

Standards of Human Rights Education in Schools

Name of organisation:

Working Group on Human Rights Education, Forum on Human Rights (Forum Menschenrechte)

(Excerpts from Standards)

Human Rights Education Standards in Schools

The areas of competency in human rights education and in political education lessons are based upon the “National Education Standards for Specialised Political Education in Schools”²⁹ as laid out by the Society for Civic Education Didactics and Civic Youth and Adult Education (GPJE).

The competencies are understood as being achievable through a developmental process which is, on the one hand, tied to existing abilities, and, on the other hand to an extension and qualitative improvement of existing abilities. The GPJE, upon whose outline this consultation paper has been developed, defines the correlation between power of political judgement, legal political capacity and methodological faculties as the conceptual interpretation of knowledge. The target competences to be enhanced are arranged according to these fields: power of judgement, legal capacity, and methodological faculties. These three fields can be assigned the usual three task fields of human rights education: learning over, by and for human rights.³⁰

Human rights-related power of judgment means:

Judgments on merit: Learn *about* human rights, i.e. the dissemination of knowledge about: the emergence and development of human rights as well as the implicated progress and inconsistencies; the different treaties and covenants; the forms, extent and reasons for human rights violations as well as important national and international initiatives; and groups and individuals who engage themselves in helping to make human rights a reality.

Value judgments: Learn *through* human rights, i.e. the development of every individual’s consciousness and how human rights can and will be translated into concrete social and political realities – for example, at school the promotion of anti-discriminatory attitudes and the acceptance of and solidarity towards the realization of human rights.

29 cf. Society for Civic Education Didactics and Civic Youth and Adult Education: National Education Standards for Specialised Political Education in Schools – A Blueprint. Schwalbach/Ts., 2004.

30 cf. Draft plan of action for the first phase (2005-2007) of the proposed world programme for human rights education; VN-Dok.: A/59/525 from 25. October 2004, S. 7.

Human right- related capacity to act means:

Learn *for* human rights, i.e. the proactive promotion of skills, decision-making and responsibility for the realisation of human rights that can find expression in everyday and professional behaviour.

Human rights-related methodological abilities mean:

To develop a critical self perception and to orientate oneself to human rights questions, to work towards this using different methods, to evaluate, and to acquire and organise independent learning processes.

Human Rights Education Standards for Secondary School II (End of Form 12/13) (pp. 26-30)

In preparation for their impending social responsibilities, youth in Secondary School II are compelled to build upon the competencies gained in Secondary School I, compiling a broader and deeper knowledge of human rights so that these values become a part of their moral code. An orientation to human rights makes it possible for students to gain a proper moral and legal point of view, of which the basis has been affected and judged by society itself.

Human Rights Related Power of Judgment

The students

- have a basic understanding of specific human rights as well as instruments and mechanisms of human rights protection;
- know the rights of specific groups and have knowledge of the existence of mechanisms of protection;
- understand the specific emphasis placed upon human rights work and human rights protection, for example: “economics and human rights” and “security and human rights”;
- understand human rights-related problems as well as those institutions and state commissions within the political system of the Federal Republic of Germany set up for the protection and realisation of human rights as a national endeavor.

Human Rights Issues Legal Capacity

The students

- are able to grasp the meaning of human rights within national state behaviour as well as in relation to their own personal consciousness and behaviour;
- have the ability to distinguish between attitudes and behavior favorable to democracy and those that are hostile to democracy. In particular, they are aware of the effects of apathy, ignorance, repression and the consequences of taking a stand.

Methodological Competences in Human Rights-Related Issues

The students

- are able to use pro-active and constructive communication practices and interactions;
- have acquired practical knowledge in which they can engage themselves in human rights protection by being informed about human rights situations both at home and abroad.