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## Conference Proceedings from the International Society for Anthrozoology's (ISAZ) Special Symposium on Humane Education

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# Conference Proceedings from the International Society for Anthrozoology's (ISAZ) Special Symposium on Humane Education

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### **Abstract**

Seven workshops, representing a variety of backgrounds and perspectives, discussed humane education in a special day-long symposium at ISAZ. The presenters explored the contemporary changes in societal expectations regarding the relationship and interactions with the multitude of nonhuman animals with whom we share our lives and how this impacts instruction.

*Keywords:* humane education, ISAZ, human-animal relationship

## **Conference Proceedings from the International Society for Anthrozoology's (ISAZ) Special Symposium on Humane Education**

The 28th annual ISAZ conference was held in Orlando, Florida. The conference theme *Animals in the Public Eye: Human Interactions and Perceptions of Animals* reflected the contemporary changes in societal expectations regarding the relationship and interactions with the multitude of nonhuman animals we share our lives with. Supporting topics, such as humane education, were included as a core aspect of the conference offerings. A special symposium on humane education was offered during the first day of the conference. The following proceedings highlight the variety of presentations and workshops offered during this special symposium.

### **Creating a Contemporary Definition for the Field and Practice of Humane Education**

*Dr. Brian Ogle, Beacon College*

Establishing an understanding of 'other' as well as increasing empathy for those defined as 'other' is a critical activity of humane education. These activities often overlap greatly with the field of anthrozoology. As such, there is often confusion and disagreement about the definition as well as the practice of humane education, particularly as it relates to activities involving non-human animals.

During this interactive workshop, participants constructed their own definition of humane education while exploring how their lived experiences shape their understanding of empathy development in human participants. An exploration of the identified systems participants perceived themselves being a part of also help shape their understanding of their approaches in humane education.

**Using clay modeling vs. cat cadaver dissection to teach human anatomy at the secondary school level: Student outcomes and attitudes**

*Dr. Emma Grigg, Center for the Human–Animal Bond, College of Veterinary Medicine, Purdue University*

*Contributing Authors: Noémie Guérin, Robin Gabriels, Monique Germone, and Marguerite O’Haire*

Increasing public concern for the use of animal dissection in education is driving development and testing of alternatives to animal use, such as 3D models or computer simulations. Clay modeling has proven successful in achieving comparable or superior learning at the undergraduate level, but has not been tested at the secondary school level. This 3-year study tested the effectiveness and appeal of clay models vs. traditional cat cadaver dissection in teaching human anatomy to high school students, in a course which had traditionally used cat dissection.

High school students (n=217) completed a laboratory exercise on human musculature using either cat dissection (control) or a clay model (treatment). Before and after the exercise, students completed a content knowledge assessment and an opinion survey on topics such as the ethics and usefulness of dissection as a learning tool, and (following the lab) enjoyment of the lab exercises. To examine retention of the lab content, student scores on the course final exam were compared.

Student performance on a content knowledge assessment increased following the lab for both the control and treatment groups. However, the improvement was significantly greater for students using the model, vs. dissection, to learn about human muscle anatomy. The use of clay models produced better short-term learning outcomes when compared with cat dissection,

although this difference in improvement was not retained in student final exam scores. No significant differences were found in student perceptions of enjoyment or usefulness between the two exercises. Students consistently expressed a strong desire to choose which approach (dissection vs. alternative) they used in the classroom.

Replacing cat dissection with clay modeling would help secondary school science curriculums model Russell and Burch's 3 R's of animal use in scientific research (Russell and Burch 1959) for their students. In this study, this replacement improved student learning, at least in the short term, while maintaining similar levels of interest and enjoyment (even when students expected to participate in dissection). Future research should focus on optimizing knowledge retention when using clay models.

**Attitudes toward Violence: Do violent attitudes toward humans and nonhuman animals predict partner violence?**

*Dr. Maureen MacNamara and Dr. Peter Fawson, Appalachian State University*

Understanding the link between attitudes towards interpersonal and pet violence can be critical in prevention and treatment. This study examines relationships between attitudes toward treatment of animals and attitudes toward treatment of dating partners in a sample of college students in a rural university. The study expands the work of Shen (2008) and Fawson (2015)- attitudes towards interpersonal violence, Fitzgerald et al. (2016)- partner treatment of animals, Herzog (2015)- attitudes towards animals, and Gupta (2008)- personality features and aggression representation in cases of animal abuse and IPV to determine if there is an association between attitudes towards IPV and towards animal cruelty.

Researchers administered surveys to students at a university in Appalachia. The questionnaire consists of the following scales: Justification of Dating Violence Scales (Shen, 2008), Dating Violence Scale (Shen, 2008), Partner's Treatment of Animals Scale (Fitzgerald, 2016), and Animal Attitudes Scale (Herzog, 2015).

This study examines the link between attitudes toward violence to people and animals in the cultural context of a rural university, thus contributing to an understanding how a rural perspective may influence the development of violent behaviors. Understanding the link between attitudes towards interpersonal and pet violence which could influence likelihood of both animal cruelty and interpersonal violence can be critical in prevention and treatment.

### **Important conversations about human-wildlife conflict and conservation**

*Michelle Szydowski, University of Exeter*

Due to a perceived gap in representation of 'humane educators' from non-westernized societies, this presentation focuses on three Nepalese people from vastly different backgrounds working towards conservation in the Chitwan National Park area of Nepal. While not at three attended structured humane education programs, all have become humane educators in their own right.

Professional musician Maile Ghale advocates for habitat protection, health and pollution reduction through community awareness and litter cleanup programs. Incorporating school and community outreach, governmental responsibility and community resource management, Nepal Dynamic Eco-Tours entrepreneur Doma Paudel is educating a new generation of Nepalese in conservation awareness and methods. Surajan Shrestha became an animal rights activist at a young age, and has formed animal rights clubs at three schools so far. This Master's degree

student successfully linked people throughout the Chitwan area into a network which now provides rapid response to animals in crisis. He also advocates for humane lifestyles using social media and word of mouth.

These three humane educators represent shifting attitudes toward wildlife and conservation in Nepal. Sharing the stories of this diverse group of people offers a view of humane education through a non-westernized lens, an area of study worthy of further examination.

### **Informing others on the topic of horse racing**

*Susan Kayne, Unbridled Thoroughbred Foundation*

Abstract not available.

### **Animals in education: A systematic, defensible moral framework for using wildlife to teach**

*Dr. Bryan Nichols, Florida Atlantic University*

Wildlife is an important draw in ecotourism and science education, but our relationship with wildlife is changing in unprecedented ways. New and immersive media representations, habitat loss and urbanization, and new insights into animal intelligence are changing public perceptions of wild animals. Many educators and organizations that work with captive or free living wild animals are confronting difficult moral decisions about existing and future programs, but few of us are taught how to make such decisions. This presentation will introduce a practical ethics framework and tools to help.

The framework and associated tools were derived from a combination of real-world cases, personal experience, input from conferences, and literature in morality, ecotourism,



resource management, and science education. A conceptual analysis was used to blend theoretical and pragmatic aspects into a useful model for educators, including moral rules and relevant justifications for harm.

The analysis produced a flow-chart like framework for systematically considering the use of wild animals in education, appropriate for both individuals and organizations. The system was derived from practical ethics (Gert, 2004) and adapted to consider free living and captive wild animals in educational contexts. Unintended or indirect impacts of interactions, especially as they relate to public perceptions, emerged as important aspects of any ethical analysis. It also takes specific educational aspects into account, notably alignment with organizational mission and research or evaluation evidence (or lack thereof) for purported impacts used to justify the use of animals in educational programs.

The development of a framework to help educators make more systematic, transparent, and defensible decisions about the use of wild animals in their programs is especially relevant to "animals in the public eye", and therefore of considerable potential interest to anthrozoology. This is especially true as much of the world is carefully reconsidering animal interactions for entertainment or education. Tools are still being developed, so input from ISAZ members will be encouraged.

### **Future trends and practices in humane education**

*Dr. Stephanie Itle-Clark, Academy of Prosocial Learning and Erin Comaskey, doctoral candidate, Academy of Prosocial Learning*

Humane education is an often-misunderstood field and one in which even current thought-leaders use various definitions (Heart, n.d., Association of Professional Humane

Educators, n.d., Academy of Prosocial Learning, n.d.). Beyond the lack of an agreed upon definition, there is an absence of a strong foundation for educators, which has caused an institutional void in overarching development. In order to become relevant and effective in more formalized education and to expand globally, humane education must develop a signature pedagogy (Shulman, 2005).

Through exploration of critical pedagogy and its many off-shoots a solid base for humane education practitioners can develop. At this time, it does so with an anthropocentric lens (Friere, 2018), often completing prosocial actions for the sake of the human species and missing animal ethics completely (Kopnina, Washington, Taylor et al., 2018). Through the collation and review of literature related to various pedagogies, the context is set for development of humane pedagogy, the praxis or overarching theory of teaching through inclusion of broad-based humane principles. In addition, tenets of humane pedagogy, including perspective building, use of language, empathy education, exploration of hegemony and systems-thinking, and recognizing the individuality of the other provide educators with a variety of tools through which to develop and build truly inclusive humane education. Humane pedagogy provides a base on which a framework for the field can develop in both the academic institution as well as individual teaching methodologies.