

HUMAN RIGHTS HERE AND NOW

Addressing Contemporary Human Rights Issues

GETTING HRE INTO THE CURRICULUM: NEW JERSEY TEACHERS MAKE IT HAPPEN!

By Jessica Mintz and John Terry

How do teachers bring human rights into an increasingly restricted curriculum? In spring 2014, a team of K-12 and university level educators from across New Jersey met at Rutgers University to develop a digital human rights education (HRE) curriculum integration guide that would help New Jersey classroom teachers link HRE to the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies and the Common Core Curriculum standards. Led by HRE USA Steering Committee member William R. Fernekes - who taught and supervised social studies instruction in NJ - the team has developed a collection of adaptable and accessible model lessons and supporting materials that encourage the integration of HRE into the state's curriculum.

The HRE Curriculum Integration Guide seeks to inspire teachers of all grade levels and disciplines to implement HRE into their daily instruction. Each lesson included in the guide has gone through an extensive 18-month piloting process, whereby team members and HRE experts provide feedback on the writing of lessons, the lessons are classroom tested, and final revisions are made based on peer and expert feedback and classroom results. To make these lessons as accessible and adaptable as possible, the authors have provided modifications for students with a diversity of needs, like English Language Learners or students in special education programs. While the [HRE Curriculum Integration Guide](#) has so far been oriented toward social studies lessons, the project aims to be more inclusive across grade levels and disciplines. In this way, our project is infinite in its scope. To access the NJ HRE Curriculum Integration Guide, you can visit www.hreusa.org and click on "Publications."



The New Jersey team is currently seeking to recruit educators from across the country to help expand the scope and accessibility of the project. We encourage teachers not only to utilize the lessons and provide the team with feedback, but also to write and submit their own human rights-focused lessons to Dr. William R. Fernekes. Each lesson should link HRE to their state's curriculum content standards. If you are interested in submitting a lesson or establishing a similar state project, please e-mail Dr. Fernekes for training and guidance at william.fernekes@gse.rutgers.edu and bill41@comcast.net.

SAMPLE LESSONS

All completed lessons in the HRE Integration Project are available at <https://hreusa.org/hre-guide/>.

Do All Children Have Sweet Dreams?

Grades 1-3

<https://hreusa.org/hre-guide/lesson-1/>

In this lesson developed by teachers in the Somerset Hills School District, students are asked to develop an understanding of needs and wants as concepts by applying them to their own lives as well as the lives of children beyond their own communities. Through evocative materials, such as a photography book titled *Where the Children Sleep*, students gain an appreciation of challenges children face around the world and evaluate the extent to which their rights are being upheld by looking at excerpts from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Let's Take Action

Grades 6-8

<https://hreusa.org/hre-guide/lesson-2/>

Developed by Anna Major for a middle school global studies course in the Bernards Township School District, this lesson uses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to examine child labor abuses by multinational corporations in African countries.

Slavery Still Exists

Grades 9-12

<https://hreusa.org/hre-guide/lesson-7/>

In this lesson by Danny Papa of Jefferson Township Public Schools, students explore the present-day issue of human trafficking. The lesson provides students with means through which they can build awareness-raising campaigns and directly confront a contemporary human rights issue.

Stages of Genocide

Grades 9-12

<https://hreusa.org/hre-guide/lesson-9/>

In this lesson by Adena Friedberg of the Bernards Township School District, students gain an understanding of the framework known as the "8 Stages of Genocide" and apply the pattern to historical or contemporary examples. The lesson also encourages students to look for indicators of potential genocide that exist today.

ABOUT THE GUEST EDITORS

A social studies teacher at Bayonne High School from 2014-2017, **Jessica Mintz** will be teaching this year at the Levi Anderson Learning Center in Beaverton, Oregon.

John Terry taught history at Jefferson Township High School and now teaches at Wayne Hills High School in New Jersey.