

Equality and Human Rights Commission, Great Britain

Contribution to the OHCHR's Methodology, Education and Training Section is preparing a progress report on the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education

As requested by the Human Rights Council, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Great Britain, an A status National Human Rights Institution would like to share the following information with the Office of the High Commissioner's Methodology, Education and Training Section, to assist it with the preparation of its progress report on the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (A/HRC/15/28).

If you would like further information from the UK Government on this issue, please feel free to contact:

Eddie Coleman

Ministry of Justice, United Kingdom

Eddie.Coleman@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Equal Rights, Equal Respect

The Equality and Human Rights Commission produced a guide for secondary school students entitled "Equal Rights, Equal Respect." It is designed to teach students about equality and human rights in a way that is empowering and relevant to their lives. It provides a range of resources and cross-curriculum lesson ideas that help young people understand their own and other people's rights and differences. It also aims to support teachers through providing a "useful information section" to assist them in developing their own knowledge of equality and human rights, and to provide advice on effective teaching methods for delivering these topics.

Equal Rights, Equal Respect has a Citizenship and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education focus, but also supports cross-curriculum subjects, including History, RE, English, Geography and Art. The toolkit offers videos, lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations, worksheets and assembly plans.

A) Video

The centrepiece is three videos (videos 1-3), directed and produced with young people. The videos explore the negative consequences of discriminatory and harmful behaviour that is common to the lives of young people today, and highlight positive measures that could tackle these issues.

The three videos feature scenarios of disability-related bullying, racism and sexism. Each video shows the scenario, with a break point to enable class discussion before the positive measure is revealed. The videos will be used to develop young people's awareness of the consequences of negative behaviour, and to develop empathy. They provide thought-provoking scenarios for young people to explore equality issues in real-life contexts.

There is also an additional video (video 4) that supports the final lesson where young people are encouraged to take action to promote and defend equality and human rights. The video shows young people working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission as equality and human rights champions, pledging to take action to tackle discrimination.

B) Lesson plan ideas

A series of equality and human rights lesson plans are provided for ideas on how these topics could be delivered. The 12 lessons have been designed to progressively develop learning but each lesson can be delivered as standalone, or integrated into other lessons.

Overarching lesson objectives:
Students will:

- Be aware that actions have consequences and develop empathy (Lessons 1-2)
- Understand identities and diversity in the UK (Lesson 3-4)
- Understand why prejudice and discrimination is wrong and the need for equality laws (Lessons 5-7)
- Understand what human rights are and how they work (Lessons 8-10)
- Understand how the media can influence attitudes (Lesson 11)
- Be able to take action to promote and defend equality and human rights (Lesson 12)

Extra activity ideas are provided for alternative, differentiation or homework activities, or to develop learning in other subjects or lessons. All the lessons are designed to support Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic learning styles.

C) Worksheets

A series of worksheets support the lesson activities. All of the worksheets are provided in Word format to allow them to be edited to suit the needs of particular classes or teachers. The worksheets include case studies, scenarios, news articles, fact sheets and more. Refer to the lesson summary below for the full list.

D) PowerPoint slides

A series of PowerPoint presentations support the lesson plans. They provide detailed background information and instructions, supported by imagery. They are editable to ensure that they can be modified to be appropriate for all students.

E) Assembly plans

Two assembly plans have also been provided to help raise awareness of the importance of human rights and equality to the wider school.

Assembly 1 - Freedom and rights - introduces human rights by exploring what freedom is and is not. It then explores the importance of human rights and introduces the Human Rights Act.

Assembly 2 - Difference and respect - gets students to appreciate that with freedom comes a diverse range of individuals. It explores the benefits of diversity and the need for everyone to respect and celebrate difference.

Right Here, Right Now

The Ministry of Justice in partnership with the British Institute of Human Rights, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and Amnesty International UK produced a resource for secondary level citizenship teachers in England entitled "Right Here, Right Now - Teaching Citizenship through Human Rights."

When the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 came into force across the UK in 2000, its wider aim was to create a 'culture of respect for human rights'. The Department for Constitutional Affairs (now the Ministry of Justice) commissioned research into what it could do to support young people to contribute to this culture of human rights, which resulted in the 'Human Rights in Schools' project.

The project is based on the premise that 'young people will benefit from being taught about human rights, and will learn about rights most effectively within a school environment where human rights are promoted and respected'.

This resource is one output of the project. As of April 2011, the government also plans to publish guidelines for secondary schools on how to develop a whole-school approach to human rights.

Human rights and citizenship education

The resource explains that human rights feature in all of the key concepts outlined in the KS3 Citizenship curriculum. They are explicitly mentioned under 'Rights and responsibilities', but they are also integral to 'Democracy and justice' and 'Identities and diversity: living together in the UK'.

Rather than a topic within citizenship, or something to add to an overcrowded curriculum, teachers have reported that it is useful to see human rights as being 'at the core of the whole citizenship curriculum'.

The resource suggests that this is because:

- Human rights can provide an inclusive framework in which different cultural and religious values can co-exist; some lesson plans in the resource will help young people to explore their own values and to recognise the common values underpinning human rights treaties.
- Human rights frameworks can help students understand concepts that are central to citizenship education: how national and international agreements are made, how conflicts arise and are resolved, how stereotyping and prejudice can be avoided and how people can live harmoniously in a diverse society.
- When young people are fully aware of their human rights, evidence shows that low-level conflict and disruption in the classroom is reduced. However, for this to happen, young people have to be taught about human rights in a classroom where rights are respected, and in a way which enables them to

understand the universality of rights and therefore to recognise their social responsibility to protect the rights of others, as well as their own.

The resource also introduces the idea of 'rights-respecting schools' - that is, schools that promote the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as the basis for enhancing teaching, learning, ethos, attitudes and behaviour.

It presents a checklist of key features of the 'human rights respecting classroom'.

Aims of the resource

The resource aims to support teachers to feel confident delivering lessons on human rights and to encourage a human rights approach to subject delivery.

There is a helpful section on teaching techniques for handling controversial issues. It suggests that within the classroom there can be explicit recognition of the need to balance the freedom of expression of all members of the class with the right of all participants to be free from discrimination and disrespect.

The resource is designed to enable students to:

- learn about the concepts and values of human rights and think about how they are relevant to their lives
- learn about the HRA and the CRC, two of the most important human rights measures for children and young people in the UK
- use human rights as a framework for exploring topical and controversial issues such as homophobia and child poverty, and
- develop key citizenship skills by equipping them to take action to uphold and promote human rights.

How to use the resource

The resource is divided into three main sections.

- Lessons 1 - 7: Exploring human rights - students will explore key human rights concepts and values and how these are expressed in the HRA and CRC. They will learn about upholding human rights in their personal lives, and as part of a school, local and global community.
- Lessons 8 - 11: Human rights issues - students will explore topics including homophobia, identities and diversity, participation and child poverty from a human rights perspective.
- Lesson 12: Taking action for human rights - students will plan to take action on a human rights issue.

Each lesson plan is accompanied by:

- learning questions
- learning outcomes
- assessment opportunities
- links to the curriculum
- suggestions for helpful prior learning
- suggested homework

- resources and worksheets
- pointers to additional resources