



EL Education Schools
Learning Expedition Documentation Project



The Human Face of Human Rights:

An Expedition into Immigrants and their Lives in Portland, ME

Grade 10

Expedition Authors

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Summary

The Human Face of Human Rights learning expedition began on the first day of school in September 2006 in all 10th grade Humanities classes (70 students total), and culminated in April of 2007. The entire year was designed as a series of investigations and projects that fit into the larger expedition, with the defining piece taking place between December and April. Students were involved in the expedition – sometimes conceptually and sometimes more directly – for 90 minutes each day.

This expedition's content focus was on the development of human rights and its guiding question was, *how should society identify and treat the "other"?* The expedition launched with a focus on the atrocities of Rwanda, and followed with an exploration of the world wars, the formation of the United Nations, and the concept of human rights versus civil rights. Then, students began in-depth studies of a human rights crisis of their choice that affects people who now live in Portland, ME. Teachers helped to match students with people who are from the nations or regions that they chose to study so that they could explore the personal stories related to their research. Portland is a refugee resettlement city, so students worked with people from a variety of nations such as Somalia, Sudan, the DRC, Zimbabwe, Cambodia, and former Yugoslavia. In fact, some of the students in the class, who are from African nations, acted as both interviewers and subjects of documentaries. Students completed extensive research projects and wrote research papers capturing the geography, politics, government, economics, and culture of their chosen region, and explored the human rights crisis in that region.



Students then worked in small teams to interview and capture the essence of their subject's story in writing and image. Students spent considerable time in class, often with experts, working on skills of interviewing, photography, and writing. Each student wrote a full Oral History of their subject and each team produced a portfolio of images. Donna Galluzzo, the executive director of the SALT Institute for Documentary Studies, worked extensively with the teachers, but also taught lessons in class on interviewing and

photography. Ultimately, as a culmination, the class created a series of beautiful, moving displays of image and text that were featured in a local gallery in downtown Portland where students and gallery staff hosted an evening gallery opening. Committees worked to organize the opening, create a professional invitation postcard, and craft an opening panel for the show. Finally, students, parents, members of the public, and subjects gathered to view the work and hear a selection of student readings.



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Guiding Questions

- How should society identify and treat the “other”?
- How have human rights crises occurred, and how should we respond?
- What can we learn about society and history from personal stories?

Case Study Topic 1

International Human Rights Crises

The first case study of the Human Face of Human Rights learning expedition centered around a broad exploration of the concept of human rights. They began with a focus on Rwanda. Reading the introduction to *An Ordinary Man*, written by the Rwandan Hotel Manager who inspired the movie *Hotel Rwanda*, and then watching the movie, *Hotel Rwanda* helped deepen student’s understanding of this conflict and the religious and cultural divisions that sparked it. Students then examined human rights atrocities throughout history, from slavery in the United States, to Nazi Germany. The class read literature on such atrocities, such as *Night*, which is set during the holocaust, and *What is the What*, which is set in Sudan. Students gained an understanding of the difference between human rights and civil rights. The class also studied the role that the United Nations plays in protecting human rights around the world, and “The Declaration of Human Rights.” Throughout this case study, students deepened their understanding of the *human* side of these issues when five people who live in Portland and immigrated from war torn countries around the world visited the class and served on a panel. The panel members honestly discussed their experiences, both during and since their ordeals, and they answered the student’s questions.

Long-Term Learning Targets

- I analyze a human rights crisis to determine the causes, effects, and resolutions.
- I evaluate the role of the UN in addressing global crises, and the international response to contemporary human rights crises.
- I use research skills and become expert in the history of one human rights crisis, including the role of geography, culture, economics, history, politics and government.
- I am able to use the making meaning strategies to analyze literature and memoir.



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Case Study Topic 2

Investigating Human Rights through the Stories of Portland Immigrants

The second case study of the Human Face of Human Rights learning expedition was designed to empower and equip students to be skilled researchers and documentarians of a human rights story in Portland. The class was fortunate to have access to the SALT Institute for Documentary Studies, which provided them with expert training as well as a gallery to display their work.

As background work, students learned essential skills on how to access research sources for readability, credibility, bias, and purpose, how to critique visual images, and how to observe people and richly describe them. This led to the students' interviews and photographic representations of immigrants living in Portland and, ultimately, to a gallery opening at the SALT gallery.

Long-Term Learning Targets

- I am able to interview effectively to unearth the essence of a person's personal story.
- I analyze image to determine and take strong, compelling photographs that capture the essence of an individual.
- I am able to write an effective oral history version of an individual's personal story. I am able to use the writing process and produce a strong, polished piece of writing.
- I am able to present my work effectively.
- I understand the power of human story.





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Connections to State and District Standards

English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Literature

Reading Process

- Students show they understand the reading process and can apply reading strategies to a variety of texts, as demonstrated through book clubs, discussions, journals, and work with articles.

Elements of Literature

- Students identify, analyze, and compare and contrast elements of literature (characterization, plot, voice, figurative language, etc.).

Informational Text

- Students apply reading, viewing, and listening strategies to informational texts in order to effectively integrate new learning.

Understanding Perspective

- Students demonstrate an understanding of perspective and point of view. They show an ability to evaluate texts and make judgments about authors' perspectives and credibility.

Image as Text

- Students show they understand the qualities of a strong image and apply reading strategies effectively to image.

Writing

Writing Process

- Students use the skills and strategies of the writing process in a variety of forms (e.g., essay, short story, personal narrative, poetry) for a variety of audiences.

Quality Writing

- Students develop quality pieces of writing, including effective ideas, organization, voice, word choice, and sentence fluency.

Writing for Purposes

- Students master the ability to write effectively for a variety of purposes: to express, present, analyze, reflect, explain, and persuade.

Writing Conventions

- Students write and speak correctly, using conventions of standard written and spoken English.

Speaking, Presentation, and Performance

Performance

- Students develop skills to present their thoughts, feelings, knowledge and opinions both informally and formally in front of audiences.

Audience

- Students are engaged, respectful, present, and supportive members of an audience.

Research

Access Information

- Students demonstrate the ability to access and gather information from a variety of sources.

Assess Sources

- Students always assess the validity –authority, age, and bias- of a source before using it.

Research Process

- Students master the research process, including generating ideas and posing questions to propel the process forward.

Research Conventions

- Students use correctly research conventions, including bibliography and citation.



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Connections to State and District Standards_

Social Studies Standards

History

Knowledge

- Identify and describe major historical eras and their defining characteristics.

Theme

- Identify and describe major enduring themes in history and their chronological patterns.

Civics and Government

U.S. Government

- Demonstrate an understanding of the basic structures and processes of U.S. Government.

World Governments

- Demonstrate an understanding of the basic structures and processes of various world governments.

World Relations

- Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of power and its role in world relations.

Geography

Tools

- Appropriately use and apply a variety of geographic tools to draw conclusions about people and places.

Influences

- Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of geographic and cultural influences.

Economics

Economic Systems

- Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of economic systems in the U.S. and the world, and how economics serves to inform decisions in the past, present and future.

Application of Social Studies Knowledge

Take a Position

- Research, formulate and defend a position on a current social studies issue.

Decisions

- Make decisions using social studies knowledge and skills.



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Major Projects

1. Research Project

Description

Students chose a human rights crisis that affected someone who now lives in Portland. They researched the history, politics, geography, culture, and economics of the situation to understand and capture what caused the crisis. Students were responsible for documenting their research process by gathering and assessing sources, and generating research questions. Their research binder was handed in and assessed routinely for all research standards. From their research, students wrote a conventional paper exploring their thesis of what caused this human rights crisis. The paper included a description of the crisis, why it matters, the history, what caused it, the global response, and what should be done to make the situation right again. In the end, papers were on display at the gallery opening as companion pieces to the oral history panels.

Assessments

Student research binders were routinely assessed against the state and district research standards.

Final Product

A polished and professional research paper was on display at the student exhibition at the SALT Gallery.

2. Oral History Project

Description

Working in teams of one to four, students interviewed someone from the country they studied, in order to deepen their understanding of the human story embedded in their research. They were required to conduct at least four interviews in order to unearth the story. Each team of students also worked to capture the story of their subject in images. They took a variety of shots and chose a selection of strong images for a portfolio to be critiqued in class. From that, they chose three images to include on their final panel that then hung in the gallery. As preparation, the class studied Annie Leibovitz's images, as well as those of visiting professionals, to understand the elements of strong images. Students then practiced and critiqued each other's work. After interviewing and photographing, students wrote the story of their subject, working to capture the important details and the essence of the story. They worked to weave together descriptions of the person as they told their story and to use quotations to capture the person's voice. Because this writing was complex, extensive time in class was devoted to writing exercises and drafting of this piece.





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Key Skills Addressed

- Crafting preparation notes and questions
- Observing and listening closely
- Developing and asking questions during an interview
- Recording and transcribing
- Taking effective notes

Assessments

- Written analysis of images viewed in class



3. Culminating SALT Gallery Exhibit

Description



Once all the other pieces were complete, each group of students worked to craft one polished display panel for the exhibit. Each panel (black foamcore) included three enlarged photographs (one 11X13 and two 8x10), three text boxes with selections from the oral histories, and a credits box. All of the panels were uniformly formatted and students spent days just on the final polish and editing of the text boxes before printing on quality linen paper. In the end, there were 25 gorgeous panels hanging in a professional gallery in downtown Portland. Final assessment for craftsmanship of the panel occurred during dress rehearsal. Other pieces (writing and images) were assessed separately before the panel creation.

To ensure that each student's work was polished and complete, and that they each had an opportunity to articulate their discoveries, students participated in formal dress rehearsals during school. The audience was a small group of peers and

teachers, and students were asked to reflect on the human rights crisis, the essence of their subject's story, their images, their intentions, and their discoveries. This also acted as a rehearsal for opening night, and students had to come appropriately dressed. All students were "required" to attend the gallery opening. Parents prepared elegant foods and all of the interview subjects were invited. As an *Exceeds* option, some students read from their work and reflected upon the process. One student read her own spoken word piece that was inspired by her project. The exhibition was closed with a choral reading of one line from each student. Afterward, the class gathered for a celebration with cake and sparkling cider, and gave toasts.



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Final Product

This exhibition *was* the final product for the Human Face of Human Rights learning expedition.

His dress is quite casual. He wears a polo shirt with a long sleeve shirt underneath. He has on baggy jeans and sneakers. Basically he looks like the average teenage boy. His eyes roll and his white teeth contrast against his pink tongue as he rolls it around his mouth. He is thinking, thinking of how to best answer the question that has just been thrown at him. I try to offer help by restating the question in a less crazy way, *“So you didn’t know that the Crisis in Darfur was going on?”* His eyes roll again and he smiles, as he answers my less confusing question, *“No.”* Of course it is not a complete answer. It is a yes or a no with as little detail as the question allows. His voice is calm and slow. His words flow smoothly together, thick with his Sudanese accent. He does not stutter over his words. Some words he pronounces wrong, but this does not faze him. He is clear. He knows what he wants to say. He is very connected to his culture.





EL Education Schools Learning Expedition Documentation Project

When you see him on the street you would think he is just an ordinary high school student. That is how he appears, but on the inside it is a different story. He misses his home of Sudan. He hasn't let go of his Sudanese culture, and we don't think he ever will.

His name is Chris Fraser. He came here from Sudan in 1999 at the age of 11. He is now 18, a senior at Portland High. Next year he will be attending college, though he is not sure which one yet. He's an average kid. He plays soccer. He does track and would have gone to states if he had jumped half an inch more. He rock climbs and his favorite place to climb is in Acadia. He hangs out with friends and goes to movies. He procrastinates doing his homework until the night before it is due. He is an average teenager, with one exception; he is from Sudan and very connected to his Sudanese culture. He misses his family. He misses his home. You can tell by the reflective tone in his voice, as he remembers these things. He tells us his mother brought him here so he could get a better education. He is not sure that is the whole truth. He wants to believe her but, *"At the same time I heard there was like a war between Khartoum and Juba."* He lived there until the age of 10 but he never knew about the wars. *"Do you want to go back to Sudan?"* I ask. *"Yes, after college or during summer vacation, to visit or maybe to live. I want to help my family. If they want to come to America I will help them I but I'm not gonna force them to,"* he answers in a voice that is still in Sudan, not in Portland, Maine. In an attempt to bring him back I ask, *"If you go to Sudan would you ever come back to the U.S.?"* He thinks about this for a minute and says, *"I might want to go back and forth. Maybe I could find a job that allows me to do that."* He has told us he would like to be a businessman or maybe a psychologist, but he's not sure yet. He would like to go to college but says, *"I'm not college material."* At the last interview, we found out that he had been accepted to Thomas College, though he is not sure he wants to go there. *"If I get accepted to UMO, I think I will go there. But I don't know if I got accepted."*



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Embedded and Related Literacy, Math, and Arts Work

Literacy

- Opening Reading: Passages from *An Ordinary Man*, written by the hotel manager whose story inspired the movie *Hotel Rwanda*.
- Read out loud in class, *What is the What?*, a fictional biography of a Sudanese refugee.
- Ran differentiated Book Clubs looking at Memoirs
- Read *Night*, a story of holocaust survival, as a whole class text.
- Research skills were a central focus throughout the expedition.
- Expository writing skills were honed for the crafting of a research paper.
- Descriptive writing skills were honed for the oral history project.

Math

- Introductory economics, to understand the economic issues of developing countries, countries in crisis, and immigration laws.

Arts/Photography

- The class viewed Annie Leibovitz's photographs on-line as exemplars and crafted a list of elements of strong images which they then used for peer critiques.
- Professional photographers visited class to show and discuss their work.
- The class learned photographic technique and engaged in regular critique of each other's work.



Connections to the Community and Larger World

Fieldwork

- The SALT gallery: visiting to learn about the gallery's mission, view an exhibit, and set up the student exhibit.
- Students studied the work of professional photo-journalist, James Natchwe, and then went to a public presentation of his work in Portland.
- Oral history interviews with community subjects



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Service

- The gallery exhibit was an effort to honor the courage and importance of the stories of local immigrants in the community, and to educate local citizens about the challenges that immigrants face.

Experts

- Donna Galluzzo of the SALT Gallery visited school to present the power of documentary and to introduce the final exhibition. Ms. Galluzzo visited the class three additional times to work with the students on interview and photography skills.
- The class organized a panel presentation that involved five people living in Portland who had immigrated from war torn countries. They spoke as a panel to the class and touched on their experiences in their home countries as well as coming to this country.
- Various local professional photographers visited to help the students with their photography.
- Immigrants and refugees throughout Portland were willing to be interviewed and photographed by the students.





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Calendar

Investigation 1

Trimester 1			Trimester 2			Trimester 3		
September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	June
Human Rights Panel	Underground Railroad & Abyssinian Church, Historical Society				Research Paper & School Presentation			Culminating Event & SALT-Style Documentary
Opening Intro to Human Rights, Create Gallery Walk	National Formation/Slavery		American Becomes a World Power			World Wars and Development of Human Rights		

Investigation 2

Trimester 2			Trimester 3	
December	January	February	March	April
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch research and documentary project ▪ Expert visitor from SALT center ▪ Begin formal interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formal interviews ▪ Expert visitor from SALT center ▪ Research paper due ▪ Documentary skills: photography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing oral histories ▪ Formal interviews ▪ Final photographs due 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select final photographs for postcard ▪ Oral history due ▪ Exhibit photographs due ▪ Formal writing for exhibit due 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All documentary work due for final review ▪ Exhibit!

