

CORE COMPONENTS OF HUMANE EDUCATION

AN INCLUSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING

CREATED BY THE HUMANE EDUCATION COALITION
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Core Components of Humane Education

First Edition

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FOREWORD

The Humane Education Coalition's publication, *Core Components of Humane Education*, is a resource our field has needed for many years. It focuses on the process of teaching and learning to create a more compassionate, equitable, and regenerative world for all living beings and the planet we share. On the pages that follow, we provide a global common framework from which we can work collaboratively to effect positive, meaningful change. We designed this resource to guide humane education practitioners in program development, to support them in assessing the impact of their learning experiences, and to offer a method for measuring the effectiveness of their education programs.

Humane education extends far beyond the classroom, serving as both an academic field and a social movement. The field's fundamental role is to empower individuals to develop personal values about themselves, other human and nonhuman animals, and the natural world; and to engage in prosocial behaviors that align with those values. This empowerment is a critical investment in our future. In this sense, the core components are not simply an outline for an effective humane education program, but also a construct for life - of actual and urgent relevance to our world and every community, classroom, organization, and human experience. The realization of a better world is our mutual responsibility, and its achievement is entirely dependent on the contribution that each of us is willing and able to make.

Thank you for reading, reflecting on, sharing, and incorporating this publication into your teaching practice. It is our hope that these core components will guide educators around the world toward a practice that will build a kinder, healthier, and more humane future.

Kindly,



Stephanie Itle-Clark
Academy of Prosocial Learning President

"A new ethic, embracing plants and animals as well as people, is required for human societies to live in harmony with the natural world on which they depend for survival and well-being."

- *World Conservation Strategy*, 1980

ABOUT THE HUMANE EDUCATION COALITION

The Humane Education Coalition (HEC) is a global alliance for collective impact. As a volunteer-driven nonprofit organization founded in 2017, HEC collaborates with education partners in human rights, environmental ethics, and animal protection to achieve common goals and support their work. **The mission of HEC is to advance the field of humane education through collaboration, education, empowerment, and inspiration.**



HEC serves as a backbone organization to a growing global network of partners and maintains coherence for the field of humane education using a targeted, strategic approach. We provide needed grant funding, education, and resources for organizations that teach about human rights, environmental ethics, and animal protection. We also work collaboratively with partners around the world to implement groundbreaking initiatives in the field of humane education, including projects in research and policy. **HEC believes education is the key to a compassionate, equitable, and regenerative future.** We invest in organizations that teach about interconnected local and global issues and empower them to create a more just, humane, and healthy world for all.

FOUR-PILLAR APPROACH TO ADVANCE THE FIELD OF HUMANE EDUCATION:

COLLABORATE

Collaborate with a global partner network to achieve groundbreaking initiatives and support their work.

EDUCATE

Provide quality learning opportunities that help improve the practice of humane education.

EMPOWER

Offer resources to assist partners with developing humane education programs.

INSPIRE

Recognize distinguished contributors to the field of humane education, and generate awareness through strategic public relations activities.

HEC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

- Bloom Grants to support education programs
- Humane education mentoring services
- Annual Excellence in Humane Education Award
- Humane Summit virtual speaker series
- *Connected Roots* podcast
- Virtual resource toolkit with 350+ resources
- "Humane Education in Practice" video series
- Online publications and research initiatives
- Networking, discounts, publications, and other partner benefits

KEY TERMS

The following terminology is defined, for the purpose of this document, as follows:

AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

The area of learning focused on developing empathy and providing opportunities for growth in awareness of feelings, emotions, and attitudes.

ANIMALS

While we recognize that animals include humans and nonhuman animals, for simple distinction, we will refer to humans as “people” and nonhuman animals as “animals.”

COGNITIVE DOMAIN

The area of learning focused on developing mental skills and the acquisition of information through knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and creation.

HUMANE

Having or expressing qualities that cultivate an equitable, compassionate, and sustainable community for all people, animals, and the natural world.

INCLUSION

The active and intentional practice of being culturally responsive to the age, ability, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and religious/spiritual or secular beliefs of others to create a fair, respectful, dignified, and comfortable learning environment for diverse learners through one’s teaching practice. *Modified from <https://diversity.gwu.edu/diversity-and-inclusion-defined>.*

LEARNER-CENTERED EDUCATION

Methods of teaching that shift the focus of instruction from the teacher to the learner and address the needs and backgrounds of the learners.

MEDIA LITERACY

The ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication; empowering learners to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and active citizens capable of critical evaluation of sources, awareness of conscious and unconscious biases, and awareness of genre. *Modified from <https://namle.net/publications/media-literacy-definitions>.*

NATURAL WORLD

Everything that exists on Earth that is not human-made or caused by humans besides humans and other species of animals (e.g., microorganisms, vegetation, land, rocks, water, air)

PEDAGOGY

The method and practice of teaching, including the theoretical concepts behind one’s practice.

PROSOCIAL

Relating to or denoting behavior which is positive, helpful, and intended to promote productive social interactions. *Modified from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/prosocial>.*

SYSTEMIC

Values, ideologies, practices, or policies present throughout society or structures, system-wide, which continuously impact and influence perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and/or the treatment of people, animals, and the natural world.

WHAT IS HUMANE EDUCATION?

The Humane Education Coalition believes humane education is a comprehensive and necessary methodology that equips learners with the tools to think critically and creatively in order to identify impactful solutions to interconnected challenges in our world. Humane education encourages many character values, including compassion, respect, empathy, and inclusion. Learners develop sensitivity to other living beings, and they learn to appreciate the diversity and inherent value of life on our planet. Humane education also provides opportunities for individuals to develop a sense of responsibility, stewardship, and self-esteem through its solutions-oriented approach, empowering learners to make choices that align with their values and take action as confident, capable citizens. We face numerous global challenges, including racial injustice, pollution, poverty, climate change, animal cruelty and exploitation, violence, inequality, and world hunger. These issues make humane education a necessity for people everywhere. By exploring the link between these seemingly isolated issues in a safe and non-judgmental environment, learners are encouraged to seek out accurate information and develop the prosocial attitudes and behaviors needed to positively shape the future.

FORMAL DEFINITION OF HUMANE EDUCATION

"Humane education encourages cognitive, affective, and behavioral growth through personal development of critical thinking, problem solving, perspective taking, and empathy as it relates to people, animals, the planet, and the intersections among them" (Academy of Prosocial Learning, 2016).

When subject matter is taught through the lens of humane pedagogy, in addition to acquiring knowledge, learners are given the space to process their own understanding, develop their personal values, and choose prosocial behaviors aligned with those thoughts and values.

PEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

An important consideration for best practices is the link between humane education and effective theories of educational practice. Strong humane education programs and humane pedagogy are founded on core educational theories. While other theoretical connections can certainly be applied to humane education, the following is a brief introduction to some of the most influential pedagogies guiding today's practices.

To begin, humane education follows a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Constructivist pedagogy sees learners as active participants in their learning, not passive recipients of information. Students build or "construct" their knowledge by incorporating new information into what they already

BACKGROUND

know (Howe & Berv, 2000). Learners are expected to ask questions, explore, and reflect. In practice, educators utilize active techniques, such as experiments and real-world problem solving, where learners incorporate new knowledge, reflect, and construct new understandings. This is a critical component to humane pedagogy, where learners are challenged to utilize new information and reflect upon previously held beliefs, values, and skills.

Similarly, a critical pedagogy teaches learners to reflect upon their own current understandings and to challenge traditional belief systems when they are founded in untruths or inequality (Freire, 1972). This is in many ways the foundation of inclusive humane education practice. Critical pedagogy was introduced by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's seminal *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This dialogue-based model of learning empowers students to identify, critique, and, ultimately, transform oppressive structures in their own lives through examining and working against oppressive systems. Humane education is informed by critical pedagogy's emphasis on the expression of learner voices, diverse perspectives, critical thinking, and positive action. An outgrowth of critical pedagogy, ecopedagogy, is designed to expand the critical reflection and challenging of systemic injustice in a way that is inclusive of the natural environment (Kahn, 2010).

Connecting the role of education to action within the community was also emphasized in Dewey's idea of democratic education. While John Dewey advocated for constructivist pedagogy, he also linked democracy and education. He did not see democracy only as a political system, but also as an "ethical idea with active informed participation by citizens" (Dewey, 1916). He argued that we have to "[equip] citizens with the ability to take on the responsibility to make informed, intelligent choices and decisions leading to the public good" (Dewey, 1916). When incorporated into humane studies, this process allows learners to be informed of issues facing local and global communities and to have the ability to make not only informed, intelligent choices and decisions, but also compassionate ones.

A solid humane education is rooted in humanist pedagogy as well. Humanist pedagogy is based on the principle that learning is not just about intellect; it is also about educating the "whole learner" and taking a person's interests, goals, and passion into consideration. The primary goals of humanist pedagogy are human well-being, the cultivation of human values, the development of human potential, and the acknowledgment of human dignity (Crain, 2015; Maslow, 2013).

Humane pedagogy is a reflective and all-encompassing educational process that embraces the ways intellect intertwines with emotion. This connection guides intent and personal motivation. It is a theory of teaching and learning that allows a learner to cultivate values through the lens of understanding systems and relationships including not only other people, but also other species and our natural world (Itle-Clark & Comaskey, 2019).

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

THE NEED FOR CORE COMPONENTS

The origins of humane education date back to the late 1800s. Since then, a broad spectrum of definitions and practices have evolved. We believe the field of humane education has reached a critical point at which we must define a high standard of quality programs in practice and increase the value and credibility attributed to the work of a global community of humane education practitioners.

We designed the following core components to help practitioners understand best practices, develop humane education programs that create and sustain prosocial attitudes and behaviors, and elevate the field of humane education as a whole.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

The core components and objectives provide a framework for developing high-quality humane education programs and lesson plans. They are designed to guide humane education practitioners in program development, and to support them in assessing the impact of their learning experiences and measuring the effectiveness of their education programs.

The five core components are intended to serve as building blocks for practitioners to creatively generate comprehensive, engaging, inclusive, and culturally responsive programs. Each core component provides an overarching element that is vital to any humane education lesson or program. The objectives provide detail on how to create a lesson or program that fulfills each of the core components. Suggested practical strategies and an example lesson plan are provided that demonstrate how to effectively address the objectives.



CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

1 - CREATE A HUMANE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The learning experience is designed to create an environment that engages learners' cognitive and affective domains and promotes prosocial attitudes and behaviors to equip them with the means to make conscious, ethical choices and empowers them to engage in positive actions.



THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE...

- A. Embraces **comprehensive humane pedagogy**.
- B. Utilizes effective **learner-centered** education.
- C. Is based on objectives that address **cognitive and affective domains** in addition to **promoting prosocial behaviors**.
- D. **Educates rather than indoctrinates**. Allows learners to explore various perspectives of a topic or issue instead of telling the learner what to think, how to feel, or what to do.
- E. Is **safe, inclusive, equitable, respectful, and culturally responsive**.
- F. Is **developmentally appropriate**.
- G. Serves as a model of **humane choices and actions** for learners.
 - i. Aims to do no harm to people, animals, or the natural world, either directly or indirectly, and to leave as small an eco-footprint as possible.
- H. Includes sources that are **transparent, accurate, and verifiable**.
- I. Acknowledges and intentionally examines diverse curriculum, presenting a balanced look at what may be controversial, sensitive, or unsettled on a personal or societal level.
- J. Is purposefully designed to encourage **honest dialogue** so different perspectives can be **shared openly and safely**.

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

1 - CREATE A HUMANE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The learning experience is designed to create an environment that engages learners' cognitive and affective domains and promotes prosocial attitudes and behaviors to equip them with the means to make conscious, ethical choices and empowers them to engage in positive actions.



SUGGESTED PRACTICAL STRATEGIES:

- Consider how the topic relates to or impacts **people, animals, and/or the natural world**.
- Provide opportunities for learners to **reflect** independently and/or to discuss in pairs or small groups.
- Utilize **humane communication**. *View our video on this topic at hecoalition.org/videos.*
- Show that you respect and value learners by practicing **active listening** when they speak. Consider utilizing a "talking piece" (an object that has significance to the group that one person holds at a time to signify that it is their turn to speak while others listen).
- Create a **respectful and inclusive classroom culture that considers the effects of dehumanizing/oppressive language**. For example, invite all learners to share their preferred pronouns, and provide a signal learners can use if they are feeling uncomfortable and need space. Empower learners to deconstruct oppressive language and replace it with humane language that values the inherent worth of the natural world; the sentience of animals; and the diversity of peoples' ethnicities, races, gender identities and expressions, abilities, beliefs, sexual orientations, and the like.
- When possible, use materials that are repurposed, reused, recycled/recyclable, no-low packaging, biodegradable, zero-waste, secondhand, fair-trade, not tested on animals, not made of or from animals, culturally responsive, and representative of diverse groups in respectful and inclusive ways.
- Thoughtful consideration is given to both the implicit and explicit messages given about people, animals, and/or the natural world in any content or media used in the classroom. When messages promote harmful, oppressive, or exploitative messages, these materials are either not included or used as an opportunity to teach students to think critically about the message being promoted.
- When possible, refrain from saying "no" or "wrong." Instead, **validate** a learner's effort, **acknowledge** where they are coming from, and **guide** them to accurate information.
- Be **open and honest** about the sources of information provided.
- Remain **sensitive** to learners' diverse opinions, attitudes, and any internal dilemmas they may experience based on the topic.

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

1 - CREATE A HUMANE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The learning experience is designed to create an environment that engages learners' cognitive and affective domains and promotes prosocial attitudes and behaviors to equip them with the means to make conscious, ethical choices and empowers them to engage in positive actions.



? EVALUATE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

Use these questions as a guide in assessing how effectively your program is designed to create an environment that engages learners' cognitive and affective domains and promotes prosocial attitudes and behaviors to equip them with the means to make conscious, ethical choices and empowers them to engage in positive actions.

- How do we **demonstrate interconnections** between people, animals, and/or the natural world?
- How do we represent **multiple perspectives** in a culturally responsive way (meaning that we have an awareness of our own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of learners and their families)?
- In what ways are we **modeling our message** through anti-oppressive language? Through the materials or resources that we are utilizing? Through the way we treat animals, including the way we speak about them and the human relationship with them?
- How does the delivery of our learning experience model **respect, inclusion, and equitability**?
- What strategies are we implementing to **create a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment**?
- How do we ensure that our learning experience is **developmentally appropriate**?
- How do we identify and evaluate sources of information used in our learning experience for **transparency and accuracy**? How do we explicitly address **media literacy**?
- What is our process for **managing difficult topics**?

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

2 - ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN

The learning experience engages learners as active participants in the construction of their own understanding about real-world issues that impact people, animals, and/or the natural world.



THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE...

- A. Helps learners develop knowledge that can be applied to **understanding the experiences and needs** of people, animals, and/or the natural world.
- B. Supports **systems thinking** through the identification of root causes of problems and the systems that perpetuate or extinguish them.
- C. Focuses on building knowledge that **encourages compassionate, equitable, and regenerative actions** toward people, animals, and/or the natural world.
- D. Values and encourages **critical thinking** through vigorous discussion, skilled questioning techniques, and the consideration of multiple viewpoints.
- E. Helps learners understand the difference between **facts, opinions, informed judgements, and conjectures**.
- F. Presents **diverse perspectives** in a respectful and inclusive manner.
- G. Acknowledges and addresses the **bias of perspectives**.
 - i. Creates opportunities to **reduce, prevent, and challenge inequities** including but not limited to: racism, speciesism, ableism, homophobia, xenophobia, and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, culture, religion/spirituality/secular beliefs.
- H. Illuminates **authentic connections** between how issues affect people, animals, and/or the natural world as is applicable to the topic being taught.
- I. Focuses on **amplifying the voices and centering the experiences** of individuals and communities who are affected by a particular issue.

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

2 - ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN

The learning experience engages learners as active participants in the construction of their own understanding about real-world issues that impact people, animals, and/or the natural world.



SUGGESTED PRACTICAL STRATEGIES:

- Provide engaging opportunities for learners to **view a topic through a broader lens**. Invite learners to create presentations, write explanatory essays or journals, respond to reflection questions, discuss an issue in pairs or small groups, complete an artistic expression, or analyze the topic as a class.
- Demonstrate not just the problem, but the **systemic inequities** that create it.
- Ask **critical thinking questions** that encourage learners to think about an issue from multiple perspectives, and discuss when statements are inaccurate or based on bias or misinformation.
- Provide learners with examples of **fact, opinion, informed judgement, conjecture, and misinformation**. Allow learners to identify each to help them base their own opinions on facts and accurate information. Acknowledge any biases that arise without admonishing learners.
- Utilize **age-appropriate methods** to present complex or controversial topics. Provide learners with relevant vocabulary, and discuss the importance of respectful and inclusive language.
- Encourage learners to consider why others may have **different perspectives**. For example, create a role-play game in which learners examine an issue from multiple perspectives.
- **Invite guest speakers and/or provide articles, stories, or podcasts**, that give voice to those who are affected by the topic discussed or explain the experience of those affected by the topic, and describe how they and their community are working to resolve an issue.

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

2 - ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN

The learning experience engages learners as active participants in the construction of their own understanding about real-world issues that impact people, animals, and/or the natural world.



EVALUATE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

Use these questions as a guide in assessing how effectively your program engages learners as active participants in the construction of their own understanding about real-world issues that impact people, animals, and the natural world.

- How do we guide learners to understand and recognize the **experiences and needs of all peoples, animals, and/or the natural world**?
- How do we guide learners to develop an understanding of the **interconnectedness** between people, animals, and/or the natural world?
- In what ways do we provide opportunities for **systems thinking** and for learners to identify the root causes of problems and systems that can perpetuate or eradicate them?
- How do we provide information that encourages **compassionate, equitable, and regenerative actions**?
- How do we create opportunities for **critical thinking** and taking multiple viewpoints into consideration?
- How do we demonstrate the difference between **facts, opinions, informed judgements, conjectures, and false or misinformation**?
- How do we represent **different perspectives and culturally inclusive** language? How do we acknowledge and address **biases** within different perspectives (i.e., dominant narratives related to our relationships toward other people; animals; and the natural world that stem from geographic hemispheres, race, gender identity and expression, age, sexual identity, ability, religious/spiritual/secular beliefs)?

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

3 - ADDRESS THE AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

The learning experience engages learners as active participants in the construction of their own feelings about real-world issues that impact people, animals, and/or the natural world.



THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE...

- A. Invites learners to **empathize** with the experiences, needs, and feelings of all peoples and animals in order to **develop care, respect, and compassion** towards them.
- B. Engages learners in experiences that allow them to **consider the perspectives** of people and animals and to understand situations from a different point of view.
- C. Provides learners with opportunities to develop **reverence** for the natural world and to instill a sense of **responsibility** for its conservation and needs.
- D. Fosters situations for learners to explore how they feel about the **interconnections** between people, animals, and/or the natural world.
- E. Encourages learners to **share feelings and concerns** related to the topics that are covered.
- F. Provides learners with opportunities to process **personal values, beliefs, and emotional interpretations** while developing their own personal autonomy.

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

3 - ADDRESS THE AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

The learning experience engages learners as active participants in the construction of their own feelings about real-world issues that impact people, animals, and/or the natural world.



SUGGESTED PRACTICAL STRATEGIES:

- Challenge learners to **put themselves in someone else's shoes or paws**. Consider sharing articles or true stories of people, animals, or communities who have experienced situations related to the topic.
- Utilize videos, narratives, music, poetry, guided visualizations, images, and/or guest speakers to convey the topic.
- Provide opportunities for learners to **view a situation from different perspectives**. For example, invite learners to write a first-person narrative based on a third-person narrative (e.g., ask students to re-write a story about an animal from the animals' point-of-view).
- Incorporate opportunities for learners to **develop reverence for the natural world**. (e.g., sensory walks to explore what they can see, hear, touch, and smell outside; guided visualization through the forest or along the ocean; artistic expressions of the natural world; creating a nature quilt.)
- Invite learners to **identify and express their feelings** through discussion, a one-word closing, journaling, drawing an emoji, writing a song or poem, reflection ticket, demonstrating through their body language, or role-play.

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

3 - ADDRESS THE AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

The learning experience engages learners as active participants in the construction of their own feelings about real-world issues that impact people, animals, and/or the natural world.



EVALUATE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

Use these questions as a guide in assessing how effectively your program engages learners as active participants in the construction of their own feelings about real-world issues that impact people, animals, and the natural world.

- How do we foster **empathy, respect, and compassion** for all peoples and animals?
- What opportunities do we create for learners to **put themselves in someone else's shoes or paws**?
- How do we encourage **reverence for the natural world**?
- In what ways do we instill a **sense of responsibility** toward conservation and stewardship?
- What opportunities do we provide for learners to express their **feelings and concerns**?
- What opportunities do we create for learners to **reflect and make connections** between their personal feelings, values, and beliefs to develop personal autonomy?

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

4 - PROMOTE PROSOCIAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

The learning experience provides learners with the opportunity to reflect on and shape their own ethical values in order to make decisions and enact change based on those values.



THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE...

- A. Encourages learners to **act according to their values**.
- B. Equips and empowers learners to engage in **positive actions** for people, animals, and/or the natural world.
- C. Provides opportunities for learners to **think critically and creatively** about various ways to address the topics discussed through **compassionate, equitable, and regenerative actions**.
- D. Considers and encourages both **personal and systemic solutions** to address oppression committed against people, animals, and the natural world.
- E. Considers ways to **ensure that actions do not have unintended consequences** that may harm people, animals, and/or the natural world.
- F. Provides opportunities to learn **how to take action** and practice **prosocial skills** to benefit people, animals, and/or the natural world in a way that is comfortable for each participant.

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

4 - PROMOTE PROSOCIAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

The learning experience provides learners with the opportunity to reflect on and shape their own ethical values in order to make decisions and enact change based on those values.



SUGGESTED PRACTICAL STRATEGIES:

- Encourage learners to **consider and identify their own values**, and challenge them to connect those values to the topic.
- Share examples of strategies people have used throughout history to be **positive role models and effective advocates taking prosocial action in their community**. Ask learners to explore how those actions might apply to the topic.
- Share examples of **prosocial actions and behaviors** for learners to consider whether they think they are effective and practical for themselves and their community, and how they might impact people, animals, and/or the natural world. From this exercise, learners can develop their own prosocial actions and behaviors.
- Encourage learners to **practice prosocial behaviors** through role-play or reading scenarios. Ask learners what behaviors and actions the characters in the scenario could or should take.
- Create **service-learning opportunities** for learners to be effective advocates by volunteering their time, engaging in outreach, participating in positive local and/or global actions, or initiating positive actions locally and/or globally.
- Provide opportunities for learners to **engage in civic action** on local and global levels about issues that they care about.
- Arrange opportunities for learners to **listen to or interview people** who are involved in and/or affected by an issue. Have them develop questions that seek to build consensus about helpful ways to resolve, mitigate, or prevent the issue.
- Encourage learners to **develop and implement learner-driven projects** that aim to resolve, mitigate, or prevent a problem.

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

4 - PROMOTE PROSOCIAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

The learning experience provides learners with the opportunity to reflect on and shape their own ethical values in order to make decisions and enact change based on those values.



EVALUATE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

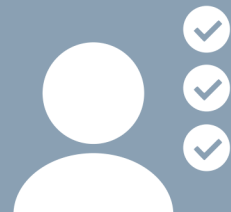
Use these questions as a guide in assessing how effectively your program provides learners with the opportunity to reflect on and shape their own ethical values in order to make decisions and enact change based on those values.

- What opportunities do we create for learners to **align their values to their actions**?
- How do we encourage learners to consider how their actions impact **people, animals, and/or the natural world**?
- How do we **empower learners** to think critically and creatively to act on what they have learned?
- Does our learning experience actively engage learners in **critical, creative, and systems thinking** with a focus on deep understanding of problems and their solutions?
- Do the solutions proposed **encourage prosocial actions** that support the need communicated by affected groups?
- In what ways do we equip learners with the **tools needed to communicate with anti-oppressive language** and to support others through mutual aid?
- What opportunities do we provide for learners to consider a range of **prosocial actions and/or behaviors** that align with their personal feelings, values, and beliefs?
- In what ways do we equip learners with the **tools needed to engage in prosocial actions and/or behaviors** that are practical, accessible, and/or feasible?

CORE COMPONENTS AND OBJECTIVES

5 - ASSESS THE LEARNER

The learning experience includes opportunities to evaluate the learners to determine whether the objectives of the program were achieved.



THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE...

- A. Incorporates an **assessment** to determine what the learners gained from the program and to evaluate whether or not the program objectives were met.
- B. Aligns assessments with **learning objectives** related to knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behavior.
- C. Provides an opportunity for **reflection** on the topic, issue, or action(s) as part of the learner assessment.



SUGGESTED PRACTICAL STRATEGIES:

- Examples of **Assessments**:
 - Art Reflection (e.g., drawing response based on what was learned)
 - Essays
 - “Exit Tickets” (short answer response)
 - Journaling (e.g., provide students with a writing prompt to reflect on the lesson)
 - KWL chart (what you think you **Know**, what you **Want** to know, what you **Learned**)
 - Poem (write a poem related to the topic)
 - Presentations (informal or formal)
 - Questionnaire
 - Project-based activities (e.g. create a video, diorama, collage, sculpture, poster)
 - Review game (e.g., trivia)
 - Research paper
 - Sharing Circles (ask each student to share one thing that they learned from the lesson)
 - Service project
 - Song (write a song about the topic)

5 - ASSESS THE LEARNER

The learning experience includes opportunities to evaluate the learners to determine whether the objectives of the program were achieved.



EVALUATE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

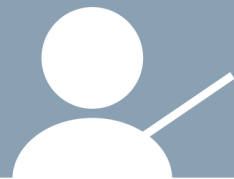
Use these questions as a guide in assessing how effectively your program includes opportunities to evaluate the learners to determine whether the objectives of the program were achieved.

- What strategy do we use to evaluate learning?
- Are we using a pre- and post assessment strategy or just a post assessment strategy?
- Is the assessment strategy, tool, or instrument clearly linked to our **learning objectives**?
- How does the assessment strategy, tool, or instrument provide an opportunity for the learner to **reflect on their own learning**?
- What system do we have in place to **analyze the assessment results**?
- How do we use the assessment results to **improve programming**?
- Is the learning assessment **age appropriate, culturally appropriate, and accessible for persons with disabilities**?
- Is the learning assessment flexible enough to **meet different learning styles** and to allow for **different ways of expressing one's learning**?

LESSON PLAN/UNIT EXAMPLE

HOW TO ADDRESS THE CORE COMPONENTS

We developed this lesson to provide an example of how to effectively incorporate the core components into your own humane education programs or content. We encourage you to review the lesson and the provided annotations, which explain how this lesson is aligned to the core components. This lesson also demonstrates how academic skills, such as reading comprehension, can be addressed through humane education content.



TITLE: THE ROLE ADOPTION PLAYS IN CREATING A FAMILY

Grade Level: 7th - 8th grade

Subject: English

Standards/Competencies:

- CCELA:CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.3: Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.3: Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
- SEL: Social Awareness (Perspective-taking, Empathy, Appreciating diversity, Respect for others)

1E. Aligning the lesson to grade-specific national standards helps to ensure that the content is developmentally appropriate for the target grade range.

(This is an example of a lesson that was developed in the United States, and it is aligned to relevant U.S. standards. We encourage you to align your lessons to the standards that are utilized in the learning communities where you are teaching to help make the lesson more relevant to traditional educational settings and to enhance the academic needs that the lesson addresses.)

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

- summarize a text.
- compare and contrast texts on a similar topic.
- cite evidence from a text to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and implicitly.
- develop their own understanding of the concept of family.
- identify who is in need of a family and explain why.
- express how they feel about the situations read in a text and consider others' perspectives that may be different than their own.
- describe ways in which society can create opportunities for mutual aid.

1B. The objectives address a) the cognitive domain by challenging learners to express the knowledge they gained from the content, b) the affective domain by inviting learners to express how they feel about the content, and c) prosocial behaviors by asking them to describe ways in which society can support others in the community.

Purpose:

For students to think about how both children and animals need families. They will read true stories to learn about different ways that people and animals have formed families to make sure the emotional and physical needs of people and animals are met.

Overview:

Learners reflect on and discuss what “family” means to them. Then they read, annotate, and analyze a story related to someone in need of a family. Learners work in small groups to compare and contrast their stories. Each group will share the similarities and differences they identified with the whole class. Finally, learners are asked to reflect on what they learned by writing a description of a family based on what they learned.

Materials:

- Writing paper and writing utensils
- 4 non-fiction readings about diverse adoption experiences (both child adoption and animal adoption)
 - Include articles that address the following topics: adoption of an older child, transracial and/or transcultural adoption, challenges individuals with a disability have experienced with the adoption process, companion animal adoption, orphaned farm animal “adopted” by another farm animal at a farm animal sanctuary, story of a birth parent and their reason for utilizing the adoption system.
- *Reading Follow-Up Questions* handout (provided following the lesson plan).

1F. Print the readings on post-consumer recycled paper as accessibility and funding allow, or print them on the back of previously used paper and discuss the environmental benefits with students. This provides an opportunity to raise students' awareness of environmental protection.

1G. Provide the sources of the readings you select for transparency. Discuss any bias leanings of your sources with students.

Resource Examples:

- *A Blessing in Disguise: How One Family Proves There's a Match for Everyone*, <https://www.americanadoptions.com/adopt/one-family-proves-theres-a-match-for-everyone>
- *Adopted Boy on a Mission to Save [Senior] Dogs Who Need a Home*, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/robbie-gay-adopted-boy-on-a-mission-to-save-old-dogs-who-need-a-home>
- *Jerome: A Calf in Need of a Family*, <https://www.animalsoffarmsanctuary.com/post/150136659641/jerome-finding-family-jerome-calf-came-to-us>
- *Transracial and Transcultural Adoption: Preservation, Policy, and a Personal Perspective*, <https://chlss.org/blog/transracial-and-transcultural-adoption/>
- *10 Birth Mother Stories Guaranteed to Change the Way You Look at Birthmothers*, <https://www.americaadopts.com/10-birthmother-stories-guaranteed-change-way-look-birthmothers/>

1A. Comprehensive humane pedagogy is demonstrated through the stories and the follow-up activities (provided at the end of the lesson plan).

2H. Select readings that demonstrate the need for both children and animals to have family, love, and care.

3D. Select readings that make explicit connections between compassion for people and compassion for animals. Follow-up activity #2 makes an explicit connection to the natural world.

3B. The readings, discussions, and follow-up questions invite learners to consider the perspectives of the individuals in the readings.

1C. The purpose of these stories and the follow-up questions is to provide students with information about those who are in need of a family. The aim is to foster compassion for people and animals.

Preparation:

- Prior to teaching the lesson, talk to any students (and their guardians) who have been or are in the foster care program, or who have been adopted, or who have adopted siblings to let them know that you are planning to teach this lesson. Provide an opportunity for them to share any thoughts or concerns, and give them advance notice.
- For in-person learning, print copies of the stories and follow-up questions. For virtual learning, provide the stories ahead of time via links or pdfs.
- Groups of four students will be created in which each student in the group has read a different text. In creating the groupings, make sure there is a diversity and balance amongst group members. Determine which students will read which texts by considering the reading levels of students.
- For in-person learning, arrange the desks in clusters of four for group work. For virtual learning, set up breakout groups in advance.

11D. The lesson fosters a safe and inclusive learning environment by providing diverse opportunities for learners to process information and to express themselves. Some students may feel more comfortable (cont.)

expressing themselves in one of the following ways: independent writing, small group discussion, or sharing and listening as a whole class. Some learners may need to write out their thoughts before they are comfortable sharing; others may be more comfortable talking in a small group; some learners may prefer to listen and hear multiple perspectives in a larger group because they want more time to think and ponder. It is important to provide a variety of ways for learners to express, process, and receive information.

1B. The structure of this lesson is learner-centered because there is little instruction provided by the educator to introduce the topic. Students are provided an opportunity to read the content, reflect on it through guided questions, discuss with peers, discuss with the class, and reflect through a written response. The approach focuses on students taking in information and developing their own understandings through reading, discussing, reflecting, and writing as opposed to having an educator lecture in order to tell the students how to think and feel about the topic and readings.

Procedure

Day 1:

I. Warm Up (10-12 min.)

1. Ask students to take about one minute to free write about the concept of family. Have them write everything that comes to mind when they hear the word "family."
2. Invite students to share what they wrote. As they do, create a web map on the board to help link ideas. [Note: As students share, encourage them to discuss what they think the most important aspects of family are (e.g., belonging, unconditional care and love, providing for one's needs, loyalty, special bond, being responsible for another)]
3. Have students brainstorm all of their ideas and see if they mention the word adoption themselves. At the end of the discussion, either come back to the concept of adoption if it was mentioned or add it to the web map if it was not mentioned. Let students know that this concept will be the focus of the lesson about family. Let them know that they will be exploring the inquiry question: "What makes a family?" Remind students to be thoughtful when discussing the topic of adoption and not to make any assumptions about what being adopted means. Explain that the topic of adoption may be something completely new for some students if they have never known anyone who is adopted and for others it may be very personal if they themselves have been adopted or have known someone who is adopted.

1B. The Warm-Up is an example of learner-centered education because the learners are invited to share their current understanding of a topic. Learners are given the opportunity to explore the topic independently and with their peers, building on their prior knowledge.

1H. Taking a moment to acknowledge that learners will bring different experiences to a topic, and encouraging respectful dialogue helps to create a more inclusive and welcoming atmosphere as described in #3 of the Warm-Up.

1I. #2 and #3 of the Warm-Up encourage learners to share openly and honestly as they are comfortable.

II. Readings (25 min.)

1. Let students know they are going to receive one of four readings related to family and adoption.
2. Pass out the readings and follow-up question handouts to each student. (Distribute the different readings you chose evenly among your students.)
3. Give the following directions to students:
 - a. Do a “close read” by thinking about the inquiry question: “What makes a family?” As you read, annotate the text looking for details related to family and adoption. (If necessary, provide students with additional details about annotating and grade-appropriate expectations.)
 - b. Answer the provided follow-up questions.

3B. Follow-Up question #5 provides students with an opportunity to empathize with the individuals in the readings.

5A. Student responses to the follow-up questions can serve as an assessment for some of the identified lesson objectives.

III. Small Group Work (8-10 min.)

1. Have students with the same reading work in groups of no more than 4 to briefly compare answers to questions.
2. Have students reflect on the web map based on their reading. Ask them to do the following:
 - a. Add new ideas to the web based on their reading.
 - b. Put a star by a couple of the key ideas about family that were emphasized in their reading.

2D. The small group work invites students to think critically by discussing the follow-up questions with their peers and encourages them to consider multiple viewpoints.

Day 2:

IV. Review (10 min.)

1. Ask students to reflect on the lesson’s inquiry question: “What makes a family?” Have them share what they think are the most important 3-5 characteristics of every family. Explain to students that they are going to work in small groups to compare and contrast their readings to their classmates readings. (For virtual learning, use a platform such as Jamboard for sharing responses.)
2. Give each student time to review their reading and their follow-up questions with a partner who had the same reading. Ask them to place a special focus on the first follow-up question where they are asked to write a 2-3 sentence summary of the reading because they will have to explain what their reading was about with students who do not read it. (For virtual learning, set up break-out rooms in advance.)

V. Small Group Work (15-20 min.)

1. Have students work in groups of 4. Each group member will have a different reading. (See *Preparation* section above for group considerations.)
2. Provide students the following instructions:
 - a. Designate each person as one of the following: notetaker (write down what the group discusses), timekeeper (keep track of time), facilitator (create an order for each person to share and keep the group on task), and presenter (share what the group discussed with the rest of the class).
 - b. In addition to your specific role, you are all responsible for sharing out in your group.
 - c. Take turns giving a short summary of your story.
 - d. Consider the inquiry question: "What makes a family?" Identify 2-3 similarities and 2-3 differences between your stories.

VI. Whole Class Discussion (15-20 min.)

1. Invite students to move their desks into a circle for a whole class discussion. (To stimulate the discussion for virtual learners, either hold a synchronous discussion session with the whole class, create an online document, or use an online platform such as PADLET where students can respond to the discussion questions.)
2. Have presenters take turns sharing the similarities they identified between their readings. Have each presenter provide one answer at a time, going around the circle until all similarities are given. Ask a student volunteer to record the responses on the board. (When a presenter says a response that was identified by another group, let them know that they can give a thumbs up to acknowledge their agreement.)
3. Then students can take turns sharing any differences between their readings that they identified, following the same format as above.
4. Ask learners the following questions based on the readings:
 - a. What did you learn about family from the readings? How does this compare and contrast to your original ideas?
 - b. How did you feel about the experiences of the people and animals in the readings? Why did you feel that way?
 - c. What are other examples of ways in which people and animals create family?
 - d. How can we improve current systems or create new systems to best serve the needs of people and animals to ensure that everyone has the support they need? What actions can we take?
 - e. Do you have any new thoughts or feelings based on what we learned today?

Note: We encourage you to consider additional points that you may want to bring up as they are relevant to you and your students, such as:

- *the importance for young people to have agency to express their thoughts and feelings about their own potential adoption, especially when they are older.*
- *the ways in which people may provide support to others even if they are not legally family, such as someone helping an elderly neighbor, someone taking care of community cats who live outdoors (and this can lead to conversations about how supporting community cats relates to protecting the natural world).*
- *a relative letting their family member temporarily live with them if their family members' parent(s) are in need of support.*

2D. Whole class discussion question a asks students to think critically by identifying what they learned from the readings and to compare and contrast that to their original thoughts. They also think critically by answering questions and having discussions with their peers.

3A. Whole class discussion question b provides students with an opportunity to empathize with the individuals in the readings.

2B. Whole class question d asks students to think about the topic in terms of societal systems.

4A. Whole class discussion question d challenges students to think about ways in which our society is or is not responsible for people and animals.

5B. Responses to whole class discussion questions d and e can act as an informal assessment regarding the influence this lesson may have on the learners' knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviors moving forward.

3F. Whole class discussion question e provides students with the opportunity to express their emotional interpretation on the topic and to express their values by sharing how the readings and the processing of those readings will personally influence them moving forward.

2D. The whole class discussion encourages students to think critically by comparing and contrasting their own thoughts to those of their peers.

2D. & 2F. The whole class discussion is intended to provide students with an opportunity to hear diverse perspectives related to the readings in a respectful and inclusive manner.

5A. Student responses during the whole class discussion serve as an assessment of the learners' knowledge, attitudes, and potential behaviors related to the topic.

VII. Wrap Up (10 min.)

1. For a homework assignment, ask learners to respond to the following writing prompt:

- a. The topic of adoption was covered in the readings. Based on one or more of the readings, write a paragraph describing the role adoption plays in creating families. Discuss how formal or informal adoption helps to meet the physical and emotional needs of children and animals. Use descriptive words as well as evidence from the text to support your answer.

5A. Educators can use the responses to the "Wrap Up" writing prompt as a formal assessment of some of the identified lesson objectives.

5C. The "Wrap Up" writing prompt encourages learners to reflect on the topic to demonstrate their learning.

READING FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Write a 2-3 sentence summary of your reading.
2. How did adoption play a role in creating a family in your reading?
3. Who benefited from adoption in your reading? In what way(s)?
4. What challenges did those in the reading experience?
5. How did you feel about what the individuals in the reading experienced?
6. Based on your reading, what do you think makes a family?



Follow-Up Activities:

1. Historical Context:

- Ask learners to conduct a research report on the history of either child adoption or companion animal adoption and farm animal rescue in the United States. Invite them to choose one of the following questions or to develop their own research question. (Note: If they develop their own question, let them know you will need to review it in advance.)
 - Child Adoption
 - How did child adoptions in the United States change from the early 1800s to the mid-1800s?
 - Who is eligible to adopt a child today, and how has that evolved over time?
 - How have the reasons for child adoption evolved over time, and what led to those changes?
 - Animal Adoption and Farm Animal Rescue
 - What is the history of animal shelters and sanctuaries in the United States?
 - How have the reasons for animal rescue changed over time?
 - What is the difference between animal rescue, animal adoption, and animal sponsorship?
- Provide learners with suggested resources to assist them. Here are a few potential sources to share:
 - *What You Need to Know About the History of Adoption*, <https://www.americanadoptions.com/adoption/history-of-adoption>
 - *Adoption History in Brief*, <https://pages.uoregon.edu/adoption/topics/adoptionhistbrief.htm>
 - *In Good Faith, U.S. Legal Battle of Gay Adoption Intensifies*, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-lgbt-adoption/in-good-faith-u-s-legal-battle-over-gay-adoption-intensifies-idUSKBN21D01I>
 - *A Brief History of Dog Rescue: How People Started Saving Man's Best Friend*, <http://saveourshelter.com/a-brief-history-of-dog-rescue-how-people-started-saving-mans-best-friend/>
 - *The First US Shelter Was Founded by Women 150 Years Ago*, <https://www.wideopenpets.com/first-us-animal-shelter-founded-150-years-ago/>
 - *A Brief History of Animal Adoption in the United States: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, <https://www.dvm360.com/view/animal-sheltering-united-states-yesterday-today-and-tomorrow>
 - *Rescue and Refuge*, <https://www.farmsanctuary.org/rescue/>

2B. The "Historical Context" follow-up activity challenges learners to think critically about the adoption system within the United States and to consider any needed changes to increase inclusion and equitability.

2. Environmental Science:

- The term “adopt” has been used as a way to protect endangered species and the natural world. Research organizations that promote symbolic wildlife and/or natural world (i.e., rainforest) adoptions. Describe what it means to symbolically adopt a wild animal or a part of the natural world and whether or not it is an effective strategy for protecting the environment. Discuss how you think care for the natural world does or does not relate to the concept of “family.”
- Provide learners with suggested resources to assist them. Here is one potential source to share:
 - Adopt-A-Rainforest: <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/tags/adopt-arainforest>

2H. The "Environmental Science" follow-up activity makes an authentic connection to the lesson by showing a different way the term "adopt" can be applied to care and protection of the natural world.

3C. The "Environmental Science" extension activity fosters reverence for the natural world.

3. Research:

- Conduct additional research on child adoption organizations, animal adoption centers, farm animal sanctuaries, or adopt-a-rainforest organizations.
- Through your research create a presentation that addresses the following elements to share with the class:
 - Explain an issue the agency is working to address.
 - Identify some of the root cause(s) that led to the issue.
 - Describe the consequence(s) of the issue.
 - Discuss how the organization is working to provide support in the short-term.
 - Discuss long-term solutions to the issue.
 - Provide specific ways that people can get involved to take action, and explain how these actions are beneficial to people, animals, and/or the natural world.

4B., 4C., and 4G. The "Research" follow-up activity provides students with an opportunity to research organizations in order to learn about ways they are helping people, animals, and/or the natural world, and to consider ways that they can take action to support these organizations directly or indirectly.

4. Service-Learning:

- Create opportunities for students to engage in service opportunities with an organization that is involved with adoptions of people, animals, or the natural world.

4G. The "Service-Learning" follow-up activity provides an opportunity for students to engage in prosocial behaviors.

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