

SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

Master Class Series

EDUCATOR GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

This collection of 5 Master Class videos is designed to inform educators about how they can use the Speak Truth to Power educational resources to improve their teaching practice. The collection features five educators, who teach in high schools and at a university, discussing why human rights education is a critically important component of 21st century education. They demonstrate how they use Speak Truth to Power lessons and related resources to help their students develop empathy and connect to the experiences of people around the world.

While the featured educators are all experienced at incorporating human rights education in their classes, the Speak Truth to Power educational resources are designed for teachers with varying levels of experience, including ones who are interested in teaching about human rights for the first time. The Master Class videos can be used by individual educators to spark ideas and also be incorporated into group professional development activities.

In addition to the Master Class videos, Speak Truth to Power in School offers the following resources:

- [Virtual Field Trip](#): This experience features Kerry Kennedy, daughter of Robert F. Kennedy and president of RFK Human Rights, hosting a conversation with established and rising human rights defenders.
- [Interactive Defenders Map](#): An interactive defenders map allows students to explore universal human rights issues through the experiences of defenders around the globe.

- [Video Vignettes & Classroom Activities](#): Students can watch the stories of three human rights defenders—Ka Hsaw Wa, Sonita Alizadeh, and Marian Wright Edelman—and hear about their passion and work in their own words. Each video vignette is accompanied by a classroom activity that invites students to learn more about these defenders' work and consider how they can become human rights defenders. Three additional classroom activities investigate the lives and work of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Gabor Gombos, and Loune Viaud.

OBJECTIVES

- Explain why it is valuable to integrate human rights education across disciplines;
- Illustrate how educators use Speak Truth to Power resources to help students learn about human rights defenders and understand how they can defend their and other's universal human rights;
- Inspire educators to consider how they can incorporate human rights education in their own professional practice.

MATERIALS

- [Speak Truth to Power Master Class videos](#)
- Computer(s) with Internet access
- Chart paper, if using the videos as part of professional development activities (optional)

VIDEO OVERVIEWS | ESTELLA OWIOMAHA-CHURCH

"Making sure that human rights is in the classroom is really about treating every student like a human being and honoring every part of who they are."

Featured Educator

Estella Owoimaha-Church teaches English and Theater at Hawthorne High School in South Los Angeles, California. She was first introduced to Speak Truth to Power in 2012 at a performance of "Speak Truth to Power: Voices from Beyond the Dark," a play by Laurence Olivier Award-winning playwright Ariel Dorfman. Estella has produced the play several times at her school, regularly incorporates defender stories in her classes, and trains other educators and artists in her community to promote human rights education and social justice. In 2017, Estella was named a Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize Finalist. She holds an M.A. in Education from Loyola Marymount University and a B.A. in African-American Studies from California State University, Northridge.

How and Why She Uses Speak Truth to Power in the Classroom

Estella Owoimaha-Church is committed to providing "mirrors and windows" for her students in her classes. Mirrors allow students to see themselves in what they study; windows allow an authentic way of viewing other people and being introduced to other perspectives and world views. When Owoimaha-Church finds that a lesson or unit lacks mirrors and windows, she incorporates the story of a human rights defender from the Speak Truth to Power collection. She has found that her students connect most to the lessons and stories about young people; her students' favorite defender is Malala Yousefzai, a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate.

Owoimaha-Church's classes follow the rules of improv comedy

1) Don't Deny, 2) Watch Each Other's Back, 3) Make Each Other Look Good. Students support each other as they learn about human rights abuses and defenders. Though the defenders' personal stories can, at times, trigger past trauma and pain in students, they ultimately inspire students to make a difference in the world.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER/DISCUSS

- Do you provide "mirrors and windows" in your curricula? If so, how? If not, how can you develop opportunities for students to see themselves and connect to others' experiences in their learning?
- What classroom rules or procedures do you have in place to encourage students to support each other's emotions and learning? What rules or procedures can you put in place to make students feel respected and supported?
- Where in your curriculum could you incorporate the stories of human rights defenders?

Related Resources

- [Malala Yousefzai Biography](#): This brief biography describes Malala Yousefzai's work as a human rights defender and includes links to learn more about Yousefzai's work and literacy rates in the U.S.
- ["Speak Truth to Power: Voices from Beyond the Dark"](#) a play for ten actors that features monologues by human rights defenders and evangelists of evil who embody fear, repression, and indifference. The play illustrates how the defenders evolve from victims of oppression to speaking truth to power.

VIDEO OVERVIEWS | CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

"Teaching human rights is not a political conversation, it's a human conversation."

Featured Educator

Christopher Buckley is a Social Studies & Human Rights Educator at Brookfield High School in Brookfield, Connecticut. He is in his second decade of teaching and credits the Speak Truth to Power curriculum with helping to make his classroom more engaging and applicable to students.

Buckley participated in one of the early Speak Truth to Power Teacher Training Workshops held in Washington, DC and now serves as a STTP Lead Educator in Connecticut and New York. He has led teacher trainings for both pre-service and veteran teachers at the Thomas J. Dodd Center at the University of Connecticut. He has also presented about STTP and Human Rights Education at the Annual Conference for the National Council for Social Studies in Boston and New Orleans and is scheduled to present at the 100th annual conference in Washington, DC in 2020.

How and Why He Uses Speak Truth to Power in the Classroom

Christopher Buckley's curriculum is designed in alignment with the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards from the National Council for the Social Studies. He believes that this framework helps students understand the purpose of their studies and teaches students how to be active and engaged citizens as well as good professionals who treat people with respect.

Buckley uses Speak Truth to Power in his classroom because his students connect to the profiles of people who are actively defending human rights today. One group of students was able to email and Skype with Kailash Satyarthi, an Indian human rights defender who has campaigned against child labor in India and elsewhere and advocated for the universal right to education. Buckley believes that the STTP resources help students understand their human rights and how to defend them and challenge students to consider how their actions impact others. In addition, they provide students a wide lens for their world view to help them make up their minds about what is important to them.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER/DISCUSS

- How are you preparing students to be active and engaged citizens? How are you preparing them to treat others with respect?
- How can you design your curriculum to help students expand their world view? How can you challenge students to consider the consequences of their actions?
- How can you use technology or other means to help students connect to human rights defenders to make their learning engaging and relevant?

Related Resources:

- [Kailash Satyarthi Biography](#): This brief biography describes Kailash Satyarthi's work as a human rights defender and includes links to learn more about global slavery and the Global Campaign for Education.
- [C3 Standards](#) were designed through a three-year, state-led collaborative effort to: "a) enhance the rigor of the social studies disciplines; b) build critical thinking, problem solving, and participatory skills to become engaged citizens; and c) align academic programs to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies."

- [Robert F. Kennedy "Ripple of Hope" speech](#), formerly called the Day of Affirmation Address, was delivered at the University of Capetown in Capetown, South Africa on June 6, 1966. Some consider it to be RFK's greatest speech. In it, Kennedy stated, "Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

VIDEO OVERVIEWS | ROBIN DELUCA ACCONI

“Social work is a human rights profession; we’re trained to go out there and be human rights defenders.”

Featured Educator

Dr. Robin DeLuca Acconi is Assistant Dean of Student Services at the School of Social Welfare, Stony Brook University. She has been a social worker since 1999. In 2015, DeLuca Acconi was named Social Worker of the Year by National Association of Social Workers, New York State Chapter, Suffolk Division. She has presented at numerous conferences and served for ten years on the Fair Trade and Civil and Human Rights Committee for the New York State United Teachers. DeLuca Acconi works with Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights as a trainer and researcher.

How and Why She Uses Speak Truth to Power in the Classroom

DeLuca Acconi uses Speak Truth to Power resources to teach graduate students in the Master’s of Social Work program about the 5 competencies of Social Emotional Learning (SEL), which include: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision Making, and Relationship Skills. She believes that these skills are critical for students to thrive in the workplace, in schools, and at many different levels throughout society. In DeLuca Acconi’s view, educators cannot simply tell students how to behave; instead, they must give students the skills to behave well.

DeLuca Acconi appreciates the Speak Truth to Power resources because each defender’s story is connected to the right they are defending. She uses the STTP resources to focus on specific defenders and the skills needed to defend specific human rights. DeLuca Acconi asks students to pick a defender whose story speaks to them and to examine how the defender exhibits the 5 SEL competencies and what skills the defender needed to be successful. Her goal is to awaken students to have an understanding and an empathy for other people’s experiences. She often shares a favorite quote by Eleanor Roosevelt to help students consider their own role in defending human rights: “Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world.”

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER/DISCUSS

- Why are the 5 competencies of Social Emotional Learning important?
- Does your curriculum focus on the 5 competencies of Social Emotional Learning? If so, how? If not, how can you adapt your curriculum to help students develop these critical skills?
- How can you help your students develop empathy?

Related Resources:

- [Human Rights Defender Biographies](#): A collection of 20 brief biographies of human rights defenders working around the globe on a wide range of issues including childhood marriage, education, environmental protection, indigenous rights, LGBTQ rights, public health, religious freedom, social justice, violence against women, and workers’ rights.
- [Virtual Field Trip Companion Activity](#): In this introductory activity, students work in jigsaw groups to build awareness and understanding of the Articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The [Core Competencies of SEL](#) were developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) promotes intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence. The competencies can be taught in many ways across many settings. Educators and researchers are actively exploring ways to effectively assess these competencies.

VIDEO OVERVIEWS | MICHELLE HADDIX

"When you are a teacher, you are a human rights defender, and every day [you're] working with children to not only educate them on their own human rights...but also how they can defend the rights for every person in the room, every human that they come into contact with."

Featured Educator

Michelle Haddix teaches Advanced Placement U.S. History and Human Geography at Herron High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. She holds a B.S. in Social Studies Secondary Education and an M.A. in Urban Education from Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis. Haddix says that she teaches because "an educated citizenry is a vital requisite for our survival as a free people! With growth of our community as a nation, Civic Education becomes increasingly important. I teach to engage students in the political realm with a clear understanding of our nation's past."

How and Why She Uses Speak Truth to Power in the Classroom:

Michelle Haddix focuses on addressing 21st century skills through her curriculum, because she believes every student needs to be able to communicate, read and identify arguments, think critically, collaborate, and make decisions that advance ideas and innovate. She finds that Speak Truth to Power enables her to teach 21st century skills in a way that entices students and gets them excited about the challenges we face in the world. She feels that incorporating human rights in her classes is critical because, "if we don't consider human rights when we consider history, then we're not really considering injustices from the past so we can change them."

Haddix appreciates that Speak Truth to Power "puts students in the driver's seat for solving some of these modern day issues in a way where they're working with community members, they're working with one another, they're learning about people that are different from them, and they're hearing the stories of people that are making really big changes across the globe." She also values the way in which STTP resources challenge students to problem solve and empathize with people who are in situations they have never experienced. In Haddix's view, STTP resources demonstrate respect for educators as professionals and allow them to integrate human rights into whatever curriculum they're teaching.

In her video, Haddix visits the Landmark for Peace Memorial, a monument close to her school that was dedicated by former President Bill Clinton in 1995 to honor both Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the late Mr. Kennedy for their contributions to our nation. In 1968, Robert F. Kennedy visited the park where the memorial is located. His initial goal was to campaign for the presidency, but instead he had to deliver the news of Dr. King's assassination.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER/DISCUSS

- Do you believe that history courses should include attention to human rights? Why or why not?
- How can you use human rights education to help your students develop 21st century skills?
- Is there a local monument or other site you can incorporate into your curriculum to teach students about human rights?

Related Resources

- [Sonita Alidazeh Classroom Activity](#): This activity encourages students to find ways to put their artistic talents to use as human rights defenders.
- [Gabor Gombos Classroom Activity](#): In this activity, students evaluate the role the U.S. news media plays in stigmatizing mental illness and take action to become mental health advocates.

- [Loune Viaud Classroom Activity](#): In this activity, students research health care issues affecting women and children in the U.S. or abroad and develop action plans.
- [Marian Wright Edelman Classroom Activity](#): This activity engages students in researching strategies for addressing inequality in education and challenges them to consider steps they can take to advocate for educational equality for all.
- The Partnership for 21st Century Skills' [Frameworks for 21st Century Learning](#) were developed with input from teachers, education experts, and business leaders to define and illustrate the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in work and life, as well as the support systems necessary for 21st century learning outcomes.

VIDEO OVERVIEWS | MONA AL-HAYANI

“Teaching human rights in the classroom is the basis for all other academic learning. It is a rock that we can step on in order to look at all of the issues that we have to teach our students, no matter which subject area we teach.”

Featured Educator

Mona Al-Hayani is a history teacher at Toledo Early College High School in Toledo, Ohio. She was named the 2019 Ohio Teacher of the Year for her work in and outside of the classroom on behalf of public education. She is the vice president of the Toledo Federation of Teachers and serves as the Federation’s Director of Human Trafficking and Social Justice Issues. Al-Hayani holds a Bachelor’s in sociology and a Master’s in secondary education from the University of Toledo. She also earned her National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.

A two-time U.S. Department of Education Fulbright-Hays awardee, Al-Hayani has traveled around the globe as a teacher leader and researcher. Al-Hayani believes that being an active participant in the democratic process is a responsibility, one that ensures equal rights and an informed citizenry. She encourages her students to practice civic responsibility to gain greater understanding of the curriculum and the world around them.

How and Why She Uses Speak Truth to Power in the Classroom

Mona Al-Hayani believes that it’s critical for teachers to tailor lessons such that they allow students to use what they’re learning in their everyday lives. Teachers’ role goes beyond helping students learn material or pass a test; they are responsible for building students’ character. She wants students to apply what they learn in the classroom to how they treat others and approach societal issues. Al-Hayani encourages her students to express their beliefs on issues they face, supporting their ideas with facts, because she wants them to learn that their voices really do matter.

Al-Hayani was introduced to Speak Truth to Power through her work with the American Federation of Teachers. She got permission from her school district to incorporate the human rights video contest into the National Honors Society curriculum that she uses. When helping students prepare their submissions, she focuses on the biographies of the human rights defenders so that students can start to see who a human defender really is. By looking at the strengths, passion and power of the defenders, students can make connections to their own lives, become inspired, and understand that they can also be human rights defenders.

Al-Hayani believes that educators are responsible for making cross-curricular ties that help students “connect the dots,” because this helps students understand, appreciate, and internalize what they’re learning. She appreciates that STTP transfers to all disciplines and allows students to focus on what they’re interested in. For example, if student are interested in science, they can choose a defender who’s dealing with the environment or climate change.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER/DISCUSS

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Related Resources

- [Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson and Reverend Allyn Maxfield-Steele Biographies](#): These brief biographies highlight the work of the Highlander Research & Education Center, a social justice leadership training school, and includes a link that describes 10 ways youth can engage in activism.
- [International Indigenous Youth Council Biography](#): This biography describes the group's efforts to defend indigenous rights and includes a link outlining ways that students can defend the rights of indigenous people around the world.
- [Ka Hsaw Wa Biography](#): This brief biography describes Wa's efforts to defend the environment and human rights and includes a link that teaches students how they can use their purchasing power to help end slavery.
- The [Speak Truth to Power Video Contest](#) is a middle and high school filmmaking competition that encourages students to become engaged in human rights through video production. Students are challenged to create a 3 to 5-minute video that utilizes creative storytelling to teach others about a human rights issue. The format is open to documentary, stop motion, narrative, digital photo essay and other innovative explorations.