

BOOK REVIEW

Empowering Students for Just Societies: A Handbook for Secondary School Teachers

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Empowering Students for Just Societies: A Handbook for Secondary School Teachers is one part of a two-part kit guide titled *Empowering Students for Just Societies*. The other part is *A Handbook for Primary School Teachers*. It was published in 2019 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which is an initiative of the UNESCO.

Empowering Students for Just Societies: A Handbook for Secondary School Teachers was developed in the context of the UNESCO/UNODC partnership on 'Global Citizenship Education for the Rule of Law: Doing the Right Thing'. This partnership brings together UNESCO's work on Global Citizenship Education and UNODC's Education for Justice (E4J) initiative under the global programme

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The handbook has four sections: Section 1: Introduction; Section 2: Getting Ready to Use the Resources; Section 3: Catalogue of Teaching Resources; and Section 4: Assessing Learning, which is followed by the References.

Section 1 has three sub-sections. Sub-section 1.1 is titled, 'Why does Education Matter for the Rule of Law?' It emphasises that secondary schools play an important role in the youth's socialisation and development, and formation of their ideas and approach towards justice, democracy and human rights. It also promotes respect for the Rule of Law (RoL) among young people which is the foundation of strong and peaceful societies. It also indicates that 'education', with teachers at the core, has a key role in nurturing future generations, who are not only critical thinkers, but also informed and empowered actors prepared to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies. The Global Citizenship Education (GCED) provides the overall lens, through which this handbook views

the role of education in the promotion of the RoL. The handbook draws upon experiences from other education processes, including human rights education, peace education, education for sustainable development, and education for international and intercultural understanding.

Sub-section 1.2 is titled 'What is the Purpose of the Handbook?' The purpose is clearly outlined as follows:

1. Provide teachers with a selection of relevant and accessible in-classroom and out-of-classroom educational resources (summaries of short activities, lessons, units, etc.) that aim to instil the principles of the RoL among secondary school students; and
2. Assist teachers in applying the teaching resources to their local educational settings by providing ideas for adaptation for a variety of learning environments.

This handbook provides:

1. Summaries of existing teaching resources selected from UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs and ministries that work to meet the learning outcomes on GCED for the RoL;
2. Links to the original resource that offers additional learning opportunities;
3. Tips and suggestions for adaptation, extension and cross-references of teaching resources; and
4. Suggestions for learning assessment.

Sub-section 1.3 is titled ‘Who is this Handbook For?’ This sub-section states that the handbook can be useful for:

1. Teachers and teacher trainers in formal school settings at the Secondary school level. It encourages teachers to strengthen the RoL through education by integrating it into their lessons and planning.
2. Professionals working in non-formal education or engaging with young people, for example, in sports associations, community organisations, social work and the justice sector.
3. Parents seeking to raise empowered young citizens who actively contribute to peace and justice.
4. Secondary school students.

Section 2: ‘Getting Ready to Use the Resources’ has been categorised into five sub-sections. This section provides background knowledge and guidance in order to best utilise, navigate, and adapt the activities, lesson plans and units described in this handbook.

Sub-section 2.1, ‘Setting Expected Learning Outcomes’, provides the details of GCED domains of learning and expected learning outcomes. It aims to empower learners to engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, as proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world. The expected learning outcomes outlined are

based on GCED’s three domains of learning (cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural). They provide an indication of the skills, values, knowledge and attitudes that should be developed in order to instil, over time, the principles of the RoL in learners.

Sub-section 2.2, ‘Creating Conducive Classroom Climates’, highlights that the modelling fairness and justice, positive engagement opportunities for adolescents, thoughtful classroom set-up and participatory teaching methods can help to create such an optimal environment in the classroom where students feel safe and nurtured, while teaching and learning is taking place.

Sub-section 2.3, ‘Selecting the Teaching Resource’, provides various points for school teachers to locate the most useful and relevant teaching resources for their classrooms in this handbook. There is an initial overview of the teaching resources at the start of Section 3 and also at the back of the handbook. There is also an index for keywords and an index for school subjects, for the convenience of the readers.

Sub-section 2.4, ‘Adapting the Teaching Resource’, suggests that as teachers prepare to use a resource, they should consider the ways and means to adapt it to suit their teaching and learning environment, national and local cultural norms, and make it accessible to as many different types of learners as possible. The adaption suggestions in the

Annexure (p. 81) provide numerous ideas, such as classroom constraints, cultural familiarity, local relevance and inclusivity for diverse students for modifying the teaching resources as needed.

Sub-section 2.5, 'Preparing: Teacher Readiness', suggests various teaching values, attitudes and skills that strengthen the RoL and promote a CoL (Culture of Lawfulness), and requires additional preparation from teachers.

Section 3: 'Catalogue of Teaching Resources' has been divided into four sub-sections.

Sub-section 3.1, 'Overview of Resources', provides an overview of teaching resources according to the languages available, suitable level and an estimated time. It suggests various short activities and games, single lessons, units or projects, out-of-classroom resources, and school-family-community engagement resources.

Sub-section 3.2, 'Classroom Resources', suggests five short activities and games for developing students' understanding and skills for promoting the RoL. The 'Single Lessons' section describes the resources designed for use during a single class period. However, the activities are also suitable for other educational contexts. Suggestions to extend these lessons and deepen students' learning are provided in the 'Tips/Think About This' section of each resource description. It also provides the activity-wise details about the

subjects covered, target learners, time needed for completion of the activity, materials needed and keywords. The section on 'Units or Projects' provides unit plans and projects that teachers can use to provide more sustained exposure to the RoL topics, over a longer period of time. Units built from several lessons or including a project component provide an opportunity for students to extend their learning and skill development from a basic introduction to a deeper analysis and application of the topic under study.

Sub-section 3.3, 'Out-of-classroom Resources', suggests various outdoor activities like sports and provides guidance for teachers on incorporating transparency, justice and other RoL concepts into sports and extra-curricular activities. It also suggests that teaching resources are very helpful to improve self-esteem, enhance social bonds and provide participants with a feeling of purpose that helps to reduce crime, as well as to prevent violent extremism and radicalisation.

Sub-section 3.4, 'School-family-community Engagement Resources', suggests various activities for engagement of adolescents with family and community. Through these activities, adolescents with the support of parents and community members, can practise shaping a society in which everyone can live peaceful, just, safe and fulfilled lives.

Section 4, 'Assessing Learning', deals with assessment, which is an important part of the teaching and

learning process. The broad types of assessment are diagnostic, formative and summative. Using a variety of assessments provides a better picture of learning progress. A few key approaches to assess areas relevant to the GCED are self-assessment, learning journals, peer-assessment, observation, portfolio and projects.

Although, the handbook has been prepared for Secondary school teachers, it is also a very relevant and important reference document for Primary teachers. There are many aspects of school education, like

setting expected learning outcomes, creating conducive classroom climates, selecting or adapting the teaching resources, classroom and out-of-classroom resources and school-family-community engagement resources covered in the handbook that are common to all stages of education. Hence, it is important that teachers engaged at the foundational and middle stages of education should also know about such documents to broaden their understanding and vision of school education.