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Designing Teacher Education Programs for Human Rights

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America is one of the foremost western nations identified as having a free and just society. As such, the government must ensure that American citizens are receiving a fair and equitable education that prepares them to be effective citizens in a liberal democratic nation. One historical goal of public education in America is the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. However, in a globally diverse society education should not be limited to the reproduction of the dominant ideology, but should emphasize the promotion of those values that support a liberal democracy: protection from despots, the possession of fundamental political rights and liberties, and most importantly a pluralistic system in which they may self-determine what is best for their own good and interests.

Public education should help students to understand their role as citizens within America's liberal democratic society. To be truly effective citizens in a liberal democracy, students need to be educated with the knowledge, ability and dispositions to engage in a pluralistic society that internalizes global values. As such, the role of American public education should be redefined as the creation of a citizens that hold a liberal democratic political culture that values national and international law while valuing human rights, the standards by which a

society can come to realize and support the conditions necessary to ensure the human dignity of its members.¹

A liberal democracy is based on the principles of public reason and intrinsic equality in which its citizens are governed based on the precepts of intrinsic equality and the affirmation of the basic principles of justice, ensuring that basic rights are guaranteed to all individuals.² In addition, educational institutions in a liberal democratic nation are tasked with developing within students an understanding of intrinsic equality.³ Furthermore education, being a concern for all of a nation's citizenry, is certainly the responsibility of a governing body that practices the principle of intrinsic equality, thereby ensuring the political and legal equality of all the stakeholders.⁴ How do we develop an educational system that is tasked with taking the unique and uncommon identities and belief systems that exist within the United States and developing a citizenry that maintains a sense of positional objectivity and that has a common national identity based on a system of intrinsic equality?

To answer this, we must first look at a definition of human rights. We then highlight the need for schools to develop citizens who maintain a sense of positional objectivity and a common national identity based on a system of intrinsic equality and the role of public education in developing this in the youth of a nation's citizenry. This leads to an examination of the role of teacher education in preparing educators that have the ability to ensure students receive such an education.

Human Rights Defined

To begin, it is important that we have an understanding of the meaning of human rights as they relate to the educational system. Regardless of the philosophical justification for human rights used, such as social contract theory or natural law, there are some basic tenets that everyone can hold true. It is these principles that are essential to the development of a human rights education.

¹ Fernando Reimers, "Citizenship, Identity And Education: Examining The Public Purposes Of Schools In An Age Of Globalization," *PROSPECTS* 36, no. 3 (2006); Betty A. Reardon, "Human Rights Learning: Pedagogies and Politics of Peace" (paper presented at the UNESCO Chair for Peace Education Master Conference, University of Puerto Rico, April 15, 2009).

² M. J. Adler, *The paideia proposal: An educational manifesto*. (New York: Macmillan, 1982); Robert Alan Dahl, *On democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Lynn Davies, "Focusing on the equal rights in teacher education," *Educational review* 46, no. 2 (1994); Amy Gutmann, *Democratic education* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); John Rawls, *Political liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Amartya Sen, *The idea of justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).

³ Adler, *The paideia proposal: An educational manifesto*. ; Dahl, *On democracy*; Walter Feinberg, *Common schools, uncommon identities: National unity and cultural difference* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Gutmann, *Democratic education*; Rawls, *Political liberalism*; Sen, *The idea of justice*.

⁴ Dahl, *On democracy*; Gutmann, *Democratic education*; Sen, *The idea of justice*.

In general, human rights are standards that ensure certain necessary conditions are met so people may achieve their full potential and maintain a sense of dignity.⁵ These standards are so important that they necessitate the protection and promotion of everyone from government officials to single individuals. Because we live in a globally diverse society, the universality of certain rights should be the topic of mutual debate so that a mutually collective understanding can be achieved.⁶ This includes those rights listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁷

In many teacher education programs, pre-service educators are provided content relating to ideas such as gender, race, religion, social class, and ability and their related impact on student achievement. Pre-service educators are also taught that regardless of a student's socio-cultural and economic background, all students should be guaranteed an equal opportunity to succeed. Horace Mann stated that, "Education is the gateway to equality." To not provide an equality of educational opportunity would violate the very principle of intrinsic equality and public reason upon which liberal democracies are based. However, equal opportunities do not necessarily equate to equal rights.⁸ The importance of educating students regarding equal rights has been made easier with the increasing number of national and international documents that provide definitions of specific rights, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva Convention, and numerous national constitutions. All of these documents contain lists of what people may expect and demand.

When we demand a right we are also according that right to others, which supports the fact that human rights apply to all individuals regardless of socio-cultural or economic background. Furthermore, when we demand rights we are also assuming the correlated duties and obligations associated with that demand.⁹ Most important of these obligations is the assurance and support of those who are having their rights denied.

The Role of Education in Human Rights

A liberal democratic government, and therefore a public education system, being based in public reason is essential to the development of a system of intrinsic equality and an educational system that educates positionally objective democratic citizens for the three reasons that make public reason public: (1) it is the reason of the public because it is the reason of the citizens, (2) it centers on the good of the people and fundamental justice, and (3) it has a public content and

⁵ Todd Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education," *Teaching Education* 17, no. 4 (2006).

⁶ Ibid; G. Meintjes, "Human rights education as empowerment: Reflections on pedagogy," in *Human rights education for the twenty-first century*, ed. George J. Andreopoulos and Richard Pierre Claude (Philadelphia, Pa. :: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

⁷ United Nations General Assembly, "*Universal declaration of human rights*," (1948).

⁸ Davies, "Focusing on the equal rights in teacher education."

⁹ Ibid.

nature given by the ideals and principles grounded in the society's notion of political justice.¹⁰ Such a purpose is essential to the development and maintenance of an educational system that is tasked with taking the unique and uncommon identities and belief systems that exist within the United States and developing a citizenry that maintains a sense of positional objectivity and that has a common national identity based on a system of intrinsic equality.¹¹

Schools are connected to this in two ways. First, public education must have a foundation in a reasonable system of principles based in a system of intrinsic equality and the basic principles of justice. The second reason naturally follows from the first in that the purpose of schools is to use this system of principles to develop a sense of positional objectivity that is shared by the numerous cultures that exists within our country. It is the role of schools to instruct the future generations in the necessary guidelines of inquiry that are the basis of public reason as well as the liberal political values of political justice and public reason.¹² It is through schools that a liberal democratic citizenry develops its sense of positional objectivity as well as its methods for balancing the diverse values that exists through the use of public reason. This is done to ensure that the system of principles upon which we are governed is reasonable, ensures intrinsic equality and fairly answers basic questions of justice.¹³ For it is through these basic questions of justice that the governing structure and norms of all systems of our government, including the guiding principles of our educational system, are developed, therefore inextricably linking the two together.¹⁴

Freire stated that the educational process, or the process of conscientization, coincides with the student's increasing awareness of their condition and how they may act to change that condition through reflection on their values, concern for societal equality, and willingness to aid others.¹⁵ If education is to do all this, and is such an important aspect of human society, it should be identified as a basic right. In addition, to ensure the goals mentioned by Freire are met, our institutions of public education must ensure students obtain at least a basic knowledge of human rights, and the necessary skills to defend not only their rights, but the rights of others. Finally, if schools are to incorporate a human rights education into their curriculum, teachers must receive the appropriate preparation through teacher preparation programs.

Education as a Basic Right

Conceiving education as a human right is a relatively new idea, first taking written form in the nineteenth century. Lindahl and Pimentel stated that the modern changes to the social,

¹⁰ Gutmann, *Democratic education*; Rawls, *Political liberalism*.

¹¹ Dahl, *On democracy*; Feinberg, *Common schools, uncommon identities: National unity and cultural difference*; Gutmann, *Democratic education*; Rawls, *Political liberalism*; Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The disuniting of America: Reflections on a multicultural society* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998); Sen, *The idea of justice*.

¹² Gutmann, *Democratic education*; Rawls, *Political liberalism*.

¹³ Dahl, *On democracy*; Gutmann, *Democratic education*; Rawls, *Political liberalism*; Sen, *The idea of justice*.

¹⁴ Rawls, *Political liberalism*.

¹⁵ P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2009).

cultural, political, and economic facets of society have greatly affected the relationship that exists between the individual and the state, especially rights of the individual and the duties of the state.¹⁶ Through their drafts of the socialist ideas of a paternal state, Marx and Engels influenced the definition of educational rights through their discussion of compulsory school attendance and other similar measures.¹⁷ The first discussion of education as a right and the state's duty to provide that education can be found in Stalin's Soviet Constitution of 1936. In fact, education as a human right is a common theme among all socialist states. This trend continued to develop throughout the twentieth century, being incorporated into many national and international documents, projecting education to the status of a fundamental human right.¹⁸

When viewed as a human right, education is said to be the acknowledgement of individual rights rather than emphasizing a person's role in the capitalist goals of a society's economic growth.¹⁹ However, research shows that actions to promote and protect human rights will remain improbable if people remain ignorant about human rights and continue to ignore public education's role to provide a human rights education.²⁰ Society as a whole is dependent upon its educational systems to develop its citizenry and ensure the creation and sustainability of satisfactory life conditions and the achievement of societal goals. Therefore, the role of education as a right is to empower individuals to meet their basic needs and while enabling them to fully and freely develop as individuals. As such, education can be seen as the pathway to individual freedom and toward the development of a free liberal democratic society in which the citizenry have the liberty to choose, think, and express themselves while pursuing political and social processes as unique, culturally diverse individuals.²¹

Human Rights Education

The United Nations was the first to publish a formal declaration of human rights that alluded to the content of a human rights education in The Charter of the United Nations. In Article 1, section 3, the United Nations Charter reads:

To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for

¹⁶ R. Lindahl, "The Right to Education in a Globalized World," *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10, no. 1 (2006); Caetano Pimentel, "The Human Right to Education: Freedom and Empowerment," *Multicultural Education* 13, no. 4 (2006).

¹⁷ Douglas Hodgson, *The human right to education* (Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1998).

¹⁸ Pimentel, "The Human Right to Education: Freedom and Empowerment."

¹⁹ Lindahl, "The Right to Education in a Globalized World."; Pimentel, "The Human Right to Education: Freedom and Empowerment."

²⁰ Davies, "Focusing on the equal rights in teacher education."; Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

²¹ Davies, "Focusing on the equal rights in teacher education."; Pimentel, "The Human Right to Education: Freedom and Empowerment."

human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.²²

Furthermore, the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.²³

Those who drafted this instrument struggled to ensure that it would fit the myriad of cultural and philosophical traditions it applied to. The United Nations has historically been concerned with the low status that human rights education has received in national educational goals across the globe. The concern over this low status generated a number of efforts to promote a widespread application since 1994.²⁴

Such a strong recognition of education as an instrument for the promotion and protection of human rights demonstrates that everyone has a right to know their rights. In addition, it creates the realization that the true civic purpose of education is to lead students to the adoption of a human rights framework through which to carry out their roles as citizens in a liberal democratic society.²⁵ It is essential that students learn about the universality of rights from an early age as most, if not all, governments that subscribe to the common human rights instruments violate those rights in practice. Davies argued that when a person has their rights violated, the concept of achievement has little meaning.²⁶

However, a human rights education is more than teaching a nation's citizenry about their rights, it is more importantly about developing empowerment.²⁷ This does not mean that we dismiss the teaching of our individual rights, for to achieve this empowerment, people must first learn about their rights. According to Pimentel and Jennings, the empowerment that comes from a human rights education creates an awareness of rights and obligations as they relate to the

²² United Nations General Assembly, "*The charter of the united nations*," (1945).

²³ ———, "*Universal declaration of human rights*."

²⁴ Murray Print et al., "Moral and human rights education: the contribution of the United Nations," *Journal of Moral Education* 37, no. 1 (2008).

²⁵ Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."; Pimentel, "The Human Right to Education: Freedom and Empowerment."; Reimers, "Citizenship, Identity And Education: Examining The Public Purposes Of Schools In An Age Of Globalization."

²⁶ Davies, "Focusing on the equal rights in teacher education."

²⁷ Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."; Meintjes, "Human rights education as empowerment: Reflections on pedagogy."; Pimentel, "The Human Right to Education: Freedom and Empowerment."; Reimers, "Citizenship, Identity And Education: Examining The Public Purposes Of Schools In An Age Of Globalization."

human condition and leads people to make claims not only for their rights, but the rights of others as well. All of this requires a properly constructed set of human rights standards that would shape not only K-12 education, but shape the nature of teacher education programs as well.²⁸

Empowerment. By developing a sense of empowerment, a human rights education is helping individuals increase their control over their lives and the decisions that affect their lives, an educational approach evidently different than the "banking" model.²⁹ Empowered individuals are conscious of their participation in the development of knowledge and seek opportunities to participate in social and political institutions in order to control their own life experiences and ensure that they reside in a system of intrinsic equality.³⁰

An effective human rights education is more than just the inclusion of human rights in the school curriculum, nor should an attempt be made to simply add the content of human rights to an already robust curriculum.³¹ What sort of educational system could support an equality of educational opportunity whose end product is an educated and positionally objective citizenry capable of maintaining a liberal democracy based on the principles of intrinsic equality and public reason? To answer this, it is necessary to begin from the premise that the goal of educational institutions is to serve as the preparatory stage for ensuring that all citizens are educated and have the skills to continue learning after their schooling is complete.³²

This form of education would be a one track system appropriately adjusted to individual differences with similar goals for all students based on three overarching objectives.³³ These objectives are: 1) all citizens should make as much of their abilities as possible, and therefore public schooling should provide them the necessary skills and knowledge to take advantage of every opportunity ensuring true intrinsic equality; 2) the citizenry are the principal rulers of a liberal democratic society, and as such public schooling should adequately prepare them to responsibly discharge their duties³⁴; 3) all citizens should receive an education that includes the basic skills that are common to all work in a liberal democratic society.³⁵

According to Jennings, a move toward comprehensive reform of the K-12 curriculum and teacher education to not just be about human rights, but to become the embodiment of human rights is necessary.³⁶ This transformation should include everything from the training that the teacher receives to the learning environment that is provided to the students. More importantly,

²⁸ Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

²⁹ Meintjes, "Human rights education as empowerment: Reflections on pedagogy."

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

³² Adler, *The paideia proposal: An educational manifesto*. .

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid; Dahl, *On democracy*; Gutmann, *Democratic education*; Rawls, *Political liberalism*.

³⁵ Adler, *The paideia proposal: An educational manifesto*. .

³⁶ Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

all aspects of a human rights education should be provided in a culturally and socially relevant environment.³⁷

Implementing a Human Rights Education in K-12

The philosophical basis of a human rights education aligns well with Freire's liberatory pedagogy and is a truly comprehensive approach.³⁸ This pedagogical approach employs a dialogic method intended to support the growth of humanization and personal empowerment while supporting differences by emphasizing the principle of equality. Research has shown that the focus of a human rights education must be on equity, transformation, and inclusion through the development of critical consciousness and critical thinking.³⁹

Such an approach develops through the recognition of students' personal knowledge and skills.⁴⁰ Teachers and learners equally share in the learning experience through active participation in inquiry and reflection through a process that reinforces our diverse human potentials. This would develop into a critical consciousness through which students' can question their social situation and become active subjects in a global dialogue.⁴¹

Research shows that high quality human rights education is provided in learner centered environments containing both content and pedagogy that promotes the characteristics of equality, freedom of expression, and the participation of learners in the educational process.⁴² The content provided should be related to both relevant life experiences and the students' cultural and social contexts while emphasizing the development of human rights and providing contemporary knowledge of human right instruments. All of this should be provided through the use of a pedagogical approach that encourages full participation of all the stakeholders, reinforcing their basic rights to freedom of self-expression and personal liberty.⁴³

Critical pedagogy, as a democratic mode of instruction, has as its aim specific democratic goals. For Friere, as for many authors of the democratic ethic, democracy was a political ethic that permitted everyone an equal right to shape collective knowledge, while hierarchal social relationships were seen as antidemocratic because they permitted specific groups to have a

³⁷ Ibid; Pimentel, "The Human Right to Education: Freedom and Empowerment."

³⁸ Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*.

³⁹ Ibid; Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."; Meintjes, "Human rights education as empowerment: Reflections on pedagogy."

⁴⁰ Pimentel, "The Human Right to Education: Freedom and Empowerment."

⁴¹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*; Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."; Meintjes, "Human rights education as empowerment: Reflections on pedagogy."

⁴² Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."; Pimentel, "The Human Right to Education: Freedom and Empowerment."; Meintjes, "Human rights education as empowerment: Reflections on pedagogy."

⁴³ Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."; Pimentel, "The Human Right to Education: Freedom and Empowerment."

greater voice in social institutions.⁴⁴ Critical pedagogy supports this view in that the curricular and instructional practices that take place under this theory are developed based on the interests of the students.⁴⁵ In addition, it rejects the teacher student dichotomy and replaces it with a deep reciprocity. This, in turn, leads to democratic results because students have a deeper understanding of social hierarchies and how they can limit free expression throughout society.⁴⁶ Therefore, critical pedagogy links pedagogical practice to the various spheres of social life and power configurations, turning pedagogical practice to a democratic political practice.⁴⁷

Critical pedagogy supports the development of students' abilities to participate in the process of public reason. Based on the aforementioned democratic basis of critical pedagogy, it can be said the teachers who employ this methodology in the classroom encourage students to adopt a particular method of sociopolitical analysis so that they may more clearly understand the relationship between world events and their personal experiences.⁴⁸ This methodology is based on the traditions of Marxism, feminism, and critical race theory and emphasizes examining how systems of inequality are created and reproduced and how they might be overturned.⁴⁹ This is similar to the work that a liberal democracy based on the principles of public reason and justice is aimed at achieving.⁵⁰

This transformative method of supporting democratic education and the development of praxis centered on the identification and understanding of social ills ensures that students understand why they exist and that they result from the political and economic forces at work in society.⁵¹ In all of this, the role of the teacher is to facilitate the dialogue and raise questions to ensure the students understood the relationship between economic and political systems and the concrete social conditions students experience daily.⁵² Critical pedagogy emphasizes the development of a method of sociopolitical analysis through dialogue, a concept very similar to that of public reason which is the basis of a liberal democracy. This analysis aims at uncovering and understanding antidemocratic practices, inequalities and injustices, linking them to the global economic and political forces that create them. By having such an understanding of these

⁴⁴ Dahl, *On democracy*; Eric B. Freedman, "Is Teaching for Social Justice Undemocratic?," *Harvard educational review* 77, no. 4 (2007); Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*.

⁴⁵ Freedman, "Is Teaching for Social Justice Undemocratic?"; Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*; Peter Mayo, "Critical literacy and emancipatory politics: the work of Paulo Freire," *International Journal of Educational Development* 15, no. 4 (1995); Meintjes, "Human rights education as empowerment: Reflections on pedagogy."

⁴⁶ Dahl, *On democracy*; Freedman, "Is Teaching for Social Justice Undemocratic?"; Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*; Gutmann, *Democratic education*; Mayo, "Critical literacy and emancipatory politics: the work of Paulo Freire."

⁴⁷ ———, "Critical literacy and emancipatory politics: the work of Paulo Freire."

⁴⁸ Freedman, "Is Teaching for Social Justice Undemocratic?"; Mayo, "Critical literacy and emancipatory politics: the work of Paulo Freire."

⁴⁹ Freedman, "Is Teaching for Social Justice Undemocratic?."

⁵⁰ Dahl, *On democracy*; Freedman, "Is Teaching for Social Justice Undemocratic?"; Gutmann, *Democratic education*; Rawls, *Political liberalism*; Sen, *The idea of justice*.

⁵¹ Freedman, "Is Teaching for Social Justice Undemocratic?"; Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*; Mayo, "Critical literacy and emancipatory politics: the work of Paulo Freire."

⁵² Freedman, "Is Teaching for Social Justice Undemocratic?."

antidemocratic practices, it is then possible to develop strategies to overturn them, thereby creating a more equal and just liberal democratic ethic.

Preparing Teachers to Provide a Human Rights Education

Teacher education programs have historically been analyzed in terms of their graduates' impact on students' cognitive learning, while little consideration is given to the effectiveness of teacher education program's role in the creation of a just, liberal democratic society.⁵³ Jennings stated that teacher education programs should use human rights as the organizing principle so that their graduates come to see themselves as human rights educators and advocates. To that end, he proposed a set of 6 human rights standards for classroom teachers (292-294): (1) Engages and supports all students' learning about human rights; (2) Creates and maintains effective environments that embody the principles and concepts of human rights; (3) Understands and organizes subject matter to promote student learning about human rights; (4) Plans instruction and designs learning experiences for the human rights education of all students; (5) Uses assessment strategies that embody human rights concepts and principles; and (6) Develops as a professional human rights educator.⁵⁴

While these standards may seem complex, they can all be directly related to the standards issued by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). By combining these standards, teacher educators can demonstrate the ease with which the existing K-12 education mandates can be reinterpreted with a human rights framework through new pedagogical approaches and supplementary curricular materials.⁵⁵

NCATE

One example of standards that can be shown to have a link to the principles of a human rights education proposed by Jennings can be found in NCATE's *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions*. Throughout Standard 4 of NCATE's *Professional Standards*, entitled "Diversity," we find that educators should be trained to provide a fair and equitable learning environment that is inclusive and promotes the diversity of all students.⁵⁶ Jennings would agree that this form of an environment is necessary to promote his 6 standards for Human Rights education in K-12 classrooms, which is made evident as Jennings includes fair and equitable learning environments as a part of each of his 6 standards.

⁵³ Davies, "Focusing on the equal rights in teacher education."; Reimers, "Citizenship, Identity And Education: Examining The Public Purposes Of Schools In An Age Of Globalization."

⁵⁴ Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

⁵⁵ Davies, "Focusing on the equal rights in teacher education."; Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

⁵⁶ National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions* (Washington: National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008).

A second example found in NCATE's *Professional Standards* states that candidates must learn to "contextualize teaching and draw effectively on representations from the students' own experience and culture."⁵⁷ This is also a principle that can be found in each standards 1, 2, 4 and 5 Jennings' standards for Human Rights education. Jennings' first standard states that educators engage and support "all students' learning about human rights."⁵⁸ This standard specifically states that educators need to be able to relate to students' developmental characteristics and needs and use this to help them connect with human rights themes. In addition, Jennings' standard 1 states that educators should be able to connect "students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and personal interests to human rights principles." The connection to Jennings' standards 2, 4 and 5 which state that educators must create environments, instruction and assessments that embody human rights principles, environments, classroom instruction, and assessments that are just and equitable.

Perhaps the strongest connections to human rights and Jennings' standards for Human Rights education is a statement ratified by the Executive Board of NCATE on October 27, 2007, entitled "NCATE and Social Justice." In this statement, the Executive Board states that a high quality, fair and equitable education is a fundamental right of all children. In this statement, the executive board draws connections to the human rights perspective taken within this research. Specifically, this statement evidences the belief that educators be required to demonstrate fairness, non-discriminatory practices, and create an equitable, caring environment for all students.

According to NCATE's *Professional Standards*, the purpose of Standard 4 is to ensure that educators are positionally objective, that they have the ability to understand and see from the perspective of each of the diverse students that they teach and reflect multicultural and global perspectives. Furthermore, educators are to be educated to understand the impact of discrimination and rights violations on the educational process. However, while NCATE's *Professional Standards* call for educators to be trained to carry out an approach grounded in human rights principles, there is no requirement for K-12 teachers to have received an education containing content of human rights principles.

Differences Between NCATE and Jennings

Although Jennings' standards can be easily cross referenced with the existing NCATE standards for teacher education programs, we need to examine what is different. Each of the aforementioned standards emphasizes a human rights component. The change that Jennings standards would call for would be the inclusion of content relating to human rights principles and an examination of the content in teacher education programs through the principle of human rights so that teacher education programs are preparing future educators to understand the social and political venues of society through a human rights framework. Davies suggested that if

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

much of this seems idyllic, it is because it is. Furthermore, Davies stated that there is little evidence that teacher educators develop a deep awareness of human rights and human rights violations through their teacher education program.⁵⁹ Rather, the research suggested that pre-service teachers are heavily influenced by their personal experience in American schools and that their professional training led them to accept an ideology based in human capital theory. Truly drastic changes are necessary to change the nature of teacher education from a system that reproduces the existing authoritarian culture that supports social division.

To accomplish this would mean not just the reform of teacher education programs, but the institution as a whole. There must be a congruence between teacher education programs and the goals of a democratic learning environment within the schools, meaning that the teacher educators must practice human rights education as well. This is based on the perception that if teachers are to promote human rights in a liberal democratic environment, they must have experienced the same in their teacher education programs as well as have received an education of human rights principles.⁶⁰

Teacher educators could use human rights concepts and instruments to help pre-service teachers explore the "psychological, philosophical, social, and cultural foundations of education."⁶¹ Pre-service educators should then be taught how to use this information to participate in teacher decision-making efforts and the development of educational policy. However, just as a K-12 human rights education should be relevant to student lives, the education that pre-service teachers receive in teacher education programs should be made relevant to the lives of pre-service teachers, their communities and the lives of their future students.⁶²

The education that pre-services teachers receive in teacher education programs includes more than just content, it also educates pre-service teachers in pedagogical content knowledge. As mentioned earlier, a human rights education is more than just content, it also involves the pedagogical approach employed by the classroom teacher. It is suggested that teacher educators emphasize to pre-service teachers that discipline and classroom management take on a new and engaging element when implementing a human rights education.⁶³ Furthermore, Davies posited that pre-service teachers should be provided a variety of diverse pedagogical approaches and develop an understanding that the approach they employ in the classroom is dependent on the student. Freire would go even further and suggest that the pedagogical approach used in the classroom should result of a dialogue between the teacher and the students.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Davies, "Focusing on the equal rights in teacher education."

⁶⁰ Ibid; Reimers, "Citizenship, Identity And Education: Examining The Public Purposes Of Schools In An Age Of Globalization."

⁶¹ Davies, "Focusing on the equal rights in teacher education."; Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

⁶² ———, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

⁶³ Davies, "Focusing on the equal rights in teacher education."; Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

⁶⁴ Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*.

In the end, if pre-service teachers receive the appropriate training on the content of human rights and how to provide a human rights education, they will have the ability to communicate how their pedagogy is shaped by a knowledge of human rights. The benefit to this approach is that future educators will have a framework through which they can develop an understanding of the schooling environment and advocate not only for themselves, but their students and their communities.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Jennings, "Human Rights Education Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education."

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