

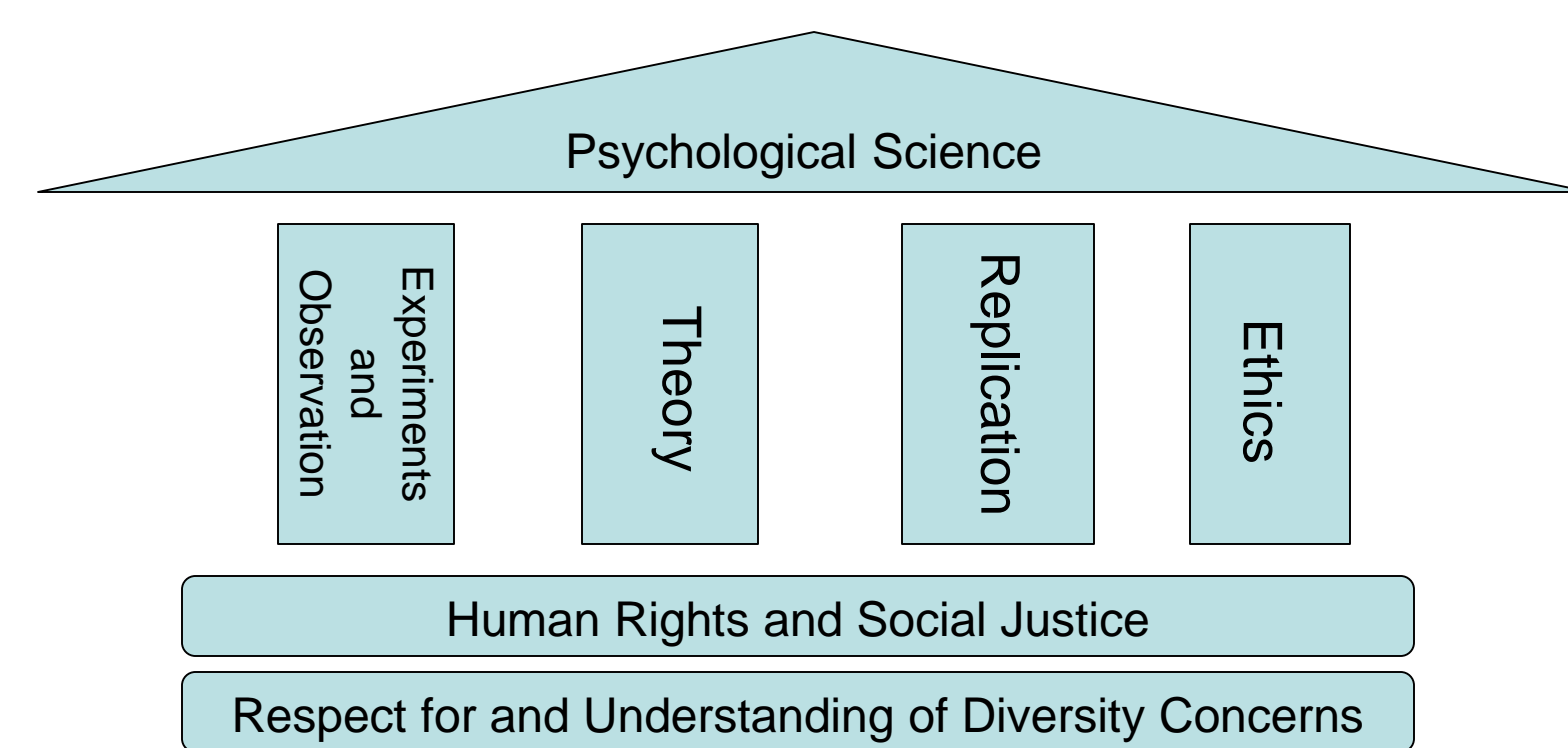


Introduction

Although research methods often are taught with an eye towards ethics, teachers may fail to include other elements of good scientific practice related to issues of human rights, social justice, and diversity. These elements are just as foundational to the field of psychology as are the concepts of research ethics, external validity, and construct validity – typically included in a research methods course. Certainly, history is replete with instances where researchers ignored human rights and social justice in the pursuit of science and engaged in significant harm. Many of our students may be familiar with the horrific research conducted by the Nazis and Japanese during World War II. However, fewer students are aware of the violations of basic ethical principles conducted by researchers the United States (e.g., the Tuskegee studies, Willowbrook Hepatitis studies, human radiation studies). In each of these cases, not only did researchers breach basic ethical principles (e.g., informed consent) but violated human rights made possible by patterns of social injustice within a culture.

As educators, we must make students aware that good science and respect for human rights, social justice, and diversity are not on opposite ends of a spectrum. Rather, one cannot conduct valid research, if elements of diversity, cultural social justice, or rights are omitted from one's research design and methodology. For example, omitting marginalized groups from a study to decrease statistical error severely limits the external validity of the study. More importantly, such exclusion becomes a social justice concern, as marginalized populations are systematically made invisible. Additionally, from a construct validity perspective, if methods developed on dominant populations are simply used with alternative populations (i.e., persons and peoples from different ability, contextual, cultural, linguistic backgrounds), the results may further elements of marginalization and discrimination within the culture.

Of course, the concepts of human rights, social justice, and diversity should not just be limited to inclusion in a discussion of research methods. These concepts need to be integrated throughout the psychology curriculum.



Multicultural Research

How WEIRD is your sample? Historically within psychology, there has been a belief that research on a subset of the human population must be applicable to all of humanity around the globe. Unfortunately, the type of sample most often used in psychological research is often derived from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies. As noted by Henrich, Heine, and Norenzavan (2010), there is a great deal of cross-cultural and intra-cultural variability evident in research findings. In addition, there is evidence that WEIRD populations are uniquely different from other groups. Unfortunately, psychology textbooks and journals are filled with psychological concepts, theories, and research findings that are based on research conducted using WEIRD populations.

The failure to include multicultural considerations and diverse populations as part of research can lead to faulty and harmful conclusions. Hall (2014) highlighted the important role of psychologists in advocating for the rights of marginalized and oppressed groups and political change. She stated, "Psychology was at the forefront of many of the political movements to make these changes, but at other times psychology actually supplied ammunition in the form of discriminatory research and theories of racial inferiority, misogyny, and homophobia" (p. 3). Unfortunately, although homogeneous samples may increase the internal validity of a study, it is often at the expense of the ability to generalize to a range of diverse populations. All of the above highlights concerns related to the topic of research validity, specifically construct, internal, and external validity.

Bernal, Trimble, Bulew, and Leong (2003), Chang and Sue (2005), and Matsumoto (2000) discussed a range of challenges related to the emphasis on internal validity at the expense of external validity and multicultural research. Challenges include:

- Overuse of college students as research participants
- Willingness to assume research conducted on one population (e.g., WEIRD samples) can be generalized to other groups or contexts
- Disregard for research seeking to explore cross-cultural differences as opposed to explain such differences
- The tendency of journal reviewers to insist that researchers add a White control group when conducting research on ethnic minority groups
- The formation of aggregate non-White populations to obtain a large sample size.
- Many psychological principles are treated at universals or etics, with little examination of multicultural differences
- Failure to address intersectionality/variability within broad cultural/ethnic groups
- Research assuming a "deficit model" with White, male, Western as the norm
- Lack of awareness of sources of construct nonequivalence—translation, conceptual, and metric.



Historical Failures

Nazi Dachau War Effort Experimentation: The Nazis conducted studies to better understand the effects of high altitude as well as hypothermia on the human body. Such research was deemed essential as pilots were being forced to eject from new fighter planes capable of high altitude flight and needed rescue from the sea.

Japanese WWII Medical Experimentation: The Japanese military engaged in brutal biological and chemical warfare experiments in China. Testing involved vivisection, amputations, organ removal, and freezing. Germ warfare field testing including methods of dispersal of diseases such as bubonic plague, cholera, and anthrax. These experiments resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Chinese.

The Tuskegee Study: Several hundred men diagnosed with syphilis were denied treatment as part of a study entitled, "Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male." Even when penicillin became the recommended and available treatment, these men were denied access to care. The study was made public in 1972 and a formal apology was issued by President Bill Clinton in 1997. In addition to the men who suffered, it should also be noted that many women and unborn children were effected significantly and negatively.

Additional Examples:

- 1940s, Nashville, TN: Pregnant women seeking prenatal care at Vanderbilt University received a "vitamin cocktail" containing radioactive iron to examine nutritional requirements during pregnancy
- 1940s, Guatemala: Under a NIH grant, U.S. researchers infected over 1300 individuals with venereal diseases, principally, syphilis to test if penicillin would be an effective treatment.
- 1940s, West Coxsackie, NY: Men were exposed to a deadly stomach bug by spraying the disease or forcing them to swallow unfiltered feces suspension.
- 1942, Ypsilanti, MI: Seriously mentally ill patients were injected with an experimental flu vaccine without their consent and later exposed to the flu. Co-authored by Dr. Jonas Salk, inventor of the polio vaccine.
- 1940s—1950s, Fernald School, MA: Young boys were fed radioactive oatmeal as members of the "Science Club" to test the effects of exposure.
- 1950s, Atlanta, GA: Prisoners were infected with gonorrhea to test infection rates and then treatment.
- 1950s—1960s, St. Louis, MO & Corpus Christi, TX: The U.S. military sprayed zinc cadmium sulfide, possibly laced with radioactive particles, over poor areas of these two cities as part of Cold War testing.
- 1960s, Brooklyn, NY: Elderly patients at the Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital were injected with cancer cells to see if they would develop the disease.
- 1960s, Staten Island, NY: Children at Willowbrook State School were injected with hepatitis through feces, either orally or by injection, and then tested with a new medication for treatment.

Activity: Discuss these examples in relation to the development of the Nuremberg Code and Belmont Report.

Activity: Students can discuss the ethics of using research obtained unethically and the long-term implications of promoting such research through citation without reference to the ethical concerns.

Human Rights, Social Justice, & Diversity in Context

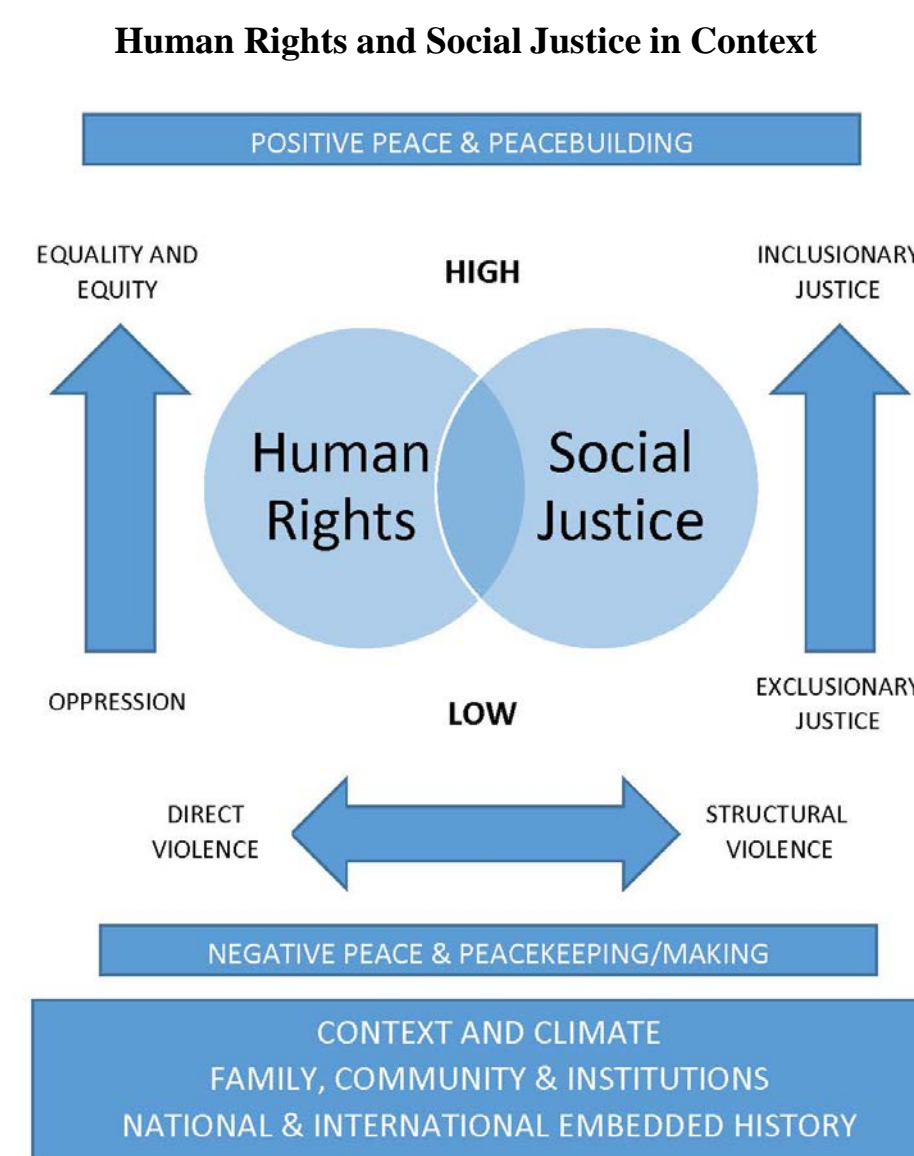
In each of the historical failures cited previously, researchers violated the fundamental human rights of the subjects and social justice was denied. Moreover, when these studies were conducted, the violations were considered justifiable due to the researcher's moral exclusion of the victims as "others."

Key elements within an ecological approach to social justice include elements such as negative and positive peace; direct, structural, and cultural forms of violence; inclusionary and exclusionary justice; and human rights. At its foundation, social justice is rooted in context, climate, and history. When examining any social justice concern, psychological scholars, practitioners, researchers, teachers, and consultants must be informed about cultural norms, such as kinship patterns, language, educational policies, economic structures, and government, and historical context.

Direct violence represents instances of harm that are largely visible, intentional, dramatic, personally directed against another, and may be motivated by instrumental needs, ideological goals, or on occasion, for power or sadism—a person is physically assaulted, a woman raped, or a country is at war. Because of the overt nature of direct violence, it can be prevented and there are periods of non-violence.

Structural violence represents social inequities that have long-term negative impacts on individuals and communities. As such, structural violence is much more insidious, ubiquitous, and continuous. Although, individuals may be physically harmed as a result of structural violence, there is no identifiable perpetrator. Ideologies that promote inequities and violence (e.g., work ethic, racism, culturally-defined gender roles, heteronormativity, cisgenderism, class structures) cause harm but are viewed as normal and appropriate, often bolstered by religious belief systems or those holding social dominance orientations.

Negative peace addresses intervention during times of violence. In contrast, the aims of positive peace focus on reducing structural and cultural forms of violence and enhancing social equality and opportunity. Unless societies, both within and across geo-political boundaries, address issues of racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, ableism, classism, poverty, cisgenderism, and other forms of social, political, economic, and ecological injustices, positive peace cannot be attained.



Demographics and Sampling

At first glance, the issue of demographics and sampling may appear to be simple. However, when one includes diverse populations or is studying diversity both between and within cultures, these concerns are highly complex and require careful thought and foresight. Some of the major issues affecting demographics and sampling involve: a) self-identification; 2) hidden populations; 3) the exclusion; and 4) faulty biologically-based conclusions. All of these issues are influenced by experimenter preconceptions about groups and cultures.

When conducting research, it is important to use culturally relevant and appropriate demographic categories regardless whether the research involves participants within or between cultures.

Familiarity with the culture, including diversity within the culture under study and other points of intersection (e.g., ethnic groups, language, religion), is essential to avoid bias and stereotypes on the part of the experimenter.

Around the globe, many groups are hidden from view due to cultural, religious, or legal strictures. For example, in some cultures adultery may result in honor killings, identification as LGBTQIA+ is punishable by death or banishment, and certain religious groups face imprisonment. Therefore, these populations often remain hidden as a matter of safety and in attempts to avoid oppression. Efforts to include and study such populations are thus difficult.

Unfortunately, researchers often exclude individuals, both intentionally and unintentionally, from research participation based on a variety of factors. Such factors include, but are not limited to, the ability to get to the site of the research, literacy, gender, language, political oppression, socio-economic status, religious affiliation, and disability. Such exclusions limit the generalizability of the research. The pool of available participants may be limited if participants are unable to read a questionnaire, lack the means to travel to the research site, or fear governmental reprisals for taking part in a research study. Consequently, those who become involved in the research may be different than those individuals who do not elect to or cannot participate.

Individuals with disabilities are often systematically excluded from research both in the U.S. and abroad. Types of disability are broadly defined in the U.S. to include sensory, physical, mental, self-care, homebound, and employment categories. Disabilities can be visible or hidden (e.g., heart defect), and individuals may or may not define themselves as disabled depending on the degree of limitation the disability creates in their lives. Nonetheless, some investigators fail to accommodate disabled participants, thereby systematically excluding them from research. Other researchers simply bar individuals with disabilities from research participation altogether, often as the result of experimenter bias—the assumption that disability has broad effects on cognition, personality, affect, or ability. Of course, this assumption is grounded largely in stereotype rather than reality (Dunn, 2000).

Activities

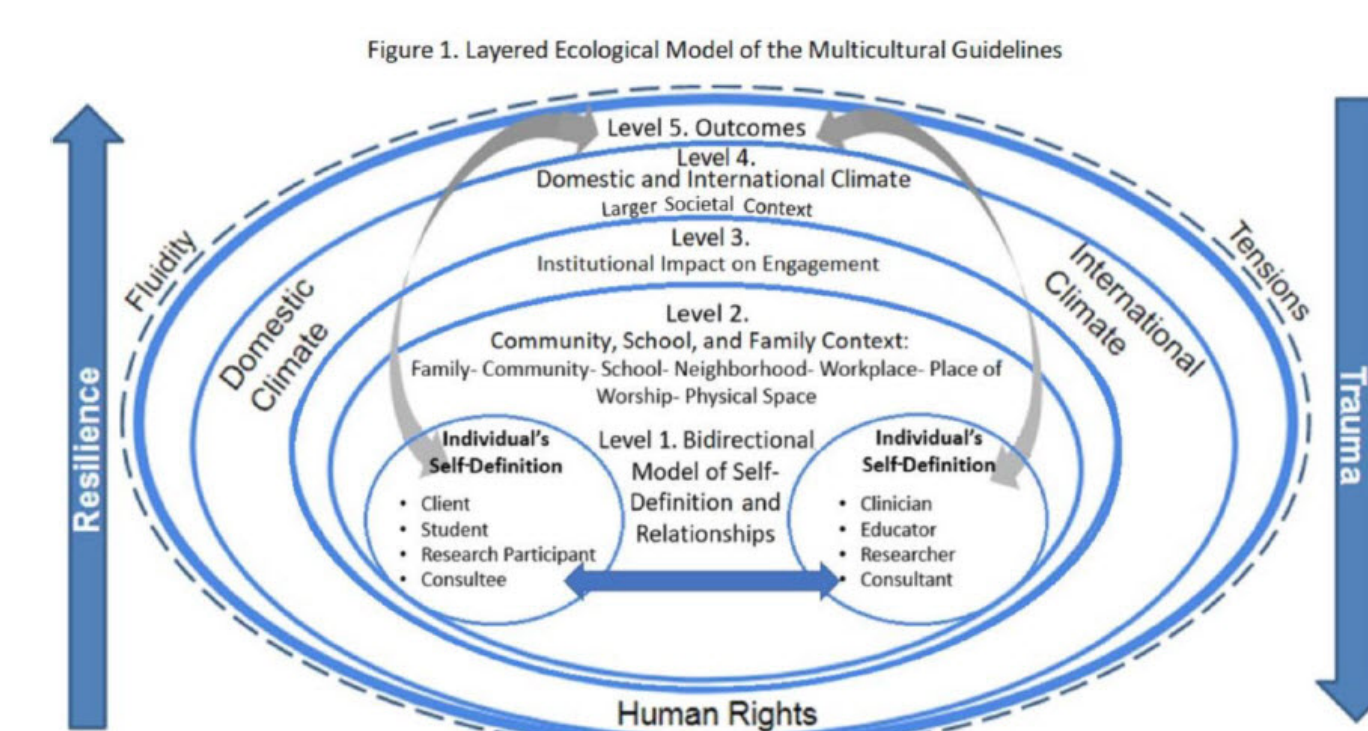
Evaluation of Published Research: Students can be instructed to bring in five articles on a topic (e.g., depression, obedience) and then evaluate the samples of those studies. They can then discuss the implications of these samples in relation to generalizability to other populations.

Examination of the Universality of PTSD and Recommended Treatments: Students can discuss the material presented in most textbooks about PTSD and compare to material presented in articles such as:

- Bracken, P. J. (1998). Hidden agendas: Deconstructing post traumatic stress disorder. In P. J. Bracken & C. Petty (Eds.), Rethinking the trauma of war (pp. 38-59). New York, NY: Free Association Books.
- Comas-Diaz, L. (2000). An ethno-political approach to working with people of color. *American Psychologist*, 55, 1319-1325.
- Kira, I. A. (2010). Etiology and treatment of post-cumulative traumatic stress disorders in different cultures. *Traumatology*, 16, 128-141.
- Qureshi, A., Bageuf, I. F., Ghali, K., & Collazos, F. (2015). Cultural competence in trauma. In M. Schouler-Oak & M. Schouler-Oak (Eds.), Trauma and migration: Cultural factors in the diagnosis and treatment of traumatized immigrants (pp. 159-175). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Demographic Questionnaire: Have students discuss the challenges associated with developing a basic demographic questionnaire that represents the diversity of human experience as well as doesn't reify notions of biological determinism on topics such as race.

APA Multicultural Guidelines: Introduce student to the APA multicultural guidelines. Have students select a topic, which influences their everyday lives and then evaluate that topic through the multicultural model, taking into account how their experiences may be different depending on various factors such as gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, education, etc.



American Psychological Association (2017). Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality. Retrieved from: <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/multicultural-guidelines.pdf>

Teaching Human Rights

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1948. Following the legacy of the Holocaust, the UDHR, as well as the Nuremberg Code and the Convention on Genocide, raised the visibility of human rights for all. An individual is endowed with these rights at birth simply because he or she is a human being. The UDHR states that these rights are universal (without distinction, all individuals inherently possess these rights), inalienable (unable to be lost or taken away), and indivisible (all rights are equally important).



In addition to the UDHR, it is imperative that our students, particularly at the graduate level, have familiarity with the following UN Human Rights documents depending on their area of specialization:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- United Nations Principles for Older Persons
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention
- Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities
- International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

A more substantive list, including a range of UN Human Rights documents as well as optional protocols, can be found at www2.ohchr.org/english/law/index.htm

These UN Conventions, Resolutions, and Declarations are essential in that they demonstrate an international set of standards (i.e., the foundations of international law), highlight the necessity of implementing these standards, and calls for external assessment in relation to implementation.

Activities: The various UN Documents can easily be integrated into psychology classes and compared to APA policies on these topics. Additionally, the documents and policies can be integrated into discussions of topics such as multicultural psychology, aging, political psychology, prejudice and discrimination, child development, peace psychology, gender, social psychology, and health psychology.

Activities

Ethics: Although psychologists are bound by ethical codes and standards developed by psychological associations and societies around the globe, these codes were not always clearly tied to principles of human rights and social justice. Fortunately, ethics codes within psychology are increasingly including elements of human rights and social justice (e.g., APA, BPS, EFPA). However, it is imperative that human rights and social justice not be contained as simply "elements" but as a foundation upon which these codes are developed and understood. Such a foundation is essential to ethical thought and decision-making for all practitioners of psychology. Have students compare and contrast the Ethics Code for APA with other national codes such as Canada and New Zealand, as well as the Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists to compare and contrast the approach taken by each organization. (<http://www.tupsys.net/about/governance/universal-declaration-of-ethical-principles-for-psychologists.html>).

Abnormal Psychology: The rights of the mentally ill and human rights make for rich fodder for discussion in the classroom. Students can examine and discuss the Mental Health Declaration of Human Rights (Citizens Commission on Human Rights, n.d.). Students can also discuss the issue of forced medication/treatment as well as the impact of extreme trauma (e.g., genocide, torture, trafficking) on survivors.

Waiting for Superman: Many students do not know or understand the distinction between direct and structural forms of violence. As such, they fail to understand the structural causes of human rights violations and the role of this form of violence in moral exclusion and human rights violations. Through the use of selected excerpts from this film, students can discuss/learn how institutional systems perpetuate inequality and social stratification.

Service Learning Projects: When teaching about human rights and social injustices, it is important that the instructor also provide students with the tools for positive action. Positive action can take many forms ranging from effective lobbying of political officials to creating social media campaigns. The goal is to move students from the possibility of potential despair, psychophysical numbing, and bystander inaction to involvement and the recognition that they possess the tools to make a difference in the world.

Using Photos to Teach Social Justice: The organization Teaching Tolerance, which develops and publishes free activities to help teachers and schools educate children and youth to be active participants in a diverse democracy, has created an exercise to teach social justice using a series of 12 lessons. Each lesson focuses on a contemporary social justice issue. The activity encourages students to better understand how people experience injustices and how to examine the totality of what is presented in a photograph.

