate has subsequently been brought into open staff discussion.

A library display of the 'Class rights' posters, with a select group of students to field lunch-time questions, had been planned. This idea was subsequently postponed as I felt it could have precipitated counter-productive consequences at that stage.

And so to human rights as such, and the questions regarding humanness and individuality. The whimsy of the alien, (a 'one-eyed' overhead projector), proved fun in promoting the identification of human characteristics. Also there are several suitable activities in Hopson & Scally regarding the commonness and individuality of humans. I found some of my lessons redundant here however as the Health Education Department had been working on self-concept too and had been using the same resource. There is some discussion of interdepartmental co-ordination but at this stage . . . The implications of liaison of course, are construed as radical by the die-hard reactionaries. 'What? Subject areas that are not self-contained? etc. Social Studies is obviously one area where co-operation would undoubtedly be of mutual benefit. Unfortunately the archaic 'jug and mug', 'chalk and talk' approach of this department prohibits self-help. (English is already regarded as having abdicated its sacred responsibility to teach grammar.)

Subsequent to work on self-esteem etc., we moved onto the UN Rights of the Child. The Swedish advertising idea caught on quickly and each group was set the task of devising an 'ad' to illustrate one of the Rights. They managed to do this reasonably well, especially considering the short time I had made available to them. We video-taped the presentations, played them back and discussed and wrote our impressions. This tape became a valuable resource which I used with the year 8s to elicit writing and focus conversation. The Year 8s wrote short plays illustrating 'Rights of the child' which we video-taped and used in the same way as the Year 9s' ads.

We then moved on to the chapter on 'Freedom of expression'. The earlier experience of letter writing and attempted discussion with the dictatorial teacher proved to be a practical starting point. We did the 'conformity activities', and the students quickly understood the concept. The discussion was animated. Poems such as Auden's 'Unknown Citizen' proved to be useful input. The students had little knowledge of the Prime Minister (which surprised me) and so we used the question of corporal punishment to emphasise the point about opinions being formed without direct evidence. This topic proved useful in leading us on to the questions regarding hurtful comments and the right to say what we like. The class had fun hurling insults but recognized that intentionality was the criterion of effect. Students were given 'situation' cards designed to clarify values (from my Drama file). In groups they resolved the hypothetical conflict and improvised the situations, which were then presented to the class.

The UN Declaration was read by the class. Some had difficulty with comprehension of course and it's a shame that the paraphrase is not more conducive to easy photocopying. We chose Article 5, regarding torture and degradation, to pay special attention to. Lessons were arranged around such short stories as Bradbury's *The pedestrian* and the novel *Odette*. The focus here was largely on literary techniques with subsidiary interpretations directed towards

Article 5. Last year a much more 'active' and 'experiential' unit was undertaken in this area, using articles by Phillip Adams on torture, Orwell's *1984*, a guest speaker from Amnesty International etc. Much reading of Amnesty International magazines was done culminating in the writing of 'freedom' letters.

Unfortunately only an abbreviated version of this has been attempted this term as time was running too short. I anticipate doing it next term however, as a 'solo' unit with the Year 11 s.

The writing and reading of poetry was considered to be a task and a chore by my class when they first came into my care. I discarded the idea of poetry analysis or dissection and promoted free expression; little rhyme and lots of 'heart, soul and guts'. The Human Rights course proved valuable experience for poetry writing and has allowed many students to really 'open-up' to themselves and others. Students were asked to find music suitable to their poems and perform it for the class. It was gratifying to note the consideration and mutual support the class gave to each other in this endeavour. Much indeed has been accomplished. Their efforts were audio-taped and this tape is proving helpful as a poetry teaching resource in other classes. The students have compiled a magazine of these poems which will be published early in third term.

After one term of teaching for human rights I can look back on many frustrations and many rewards. Much could be done to integrate English and human rights resources especially with the growing understanding that 'English' be taught across the curriculum and that literacy assessment become the domain of *all* teachers. English, i.e. subject English, will need increasingly to justify its existence. 'Human rights', 'life skills', 'self-concept' etc: these are areas we could be looking to. There is much in the way of conventional English resources to expedite a graduate transition.

Wouldn't it be great if somebody could collate this wealth of resources and create units of work applicable to secondary students. I'd imagine it would be quite possible to integrate an action research profile.

### **Term 3**

My Year 8 and Year 9 classes began third term with a solid background of decision-making and group processes. They were also familiar with several aspects of the human rights area; indeed too familiar. Though I avoided overt connection of topics to the human rights theme the question was invariably asked—'This is another 'Rights' thing, isn't it sir?'

I persevered never-the-less explaining that we were a special class trialling material for Canberra, etc. They accepted this. In normal circumstances I would not have persevered, as for much of third term topic selection was non-negotiable, and there arose a somewhat manipulated feel to the classroom atmosphere. This counter-productive quality is avoided in a less forced, experimental environment.

The value of themes covered in term three was never in doubt. Unfortunately the text *Teaching for human rights* was not a resource to which I could turn with much confidence. Many (most) of the activities were directed towards primary age children and it was disappointing to have to spend hours and days seeking out and devising appropriate resources.

Back to my classroom and teaching for human rights . . . Racism interested me a lot and fortunately activities and resources are not hard to come by in this

area. Several texts have quality material on stereotyping and there are many appropriate novels and short stories. The 'two box trick' proved a lot of trouble for little worth. Though discussion was generated many children pointed out that the packaging 'trick' was not transferable to human situations. I tend to agree. This is a primary exercise with little to recommend it for secondary students.

The activities promoting awareness of false logic and generalisations were better received. They proved useful in teaching about racism and prejudice but there was little to suppose that attitudes changed.

Activities about sibling ethnic acceptance certainly had the students thinking as they learned of the unreasonableness of intolerance. Combined with role-play activities from the *Non-stop discussion workbook* and improvised drama presentations, several students volunteered a change of mind, if not heart.

I had also organised an interclass meeting between my own European background children and a class from the Intensive Language Centre (ILC)—mostly Vietnamese and South Americans who had been in Australia less than three months. This turned out to be an unqualified success, helped in part by the consciousness-raising activities of the previous weeks. The kids were invited to mingle and introduce themselves. Hesitant at first, the smiling and open faces of the Vietnamese soon broke down barriers and people were literally falling over themselves to make friends.

Class members at future meetings were able to act as peer teachers for several language and cultural activities devised by ILC teachers. Formal interchange finished at an end-of-term visit to see a play in town. The togetherness and lack of discrimination evident between some of the previously vocal Mediterraneans and their new-found Vietnamese friends was a sight to behold. *But* during Review, these same kids still managed to maintain their generalised prejudice, but now adding comments such as '... except for Nguyen, he's like us!'

'Families' proved to be a theme with a mine of resources and much literature was found that could be turned to good use. My children come from a wide variety of family backgrounds and vigorous debate was conducted; single-parent kids and extended families versus the Anglo-bourgeois model. Reason won the day! The class brainstormed 'What families do' and the resulting comments were used as bases for taped interviews or improvised situations. An architect friend of mine who has researched widely and now builds non-standard accommodation for non-stereotype families was invited to contribute. He was able to bring blueprints and models which motivated a successful assignment for groups on 'Planning a house'. Though initial enthusiasm for model-building soon waned (except in a couple of notable instances), blue-print plans of remarkable insight were produced.

During the Review, students voted the 'Family' unit 'mint'. The politics of Labor versus Liberal ideas of family were introduced by a student with some surprising results. The Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration were scanned for family related propositions and the class generally felt the family was well protected. Some students expressed disappointment that the Articles were not laws which all the countries had to obey.

Some moves towards acknowledging human rights on a whole school basis made third term a particularly rewarding one for me. I was elected to the School Management Committee whose brief it was to investigate other schools' dealings

with children in both positive and negative aspects, and to create a more successful management system in our own school. The committee elected me as chairperson and I copped considerable backlash from powerful conservative members of staff, but they proved to be a vocal minority. The plan that the committee eventually put up was adopted by the General Staff by a vote of seventy to eight!! Rank and file outnumbered the power-brokers by a large number!

Self-concept of teachers and students rates high priority and various moves are afoot to encourage awareness of personal esteem both within classrooms and staff-rooms. Corporal punishment, whilst not yet banned, has fallen into disrepute and a more acceptable substitute is being trialled (namely, a time-out room).

A proposal of my own, endorsed by the committee, sort of slid in the back door. It was for a student-centred and devised 'Till of Rights and Responsibilities' to be drawn up with every student in the school contributing. All school rules in future will be related to this. All English teachers plus fifteen other volunteers were briefed, and talked through the program booklet I had devised (with the assistance of some Human Rights Commission material). It was important that extra-curricula work was not expected of anyone. December 10th, being 'Human Rights Day', was selected as a most appropriate date to implement the activity.

Years 8 and 9 only were at school at this time, which left many teachers free to contribute. Every class was divided into small groups with an adult facilitator for each. The day was voted a great success which led to the Principal asking me to continue with the plan to include the upper school next year.

## **YEARS 9, 10**

### **Rationale**

There were four major reasons for my becoming involved in the Human Rights Commission program. Those reasons were both practical and philosophical. As a teacher of social education, I believe that the work of the Human Rights Commission is very important and that the presentation of the ideas and principles of human rights and responsibilities to students for discussion is vital.

Another reason for becoming involved in the program was as a partial form of legitimisation for the somewhat controversial girls' unit I was running. There had been some opposition to the unit being single-sex, and by being involved in the trialling of Human Rights Commission materials I hoped that the unit would be viewed as slightly more worthwhile by its opponents—or at least wouldn't be under pressure to be removed from the timetable.

I was also attracted to applying to join the program because I'm always interested in alternative curriculum materials and I was hopeful that the Human Rights Commission materials would provide a stimulus for my class.

The final reason I had for applying for the Human Rights Commission program was the grant. My school is a school with very limited funding and any money available for the resourcing of the unit was seen as very welcome.

## Structure

### *The School*

The school seems to be a cross between a rural and an outer suburban one. Eight hundred and fifty students attend and 90% of them are bussed to school. The clientele are, I think, best described as a mixture of working class and welfare class children. Many of them have a very low opinion of the value of schooling and lack motivation. Many students leave school at the end of Level 10.

The school itself is based on a mini-school idea. The junior school, Levels 7 and 8, is skill-based; the middle school, Levels 9 and 10, is based on negotiation (the ideas of Garth Boomer), and the senior school aims to extend the numeracy and literacy skills as well as the skills of negotiation taught at the lower levels. At Level 12, HSC and STC courses are taught. STC is an alternative Year 12 course. Course content is determined by negotiation and student participation in community studies and community action is often a feature of STC courses.

The Human Rights Commission material was taught and trialled at the middle school level. The middle school units are ideally elective, although because of staffing and timetabling constraints, approximately two-thirds of most students' courses are their first choices.

At the middle school level I teach two units: 'Peace Studies', and 'Girls, School and Society'. I could have easily incorporated the Human Rights Commission materials into each of these lines. I chose to trial the materials in the 'Girls, School and Society' unit because of the reasons outlined in the rationale (legitimacy of the unit, the opportunity for new materials, and money for resources). As well there was the fact that I am particularly interested in the area of women's rights and there are plenty of examples readily identifiable within the experiences of the students involved in the course, which give more meaning to the concepts being discussed.

The 'Girls, School and Society' unit ran for one semester and was a girls only unit. The content of the unit is negotiated so the students decided which aspects of the human rights material we trialled. We covered some of the material but the girls considered parts of it not to their liking. They did, however, give reasons why they didn't want to do different activities. The material was integrated into the course under the appropriate negotiated topic areas as they were studied.

### *Planning*

The planning stage was critical to the success of the program. I sent away for the recommended video *Seeking an Answer*, and found it useful as revision material. I also found the Curriculum Services Unit publication *Social education in technical schools* (1982) an excellent document for the greater elaboration of ideas for the method of enquiry learning (if not the content).

The Humanities faculty co-ordinator was very supportive of the project and was always willing to offer opinions and suggestions when invited. Another colleague was also involved in trialling human rights material and worked closely with me.

One attempt was made to involve the parents of the girls in the course, by sending out a letter outlining the course and inviting parents with an interest, or any expertise, in any of the topic areas to come and make a guest appearance

during a class. All of the parents sent back the form but none of them was willing to come into the classroom, although many expressed their support for the unit. I spoke to some of the parents about their unavailability to attend, as well as to the students. It seemed that the girls in the class would have all been thoroughly mortified if their parents had come to the school and they had cajoled, threatened and pleaded with their parents to prevent them from involving themselves: an unexpected obstacle.

The major obstacle to my planning of the unit was the teaching method of negotiation (initially anyway, until I had slightly changed my ideas of what the unit should have been about) used to devise the content of the course. This did not really cater for the usual set course content (to a greater or lesser degree). So I decided that my teaching methodology should comprise the greater part of my involvement in the Human Rights Program: that is, teaching *for*, rather than about human rights.

The setting of goals for the course was something else which changed considerably as the semester progressed. I had hoped to teach the course as a sort of sociology/women's studies unit with the girls choosing to talk primarily about inequality, widening career options, the historical development of the role of women, and other similar areas. Predictably enough, I suppose, my ideas were set back considerably when I spoke to the students. They had different ideas about what they wanted to learn in the subject and their ideas were largely based around themselves—talking about their experience of the world and issues which they felt were important (primarily personal relationships).

One of the first things I noticed about the students when I was talking to them (and also about other girls at our school) was their lack of self-esteem. This was another reason why I changed my goals from being so content orientated, to concentrating on making the girls feel as though they were important: an essential objective was that they understand that their opinions and ideas did matter, and that they had rights as people which could and should be exercised. I believe that changing the emphasis of my teaching from content to method was a positive step towards teaching *for* human rights.

The students decided on the topics which they wanted to study after viewing the film *Puberty Blues*, which raises a lot of issues relevant to fifteen-year-old girls. The topics were:

1. Health and Sexuality
2. Rape and Sexual Harassment
3. Sex Roles
4. Sexism and Discrimination Against Women

One other topic, 'Famous Women in History', was added to the course in response to a number of parental requests for assignment work (these parents believed that if a course of study is to be valid, then written work for assessment is required).

After the topics were set, we negotiated the structure of the classes and the class rules. The students preferred as little writing as possible, but I believe that writing is important as a way of clarifying ideas. So we negotiated a majority of time spent on non-writing activities, but they agreed to a writing element if I thought it was necessary. The students also wanted to watch videos, so we

decided that they had to be relevant to the topics of study and opened up for sensible discussion afterwards.

The class rules were:

1. Every person has the right to express her own opinion without being criticised.
2. Always wait until the person speaking has finished before saying anything yourself.
3. The set work must be completed to the best of one's ability.

Evaluation of the unit was also discussed and it was decided that students should successfully complete the unit if they co-operated in class and completed most of the work. They also agreed to write an assessment of the unit—what they had learned, their opinion of the unit, and their opinion of my teaching methods with suggestions for possible improvements.

### **Teaching strategies**

The main teaching strategies used were negotiation (enquiry learning), small group activities, individual writing activities, and group discussion. Less frequently used activities were simulation games, viewing audio-visual materials, and debates.

### **Implementation**

#### *Enquiry learning*

Enquiry learning has been, for me, a rewarding method of teaching. Although I have been experimenting with enquiry and negotiated learning for some time now, I find that it is a learning experience for me with every new class. The students also seem to generally find it a much more challenging way to learn. This is not without its problems though, because many students would prefer to copy notes from the board than involve themselves in less passive activities. There is a definite stigma attached to doing your schoolwork, and even more so to enjoying it and trying hard to produce something of a high standard. I have run across these negative attitudes quite frequently and consider that the one major difficulty with enquiry learning principles is that they assume a willing and motivated clientele.

#### *Attitudes and responses*

In the 'Girls, School and Society' unit I have encountered only positive responses from the students about the course itself. That is not to say that I have not had to deal with the power struggles and various conflicts that seem to be present in almost every class. In one of the 'Girls, School and Society' classes there was a girl who seemed to have complete control over the majority of students in the class. She managed to inhibit the whole class during discussions—no one would talk unless she had given her opinion and the tone of the activity was set. This created problems in a class where discussion of concepts was of paramount importance.

Apart from these sorts of hazards, which every teacher must encounter, I have found that democratic teaching is much more rewarding in terms of both my own skill development and the quality of learning of the students. The students admit

to enjoying classes. One said 'We don't even mind coming to this class'—high praise!

### *Obstacles encountered*

The main obstacle I encountered in the teaching of this unit was the attitude of a few of the members of staff. These staff members found the perceived content of the unit threatening (particularly the section on sexual harassment) and made it very clear to the class members that they disapproved of the unit and thought it was a waste of time.

One particular instance best illustrates the lengths to which these staff members went. One of my 'Girls, School and Society' classes was working in the library when I had to leave the class for an hour to work with the students for the school production. When I came back to the class I found one teacher (with no reason at all to be speaking to my class) going around to each group of students in the class and saying to them: 'You know this unit is a load of rubbish, don't you. It teaches you girls to be man-haters', and other like gems. When I approached him about it, he replied: 'Oh, they know I'm only joking'. Other similar attitudes were expressed to the students on different occasions. To rebalance this the students and I discussed the reasons why some people might dislike the unit.

### **Evaluation**

Student evaluation was based on what we negotiated at the beginning of the semester (discussed in the Planning section). Students' written evaluations of the course were supplemented by self evaluations, made on the sheet from the Curriculum Services Unit *Social education in technical schools* document, given opposite.

My own evaluation of the program was based on my purely subjective judgments and on the evaluations of the students. My observation of the increase of confidence and self-esteem in almost all the students is very rewarding. Other teachers have also remarked that many of the girls are more likely to stand up for themselves after having completed the 'Girls, School and Society' unit. Hearing such things as this certainly makes me feel very positive about the success of the unit.

I have also found that through teaching for human rights, a better student/teacher relationship is developed—this is confirmed by the students' course evaluations.

### **Resolutions/Decisions**

My most resounding resolution as a result of the program is to teach for human rights in all of my units. I have been trying to teach in a democratic manner in any case, but I have decided that much more than negotiated content, teaching for human rights involves carefully listening to the students' wants and perceiving their needs. Raising the self-esteem of the students and the unconditional valuing of their opinions seems to be a method of fostering better teaching and learning.

**Student self evaluation'**

Name of Student: .....

Place a tick (.I) in the column which best describes your feelings about your own performance during this course/unit.

S.A. = Strongly Agree

A. = Agree

U. = Unsure

D. = Disagree

S.D. = Strongly Disagree

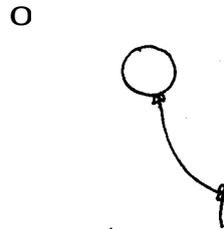
<i>I learned a lot in this course when I</i>	S.A.	A	U	D.	S.D.
Read books, magazines etc.					
Listened to the ideas of other students					
Talked about my ideas with a small group					
Listened to the teacher Completed the written essays or assignments					
Gave my own opinions					
Talked <i>informally</i> about all sorts of matters with a small group Did things myself					
Used community resources Asked questions					
Played in a simulation activity Conducted a survey of peoples' views					
Carefully analysed the content of books, films or magazines Viewed videotapes, films or film strips					
Participated in an excursion or work experience program					
Listened to and/or talked with visiting speakers					

Any comments—i.e. about why any of the above was useful to you:

The questions on these sheets give you a chance to put your own point of view about your performance in Social Studies this term/year.

Try and answer the questions honestly. Before your school report is written for 'c' this subject I will discuss your self-evaluation with you.

<sup>1</sup> 'Social studies evaluation', in Social Education Materials Project Conference, *Report: course construction, Glenbervie, 1977, p. 109.*



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It is also a means of realising that learning is a two-way activity; I can learn a lot from students and they can learn a lot from me.

I also believe that it is vital to make students aware of their rights and the accompanying responsibilities so that they can make more rational judgments and decisions regarding their own lives.

## **YEARS 9, 10, 11**

### **Rationale**

Given the need to continually review curriculum and its relevance, the prospect of gaining access to a package that would draw 'the issues of today' together was very enticing. In a society with changing values I viewed the information, advice and skills contained in the wide range of expected topics as essential to students' ability to develop a new 'moral and values' code suited to the social and economic climate of the eighties. Aware of the importance of teacher input, during a period when these issues are exposed to the public almost daily, I also felt a need to become aware and involved myself. Not only could I, as a better informed teacher, be able to impart background and terminology but I should then be in a better position to consider my own relationships, with thirty different students, in a new light. In retrospect, and stated very simply, I found the more positive and caring class climate to be very refreshing indeed. At the risk of sounding like a 'born again' humanitarian, I then decided to channel my energies into participating in a total review of the school discipline system. The objective was two-fold; firstly to create a more caring environment for a thousand students whose specific needs are often neglected, and secondly to make the teachers' job easier and more rewarding by improving the school ethos. It is important that the students, teachers, and the school administration realise that there are rewards to be reaped by all. Only then will they participate in a program that demands change (which is threatening in itself) and with sufficient energy, given the constraints on the availability and 'cost' of time.

### **Structure**

In terms of classroom activity the program was virtually designed for a term's work in Year 9 English, for a recurrent theme in Year 11 Current Events, and for a collection of 'life skill' workshops for those Year 10s intending to leave school. Having gained the 'Teaching for Human Rights kit' early, I was in a position to both trial Commission material and assemble material from that presented by the Social Studies Curriculum Branch on Social Issues for Year 10. Contact with Amnesty International, equal opportunities, and multi-cultural resource development groups, ensured a wealth of material; not to mention the media which was to provide much stimulation.

Thus in first term 1985, a Year 9 English class of mixed ability and background set out on a program which was to present a variety of new concepts, some vaguely familiar, but *all* requiring the keenness and freshness that a first term is best suited to yield. Three out of five periods a week were assigned, although I catered for the need to be flexible.

The Year 11 class assembled and lay in wait to spring into action if and when relevant topics should emerge as the year's news unfolded. Current Events was

structured to allow for teacher input, media input sessions, and practical workshops to allow full treatment of the topics—clarifying terminology, and developing opinions in discussions, surveys, and debates.

The course for those Year 10s intending to leave school was implemented in third term. Once a week we would gather to consider issues that would face the students in the real world, with the key objective being to develop self-esteem.

In terms of teaching for human rights, as opposed to teaching human rights topics, what evolved with respect to my own relationships with the students stemmed from changes in my 'teacher behaviour'. This was unashamedly spontaneous.

The formulation of a student management program commenced mid-way through second term. That process involved twenty or so workshops, some in school time. The objective was to produce an alternative 'discipline structure' which would acknowledge the phasing out of corporal punishment and offer to all concerned a better working and learning environment. Student surveys, counselling and teacher in-servicing is an ongoing process. By the end of 1985 a framework is in place, teachers have been 'reminded' of the benefits of positive classroom approaches, and students have contributed to a rights and responsibilities code.

## **Planning**

In planning the Year 9 English activities I was mindful of the challenges the students and I would face. The topics covered would be difficult for some of those with less ability, and perhaps unacceptable to those from family backgrounds which conveyed contradictory attitudes. I considered *exposure* to be a major goal and was ready to accept any deeper results as a bonus.

As the course progressed and the rapport between the students and teacher developed, I could tackle issues and my own teaching behaviour in a more meaningful way. Human rights is a very serious business and requires sensible and controlled discussion, thus the preparation of the learning climate is of vital importance.

I planned to cover all the issues involved using a variety of teaching techniques. I also had to plan to ensure that the skills associated with the English course requirements were not neglected. The task wasn't difficult as the students were required to exercise a host of enquiry and reporting techniques. The department I operated within permitted sufficient freedom of course content and because they knew I was aware of my obligations regarding literacy, obstacles from the administration were non-existent.

The Year 11 Current Events course was less structured, in the sense that the news of the day provided the spring-board for the study of topics. I had acquired enough background material to supplement most news articles and to give them a background and perspective. The importance was obvious; there it was in black and white. The issues of land rights, apartheid, racism, women's rights etc., called out for attention, and most dovetailed neatly into existing curricula. Access to the material supplied by the Human Rights Commission could only enhance my ability to understand and convey the complexity of news events.

In obtaining release from the normal timetable for the Year 10 school leavers, the obstacles were a little more substantial. Justification for the change was

phrased in the following terms and formed the basis of our stated goals. The one period 'off' per week for 'transition education' was to provide the vehicle to allow the school to address the various concerns raised in the Beazley Report<sup>2</sup>: equality of opportunity, multiculturalism, the education of Aboriginal children, community participation etc. Some predictable objections were advanced, many along the lines of questioning the value of 'Mickey Mouse', life-skill sessions, as compared with the value of passing academic subjects.

Overall the plan, which was perhaps a little idealistic, was to enable the students within the classes to reach a position where they could make informed comments and give considered opinions about public issues. My role was not merely to inform or highlight issues; it was also to promote tolerance of people whose appearance, lifestyles, and opinions varied from what these students perceived as normal. It was my opinion, after five years of teaching within this community that there is a real need for considering more carefully some of the over-generalised thoughts students have about various groups within this society.

In smaller print, the plan also called for alterations to my own teaching methods and relationships with students. I was to engage in a refresher course of listening, questioning and inviting student participation. Some were old techniques from the Diploma of Education; some were new, emerging from my interest in self assessment ideas uncovered during reading and preparing for Teaching for Human Rights.

### **Teaching strategies**

By its very nature, improving respect for human rights encourages the use of 'democratic' teaching strategies. It was obvious that teacher lecturing would be monotonous and counter-productive. Among the goals of my program was a desire to make a serious and difficult study interesting. It required an effort to extract serious comment about topics previously scoffed at, compassion for people previously dismissed, controlled debate among the misinformed, and at the same time to cater for different student abilities and backgrounds in an atmosphere of enjoyment. As previously stated, the relationship between students, their peers, and the teacher needs to be pretty good before venturing into what can be an emotionally charged cascade through issues that the world's thinkers cannot agree on, let alone myself and the Year 9 English class.

The activities designed for the Year 9 English class, whether based on the 'kit' (e.g. teachers *coup d'etat*, building a world community) or on other material, necessitated modelling and role-playing. Small groups would consider results and report back to the class at large. All students were encouraged to make a contribution. While discussion and debate allowed the students to develop the essential skills of opinion formulation, respect for different ideas, and communication, I would add that some teacher-input (even a set of notes!) was required as a prerequisite for some sessions. Particularly with the Year 11 s, who considered the topics in more depth, it was essential that they had a basis of facts where possible in order to analyse news stories and make reasoned comments. To

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<sup>2</sup> Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia, *Education in Western Australia* (K. B. Beazley, Chairman), Perth, 1984.

that end I often found myself seeking—from the 'kit' and associated handbooks—definitions of 'racism', 'prejudice', 'sexism', the 'Human Rights Charter', 'stereotypes' etc. The accompanying examples, and the methods used for viewing the world in which we live—in a critical fashion—were invaluable.

The media, and the methods of examination promoted in educational publications from local newspapers, added real life to the program.

Class surveys turned into questionnaires for friends and family, as in the case of the capital punishment exercise. Role-playing became a class play for land rights. Poetry, letters to the editor, even to Reagan and Gorbachev for peace, contact with class representatives on the student council, flowed fairly freely.

Team teaching was used to elicit responses from students of different abilities. The school's reading teacher would visit the class once a week and work alternately between students requiring remediation and others looking to extend some study topic and gain greater understanding. Given the attempt to present a smorgasbord of human rights topics to Year 9s over one term, this process was essential.

The actual class numbers, the age of students and their position in the school influenced the strategies used.

The Year 9s—there were thirty in all—were eased into more tolerant self-expression; the emphasis was on politeness and one person speaking while all the rest (including the teacher) listened. The Year 11s, twenty in number and full of opinions, were hot to trot from the emergence of the first issue. I wanted them to organise their thoughts by bouncing comments around the group. The Year 10 school-leavers required more confidence and recognition; they were hesitant to express themselves on some issues initially. A host of self-esteem exercises from the Guidance Officer's desk, and a ratio of one teacher to six students, paved the way for some worthwhile activities with this group.

## **Implementation**

At the beginning of the Year 9 English course it was important to establish the position of the fourteen-year-old student with reference to the world at large. From this starting point, examination of topics such as problems facing the third world, the handicapped, the aged, the refugee and the immigrant would be easier to tackle.

The initial exercises we tried looked at individual characteristics (favourite food, music etc., height, weight, ambitions . . .), identified commonalities and differences, and linked responses to socio-economic status (e.g. would rich people answer differently to poor people?), geographical position, cultural heritage, political standpoint, age and sex. Among the activities, the students were enthusiastic about tracing family trees, and produced some entertaining ethnocentric maps of the world from their Aussie viewpoint. 'Sending us to the stars' from Ralph Pettman's book drew it all together.

This insight into the value of starting where the students 'were at' confirmed my belief that the human rights issues should be topical, that concepts and terminology need to be learned and experienced, and, for many students, that experience of these topics in their daily life is necessary to guarantee interest. As the curriculum unfolded, the key to success emerged: it was the simple need of all students to be able to speak their mind without feeling inadequate or attracting ridicule. Later I would assess this aspect of the class' reaction as being

its most rewarding achievement. It is far easier to measure the acquisition of knowledge, but this observed change in students' behaviour was more important to me, because I was looking for some positive feedback about what I was trying to do.

The use of some very good videos, e.g. *Images*, *The Whites of Their Eyes* and *The Young Ones*, which examine the images of the world's races as portrayed by film, art and language (in particular sexist language), provided variety. Along with the previously mentioned activities such as role-playing, surveys and newspaper studies, there were a lot of different things for students to do.

In implementing the Year 9 course I was mindful that the students would be exposed to the topics again when undertaking the Year 10 Social Issues course. Thus I was content with the somewhat brief coverage of *many* issues, as opposed to an in-depth look at a *few*. I was fortunate that the Year 11 Current Events group provided opportunities for intensive studies. I was learning from my work with the junior groups all the time. Consequently I was in a position to develop concepts further as the need arose.

What a year it was for human rights issues! Changes in education, land rights, terrorist activities, apartheid, the proposed introduction of the ID card, the death penalty for drug smugglers in Malaysia, the high profile of the peace movement, and so on.

The Year 10 school-leavers considered the issues of survival and the rights of the unemployed, the employee's rights, problems confronting females in the work place, the role of the law etc. These topics were designed to prepare them for the colourful and sometimes confusing world outside school. Guest speakers and excursions to service organisations within the community were an integral part of this curriculum.

Having implemented a human rights program, I think it should be stated that this type of work, and discussions with students, can be controversial. To some teachers and parents looking in from the outside, the perception is that traditional values are being challenged, and normal methods of teaching are being questioned. That can seem offensive. At one stage, the students were required to write down the rights they believed existed for them in various classes. Some surprising differences emerged regarding teachers' expectations: Who is right and wrong? Who makes this assessment? What are his/her qualifications? The program can become too personalised before the group has developed the skills necessary to cope with what must be, to some, a novel approach to 'schoolwork'.

Overall there is a need for:

- the teacher involved in implementing a Human Rights Program to be respected by the staff and students
- the program to be seen as providing benefits for all associated with the school

A 'radical', no matter how valid and just his or her intentions, might not get to first base. One must work within the existing decision-making framework and promote change, *if needed*, by consensus where at all possible.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation is certainly a difficult area given the subjective nature of value formulation. As a classroom teacher of Social Studies, and teaching human rights

in an English class, the old 'gut feeling' provided the initial self evaluation. Have I been able to do anything to improve respect for human rights in my classroom? Do I show more respect for the rights of my students, they for mine, and for each other? Have I made the students more aware and more compassionate? Are they more concerned for minority groups within the school, the community and in the international sphere? Are we more tolerant of those with different opinions and lifestyles?

The article by 'H. H: on monitoring, in the April newsletter from the Human Rights Commission Schools Program, provided assistance in pursuing a more formal approach. Student awareness of human rights issues at home and abroad was relatively easy to monitor. Evaluating changes in students' social values was more complex. It had to be ongoing, with the results of the early class activities providing a benchmark against which to measure change.

The students' understandings of terminology and concepts were tested, to indicate whether the group was aware of the meaning of 'sexism', 'racism' etc. A series of activities designed to gauge compassion and tolerance was administered at different stages of the course and individual responses were compared with earlier work (e.g. a worksheet on 'Aid and measuring attitudes to providing aid').

A teacher can also ascertain aspects of the success of specific learning activities by observing the level of enthusiasm, participation, and the quality of written work, and by inviting student comments at the end of a lesson. For instance, when students write unsolicited letters to the editor of the local newspaper concerning Asian migrants, that is in itself pleasing to a teacher who values such initiative.

As the section 'Decision/Resolutions' reveals, some activities definitely came across better than others. I gauged student attitudes via small-group interviews and discussions as the course progressed. In addition, students were required, at the end of the term, to list those units they found:

- most enjoyable
- most worthwhile

By the time the Student Management Committee was calling for student contributions to a rights and responsibilities code, responsible opinion was already coming from the Year 9s and Year 11 s.

The course with the Year 10 school-leavers was partly evaluated by using an exercise designed to test their self-reliance, initiative and willingness to ask questions. Each student, working as an individual or in pairs, was required to arrange appointments to visit and extract information from the C.E.S., C.Y.S., or 'Bridging the gap', and then to report on their findings.

In evaluating my behaviour in terms of improving respect for human rights, I made some little studies of my own practices. I was eager to improve education for the disadvantaged students, those who often miss out on attention because it is directed to where it is 'better' received.

I was conscious of who I talked to in class, who I praised, and the time I spent with particular students. Evaluation surprisingly wasn't that difficult, and the benefits for me surfaced quite quickly. The students seemed to gain confidence and co-operation improved, and that assisted the smooth running of my class and made the learning situation more satisfactory. I also considered how I awarded actual levels and grades after becoming a little concerned that I was

equating neat and colourful work with girls and giving neat and colourful work high marks. Are girls rewarded for being quieter? Many thoughts sprang to mind; something to work on! Standard Referencing Assessment whereby students are tested with reference to stated criteria may change the pattern.

### **Decisions/Resolutions**

The state of our youth is often blamed on schools, and thus there are increasing demands in schools to teach a host of subjects, values and skills. It is also often related to the condition of the family and the influence of parents, and it can be seen as a product of an unthinking media or an ineffective political, judicial and welfare system. The position of teachers makes it possible for us to provide the conditions necessary to improve respect for human rights in our classrooms, schools and communities, even though our contribution must be seen as just one influence on young adults. We need to act locally, while thinking globally. My teaching of human rights and my dealing with students have been, personally, most rewarding. However my involvement in formulating a Student Management Program, and emphasising positive teaching techniques, may be more significant in its effects.

The 'good news' centres on my contention that through attention to detail in my teaching, and because of some well chosen human rights activities, the students I interacted with are in a better position today. They are able to view a diverse world with more understanding and tolerance, and this should guarantee that they possess the behaviour to match. The program was mentally stimulating, current and enlightening for most, because it was 'hands on' which promotes the most effective learning.

The reservations? Well, not all students will respond in the same visible manner no matter what. There is a danger of portraying too much of what seems 'normal and acceptable' in the blissful lives of fourteen-year-olds as requiring review. That is, there is a danger of coming on too heavy, with one disadvantaged group after another, until students ask: 'Does he want *us* to feel guilty for the injustices of the world?' It is a difficult task attempting to bridge the gap between what affects their lives directly and what they can be realistically expected to have broader obligations to. 'Splendid isolation' has its advantages in a competitive and confusing world.

The self-esteem activities for Year 10 school-leavers needs to be more of an across-the-board thrust. It should start well before the third term of their last year at school. Changing the already fairly well-set attitudes of the Year 11 s suggests again that a whole school approach across all subjects, plus a suitable 'tone' at home, is essential to yield spectacular results. Attitudes are something you grow up with, they evolve, and sadly, in some cases, they mature into set opinions far too early.

As for the Student Management Program which attempted to work out one or two of the action implications referred to by the Beazley Report, namely abolishing corporal punishment and involving teachers, students and the community (via community needs survey) in the decision-making processes, 1986 will tell more. There linger some slight reservations concerning the ability and desire of some colleagues to act consistently and in line with recommendations about treatment of classroom disruptions. Some teachers are obviously

unimpressed with a review of teaching practices that have earned them a living for many years and, at the same time, have turned out reasonable students.

Reservations? Well they did emerge throughout the year. Like my students I have a background of observation and experience which may lead to different conclusions and behaviour from that promoted by the Human Rights Commission. We are vulnerable to criticism—the article in the *Australian* newspaper on what human rights is teaching raised a few queries. Queensland considers peace studies as un-Australian, but I'm a patriot. Is 'human rights' the domain of the Catholic Education system; does my government Education Department superior endorse its teachings? *The 'human rights' umbrella has exploded to include so much, that it is difficult to assess the validity and sincerity of some of the organisations who stand under it.* Am I a vehicle for all that is 'radical', endorsing all that comes out of the Canberra office? Will my daughter, for example, be coerced into playing football—and indeed much else loosely associated with human rights?

The conclusion: I'm into encouraging tolerance and compassion for fellow human beings. I wish to provide a caring environment where no one is disadvantaged by others infringing on their rights.

## YEAR 10

The Human Rights Schools Program was first drawn to my attention while I was (presently still am) a serving member of the Education Department's Social Studies Curriculum Committee. The committee was informed of the project and its aims, and on the basis of this and my long term interest in human rights movements, I applied successfully to participate in the scheme.

I have been a secondary school teacher for the past eight years, teaching in three different suburban high schools. My present school is in the south-west suburbs of the city, considered a working class cum lower middle class area, with a fair percentage of Housing Trust homes. The school has approximately 560 students with a declining enrolment. The school's curriculum is essentially academically based, although pressures are at present being applied to alter this situation, with the introduction of more appropriate lifestyle-type subjects.

The school, therefore, could be considered as fairly typical for such purposes. The students are generally co-operative and the school has an adequate reputation in the community. However, it must be pointed out that in terms of curriculum development and attitudes it is extremely conservative, both in terms of administration and staff.

The structure of the subjects in which the course was trialled is as follows. All students do History (Australian) in Years 8 and 9, with some Geography in the latter. In Year 10, a compulsory subject called Social Science is offered, consisting of approximately four, ten-week units—History, Geography, Economics, and The World in Conflict.

It was in the last unit that the course was trialled.

When the administration was approached (Senior and Principal) they showed little interest. No interest was shown by any of the other administration or staff either. They did not, however, interfere in my program, and I made regular reports on what was happening to my Senior.

The unit was used in two Year 10 classes of mixed ability with the class size being an average of twenty-five. The subject structure was six periods of forty minutes per week over twelve weeks, i.e. approximately seventy-two lessons.

The classroom in which the majority of the work took place is traditionally set out with four rows of desks with two students at each. At the rear of the classroom is an area for discussion groups, quiet reading etc.

The program, as stated, was integrated into the 'World in Conflict' unit, which basically discussed the nature and causes of conflict in the world, with a couple of case studies; for example, Kampuchea and the Middle East.

I had a totally free hand to do whatever I wished to do with the program in the unit. My basic philosophy was therefore to integrate the Human Rights Program into the study of 'The World in Conflict' and then discuss the ideas on the local level, including within the school.

Since the school is traditionally based, essentially the program was taught in that manner. This involved a fair degree of teacher input and direction. The students, however, were involved in various activities which will be mentioned later, such as group work, surveying and role-playing.

My initial strategy was to approach the idea of human rights at the school level and look at two issues that were being discussed by students—namely school uniform, and classroom rules; then to expand on this idea of 'rights and responsibility' to the international level by examining the apartheid situation in South Africa, drawing on the role of the United Nations and its Declaration of Human Rights.

However, I found very quickly that this strategy was ineffective. There were several reasons for this, the main one being that students found it difficult to understand the concept of human rights on this level. Consequently I decided after discussion with the state project officer and the national consultant, Colin Henry, to change my approach. Essentially I reversed the process. I began by examining the situation in South Africa. This involved its history, the conflict between whites and blacks, and then, in detail, an analysis of the present situation. This examination included the life of blacks in townships and homelands, job opportunities, working conditions, pass laws etc. As well, the role of coloureds and Asians were examined in this context.

Of course, a major part of the study included an examination of white authority in South Africa. By doing this it brought home to the students how groups of people in another society were being deprived of their rights. At this stage I introduced the Declaration of Human Rights. The class examined this and then in group sessions went through the charter and identified the Articles of the Charter that the South African Government had broken.

The general reaction was one of outrage—that a group(s) of people could be so deprived of their rights.

The idea of prejudice and racism slowly became clear to the students during this topic. They identified these characteristics in some sections of the white South African population. This, I believe, was essential for them because they were now ready to look at themselves to see if they harboured any prejudices. Most at this stage professed that they did not.

The topic so far described was taught using varied teaching methods. The central one was to get as much discussion as possible going about the ideas

raised. Students were also required to collect newspaper items of the current situation in South Africa and give verbal resumes of them in front of the class. The issues raised were subsequently discussed by the whole class. As well, various other techniques were used. Students were teacher-directed e.g. information was copied off the board, and students were required to find out information for themselves by reading and collating from various texts etc.

For stimulus material, various videos on the South African situation were shown. *Last Grave at Dim boza* presented the black view of life in South Africa and was well received by the students. This video was followed up by question and answer sessions. Another video used to initiate discussions was one available from CARE called *Sport and Politics in South Africa*. This was used to introduce the idea of sport and politics and how the oppressed groups in South Africa are deprived of their rights in this field. This then led into a discussion of the 'rebel' cricket tour of South Africa. Students then drew posters presenting their viewpoints. The classes were about 60-40 against the tour.

By this time the students had developed an awareness of the idea of human rights and concepts of prejudice and racism. However, most expressed the view that they were not prejudiced or racist. It was at this point the focus of the topic changed from viewing the situation in South Africa to the individual student. The purpose was now to see if the students themselves were racist or held prejudices. This is where the Pettman book proved to be more than useful. The exercises it provided, in conjunction with other materials, e.g. articles from newspapers, were used so that the students could find out whether they themselves were actually racist or prejudiced. Many were quite shocked by the findings, thinking that only 'other' people could be like this. The exercises proved very useful for this purpose. After discovering this, the class targeted groups that were discriminated against in the school, e.g. the 'ethnic' population. Discussions then ensued about how people become prejudiced and what could be done to change this. Most agreed that it was worthwhile trying to change their prejudiced and racist viewpoints. Some (a small minority) refused to accept that change was necessary.

This then brought up the idea of the rights of the individual in the school and the society at large. Most were again surprised to find that some people in Australia were deprived of their rights as laid down by the Charter, e.g. unionists in Queensland. So students were becoming aware that even in Australia people like those in South Africa were prejudiced, and that various groups were being deprived of their rights.

The next step was to see if students themselves could do anything to improve the situation in the school from a human rights point of view.

Most agreed that it would be very difficult. However, students agreed that by becoming aware of the problem they had taken the first step to overcoming it. Many students said they would try to be more tolerant in their attitudes, but agreed it was because of peer group pressure.

In evaluating the success/failure of the course, I handed out a simple questionnaire which showed that an overwhelming majority of students:

- (a) found the course informative
- (b) raised their awareness of these issues and their own prejudices
- (c) thought it was worthwhile doing

Many maintained that it was the most interesting unit of work they had done in their secondary school studies.

From a teaching point of view the program was a success: not only from the students' reactions, but from the interest it stimulated. It also raised my consciousness as well, making me aware of my own prejudices.

The exercise was very worthwhile and I believe if this and other information from similar studies can be disseminated it will only enhance the role of the Human Rights Commission and raise in general the consciousness of students in schools.

### Materials

(Supplementary to those supplied in kit)

#### *CARE Newsletter*

CARE (Campaign Against Racial Exploitation)

P.O. Box 51

Kensington Park S.A. 5068

#### *Videos*

*Last Grave at Dim boza*

*Rockin' the Botha*

*Nelson Mandela*

*Sport and Politics in South Africa*

(Available from CARE)

#### *Audio*

BBC Documentary *Race Relations in South Africa* (Also available from CARE)

### YEAR 10

In February 1985 a submission was made to receive funding under the Human Rights Commission's grants to schools program. Funding was received and what follows is an outline of the program that we attempted.

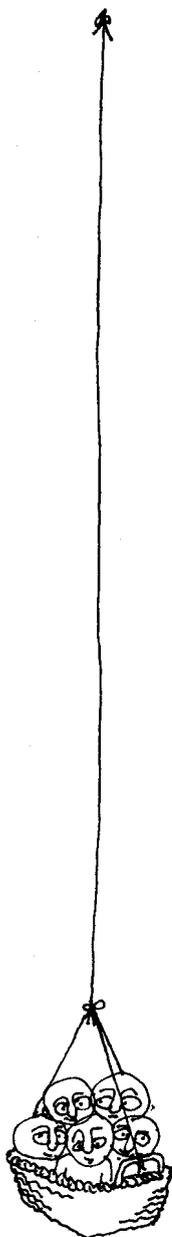
#### What we aimed to do

Our original submission was based on Article 1 of the *Universal declaration of human rights*. Three questions were to be examined as a result of this:

- (i) Are all Australians born free and equal?
- (ii) Are all members of our community given 'equal dignity and rights'?
- (iii) Does a true 'spirit of brotherhood' exist in Australia today?

#### Who we worked with

Most of our efforts were concentrated on our Year 10 students as it was felt that they most needed experience in this area, not only in studying materials but in having broader contact with the community. This gave the opportunity for the girls to develop skills in:



- (i) Varied methods of research
  - using community libraries
  - making contact with many varied community groups
  - acquiring audio-visual material and using this in their presentations
  - developing interview techniques
- (ii) Critical thinking and evaluation of material gathered from a wide variety of sources
- (iii) Presenting material to peers and teachers in an interesting and informative manner (This was also a wonderful opportunity for students to be on 'the other side of the fence' and have a fairly in-depth taste of what school is like from a teacher's point-of-view.)

Girls in Year 9 were also given—as part of their Religious Education (R.E.) Program—a day in the community working with groups of widely differing people. This had a very useful overlap with the main work being done in Year 10 and will provide a good starting-point for these girls when they do a more comprehensive social justice program in 1986.

### **What we actually did**

The social justice unit was run as part of the R.E. Program. It occupied all of Term 2, 1985. The following are the aims as they appeared on the R.E. Program sheets for this time.

### **Aims**

The general aims of our R.E. Program express our goal for this topic as follows.

To lead students to accept that the follower of Christ must ultimately be a person committed to justice and therefore one willing to work for the equality of all persons in whatever life situations they may find themselves.

With this in mind we will strive:

- to help students more fully understand what the rights of the individual in society should be
- to lead students to be more aware of the injustices that can occur at all levels of society, from the family unit to international concerns
- to help students develop their own decision-making capabilities by providing opportunities for them to explore varied areas that fall under the broad topic of social justice
- to provide the opportunity for students to gather material from a vast range of sources and so develop their own investigative skills
- to help students become more conscious of their own rights, while at the same time realising that having such rights carries with it the responsibility of being just in their own relationships

### **Teaching strategies**

Before the unit could be developed it was obvious that students needed a much greater understanding of what the term 'justice' actually refers to. Each girl was given a copy of the UN Declaration of Human Rights and various activities based on this were carried out in our small **R.E.** groups. Other material, ranging from church documents to poetry, was also circulated and discussed.

Part 2 of the Human Rights Commission video (*Fair Enough*) was shown, dealing with injustice within the school system. This was a topic very close to the hearts of students and provided an excellent foundation for further defining 'justice'.

After this initial treatment, the whole of Year 10 came together for a brainstorm session where students raised issues that they considered showed denial of human rights. From this the girls elected to work in small groups to do an in-depth investigation and subsequently report on one area. N.B. This was a time-consuming and often chaotic meeting; however, this in itself provided an interesting lesson on the need for compromise in some situations.

The lists below are the topics finally \*decided upon. These were put into the four groupings indicated and a teacher was assigned to help the girls within each group. The parallel timetabling of R.E. meant that the girls could work with anyone as other classes would not be affected. Groups were kept to a maximum of five or six members to ensure that everyone, as far as humanly possible, would have a role to fulfil, and sitting on the sidelines whilst others did the exploring could be minimised.

- Freedom of speech
  - Third World
  - Unemployment
  - Discrimination
  - War
- Incest
  - Rape
  - Child abuse
  - Gay rights
  - Prostitution
- Marriage
  - Divorce
  - Adoption
  - Wife/husband abuse
- Alcohol
  - Drugs
  - Euthanasia
  - The aged
  - Abortion

As a starting point for finding information teachers established lists of contact points that they knew of. They then assisted the girls in their group to enlarge these lists, mainly with the help of the phone book.

Once some idea of where to find information was established, the girls then had to make their own contacts and arrange to visit the places that would be of most benefit to them in studying their topic. All groups were allowed to use the Thursday afternoon double R.E. period for these visits. This meant that they could leave school at the beginning of lunch and travel to town or wherever else they needed to go and still be home at a reasonable time (this was important as some girls would not have been permitted to go by their parents otherwise). Prior to the Thursday outing each group had to give their group teacher a written summary of where they were going, who the contact person was, what they were

going to do, how they were travelling etc. On the day they also had to fill in a 'sign out' book before they could leave the school grounds.

The places students visited were many and varied and some were more successful than others. A few examples include:

- St George Community Contact for information on many varied topics including alcohol, child abuse etc.
- Wesley Centre Life Education Unit—drugs
- Pregnancy Counselling and Support, Strathfield
- Adopted Persons Contact Register agency and both government and private adoption agencies
- Youth and Community Services (YACS) for many varied topics
- The UN library for information on world issues

After the initial research had been completed, the girls had time to organise their presentations. This included booking audio-visual equipment, having sheets duplicated, preparing role-plays, taking pictures/slides, making tapes of both comments and music etc.

The actual presentations were of differing standards, as will be discussed in the evaluation. Some groups went to a great deal of effort and offered for our information material such as:

- Films:
  - Do I Have to Kill My Child* on stress and child abuse
  - The Silent Scream* on the abortion issue
  - Annie's Coming Out* on the rights of the handicapped
- Slides:
  - Taken at Foster House with the homeless gentlemen cared for by the Salvation Army
  - The pros and cons of adoption—a set provided by YACS
- Guest Speakers:
  - From the Catholic Adoption Agency
  - From St John of God Hospital, Burwood, on alcohol and drug problems and treatments

There was also a great variety of written material provided.

The 'grand finale' of the term's work was a sausage sizzle and concert afternoon provided for needy groups in our local community. This was done in liaison with the St Vincent de Paul Society who brought to school groups from their refuges and aged homes. Many patients from the local nursing home also attended.

## **Evaluation**

As this was a new venture for us it was very much a trial and error effort. When we began the term we had no idea that the research and presentations would become as involved as they did. This meant that there was considerable disorganisation towards the end of the term as we tried to fit all the group presentations in. We were fortunate that teachers of other subjects 'donated' their lessons to us to get through our work. This lack of time also meant that we did not satisfactorily evaluate and conclude the unit with the students.

Probably the most valuable aspect of the work was that the students actually went out and did some field research themselves and therefore encountered people

and situations that they may not otherwise have come in contact with. This was a very broadening experience, especially for girls who have led a fairly sheltered life or for the ones who have the 'it will never happen to me' attitude. Seeing life in the raw on the streets of Sydney really makes one aware that this may be the lucky country for some, but not for others, and you are forced to ask the question 'Why call this a lucky country?'

Many doors were opened for us, such as the invitation to the opening of the wall mural at Foster House which was attended by the Lord Mayor of Sydney and all the Salvation Army heads. The girls were very impressed with this outing and had a wonderful time socialising with the men that many Sydneysiders class as 'no-hopers'.

During the psychiatric nurses' strike I took two girls who had a specific interest in this area to work at a local hospital for a night. They did a wonderful job and although it was kept fairly quiet at school the fact that they had done so filtered through and said a great deal about putting principles into practice.

*The future:* We definitely aim to offer a similar course to Year 10s in 1986, but with refinements. This will possibly come in the form of mini-electives that will be organised more fully than this year. A more structured time for presentations will also be needed if we are to do a worthwhile summing up with the girls. Not being able to do this this year meant that all of our aims were not fulfilled.

Without the grant much of what we did do would not have been possible as we could not have said to groups, 'Yes, hire that film' or 'Take those photos' or 'Here's a blank tape for your interview' etc. The money gave us some freedom that would have not been there, and with the remaining money we hope to acquire some more equipment to cut down the squeeze that was felt this year, as well as saving some for additional expenses such as fares etc.

### **The Year 9 Day**

As mentioned earlier this was a small step for this year, but should be of great benefit when we start off in 1986. These girls went out in groups and looked specifically at people serving the needs of others:

- with Sr Carmel, the Pastoral Care Sister at Long Bay Gaol, to the gaol itself
- with St Vincent de Paul personnel to their sheltered workshop for handicapped young people
- to St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst, and to the nearby soup kitchen and drug treatment centre for those on the methadone program
- to the Little Sisters of the Poor, Randwick, to experience their care of the aged

All told, the girls went to some twelve places and rated the day a great success. This gives us hope for 1986!

The year's efforts have certainly had their ups and downs but I'm sure that all those who have worked on the program would not have been without it, and feel that its failures were outweighed by its successes. We thank the Commission for giving us the impetus and help to get involved more fully in this area because really, this is what our faith is all about, and if we can't help our students to become people of justice then we may as well close up shop.

## YEARS 10, 11

### Rationale

We felt that the Human Rights Commission (HRC) framework would offer us the opportunity to improve and augment the existing courses offered to Social Science and Social Studies students. We felt that our students were somewhat isolated from and inexperienced in considering human rights issues and that students considered such issues as irrelevant and unimportant.

### Structure

In our initial application, we agreed to *only* trial the material on racism and sexism because we already had established courses at Year 10 and Year 11 incorporating these themes. We adapted our existing programs in order to meet the demands of the Human Rights Commission framework and then we set out to teach not only *about* human rights but *for* human rights as it applied to 'sexism' and 'racism'.

### Planning

The bulk of the workload fell on my shoulders; I was the only teacher teaching Social Studies and Social Science and I was the only staff member actively involved in trialling the Human Rights Commission material. The planning was difficult as far as I was concerned due to a number of factors.

1. I had returned from Maternity Leave and as I was teaching Year 10 and 11 Social Studies, I suddenly found the Human Rights Commission material thrust upon me. During the initial days, I found that I spent considerable time researching the Human Rights Commission and their material, and it seemed to take some time before I was ready to plunge into the unknown.
2. At our school we draw students from an unusually large area and it is notoriously difficult to involve parents in school life, let alone involve them in implementing a particular subject on the program. I found it impossible to involve parents or the community in planning, although parents and the community did contribute indirectly during the program. One factor which did assist me to involve other staff was to invite speakers to the staffroom for morning tea. This proved to be effective and stimulating and encouraged staff to consider the material and contribute to the program where appropriate.
3. Another problem I encountered was the changing structure of my class group. I began with twenty-two students in the Year 11 group and this number declined to seventeen in the space of one term. The aspect which concerned me was that it unsettled the relationships within the group and slowed down the progress we seemed to be making.
4. Another problem I encountered was trying to ensure the continuity of the sexism and racism material. The HRC material was only trialled in Social Studies for five periods per week (two on Monday, one on Thursday, two on Friday). I found that when we took into account disruptions in the school program, student absences, and other miscellaneous interruptions, the continuity of the program, which was of paramount importance, was severely affected. It made activities and strategies which required two to three periods rather tedious, and it was difficult to sustain interest.

### Teaching Strategies

More details are provided in the 'IMPLEMENTATION' section; however, briefly those strategies which we used were:

- class discussion
- small group brain-storming
- role-plays and simulations
- short dramatic productions
- interviews
- observation techniques
- individual research projects
- newspaper studies
- chalk and talk classes
- guest speakers
- comprehension and document exercises
- audio-visual
- testing
- essay writing

### Program 1: Sexism

We decided to trial the material for one term in Year 11 Social Studies classes. As we already ran a course at Year 11 which considered groups in society who experienced and suffered inequalities, it was decided to incorporate the human rights material into this existing course. The trialling of human rights material was to have begun at the beginning of Term 2. However, due to the constraints of a mid-year examination program (which finished on June 30th) the program was not implemented until the beginning of July. Consequently, students found difficulty in their transition from the demands of examination to an enquiry oriented classroom where they were being asked to think independently; to explore ideas, values and emotions; and to express themselves freely.

#### *Lesson 1*

As an introductory exercise, we viewed the videotape *Talk Back* and it stimulated discussion amongst some of the group. During the videotape, considerable chattering and snickering could be heard in response to the case studies presented. However those students who were so willing to contribute 'in the dark' were later most reluctant to participate in the discussion and to air their viewpoints. Students were then asked to write their reaction to the videotape.

#### *Lesson 2*

Next I invited a speaker from the Equal Opportunity Board (EOB) to talk on:

- EOB and its role
- sample case studies
- sample case studies relevant to kids
- procedures to put a complaint

However the speaker was late and it was not possible to obtain another speaker.



(d) what types of toys did the children play with?

(e) did your child converse with others? Whom and for how long?

Ask the child to paint a picture of the family (observe the sizes of the people in the family as this reflects the importance of each person as perceived by the child).

*Step 2*

Ask the child who does the following

*Who does it*

(a) washes the dishes

washes the clothes vacuums the floor

puts out the rubbish bins mows the lawns

cooks breakfast

cooks dinner

sets the table at night does the garden

makes the bed

*Who should do*

*it*



- (b) Who do you think should do those tasks mentioned above?  
 (c) e.g. What does Daddy do when Mummy is cooking dinner?  
 Washing the dishes etc?

N.B. You will need to use your own discretion here and base your questions on the answers from Step 2.

### *Step 3*

- (a) what are your favourite toys?  
 (b) do you have any pink clothes?  
 do you have any blue clothes?  
 why/why not?  
 (c) which television programs do you watch?  
 (Follow this up by finding out who is the most important character, and why?)

Ask children what they have been doing in the Kinder and why?  
 (Which areas do they prefer to spend their time in and why?)

REMEMBER TO ENCOURAGE KIDS TO TALK.

### *Lesson 5*

I have found some very strong examples of prejudice amongst the students and some of the strongest feelings were expressed 'in the dark' during films or when they were least likely to be identified. I also found that those most willing to express their views were often the ones most unwilling to participate in any class discussion. In order to overcome this problem I resorted to the trust exercise. I found that those students who had been the most reluctant to participate in discussions felt free to describe their feelings of anxiety, mistrust etc., after taking part in the trust exercise.

After the blindfolding, students felt quite at ease discussing their feelings, and they were introduced to the idea of trust and its application at school. Students then discussed the importance of developing trust in the student-teacher relationship and, as a result, students were asked to identify the characteristics of the 'ideal student' and the 'ideal teacher', e.g.

#### *Ideal student—group effort*

1. has homework, classwork, assignments etc. handed in complete and on time
2. always above average class and best marks
3. regular attendance
4. always polite, never rude
5. refrains from talking in class when unnecessary
6. eager to participate in class and discussions
7. listens and concentrates at all times
8. intelligent
9. never chews in class
10. pleasant and friendly at all times

*Ideal teacher—group effort*

1. relates to students as people and not animals
2. doesn't relay students' faults through the staffroom
3. pleasant and friendly
4. able to have a joke and a bit of fun
5. makes learning fun and interesting
6. not old-fashioned
7. understanding and helpful with any problems
8. allows for human error
9. doesn't pressure students into a breakdown

*Lessons 6 and 7*

In the light of student expectations, students were *then* asked to draw up a 'bill of rights' for their year 11 Social Studies Class. Students worked individually in drafting their 'bill of rights' and then were asked to present them to one of two small groups. Negotiation produced a final draft of the 'bill of rights'.

Two 'bills of rights' were finally produced. This proved to be far more difficult than anticipated. Students who tended to be more outspoken tended to dominate the discussion and to be somewhat overbearing in their opinions.

It took some negotiation to get across the importance of all students contributing to the production of their 'bill of rights'. However, progress was made and I found the discussion most enlightening. I learned a lot about my students' grievances and expectations!

*Lessons 8 and 9**40 years on . . .*

We organised a class reunion for the year 2025. Students had to imagine that 40 years had passed and they were returning to their Year 11 Social Studies Class Reunion. (My students who are now sixteen and seventeen would be fifty-six and fifty-seven years of age by 2025.)

I set a number of rules to ensure the success of the reunion.

- Each student was expected to bring 'a plate' (I provided the liquid refreshment) and this helped to achieve the party/reunion feeling.
- Each student was invited to dress for the occasion, i.e. to provide clothing props to indicate where they will be, or hope to be, at that time of their life.
- Each student had to prepare a written resume of their lives up to 2025 which had to be submitted immediately *before* the reunion.
- I was a part of the reunion as well—so with the help of other staff my hair went very grey and I had an awful lot of wrinkles.

The main aim of the reunion was to observe the differences between expectations of boys and girls—particularly their jobs and career aspirations, marriages and the family situation. This proved to be quite enough in terms of management.

This exercise was held twice, once at Year 10 level and once at Year 11 level. I found the results at both levels extraordinarily similar but the Year 10 Reunion was far more rewarding than the Year 11 one, probably due to the nature of the

group. Year 10s were able to fall into the swing of things far more easily than Year 11s, who have to contend with more conflicting demands at Year 11.

A most successful exercise—lots of fun and the information collected is valuable!

### *Lessons 10 and 11*

#### *Guest speakers*

One was from the Women's Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE), an organisation funded by the Premier's Department. It aims to provide community information and a referral service for women and to advocate practical means of determining and providing for the needs of women. The two speakers talked to the students, concentrating on the areas of sexism and racism in relation to women. One, a Polish immigrant who fled Poland two years ago, described her experiences as a Polish immigrant, and the discrimination she experienced.

They discussed anti-semitism, anti-Aboriginal sentiment, as well as sexism and the need for organisations such as WIRE to provide information and other services for women, whom WIRE considers have limited access to relevant information.

I found the discussion enlightening and worthwhile, but I got the distinct impression that some of the students feel that they can do very little to improve their lot. One girl commented 'What can you do when you live with a family which is sexist? I argue and fight, but I can only go so far or I might get kicked out!' Obviously there is a growing awareness by class members of their rights, although some are clearly frustrated by the responses of seniors and family.

We had an informal discussion; a break in the middle to have morning tea. This was most successful. One unexpected and unintended result was the reaction in the staffroom. It was a 'hive of reaction' when the WIRE representatives came in. This reaction came from several male members who felt enormously threatened by what they called 'radical feminists' who in actual fact were very middle-of-the-road, equal-opportunity activists.

### *Lesson 12*

To follow up the previous exercise, students were asked to look at their 'Summary of job expectations', and asked to identify those jobs or careers that were perceived as being sex stereotyped.

Students were then provided with additional data related to 'female jobs' and 'male jobs' and apprenticeships.

As a follow up to this exercise, students were asked to participate in a role-play situation with their parents. They were to do some preliminary investigation into a career or course which they felt might be perceived by parents to be an 'unsuitable choice due to the sex of the individual'. Then, after each student had formulated a case for their new career, each student went home and tackled their parents about a new career or job. Reactions were very varied.

### *Lessons 13 and 14*

We invited a speaker from Women Who Want to be Women (WWWW). The woman who represented WWWW spoke to the students about her organisation. WWWW is a conservative political organisation which was established to present

the case for 'women who want to be women'. They consider that women and men are equal but 'different' and that women should be entitled to stay at home if they *wish*. WWWW claim that feminism is a Communist plot to get women out of the home and into the work force. *Fortunately* my students were quick enough to be critical of some of WWWW's basic contentions—WWWW was a group which has had little exposure in our town and it was reassuring to note student reactions to their fundamental ideology.

After the visits of these guest-speakers, considerable discussion (and snickering) from male members of staff followed and it was put to me that surely it would be fairer to present the 'male' case. This highlighted one major problem with regard to sexism—it is easy to obtain information about the female cause, but almost impossible to locate information about sexism against males. (I am not so one-eyed to think that such sexism does not occur.)

#### *Lessons 15 and 16*

As a result of this dearth of information one of our staff members, who is leader of our school debating team, volunteered to present the case of the male. He did this with great aplomb. *But* perhaps wanting to provide the other side of the case was my fatal mistake. He deliberately tackled some of the familiar stereotypes we had looked at and rather than viewing his statements critically, some well founded and many unfounded, the students accepted his speech at face value. In effect he reinforced all the existing stereotypes and examples of sexism we had been battling against. We had undone a lot of our work in one 'foul speech', which only highlights the tenuous nature of anti-sexism and equal opportunities.

This acceptance was reflected in an essay which was set prior to the speech and not due until after the speech. The topic 'A woman's place is in the home' was set so that students might be able to use evidence they had gathered during this course of study. The essays speak for themselves! I didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the superficial, uncritical, *sexist* comments that so many contained.

#### *Lessons 17 and 18*

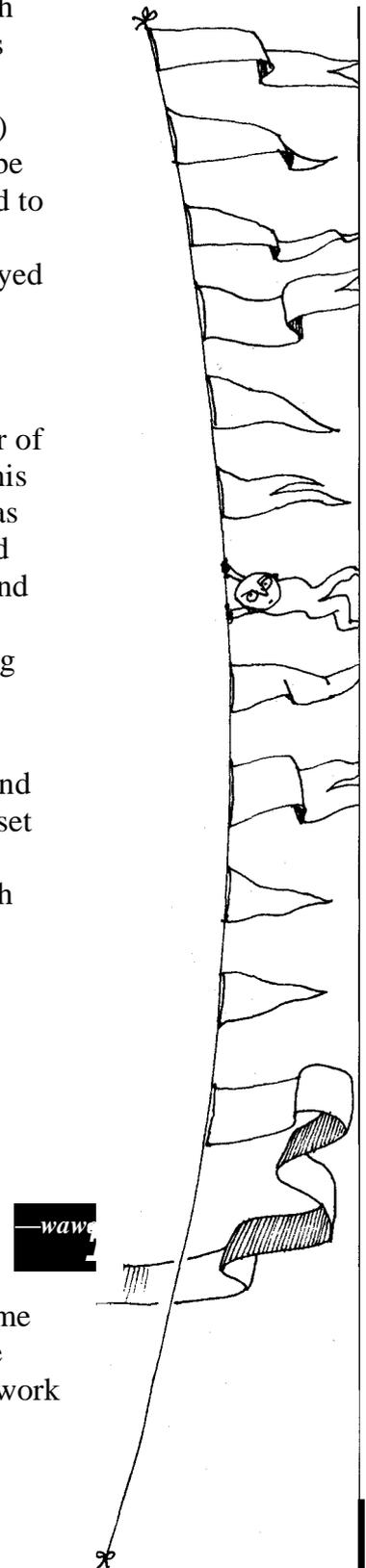
The next two periods were spent critically viewing the videotape and *questioning* many of the speaker's statements, pointing out the inadequacies of some of the arguments, and discussing the debating techniques which had been utilised.

#### *Lesson 19*

Students were asked to prepare a poster suitable for publication for the Junior Media Peace Prize Competition run by the United Nations Association of Australia and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. The theme of the competition was to build a peaceful world—at home, at school, between the sexes, races, religious groups and nations. Eleven students prepared and entered work suitable for the competition. It was a pleasant break to the class routine.

#### *Lessons 20-23*

My Year 10 group wanted to do something novel when studying sexism and so they initiated a short production which they presented to a number of class



groups including my Year 11 students. The production developed around a female dominated class and the students devised the mini-production themselves. The students presented a diverse program. The production was enormously successful. The students used limited props and relied heavily on characterisations to convey their message.

#### *Lesson 24*

Students tackled the concepts of stereotyping and socialisation and how they relate to sexism.

Students made use of the anecdotes contained in the HRC booklet, *Sexism*. Students also were provided with a framework for socialisation and drew on their experiences in the local pre-school. An essay was set on 'The role of socialisation in shaping sexist attitudes'.

### **Program 2: Racism**

#### *Lessons 1 and 2*

As an introduction to 'Racism', a representative from the 'Young Australia Workshop' was invited to perform to all our Year 10 and Year 11 students. She performed *Wadda Ya Doin' Here Anyway*, a play about racism directed at migrants and the contradictions that migrants themselves face. She performed the entire program and then ran a discussion after the program. This was most worthwhile. The concept of a 'one woman show' was quite a foreign concept and the students received the entire program well. The performance promoted much discussion about the position of migrants in our community and our expectations of migrants. It highlighted the ease with which people are able to jump to unfounded and unjustified conclusions and fall into the trap of using blanket stereotypes.

#### *Lesson 3*

In order to pursue the idea of stereotyping and stereotypic prejudice, we used the 'Know your potato' exercise. All students selected a potato from a 'pool' of potatoes and got to know their potatoes. Many giggles, sniggers, and chuckles later ('All spuds are the same, Miss'). Selected students were asked to describe their new potato friend. These students were able to give quite distinctive descriptions of their 'friends'. The potatoes were returned to the pool and then retrieved.

Students were very surprised at the ease of the exercise. This reinforced the concepts introduced by Stella Pub, and highlighted how easy it is to regard people as part of a group rather than as individuals. Even this simple exercise was instrumental in exploring the concepts of stereotyping and prejudice for students in Years 10 and 11.

#### *Lessons 4 and 5*

I attempted to establish how racist students in the class were and also to make other students in the group realise that there was a diverse collection of racial attitudes within our class group. Students were given a list of statements from the

*Teaching for human rights* handbook and then asked to respond by rating seventeen racial groups, one of which was a nonsense race. The students were asked to rate each racial group and then asked to openly declare their responses using the 'four corners of the room' method. This method forced the students to express their opinions and attitudes publicly.

True to form, we found some very rigidly held racist views and our results confirmed the research finding that those who expressed intolerance towards a number of peoples, tended to express intolerance across the board. Those students who were willing to accept ethnic groups, actively challenged those who were non-accepting. The non-acceptors stuck to their guns and even appeared to be 'proud' of their beliefs, much to the consternation of other class members.

### *Lessons 6 and 7*

In the next double period, students decided to prepare an international luncheon. Each student prepared a dish and was asked to invite a guest to school for the lunch. Initially students were excited and eager to have the lunch and to invite guests. As the day drew closer, students' reluctance or inability to invite a guest became more apparent. However students felt that we should persevere with our original idea to invite guests, so we did just that.

The food ranged from Hungarian Goulash Soup, to Austrian Sour Pickle and Vinegar Potatoes, to West African Colonial Bananas—quite a sumptuous feast. However, on the day of the luncheon it was revealed that only two students had actually invited guests—a young male Greek school teacher and an elderly Polish lady. The students were concerned; so was I. We decided to proceed with the luncheon with the two guests, and jump our hurdles as we got to them. The teacher arrived—eager to start eating. The lady arrived alone. She lacked confidence and was intimidated by the mass of youthful faces. When she realised that she was only one of two guests, she politely asked if she could leave. She told the host student that she felt uncomfortable and very self-conscious, and that she would go home. We were all embarrassed, but felt that in the circumstances she was quite entitled to go home before the luncheon. In many ways the outcome of the luncheon, although undesirable, achieved more than umpteen lessons might have been able to achieve.

The students instantly comprehended the 'us/them' dichotomy, and understood the feeling of alienation experienced by the lady in a foreign location. They understood her decision to leave and this was borne out in a written exercise where they were asked to consider a similar hypothetical situation and express the feelings and responses of a hypothetical women in this plight.

### *Lesson 8*

After this sobering experience, it seemed timely to present additional material to students regarding human rights. Brief case studies on Steve Biko, Fred Morris and Alexander Solzhenitsyn were given to students, which led to animated discussion amongst the class. These case studies, in turn, led to a discussion of human rights and the limitations and effectiveness of the *Universal declaration of human rights*.

*Lessons 9 and 10*

From these case studies, we progressed to the Australian situation and considered the plight of Aboriginal Australians. We considered a range of source material particularly concentrating on news articles from the *Age*. The Aboriginal 'Charter of rights' was used to demonstrate the existence of inequalities and the dissatisfaction of the Aboriginal community. This discussion certainly elicited bigoted attitudes amongst certain group members whilst others were disheartened and frustrated by the material presented to them. Students were asked to write an essay titled 'Ayers Rock—who should control Ayers Rock?' this work was set just as the controversy was raging over who should control Ayers Rock. Students were able to follow the sequence of events in the, newspapers.

*Lessons 11-15*

Students were then set an individual research project where students were required to draw upon their own initiative and resources to produce a report on 'Apartheid in South Africa'. (Students were free to choose their topic, however it was generally agreed that South Africa and its apartheid policies offered the best access to resources.) One of the problems of being in a rural area is that you have limited access to a wide range of resources. The project involved collecting relevant news articles for a short period, researching the issues of South Africa and apartheid, and then utilising that material to write a 1200 word essay.

The report was demanding. However it required students to draw upon a range of skills, from selecting and critically evaluating news articles, to conducting an interview, to writing an essay utilising relevant material they had gathered, to attempting to provide some solutions to the conflict. This report completed the work on racism and human rights.

The final activity that was required of students was to interview a prominent member of the community about his or her stance toward the issue studied by each student. This was an excellent strategy in that it encouraged students to be resourceful and critical thinkers.

**Decisions/Resolutions**

As a result of the evaluation procedures implemented, I have decided to continue using the human rights material in 1986. Again, we will incorporate material into existing courses as we did in 1985. We plan to expand the human rights courses offered in 1987 and incorporate appropriate material into other topic areas, and topics already covered where we have already consciously implemented HRC material, e.g. studies of the disabled and a study of poverty.

It is also proposed to refine the materials used this year and offer similar courses on racism and sexism again in 1986. Obviously our students found it worthwhile; often their eyes were opened to ideas and concepts which they had previously taken for granted or had not thought about.

It is also proposed to construct a case study of the dilemma facing Jenny Lade and Robyn Williamson in Afghanistan.

It is felt that this case study may have more relevance for our students, and as a result, will have a greater impact in terms of students appreciating the basic rights of all people in our society.

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## Audio-Visual Materials

### Audiocassette

*Race Relations in South Africa*. BBC Documentary.

### Film

*Annie's Coming Out*

*Big Henry and the Polka-Dot Kid* (Learning to be a human series)

*Do I Have to Kill My Child*

*Families: Alike and Different*

*Dr Zeuss on the Loose*

*Puberty Blues*

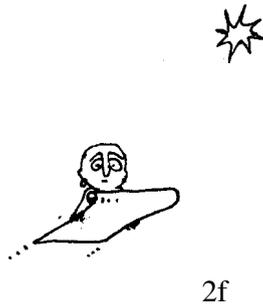
*Sahela*

*The Seven Ravens*

*The Shopping Bag Lady* (Learning to be a human series)  
*The Silent Scream*  
*Stepping Out*

**Videocassette**

*Don't Think I Don't Think*  
*Fair Enough*  
*Images*  
*Last Grave at Dimboza*  
*Nelson Mandela*  
*One Day in the Life of Ivan Deni sovich*  
*Rockin' the Botha Seeking an*  
*Answer Sport and Politics in*  
*South Africa*  
*Talk Back*  
*The Whites of Their Eyes*  
*The Young Ones*



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