

The Pedagogy of Exploring Humanitarian Law: Ten Features

*What Challenges
Does Each Feature
Present for Teachers?*

*What Needs Are Suggested
for Teacher Training?*

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The pedagogy of EHL can be characterized by ten features

- Today we will look at each of the features
- The challenges each presents for teachers
- The supporting elements in teacher training

1. The classroom or group is a learning community:

1.1 for dialogue in the co-construction of knowledge

1.2 for developing a moral voice

1.1 For dialogue in the co-construction of knowledge

The classroom or group can provide a safe and supportive context for trying out ideas, asking questions, developing solutions

*"Conversation around a shared problem
can serve as natural scaffolding....
The presence of 'the other' compels the speaker
to assemble and formulate ideas in ways
that reach out and communicate meaningfully ..."*

*Maureen Keohane Riley and Catherine Cobb Morocco,
"Talking in School," The Diagnostic Teacher,
Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1999*

What does
making a classroom a learning community
demand of the teacher?

- Group leadership skills, not letting anyone dominate...
- Encouraging diversity in contributions, everyone has something to offer
- Encouraging but not forcing participation, respecting privacy
- Taking learners' ideas seriously
- Treating "mistakes" respectfully

1. The classroom or group is a learning community

1.2 For developing a moral voice

"Having a voice ... in making rules at home or in the classroom, can be one way to develop moral courage.

This is especially difficult and thus especially important in cultures that socialize children to have very strong respect for authority.

Speaking out and thereby standing out is especially difficult in such cultures."

*Ervin Staub,
"From Humanitarian Law to Action in Behalf of Humanity,"
May, 2003.*

What does
helping learners develop a moral voice
demand of the teacher?

“Adults require training that creates some degree of transformation if they are to provide children with opportunities to use and gain confidence in their own perspective and voice.

The example of moral courage by adults is also highly important.”

*Ervin Staub,
"From Humanitarian Law to Action in Behalf of Humanity"
May, 2003*

2. “Active learning”, “Interactive pedagogy”, “Learner-centered”, “Participatory”

(These all mean: organized around learners' interests, ideas and questions.)

For example, instead of giving learners the rules of IHL to memorize, EHL shows learners photos of war's effects and asks them to propose rules.

Why?

Because that motivates learning.

To make knowledge meaningful, learners must make it their own.

If the subject matter is understood, internalized, then it can be retained and passed on.

2. “Active pedagogy” “Learner-Centered” “Participatory”

On the construction of knowledge "*...learning proceeds through the individual's construction of understanding, not only by accepting facts or rules from teacher or textbook; teaching is the facilitation of knowledge construction...*"

Barbara Scott Nelson
"Reconstructing Teaching," *The Diagnostic Teacher*,
Teachers' College Press, Columbia University, 1999

**What does
an active pedagogy
demand of the teacher?**

- Being able to guide learners in activities such as role playing, brainstorming, dilemma analysis
- Being open to unanticipated responses

**In EHL, the teacher acts as a mentor in learners' explorations,
rather than as a deliverer of facts.**

3. The subject matter, international humanitarian law (IHL), is new to most teachers

Most teachers, at least in this generation, are not experts in IHL

IHL has not been widely taught in schools until now.

And IHL is evolving. It is forced to evolve as armed conflict evolves.

So, the role of "mentor-in-exploring" is appropriate.

And it is beneficial, because it allows learners to take an active role in their own learning.

What does *teaching an unfamiliar and evolving subject* demand of the teacher?

-
- Starting to learn the subject matter
- Being willing to say
 - “I don't know”
 - “Let me think about that”
 - “Let's see how we can find out”

Or, sometimes,

- “People are working on that problem”
- “What do you think”
- “What can you contribute to it?”

4. The tone of EHL is “exploring”

- The spirit of "exploring"

We don't know everything now,
but will discover more as we go.

- Learners and teachers are exploring together,
Even IHL experts are still exploring

There are questions to which no one
yet has answers.

Youth are invited to help develop
those answers.

4. The tone of EHL is “exploring”



■ "No Easy Answers"

We don't avoid questions because they are difficult.

We can tolerate holding a question,
letting it become informed with time.



It is empowering and stimulating
to work on unsolved problems,
recognize new questions.

What does *"exploring"* demand of the teacher?

- Letting go of the role of expert, holder of answers
- Finding new ways to assess student learning

EHL provides "safety nets" for the teacher in exploring, so that the discussion doesn't go off a cliff: the "No Easy Answers Corner" list and the "Key Ideas" box at the end of each exploration.

5. EHL is structured by concepts

Powerful concepts

- that are relevant to the content of all the modules
- that make EHL memorable
- that are useful beyond EHL

For example: *Chain of Consequences*

In Module 1~ the *chain of consequences* of a humanitarian or inhumane act
for the vulnerable person,
for the bystander
for other bystanders
incremental growth of humanitarian
or inhumane behaviour

5. EHL is structured by concepts

In Module 2~ the *chain of consequences* of a devastation of war
the loss of a resource

or the use of a child soldier

or an injury inflicted by a landmine

(an "indiscriminate weapon" is so-called due
to the unpredictability of its *chain of
consequences*)

ripple effects

side effects

intended and unintended effects

5. EHL is structured by concepts

In Module 3~ the *chain of consequences* of a violation
one violation leads to another
escalation of violations
atrocities

5. EHL is structured by concepts

In Module 4~ the *chain of consequences* of alternative approaches to justice:

 forgiving and forgetting

 trial and punishment

 truth and reconciliation

for a society

 for the victims

 for the violators

5. EHL is structured by concepts

In Module 5~ the *chain of consequences* from humanitarian action

to replace the basic supports of life

the resources needed to do so

and the dilemmas in so doing

5. EHL is structured by concepts

Chain of Consequences is a systemic concept that underlies analysis and planning in a wide variety of professional fields including:

health and medicine

ecology and environmental protection

legal reasoning and law enforcement

physics, chemistry, engineering

government, industry

What does
material structured by concepts
demand of teachers?

Understanding the concepts, in order to help learners
provide relevant examples

6. Dilemma analysis is a major activity in EHL

For example, a private citizen visiting a prison sees a guard humiliating a prisoner. Should she confront the guard, report it to the authorities, do nothing?

Dilemmas are valued because they are rich material for

Analyzing multiple perspectives

Drawing chains-of consequences

And because they are faced all the time by people engaged in armed conflict and in humanitarian work

6. Dilemma analysis is a major activity in EHL

We analyze dilemmas from all points of view,
but we don't stop there.

We cultivate resourcefulness in finding new alternatives,
negotiating the obstacles, meeting the needs.

Two messages come from dilemma study:

The first is that one has choices--

Not always easy choices, but choices.

The second is that the choice one makes

can have far-reaching consequences.

What does
dilemma analysis
demand of teachers?

Practice in seeing an issue from various perspectives
tracing consequences
conceiving alternative actions

7. EHL engages the heart as well as the head

Concepts and skills are important,
but the exploration must *matter* to the learner

In stories, films, voices from war--
the plights of individuals elicit empathy

But sometimes, a learner's or community's own experience
can make the emotion too powerful

What does
inviting emotion into the classroom
demand of the teacher?

- Knowing how to encourage empathy in the classroom,
and how to channel it, keep it in bounds
through techniques such as
dramatization, freeze-frame, writing, art...
- Being respectful toward the expression of emotion
- Being in touch with one's own feelings
- Knowing when outside help is needed

8. EHL uses documentary, primary source materials: news accounts, letters, etc., rather than textbook summaries, actual events and quotations rather than simulated

Documentary materials are richer;
they hold up to exploration from many points of view.

(ICRC's People on War project made many voices available on humanitarian acts, violations, seeking of justice.)

Practice with documentary materials enables learners to apply course concepts and thinking skills to:

- events in history
- world news
- events in everyday life

Documentary materials provide examples from others' lives-- situations and behaviour-- that allow learners to contemplate situations and decisions they may themselves face one day.

8. EHL uses documentary, primary source materials

8.1 EHL's documentary materials present both positive and negative aspects of human behaviour.

In the film *I Don't Want to Go Back*, Colonel Mother Blessing talks about why he uses child soldiers.

*"Some of them are nine, some of them are ten, some are eleven, the highest is twelve.
They go on the advanced team.... The small soldiers, they are not afraid.
I trust them and they are my best because they execute any order that I give them...
When I say "OK, that man should be executed," for sure they will do that.
So I have the trust and confidence in them."*

What questions will students raise?

"How did he become so evil?"

How to answer?

Always, problematic issues are possible.

Here, for example, the question could arise
of whether a child should always obey an adult.

8.1 EHL's documentary materials present both positive and negative aspects of human behaviour

Why show the negative side of human behaviour?

In the view of Nobel Prize winner Joseph Brodsky, "evil is not an aberration that stands apart from ourselves but a mirror-- 'a reflection of ourselves: of human negative potential.'

And he maintains that we will never be able to combat evil unless we honestly examine the negative as well as the positive aspects of our nature.

History matters for other reasons too. It fosters perspective-taking, critical thinking, and moral decision-making.

Our students must learn that the world they live in did not just happen. It is the result of choices made by countless individuals and groups."

What does *documentary material, positive and negative,* demand of teachers?

- Avoid both idealizing and shocking. Idealizing ignores the bad side, shocking presents too much of it, the grotesque
- When bringing in news events, try to create a balance between the positive and the negative, and encourage students to do so
- For both the good and the bad, be sure that learners understand the point of what they are observing, see the relationship to the consequences

"Exposure" is not enough. Learners must be guided in giving meaning to the real life stories they work with.

8.2 EHL's documentary materials present situations from both home and abroad.

This can be challenging when negative behaviour comes from home

At first educators ask for examples from home, for relevance.

Later, they often prefer to use examples of other cultures.

It is easier to look critically at events at a distance.

What do
documentary materials drawn from both home and abroad
demand of teachers?

- National authorities will likely make decisions, selections, and adaptations of materials they perceive as problematic for their country
- Teachers , however, will still face issues of attribution of good and bad to "us" and "them"

In these cases, teachers will need to remind students that,
"It could happen anywhere; it could happen here.
That is why rules about armed conflict are needed."

8.3 Must documentary materials be recent to be relevant?

Some teachers express the wish that the My Lai case were a more recent one, but we believe that events from earlier history are easier to examine objectively. We would prefer that the example be from an even earlier era -- the Peloponnesian Wars would be better! But we do not have such recorded testimony from those times, and the striking value of the My Lai case is the testimony's immediacy and honesty.

Whatever the time and place, EHL's approach is to focus on humanitarian principles involved and on the situation of victims rather than the perpetrators.

What does
use of historic material
demand of teachers?

Pointing out the universality of the emotions of war and humanitarian principles.

Making clear the relevance to events of today.

It is good for learners to come to understand that not everything has to be current to be relevant

9. EHL is "open-structured," open to "making it your own" in many dimensions

Open structure

What does it mean? Almost an oxymoron, what part is structure, what is open? Structured by concepts, questions, key ideas.

9.1 Culture

EHL uses images, stories, sayings from many cultures, times and places – many voices

And the materials invite your own, asking teachers and learners to contribute literature, news accounts, community stories, surveys, photographs, poems ...

9. EHL is "open-structured," open to "making it your own" in many dimensions

9.2 Modes of learning, for learners of different interests and academic level

For learner problems with reading,

stories suggest reading-out-loud and role playing;

extensions activities include activities in drama, fine arts, music, creative writing, literature research.

9.3 Video and Audio technology

What do you do to replace video material where there are no video players?

Photos and transcripts are available to support your plan

Where there is no copying facility, resourceful teachers use posting, "rotating tables" ...

9. EHL is "open-structured," open to "making it your own" in many dimensions

9.4 Classroom Size

Large classes will require adaptation of participatory activities.

What do *the needs for contribution and adaptation* demand of the teacher?



Flexibility



Resourcefulness



Sharing ideas with others

10. Honesty of the journey:

We acknowledge there are violations,
there are gaps between ideals and actual behaviour.

But we don't view these discrepancies as hypocrisy, rather
as something to improve, gradually perhaps.

Because students can see there are violations;

What we do about violations is what matters.

10. Honesty of the journey:

We acknowledge when we don't know something.

And distinguish between the answers

that we don't happen to know

but can look up ...

And the answers that no one yet knows:

or has worked out –

the questions to which there are

"No Easy Answers".

What does *this “honesty”* demand of the teacher?

-
- Willingness to admit that adults make mistakes
And a view that the human condition
is improvable
- Willingness to admit that one doesn't know something.
And valuing patience and effort
in learning and in developing strategies that work

Role of the teacher in EHL

- Establisher of the classroom community
- Facilitator
- Mentor in exploring and learning
- Subject matter expert?
- Evaluator
- Creative contributor (of local culture, of adaptations for local setting)

Role of the teacher in EHL

“I am happy that I have become a creator. I was simply a teacher-performer at my school”.

A Ukrainian teacher

“EHL is a big river on which lots of boats float. Its waters are IHL and its banks direct the IHL exploration for the youth.... The learners and teachers will go various routes... But all of them will still be in the clear-way of the EHL river.”

An ICRC officer, Kiev

Teacher Support

What training do teachers need for their role in EHL?

- What do they need to know?
- What learning experiences do they need to have?
- What should be the content of teacher training?

Teacher education should mirror the pedagogy for learners:

“Teachers should be viewed as active constructors of their own knowledge about learning and teaching. That is, just as it is impossible for teachers to pour knowledge into the minds of students, so it is impossible for teacher educators and supervisors to pour knowledge into the heads of teachers.”

Barbara Scott Nelson

"Reconstructing Teaching," The Diagnostic Teacher

Teacher Support

In preparation for teaching EHL:

Teachers need to see other teachers teach.

“Psychological theories have traditionally assumed that learning can occur only by performing responses and experiencing their effects. ... In actuality, virtually all learning...can occur vicariously by observing other people's behavior and its consequences for them.”

“By observing others, one forms rules of behavior, and on future occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.”

Albert Bandura, Stanford University,
Social Foundations of Thought and Action, 1986

Teacher Support

EHL provides video clips of actual classroom teaching. Prospective teachers can view the clips in a workshop and discuss decisions the teacher made and alternative approaches.

While teaching:

“Teacher educators and supervisors should be collaborators in the creation of knowledge about learning and teaching. That is, rather than being a critic of teachers' practice, the supervisor or teacher educator would be a collaborator in thinking through puzzling dilemmas of teaching.”

Barbara Scott Nelson

"Reconstructing Teaching," The Diagnostic Teacher

Teacher Support

Over time:

From research on how teachers adopt new teaching methods:

“Research on teachers' change of instructional practice and the development of a new instructional repertoire is under way, but it is in the very early stages. There are indications that teachers need to work through the new instructional methods over time in the context of their teaching practice; that they see different aspects of the problem at different points in the process of change; and that they become proficient and flexible in their use of new methods only over an extended period of time, often 2 or 3 years.”

“Teachers' initial attempts at changing their teaching may be disjointed and they may face classroom management problems because the kind of classroom they are trying to envision and develop is significantly different from the kind of classroom they currently know how to create and manage.”

Barbara Scott Nelson

"Reconstructing Teaching," *The Diagnostic Teacher*,
Teachers' College Press, Columbia University, 1999

Teacher Support

EHL support materials for teachers include:

■ The Modules

- lesson plans
- background resources

■ The Methodology Guide

- guidance on techniques
- plans for workshops
- transcripts of videos

■ The Teacher Video

- showing actual classroom teaching

■ Teacher Training Workshops

Teacher Support

Communities of Practice are establishing themselves
in seminars, and over the internet, using distance learning

EHL educators can be a “global community of practice”

We are doing something new, unprecedented,
we need to share with each other
the strategies we develop.