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# A Proposal for a Humane Pedagogy

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## Abstract

*A review of prevalent education movements critical pedagogy and ecopedagogy, demonstrates a lack of a pedagogy that is equally inclusive of human, ecological, and animal literacy within teaching and learning. As such, this inclusive approach has been omitted from educator professional learning, leading to an oft fractured model of practice. Therefore, a signature pedagogy must be adopted to provide the humane education field a compass for sustainability and development. This paper introduces the elements of a humane pedagogy, including recognition of positive and negative power systems, inclusive welfare, and the non-human animal perspective. In addition, suggestions for professional practice and curriculum development are provided. This paper concludes with author recommendations for the future of humane education, specifically through research focused on building and testing theoretical and practical frameworks to guide advancement of humane pedagogy.*

*Keywords:* pedagogy, prosocial education, critical pedagogy, humane pedagogy, ecopedagogy, humane education

## A Proposal for a Humane Pedagogy

There is frequent discussion amongst both scholars and practitioners about the importance of pedagogy on the learner (Bhowmik, Banerjee, & Banerjee, 2013; Paniagua & Istance, 2018). But how is pedagogical approach determined and defined? A teacher's pedagogical approach is dependent upon several factors related to environment and training, as well as personal beliefs system about the purpose of education (Beetham & Sharpe, 2019; Blake, Smeyers, Smith, & Standish, 2003; McCaughtry, 2004). This personal philosophy of education embraces the ways in which knowledge is imparted, the theories that "justify the use of…techniques" in teaching, and the values connected to the purpose of sharing knowledge (O'Connor, 2017, p. 5). These three components combine in a signature pedagogy for each individual educator and an overall discipline in general (Shulman, 2005).

Humane education is an approach to teaching and learning through a lens of human, animal, and environmental justice. As humane education developed, a signature pedagogy which fits the full spectrum of content or all the tenets of humane education (to include the interconnectivity of people, non-human animals, and the environment) remained underdeveloped. A signature pedagogy for the field means professionals are prepared not in "understanding alone" but supporting "accomplished and responsible practice" (Shulman, 2005, p. 53). As defined by Shulman (2005) the three dimensions of a signature pedagogy are: surface structure, deep structure, and an implicit structure. Surface structures are the "concrete, operational acts of teaching and learning" including methods of questioning and demonstration. Deep structures are a "set of assumptions about how best to impart a certain body of knowledge and know-how". The implicit structure includes a "moral dimension that comprises a set of beliefs about professional attitudes, values, and dispositions" (Shulman, 2005, p. 54-55).

Currently, implicit structure for the field of humane education at some level exists. For example, many humane education organizations agree on a set of values or ethics surrounding creating better welfare and a more compassionate world for people, animals, and the planet. For instance, the group Humaneness 101 (n.d.para.2) states its mission is to "foster a greater sense of empathy and compassion", likewise, RedRover Readers program provides educators with materials that help them teach "empathy skills" (n.d., para. 1), The Good Kid Project produces stories to teach "tolerance, humility, and compassion (n.d., para. 3), and Mini Acts for the Greater Good has as a mission to inspire "compassion, respect, and responsibility for all people, animals, and the planet through humane education" (n.d., para.1). Despite such overlap, the foundational elements of humane education are continuously evolving.

Yet agreement exists that a true humane education is one that follows best-practices to reach the "whole child". Specifically, exemplar humane education programs work to include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor or kinesthetic learning. In other words, a humane education must encourage its learners to grow in their knowledge, their values, and in their actions.

A review of humane education curriculum and program goals indicates that deep structures or the assumptions about how to teach inclusive humane education are still in the formative stages (HEART, 2018., RedRover Readers, n.d., Humaness 101, n.d., Project WILD, n.d., ACTAsia, n.d., Charleston Animal Society, n.d., SPANA, n.d., and Teaching Tolerance, n.d.). A little over half of programs specifically describe the connection to the cognitive domain, or the desire to increase critical thinking skills including using a systems-thinking approach (HEART, RedRover Readers, Humaness 101, Project WILD, SPANA,). Almost all of them support the development of the affective domain through teaching learners how to reflect upon

their feelings and the feelings of others (HEART, RedRover Readers, Humaness 101, ACTAsia, Charleston Animal Society, SPANA, and Teaching Tolerance). Action is listed as core for only the Teaching Tolerance materials. Each of these curriculums or programs have commonality, yet each is presented through different methods, over various lengths of time, and they also differ in focus, ranging from a core content of animal welfare, human rights, environmental protection, or a combination of these three core social justice issues. The concrete operational acts of the pedagogy, and the specific strategies that are taught to humane educators are not present across providers. As the implicit and deep structures solidifies, the surface structure habits of the pedagogy need to develop and be taught to and utilized by educators throughout the inclusive field.

A lack of core pedagogy results in humane education not fully developed as a comprehensive or inclusive practice. Instead it has created fractured components. In short, instead of the interconnectivity of the animal, human, and environmental components receiving equal promotion, certain components have emerged as more successful than others in reaching mainstream education. In example, environmental literacy has become common and many US states have environmental education standards or incorporate environmental and sustainability into science standards (Kentucky Department of Education, 2015; Wheeler & Vavrus, 2014; Church, Bernier, Skelton, 2008). A fully inclusive practice containing all three areas (human, non-human animal, and environmental) functions currently within the realm of what Shulman gives the moniker “compromised pedagogy”, one that is not truly balanced and which does not give “adequate attention to all the dimensions of practice-the intellectual, the technical, and the moral” (Shulman, 2005, p. 58). A signature pedagogy for the field, humane pedagogy, will assist educators in reaching the whole learner and will engage the head (cognitive), heart (affective),

and hands (psychomotor) of both learners and educators. Moreover, it provides an opportunity for humane education to reach its full potential as a means of addressing social issues through education.

**The Next Chapter in the Entomology of Humane**

To understand the direction of a comprehensive use of the word humane, the history of the term provides direction. The word humane has a rich history and like similar terms human, humanist, and humanitarian, it has roots in the Latin word homo [man] (Green, 2015, p. 151). Prior to the 1500s "human" and "humane" were often used interchangeably to refer to "qualities befitting human beings" (Humane, n.d). In the early to mid-1500s the first use of the word humane to mean "marked by compassion, sympathy, or consideration for humans or animals; characterized by or tending to broad humanistic culture" occurred (Merriam-Webster, n.d.; Unti, 2018, p. 7). Likewise, French philosopher Michel de Montaigne used the term in regard to the need for kind and respectful care for animals and nature in 1580 in his work *Essais* (Montaigne, 1580). Until about the 18th century both words were considered interchangeable, with humane denoting the better qualities of humans. Similarly, thought leaders of the time conceptualized that the desire to care for others was the essence of human beings and as noted in Fiering's paper, *Irresistible Compassion: An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sympathy and Humanitarianism* (as cited in Unti, 2018, p. 6), one who wished not to act with compassion was "thought to be less than human … to be human in the true sense of the word was to be humane." By the early 1800s the words human and humane had distinct meanings with the term humane maintaining the connection to kindness and those prosocial behaviors that society wished to cultivate. Humane became an adjective which described these behaviors and actions.

Alternatively, *human* correlated to the innate quality of being a human person (Unti, 2018, Humane, n.d.). As the descriptive word humane became part of the lexicon, it integrated into the societal institutions and interest groups who were focused on the "improvement of civic life" (Unti, 2018, p. 8). These institutions were founded to address the human impacts resulting from early urbanization and industrialization and had as their goal to help "human society…become ever more humane" (Unti, 2018, p. 8). For example, the late eighteenth-century formation of life-saving societies dedicated to rescuing the victims of drowning and shipwreck was designated the Royal Humane Society. The Royal Humane Society had as its main mission the preservation and restoration of life related to two objects: 1. to assist those in danger of drowning and accidental death and object 2. to assist those who may be a state of "suspended animation" (Royal Humane Society, 1826, p. 9). The life-saving goal and the use of the term humane influenced early America with similar humane societies. Equally, education was a core component of each of these societies, teaching revival and resuscitation techniques and directions for emergency care within their communities.

An additional example of the connection between humane to human outreach was the formation of the "Humane Society" as a collaboration between the Society for the Relief of Distressed Debtors and the Medical Society of New York. Its aim was to combat the debtors' prisons, where not only were conditions squalid, but the prisons were full and those imprisoned could not earn money to repay the debt (Heale, 1968). The society set up a soup kitchen that provided meals to the prison as well as the poor in the city and they provided medical care to those who could not afford treatment. In March 1803 the organization officially changed their name to The Humane Society of New York (HSNY).

The focus of the HSNY changed when debt laws were reformed in 1806. At this time, the HSNY mirrored the societies working to save individuals from drowning. The organization also supported penitentiary reform and humane campaigns against court corruption and child labor, specifically the use of young boys as chimney sweeps (Mohl, 1970).

As animal welfare became a concern and formal organizations were created to address this issue the term humane began to take on the use that current society still uses. Shortly thereafter in 1877 the American Humane Association was founded by humane society representatives from around the United States. Initially the association worked on improving the treatment of working and farm animals. In 1878 child safety became part of the mission and programs of the organization (American Humane, n.d.). During this same time period the understanding of the term humane was being questioned by leaders in the field, including Henry Burgh, founder of the American Society against the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). He advised a colleague against using the term humane in an organizational title because it did not fully or explicitly express the work being done with animals.

Humane education, like the word humane, is at its historical core founded on the principle that people, animals, and the planet are interconnected. The providence of human-kind is linked to humane work and the development of the prosocial traits that create a world in which all living beings are afforded the ability to live as they were meant to, in a fair and comfortable way. In order for this to occur, society must continue to provide humane education and most importantly, to expand the framework of how this education is delivered so the lessons are fair and equitable, without bias toward human or animal-kind, and designed to support each learner. This humanistic method supports the civility of cross-existence and individual self-actualization. In adopting a true humane pedagogy, learners activate the full domains of learning, allowing

scholarship to be more than knowledge retention or regurgitation and instead asks each individual to use the cognitive content obtained to reflect upon her or his personal values and attitudes and how the information may impact future choices and behavior.

While a humanistic philosophy may sound anthropocentric at first glance, these principles are in fact a perfect fit for a humane pedagogy. This reflective and all-encompassing educational process is an important outcome that can impact the way people act and live, and embraces the ways intellect intertwines with emotion. This connection, or conation, guides intent and personal motivation related to why individuals make the choices they do (Bagozzi, 1992). The goal of humane pedagogy is growth in knowledge, reflective skill, and perspective building which allows each person to live in a world where the human, non-human animal, and natural world are a system of equally important components. Humane pedagogy allows learners to review information gathered from the culture and customs and to determine if modification of this content gathered during early socialization is needed – in essence, how they wish to be a human being (Aloni, 2007).

**Social Issues Impact Pedagogical Practice: Current Trends**

Where economic and individual prosperity have been at the root of the western education system for several decades now, the system of learning has not escaped the influence of societal change rooted in social and environmental causes (Bajaj, 2014; Brown, Notterman, Ontell, Rappaport, & Sherwood, 2015; Nelson, Palonsky, & McCarthy, 2013; Wexler, 2017). Supporting prosocial, or positive attitudes and socially accepted or ethical behaviors, in youth has long been a part of the educational system (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Under oft-studied influencers of ethics education (i.e., Kant, Rowls, Kohlberg, Gilligan) a general prosocial or

moral socialization in the school system and community is both implicit and explicit whether it is teaching morality in relation to justice or lawfulness (Kant, 2017; Kohlberg 1964), reasoning related to a social contract (Rawls, 1974), or a concern for care and well-being (Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988). Whether the ethics develop by voluntary decision or as part of a community connection, the goal is to increase the prosocial capabilities in citizens (Noddings & Slote, 2003).

Such understanding of the purpose of education is reflected in the way teachers are trained. Teacher preparation now commonly includes foundational knowledge of multicultural approaches (Banks, 2015) and environmental studies (Alvarez-Garcia, Sureda-Negre, & Comas-Forgas, 2015). These now mainstream ideas in teaching and learning not so long ago began as social movements and have continued to be studied and refined within the lens of pedagogical practice. However, despite the advances of some social justice and environmental protections made within educational institutions; the inclusion of the animal perspective has been largely peripheral. Where historically a "humane education" focused on developing a positive perspective of the non-human animal world (Whitlock & Westerlund, 1975), it included environmental and social justice elements alongside animal protections (Unti & DeRosa, 2003). Currently, humane education is defined as learning which is inclusive of compassion and empathy toward people, animals, and the planet and the interconnection among the three (Academy of Prosocial Learning, 2016; Association of Professional Humane Educators, n.d.; Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers, 2019). Yet, such programs that truly do all three are small in number and generally conducted as an aside from daily learning. Furthermore, this summation is not an agreed upon definition among organizations and practitioners and fails to offer any guidance in how such learning should occur. This lack of clarity has led to ambivalence both with practitioners of humane education in the non-profit sector and

mainstream classroom teachers as to what humane teaching is or does. Therefore, a practice that moves beyond program elements to an intentional pedagogical approach is suggested.

This paper proposes both a theoretical and practical description of a humane pedagogy as the next phase of a critical pedagogical evolution. It will demonstrate how a humane pedagogy builds upon the theoretical roots of Freire's critical pedagogy and Gadotti's ecopedagogy to raise the voice of the non-human animals into the examination of local and global systems to meet learning goals. Next, the paper brings the pedagogy into practice with a detailed outline of its formation and application.

**An Expansion of Critical Praxis**

Currently a concerted effort by those within the humane education field exists to strengthen its relationships with other successful social change education movements. Professional organizations such as the Humane Education Coalition, have attempted to build consensus by actively recruiting and marketing to members within the domains of social justice and environmental protection, as well as animal focused organizations. The term "humane education" has been defined more recently in the literature as the teaching of one's roles and responsibilities towards animals, the earth, and each other (Arbour, Signal & Taylor, 2009; Association of Professional Humane Educators, n.d., Academy of Prosocial Learning, 2016). The connection amongst animal welfare and animal perspective to that of other social justice and environmental reforms in education creates a natural strengthening of the social change education movements to achieve reform (Horsthemke, 2009; Kahn, 2008). These reform education movements can be traced to Freire's critical pedagogy (1970), which at its core demands a critical investigation of systematic oppression from the student population. Freire's

praxis model redefined the role of student and teacher and forced the questioning of authoritarian systems. In essence, the praxis model is both reflection and action, both interpretation and change. As he puts it, "Critical consciousness is brought about not through intellectual effort alone but through praxis through the authentic union of action and reflection" (Freire, 1970). Freire's seminal work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" was subsequently expanded when the realization of the role the natural environment had in connection to the degradation of both people and earth (Gadotti & Torres, 2009). With this inclusion of environment in the discussion of equity came the introduction to ecopedagogy. Ecopedagogy included the examination of non-human elements and more specifically conservation and environmental oppression in its relation to human suffering (Kahn & Kahn, 2010). Two decades later, Selby (1995), connects these ideas to the sufferings of non-human animals in the design of humane education curricula. In doing so, he further acknowledges the numerous forms of education that explore issues of oppression and exploitation including, environmental education, social justice education, peace studies education, feminist education, development education, and human rights education. Selby (1995) sees humane education as the entwining of such programs into one united pedagogy aimed to develop critical thinking skills, respect, and compassion for all people, all animals, and the environment [as cited in McGee, 2005]. Yet, this vision was not reflected in the growing literature of pedagogical practice.

While the previous pedagogical approaches have discussed the liberation of people and the living environment through education and critical examination of systemic oppression these pedagogies have insufficiently addressed or acknowledged the non-human animal. For instance, Freire's model does not include the animal or the animal perspective as integral to the process of empowerment. His work not only excluded the non-human animal from the networked

relationship of power and oppression, but explicitly denies non-human animals a place in the conversation. Bell and Russell (2000) attempt to address "some of the anthropocentric blind spots within critical pedagogy*"* (p. 189) by addressing Freire's suggestion that humans are far different and separate from animals as humans are the only species capable of enacting change (Freire, 1970). The authors also argue that this paradigm limits the discussion and potential for addressing inequities in the world, as it automatically places a hierarchy between species. This position perpetuates an oppressive anthropocentric system, with implications for the environment and social justice. Corman (2012) agrees in her critique of Freire's model calling on educators to embrace critical theory, by "sharpening our own critique of speciesism and anthropocentrism, we work against a dominant Western cultural logic that reifies animals, and casts them in the perpetual role of humanity's degraded Other" (p 41).

Even more recent evolutions of critical pedagogies such as ecojustice (Bowers, 2002) which do more to inclusively discuss the non-human animal as deserving of equal consideration fail to fully examine the relationship between the learner (humans) and others, including non-human animals within the system. For example, Bowers (2002) calls for the differentiation, particularly in teacher preparation, in an ecopedagogy to that of a critical pedagogical lens, by suggesting a move away from anthropocentricity to an ecological viewpoint linked strongly to cultural traditions. Specifically, Bowers (2002) discusses how root metaphors which evolved alongside the industrial revolution sparked a critical pedagogy which largely ignored its connection to the environmental system. The assumption is that an eco-justice pedagogy allows for the reflection of a truer understanding of human's interconnectedness with the natural environment. However, in the consideration of cultural traditions which are respectful of the environment, there is little consideration to those which may harm non-human animals. Further,

there is no discussion of the types of connections which are possible between the non-human animal system and that of the human. The inclusion of the non-human animal, wild or domesticated, does not feature as an important consideration in the presentation of this pedagogical lens. Similarly, Martusewicz and Johnson (2016) in laying the case for ecojustice education, discuss the importance of a two-pronged approach focused on recognizing the cultural embeddedness of relationships to one another (human to human) and human to nature. Perhaps, the authors assumed the inclusion of non-human animals in "nature", but this denies non-human animals their unique attributes and the types of relationships that they can form with each other, with non-humans, and with their natural environment. Furthermore, this proposal is built within an ethic of care theoretical frame. The problem again is that an ethic of care implies an imbalance of power, not dissimilar to the idea of dominion. Although we agree that the human system has a responsibility towards other systems (as well as within its own), it is the way this interconnectedness is considered that matters. While certainly humans exert power over their natural environment and non-human animals, to position them in a perpetual state of vulnerability denies them their inherent value as equally important in the ecosystem. It is through a lens of equity and individuality that a humane perspective emerges and what we propose as a *humane pedagogy*. In this way, a humane education can surpass a singularly focused anti-oppression education in any one domain or type of life and instead recognizes it across species. Further, it moves beyond the recognition of negative and oppressive relationships and advocates for one which emphasizes the consideration of "the other" not within a structure of dominion, but with equal weight. At the same time, humane pedagogy also stresses ecocentric (nature-centered) versus anthropocentric (human-centered) perspectives or the understanding of autonomy and dignity for every being and focuses on our general duty of respect for such. An ecocentric

perspective “places intrinsic value on all living organism and their natural environment, regardless of their perceived usefulness or importance to human beings” (Ecocentrism, n.d.). Within a humane approach to education (a humane pedagogy), species is an intersecting identity in the same way that other forms of stratification such as race, class, age, and gender are. The privileges or disadvantages inherent of each intersecting component become equally valid. Following, the proposed definition of a humane pedagogy moves the term “humane” beyond its colloquial understanding of animal focus and also moves humane education beyond a moral imperative and ushers in a new way to examine and connect with living systems.

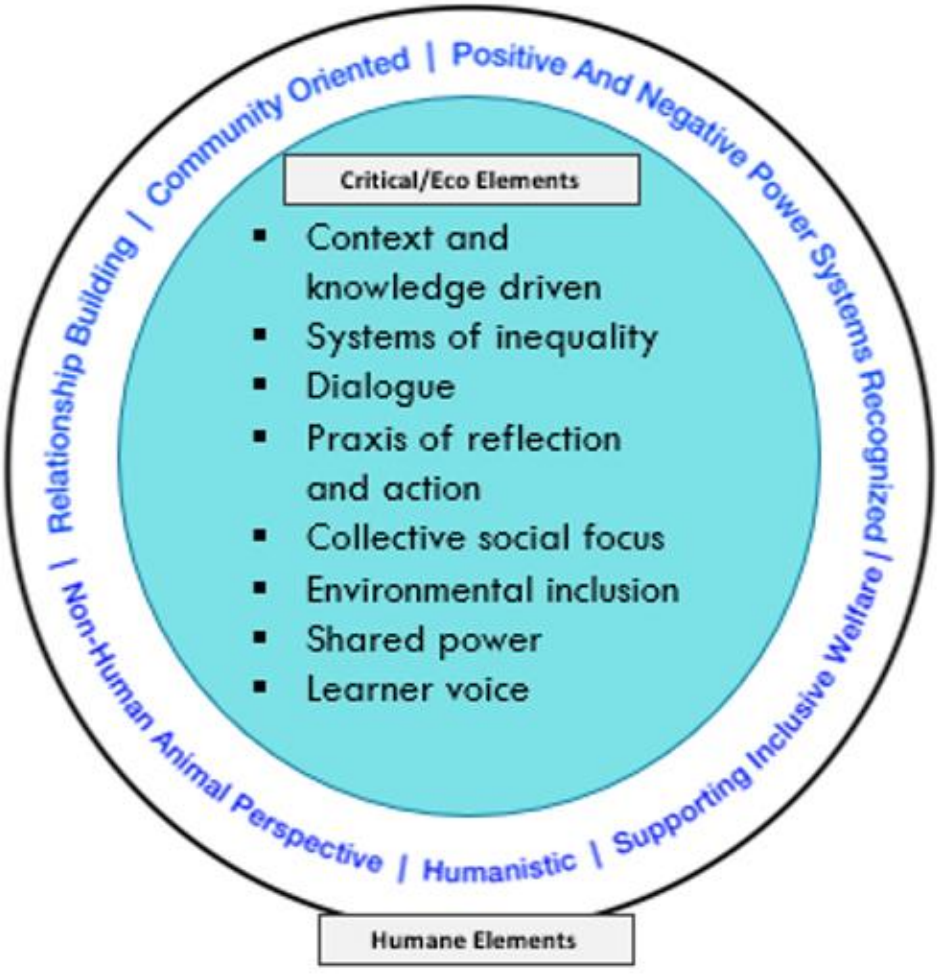
**A Humane Pedagogy Defined**

A humane pedagogy builds upon the foundation of both critical and eco-pedagogical approaches and expands it in two ways. First, the inclusion of non-human animals as an equal and separate system. Second, the humane elements which imply a prosocial and civically minded lens. To accomplish this, a humane pedagogy, at its roots, is constructivist in nature and believes that learners build their knowledge through experience. Furthermore, a humane pedagogy assumes a student participatory approach requiring an equitable and shared power dynamic between student and teacher. It further expects students to question power dynamics both in and outside of the classroom and to challenge the systemic status quo. At the same time, the goal of teaching and learning is to create change that moves beyond the individual to areas that are systemically and socially focused. In this way, the approach utilizes understanding of interdependence and experiences to help students examine the world around them, make decisions about their interpretations of their world, process personal values, and eventually take action to impact it. Here, the humane pedagogy looks to not only question areas of inequity or

relationships that result in deficit, but to include positive and prosocial outcomes of that inclusive focus.

These *humane* elements delineating a humane pedagogy from other areas of critical praxis derive from an overarching goal of creating benevolent outcomes for people, animals, and the environment. Figure 1, created by the authors, illustrates the relationship between humane elements to critical praxis resulting in the proposed humane pedagogy.

*Figure 1. Humane Pedagogy*



At the core of humane pedagogy, the foundational elements of critical praxis exist. It is with ecocentric humane elements (as noted in Figure 1) that humane pedagogy develops. Through a humane practice, learners are able to experience the reality of their identity, their relationship with others, and the identity they wish to build.

**A Humane Pedagogy in Action: The Five Dimensions of a Humane Education**

Translating this pedagogical model into a practical application is an essential aim of this paper. Through this translation we exemplify the pedagogy by identifying its applications across the three domains of the learner's development (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor). The following five dimensions of humane education were derived from the literature related to social justice and environmental education elements as well as build upon the learning categories taught to formal teachers (i.e., knowledge, skills, and attitudes or KSA's). Specifically, using Picower's (2012) Elements of Social Justice Curriculum supported also by recommendations by Hackman (2005) and other studies of programs focused on social justice reviewed in this paper the recurrent types of learning recommended for creating a socially just aptitude were included. Similarly, the Environmental Protection Agency (epa.gov, 2018) also outline a typology of learning for students in the domain of sustainability and pro-environmental understanding and behavior. Although there were differences in the ways each author labeled the underlying typology, consistency of the intent of the language existed. For the purposes of creating the animal components in relation to those in the human justice and environmental sections, a new, but consistent set of terms emerged as dimensions.

As such, the dimensions of a humane education serve to promote the opportunity for socially driven curricula inclusive of human-focused social justice, environmental, **and** animal protections through learning experiences. At the same time, humane pedagogy does not dictate a specific program of study, nor topic directives, but creates a platform where such topics are possible. It similarly, does not adhere to a singular learning strategy, but does require a constructivist approach to teaching and reflective practice as an important component. This constructivist approach supports the use of metacognition as well as systems-based analysis, helping learners explore the individual components as well as their relationship as a whole. These core principles guide learners through the five dimensions of humane pedagogy and engage "higher level thinking (including… problem solving…), affect (including motivation, self-concept, self-regulation…)" (Hartman, 2001, p. 34), as well as prosocial action. Figure 2 illustrates the stages of a humane pedagogical approach that creates opportunities for learning across each. While the stages are not linear per se, it does suggest a building of complexity from one dimension to the next. Reflection is built into each dimension and supports the affective growth for each individual and the group as a whole.

A small mixed-methods study evaluated the suggested dimensions in an attempt to build a universal framework for humane education (Comaskey, 2019). Survey results of over nearly 100 self-identified humane educators prioritized concepts according to necessity of inclusion for social, environmental and animal justice learning. The results were reviewed to determine if these priorities fit into the suggested dimensions. Following focus groups with participants both in and outside of the United States were conducted to further build broad agreement across these areas to determine the major constructs underpinning humane education. The appropriateness of the dimensions was discussed with all groups to clarify responses. The qualitative analysis

identified themes that served to frame the findings from the survey, resulting in a suggested framework (Comaskey, 2019)

Dimension One: Awareness

To begin, we suggest students discover topics through a state of awareness. This process consists of students examining their communities, local and global environments and identifying areas that concern them. The educator's role here is to provide guidance in allowing this exploration and giving students appropriate time to identify areas of interest, to discuss, and deconstruct. It is in this dimension that educators decipher what students already know and where gaps in knowledge may exist. Additionally, educators can begin to think about ways to help students see connections amongst the three foci (social justice literacy, animal justice literacy, and environmental justice literacy) and determining appropriate learning goals and activities to reach them.

Dimension Two: Knowledge

In this dimension, learning takes place as participants actively seek out information around the topic of interest. Students are guided in finding sources of information that are reliable and trustworthy, but at the same time reflective of multiple perspectives where applicable. Educators can provide materials for reading and other sources of media, as well as living examples such as interviews with members of the community and each other. Additionally, knowledge can be gathered through experiences. When students have the opportunity to engage in dynamic opportunities to learn, particularly through a lived experience the learning can be more impactful. The idea is to share knowledge and create new understandings through information shared.

Dimension Three: Attitudes

As students engage with new information, the also begin to determine how that information fits with what they already knew or *thought* they knew. When students have the opportunity to examine their knowledge and beliefs across the human, non-human animal, and environmental systems, they incorporate new information into their working set of values. Here, educators engage students in ways which allow them to articulate their responses to the learning experiences and identifying how it fits in or impacts their worldview.

Dimension Four: Skills

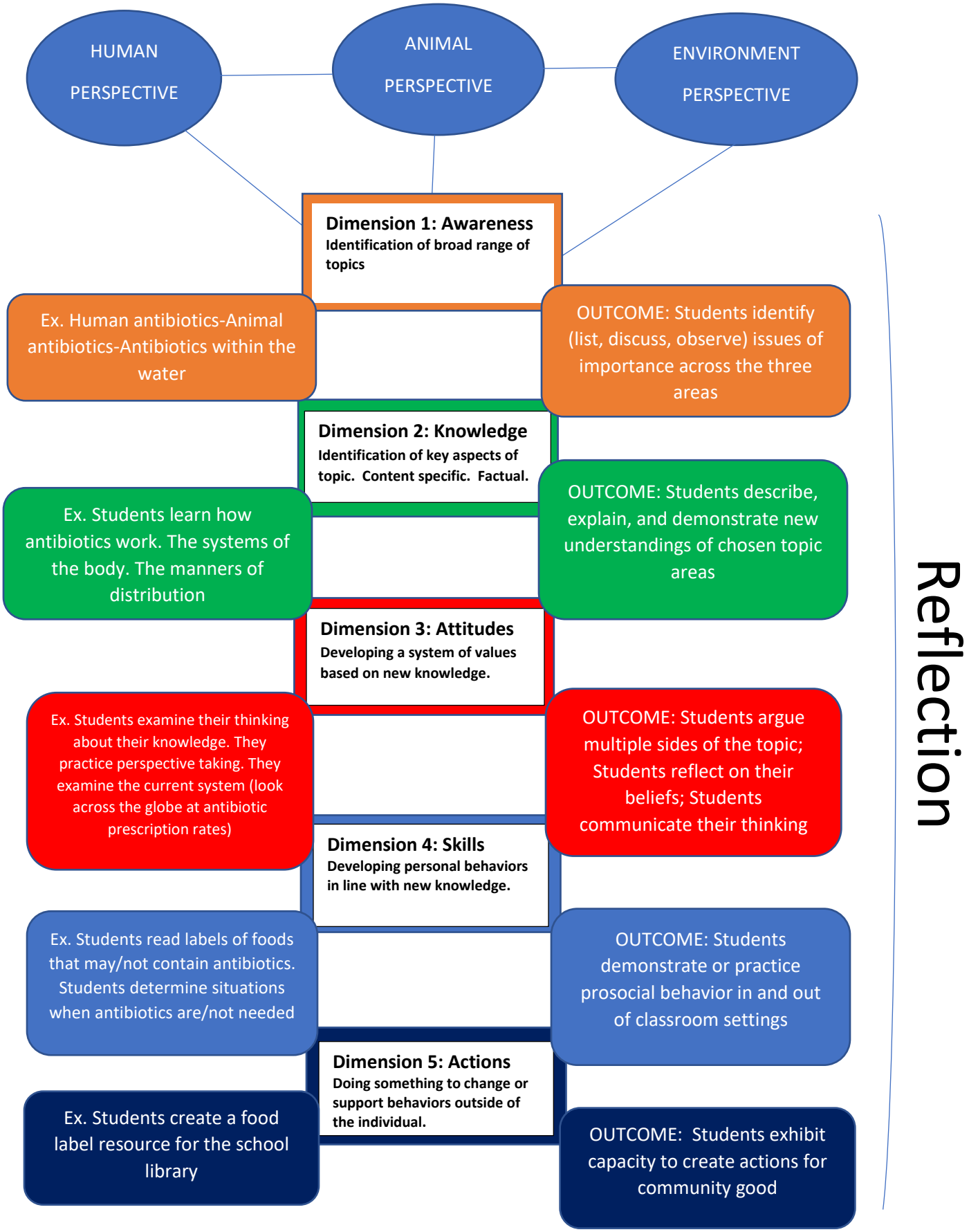
As students begin to organize new information aligning with their experiences and values, they will naturally need opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned. Accordingly, students can determine what things they might need or want to "do" with their new knowledge. For example, if students were learning about antibiotics and the role they play in our living systems, an appropriate skill may be students learning to read food labels (Figure 2). Again, the dimension allows for variation in the types of skills that students acquire. The skill set should emerge from the students' own determination of how to apply their new understandings and feelings about the topic they are exploring.

Dimension 5: Actions

Ultimately, students are provided opportunity to take-action with the support of the educator. This dimension differs from skills in that the action here moves students beyond their own individual learning and towards that of the community beyond. In this dimension, the educator provides the encouragement of social, intellectual, and emotional virtues, not just the traditional moral virtues with the intent of growing the civic character. The action dimension, in combination with reflective practice, can also produce new awareness as the learners develop a

stronger relationship with the system in which they are working. Following, this can lead to the dimension process beginning again creating a continuum of learning.

*Figure 2. The Five Dimensions of Humane Pedagogical Practice*



**Recommendations for Future Developments**

The dimensions of humane pedagogy introduced in this paper provide a guide to future research and curriculum development. Future research is needed to examine the five dimensions of humane pedagogy and its usefulness for formal and informal education audiences. Both types of educators would provide important feedback about the inclusive focus and use of the dimension framework. Additionally, the conceptual framework of the five dimensions can act as a guide for humane education and inclusive prosocial education curriculum development.

In addition, the preliminary research aimed at identifying universal concepts that underpin the intent of humane education should expand to include larger and more diverse populations. Building on the initial results from Comaskey (2019), research should aim to build deeper understandings of the conceptual framework for humane education which will serve to support advancements toward a signature pedagogy.

Specifically, moving the pedagogical practices of humane education forward will require the adoption of a more inclusive approach; one that incorporates not only the whole child, but the entirety of our system. The weaving of concepts that cross species and impact all living beings must be considered. In this way, humane education embodies its true and original foundation and reflects the inter-connectedness of life on earth. Here, humane educators also must embrace the need to utilize the science of teaching and learning to create impact that is accessible and sustainable.

**Humane Pedagogy Looking Forward**

This paper describes the evolution of critical pedagogical practice to encompass the non-human animal perspective through a humane lens. This inclusion, in addition, to the elements of practice proposed create a signature pedagogical practice for humane education: a humane pedagogy. The necessity of establishing a guide for pedagogical practice that encompasses these elements comes from the belief in addressing the socially driven needs of students in the learning environment. Growing social movements globally, such as MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and Climate Crisis have a strong youth voice and in which students are leaders and change agents. As these movements grow, it will require educators to have the tools necessary to engage and support their learners. At the same time, it is not enough to be able to provide tools of social engagement, but to conceptualize a learning experience that supports student development as life-long learners and which enhances the lives of the communities in which they reside. By establishing an inclusive praxis rooted in critical pedagogy, humane educators can develop meaningful practice that addresses students' needs across the learning domains. Moreover, by expanding the critical/ecopedagogical scope to acknowledge the non-human animal in the ecological system, we can begin to change the lens of both students and educators to create. While those already identifying as humane educators may have a firm understanding of the animal perspective in relation to environmental or social justice issues, other educators may not. A humane pedagogy provides a new pathway for educators to examine this interconnectedness, to develop programs, and to evaluate accordingly. As such, adopting a humane pedagogical approach serves to both address a need within the field of humane education, but also a global need for addressing social issues in our learning environments.

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