LESSON PLAN

Level: Grades 9 to 10

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Duration: 1 to 1/2 hours

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Shaking the Movers: Youth Rights and Media

Overview

Students will discuss the concept of human rights and then learn how these ideas led to the drafting of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. They then consider five particular Articles of the Convention and, in groups, discuss how these relate to their media use. Students debate which Articles are most important to their media experiences and defend their choices to the class.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- learn about the concept of human rights
- learn about the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- discuss how Articles of the Convention apply to their media use
- lead a small-group discussion
- collaborate with an expert group
- present and defend opinions
- write a persuasive essay

Preparation and Materials

Teachers wishing a fuller background on the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* may consult the UNICEF Web page at http://www.unicef.org/crc/.

Photocopy the handout *Media Rights*.

Procedure

What are Rights?

Start by asking the class what they know about the term *rights*:

- When we talk about having the *right* to do something, what does it mean? (That you can't be prevented from doing that thing.)
- Following on the last point, introduce students to the idea that some rights protect your *ability to do things* (e.g. expressing your opinion) and others guarantee your *protection and freedom from certain things* (e.g. having your reputation damaged by false statements about you). In fact, the rights you have to *do* things can't be separated from other people's rights (and vice-versa.)
- What examples of rights can students think of? (Some might include the right to free expression or "freedom of speech," right to privacy, the right to vote, etc.)
- Why do we have rights? (Rights limit the power of government over people and promote fair treatment of all citizens; in general, they protect people from being *mistreated* or *unreasonably limited* by the government or each other.)
- Where do rights come from? (Rights are guaranteed by the *laws* or *constitutions* of different nations. One of the reasons for the founding of the United Nations in 1945 was to ensure that there would never be another human catastrophe like the Second World War. One of its most important tasks was to create new instruments to redress the human wrongs of the period up to and including the war by promoting human rights and guaranteeing them through international treaties and conventions like the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.)
- Who has rights? (Everyone: the difference between a *right* and a *privilege* is that rights are *guaranteed* and available to *everyone*.)
- What limits do rights have? (Rights normally are limited only when they conflict with other rights. In Canada, the rights guaranteed by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms are subject to "reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society." For example, you have a right to freedom of expression, but not to falsely shout "Fire!" in a crowded theatre because that would conflict with other people's right to safety.)
- Does everyone have the same rights? (Normally all adult citizens of a nation have the same rights, with some exceptions: if you are a resident of a country but not a citizen, you will have some rights but not others; and you may be temporarily deprived of some rights if you commit a crime.)
- Do children have rights? (Yes, though children often do not have certain rights such as the right to vote or to agree to contracts until they reach the age of majority, which in Canada is 18.)

Rights of the Child

Following on the last point, explain to the class that because children have generally had limited rights to participate politically (most importantly, the right to vote), it is difficult for them to protect or advocate for their rights. As a result, in 1989 the United Nations adopted the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which calls on all countries to protect the rights of children (defined by the *Convention* as being anyone under 18 except in nations where the age of majority is younger.) The rights covered by the convention are human rights because *all children* in the world should have them.

Give students some examples of the rights guaranteed under the Convention:

- The right to protection from violence (Article 19)
- The right to an education (Article 28)
- The right to learn about and practice your own culture, language and religion (Article 30)
- The right to play (Article 31)
- The right to be protected from harmful or exploitative work (Article 32)
- The right to know about their rights under the Convention (Article 42)

Explain that in order to have any legal power the Convention had to be *ratified* (made law) by different countries. Canada ratified the Convention in 1991, and has since that time used it as a guide when creating laws relating to children (for example the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*); since 1990 the Convention has been ratified by all UN members except the United States and Somalia.

Media Rights

Explain to students that because using *media* (television, music, the Internet, etc.) is an important part of their lives, the Convention applies to their media use as well. For example, Article 28 might guarantee the right of students to access the Internet or other media products when it's necessary for their education, and Article 32 might protect children from having the creative work they do on or offline exploited by adults.

Distribute the handout *Media Rights* and divide the class into groups of four. (If the number of students in the class is not divisible by four, you can either have some oversize or undersize groups; either will work equally well.)

Within the groups, each student will act as the *expert* for one of the Articles (with Articles 34 and 36 counting as one Article):

- Child's Right to Freedom of Expression (Article 13)
- Child's Right to Privacy (Article 16)
- Child's Right to Access to Appropriate Information (Article 17)
- Child's Right to Freedom From Exploitation (Articles 34 and 36)

Each expert will read and/or summarize their Article to the group and lead a short discussion on how it relates to their media use; the expert for each Article should also take notes on that discussion. The discussion should cover the following topics that examine the ways in which this Article is relevant to students' media use:

- Situations: What situations can you think of where your rights under this Article are not respected?
- Challenges: What challenges can you think of that might make it difficult to guarantee the rights under this Article?
- Limits: What do you think would be reasonable limits for the rights guaranteed under this Article?
- Strategies: What do you think are the best strategies for guaranteeing the right guaranteed under this Article to all youth?

Give students about 20 minutes to discuss the four Articles. (Remind students that their discussion should focus on how the rights relate to *their* media use. For example, they might discuss the right to privacy with respect to their parents snooping on their *Facebook* profiles, but not to their parents snooping in their rooms.)

Students now form new groups with the other students who were experts on their particular Article. (So all of the students who led the discussion on Article 13 now form a group, all of those who led the discussion on Article 16 form a group, and so on.) These *expert groups* now share the results of their discussions and decide on the *three* items in each category (Situations, Challenges, Limits, Strategies) that they agree are the most important.

Making Your Case

The experts now return to their original groups and present what they agreed upon in their expert groups.

The original groups now each select which of the four Articles they feel is most important and relevant to their media use. They then select one item in each category that they feel is most important. At the end of this process they will have chosen one Article and, relating to it, one Situation, Challenge, Limit and Strategy they think is most important and relevant with regards to their media use.

Now have students present and *defend* their choices to the class, explaining why that Article and related Situation, Challenge, Limit and Strategy are most important and relevant with regards to their media use.

My Manifesto

Have students pick one of the items their group presented to the class (a Situation, Challenge, Limit or Strategy) and write a short essay explaining their position.

Optional: Using a free blogging platform such as *Blogger* or *Wordpress*, create a classroom blog and post students' essays; you can also invite students to comment on each others' entries.

Optional: Have students send their essays (or select essays from the class) to individuals or public bodies who have the power or influence to promote or guarantee children's rights with regard to media (e.g. Members of Parliament or Provincial Parliaments, local school boards, the CRTC, etc.)

Extension Activity: Video Essay

Have groups collaborate on a video essay that expresses their opinions on the rights of the child as it relates to the media. For examples you can view the Oneminutesjr videos http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/media_youtube.php and the Rights of the Child cartoons http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/433_cartoons.php on the UNICEF Web site; students can also submit their videos to this site once they are completed.

Divide students into groups of two or three, and have them research and create a video essay on their opinion. It should cover key points relating to the chosen issue, and make a persuasive point. The video should be no longer than a minute or two long (60-120 seconds). (If making a video is not technically feasible, students should either perform a skit or write a short essay with the same requirements.)

To help students make the videos, distribute the handout *Creating a Video Essay*. Review "The Pre-Production Phase" section, and explain that careful planning is the key to making a good video. Talk them through the section entitled

"Start with a plan," and then go through the "Have a script" section. Direct each group to write the script; once it's written, have them rehearse it to make sure it fits the allotted time frame.

Review the "Create a storyboard" section with the class, and have each group create a storyboard and a shot list for their video. Check and approve each group's work, then schedule rehearsals (both with and without actual cameras). In some cases, the storyboards and shot lists may have to be adjusted based on rehearsal results.

(During rehearsals, remind students to be aware of the material in the "Respect bystanders and copyright" section, covering aspects such as scenes of conflict and visible trademarks.)

When the groups have finished rehearsing, review with them "The Production Phase" section of the *Creating a Video Essay* handout. Have each group shoot their video, following their storyboard and shot list.

Finally, review "The Post-production Phase" section and have students edit first the individual segments of their videos, and then the segments together as a whole.

Extension Activity: Imagineaction

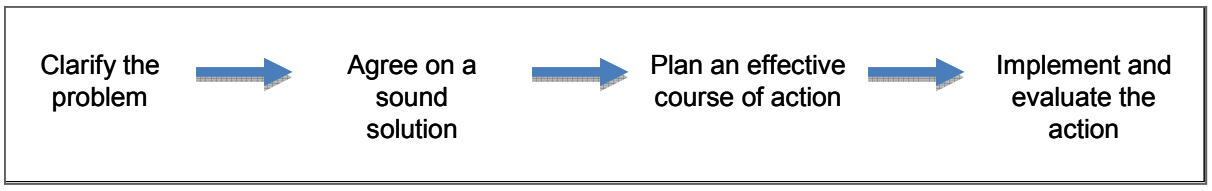
This activity encourages students to take action on the issue(s) that have been identified by them. Students have discovered how their rights, as they apply to their media use, may be infringed by the actions of others. Through this exercise, students and their teachers, will explore ways in which they may act constructively to correct this situation.

Imagineaction (www.imagine-action.ca) is a program designed to facilitate student-teacher –community social action. Once registered on the web site, teachers have access to project funding, professional resources, a database of community experts and agencies willing to assist, and a showcase of ideas from across the country.

In their groups, students have identified which of the four Articles they feel is most important and relevant to their media use. They have chosen one Article and, relating to it, one Situation, Challenge, Limit and Strategy they think is most important and relevant with regards to their media use and defended that to the class.

Each of the identified articles should be recorded for everyone to see. The class should identify one issue arising from the discussion that they deem as the most important to them and for which they may be able to effect some change. You may wish to show the Imagineaction video – *Making a Difference* as an overview to the Imagineaction program.

Briefly outline the framework for guiding students through an action project as described in the *Making a Difference* teacher guide.



Have students brainstorm possible solutions to their problem and then agree on a solution that is doable. Solutions may include awareness campaigns, petitions and/or letter writing. When implementing your strategy, it is important to remember that the problem solving model should be used as new problems arise. Students should be involved in clarifying and solving any new problem as it may arise.

With your students, determine what will define the success of their program. For an awareness campaign, for example, students may want to survey a representative group in the school both before and after the campaign to determine its effectiveness.

Media Rights

These Articles are taken from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. You can read learn more about the Convention at http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_understanding.html and read the whole text at http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm.*

Child's Right to Freedom of Expression

Article 13:

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.
2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
   (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or
   (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.

Child's Right to Privacy

Article 16:

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.
2. The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Child's Right of Access to Appropriate Information

Article 17:

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.

To this end, States Parties shall:

(d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;

(e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being…

Child's Right to Freedom from Exploitation

Article 34:

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

(α) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;

(β) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;

(χ) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Article 36:

States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.

Creating a Video Essay

A video essay, just like a written essay, explores a topic and makes a persuasive point about it. Its style can range from simple or as complex as you wish: edited or unedited, with music or voice-over, or without. It can be created on a cell phone, a video camera, a webcam, or any other video device.

The Pre-Production Phase

Start With a Plan

First, ask yourself some basic questions about your project:

- What's the message you want to convey?
- What visual and technical elements, such as sound or camera angles, will help to get your message across?
- What other elements may affect your message? Things to consider include location, people, and props. If these are key to your design, it may be a wise idea to plan your ideas around these elements.

Have a Script

Once you've worked out the details of your message, and thought about how to get it across to your audience, it's time to commit your ideas to paper. Your script should identify how the images and audio (dialogue, sound, music) will fit together.

Create a Storyboard

When your script is ready, the next step is a storyboard. (Don't worry about making your drawings look really good! Many talented filmmakers create very simple pictures). Storyboards are important for many reasons:

- They help you solidify the mental images you want to capture. The process of creating a storyboard forces you to focus on each sequence, shot, camera angle and camera movement. (For details, see the "Camera shots" in *The Production Phase* section of this handout.)
- They make an excellent communication tool, allowing you to show others (such as the people who are working with you) exactly how you want the story to unfold. Words can cause confusion and leave listeners unclear about your intentions; pictures are much easier to understand.
- They simplify the order in which you choose to shoot your project, allowing you to note which shots are similar enough to be covered by the same camera position.

Make up a Shot List

Your shot list is the order in which you plan to shoot your essay. List your shots not in chronological order but according to location, and match the ones that have a similar set-up. For example, if your storyboard shows that shots 4, 9 and 15 are all close-ups of someone sitting in the same place; all three shots could be recorded one after the other.

Prepare Your Technical Needs

List the things you'll need for your sound effects, props, costumes and equipment. Make sure the batteries for your equipment are fully charged. Have extras of everything on hand: batteries, extension cords and power bars, electrical and masking tape, and videotape (if you're recording in that format).

Review your camera's operating manual. Before shooting day, make sure you're familiar with the key functions you'll need, and get some practice using the camera. Keep the manual with you, just in case you need to troubleshoot. Also, familiarize yourself with any mechanical quirks the camera may have. Some cameras, for instance, automatically roll back the tape just a bit when you stop recording, so you lose some footage.

Choose Your Location(s)

Whether you decide to film in a public place or a private one, you need to consider technical issues and/or permission issues.

- Be sure you have permission to film at your chosen location. If it's your school, for instance, you'll need permission from a teacher or principal. If it's a business or a private home, you must get permission from the owner. If it's a park or a public location, you may need to get a city permit. If that's the case, your teacher can help you.
- If your location is indoors, check in advance for the accessibility, location and number of electrical outlets. Make sure you have enough power for all your equipment.
- Check the ambient light and sound at your location. Are there any elements that will distort your sound, such as a water fountain, traffic, a humming ceiling fan, construction going on? Will you need to bring extra lights to illuminate your scene(s) properly?
- If you plan to film outdoors, pay close attention to the weather forecast. You may need to change your shooting day to accommodate the weather.
- If you have a crew of people helping you, let them know well in advance when and where you'll be filming. Make sure they know what their roles will be.
- Have your production notes with you at all times. They'll keep you on track while shooting.

Respect Bystanders and Copyright

Your scene(s) should not include any physical conflict, violence or weapons. If you plan to shoot a tense scene involving arguments, emotional distress or staged injuries, take extra precautions in a public place. You may need to post a public notice, notify city authorities, get a special permit, or even have professionals standing by. If you plan such a scenario, have your teacher help.

People who appear on camera should avoid clothes with logos or brand names, as these are copyrighted images.

The Production Phase

Camera Shots

Every film, whether short or long, is made up of thousands of shots, all of which must be carefully planned by the director. Here's a brief introduction to the various types of shots, involving different aspects of the camera.

Camera Distance

Depending on how far the camera is from its subject, the three main types of shots are close-up, medium shot, and long shot.

- A **close-up** shows only one part of the subject, usually in great detail: a person's face, a car's licence plate, a hand on a doorbell.
- A **medium shot** shows roughly half of the subject: a character from the waist up, or the back end of a car.
- A **long shot** shows the whole subject: a person from head to foot, or the entire car.

Other kinds of shots are the "establishing shot," used at the beginning of a scene to give viewers an idea of where they are. For example, a long shot of the school's façade, or of City Hall, establishes the fact that the story takes place at those locations.

During a conversation, or a scene involving more than one person, a "reaction shot" is used to show the effect of one person's actions on the other character(s).

Camera Angle

The angle from which a director chooses to shoot gives audiences some subtle clues about a scene.

- A "high-angle" shot positions the camera above eye level, looking down on the subject. Depending on how extreme the angle is, this makes the subject look small, insignificant, weak or helpless.
- An "eye level" shot gives a neutral, factual impression.
- A "low-angle" shot positions the camera looking up at the subject from below. This angle makes the subject appear important, powerful or dominating.
- A "reverse-angle" shot positions the camera as if it were the subject's own eyes. So rather than looking **at** the subject, the camera shows what the subject sees.

Camera Moves

A camera isn't a fixed observer; it can also move in and out of the action. When the camera moves left or right, it's called "tracking" (sometimes also known as "trucking"). Moving forward or backward is known as "dollying."

When the camera stays in the same position and turns left or right, it's called "panning," and turning up or down is "tilting." Focusing can also make the camera appear to move closer to its subject or further away from it, by using the lens to "zoom" in or out.

All these camera moves are useful, but they should not be overused—or they'll distract the audience and diminish the intended effect. Camera movements should always be planned and rehearsed ahead of time, so they'll be smooth and in tune with the action.

Using Your Camera

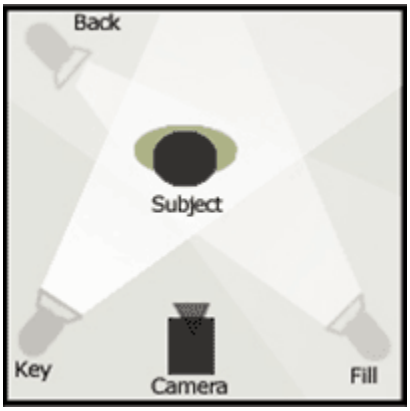
If you're not used to working with a video camera, it pays to keep a few guidelines in mind:

- When setting up for filming, it's always wise to tape down extension cords and electrical wires. This prevents people from tripping over the cords, and either injuring themselves or unplugging or damaging the equipment.
- Check the lens periodically to make sure it's free of dust and hair. When you stop recording, even briefly, put the lens cap back on.
- Every time you change location, do a "white balance": zoom the camera in on a sheet of white paper, and use the camera's automatic white balance setting. This ensures that the camera registers colours properly. Every location has its own idiosyncratic lighting and hues, and this helps you to compensate.
- Use a tripod for steady, professional-looking shots that are easier to match at the editing phase. (However, if your story needs a realistic feel, like a home video, a documentary footage or a police drama, you may prefer the slightly wobbly hand-held approach.) Practice all camera movements before you shoot. When you record, don't stop until you've completed all the motions.
- Use manual focus. Although automatic focus ensures that everything is sharp, you risk losing your focus if there's movement near the lens, or a change in lighting. To avoid these problems, set the camera to automatic focus to zoom in on your subject; then, once you've focused properly, switch to manual and zoom out again to re-establish your original framing.
- If your subject is moving across the frame or out of it, wait until she or he leaves the frame completely before you stop recording.
- Keep a log of all your shots. Include information such as shot number, duration of the shot, and whether you felt it was a good take. Again, this saves time during editing.
- Record longer versions of each shot than you think you'll need. You can always edit a shot down in post-production, but you can't make it longer.
- Take extra shots for "cutaways." These come in handy during editing if you find you need some extra material to insert between sequences that don't quite match up. An extra shot can be a close-up of a person, a prop or even just a hand movement. Also take some "establishing" shots of settings, such as an exterior of a building, to make it easy for your audience to identify the location.

Working With Light

Knowing how to use lighting properly can help your project look really professional. Here are some "how-to" tips for creating good lighting.

- When it comes to natural light, trust your camera's video display rather than your own eyes. Human eyes automatically adjust to light levels, which lenses can't do. That's why a bright sunny day appears clear and crisp to our eyes, but on film it looks overexposed and washed-out. If you're shooting outside in daylight, it's best to do it when the sun isn't directly overhead.
- Avoid windows during interior shots, since the bright light from outside will make it hard to see your subject. Never place your subject between a window and your camera. If you're shooting in daylight, you may need to cover the windows and turn on some artificial lights.
- The main light used to illuminate your subject is called the "key light." It's usually the most intense light in the set-up, and should be placed at a forty-five degree angle to both your subject and the camera.
- The "fill light" is a secondary light used to offset any shadows created by the key light. For that reason, it should be placed on the opposite side of the camera from the key light.
- A "back light," pointed at your subject from behind, distinguishes your subject from the background.



Working With Sound

Sound is extremely important, since audiences are often more ready to forgive poor-quality video than bad sound. To get the best sound possible, follow these tips:

- If you place your subject too close to the microphone, the sound will be too loud, or may sound distorted or cracked. If you use an independent recorder and have those problems, then your levels are too high.
- If you place your subject too far away from the microphone, the audio will be too soft, and will blend into the background noise. The sound will be unusable during editing.
- If you record some background sound on location, it can often be useful in helping to fill in gaps in the soundtrack at the editing phase.

The Post-Production Phase

Editing

Editing is a complex process that involves turning your raw material into a polished final product. Fortunately, new technology—such as specialized editing software—has made the process relatively simple. The computerized tools you use will define some of your options, but here are some general tips on editing:

- Give yourself a lot of time. You've worked hard to get your project to this point, and you don't want to be rushed during the important final phase.
- Make sure your computer has enough space for all your project files: original footage, extra files such as sound or music, and your final version. Video production is a space-gobbler, and can easily overload your system. If disk space is limited, edit the project piece by piece, using only the footage you need to work on at any one time.
- Keep your story simple, and don't be tempted to include a shot just because it's interesting or was hard to get. Keep your focus on the story. Remember, the final product should only be 60–120 seconds long, so don't spend too much time on fancy transitions or special effects.
- If things aren't working well, try experimenting a little. Sometimes just changing sequences around can enhance or clarify your story.
- When it comes to adding in background sound, don't get carried away. You want your sound effects to enhance the scene, not to distract the audience. (Don't turn the volume up too high, for example.) If you want to use background music, you may need to create the music yourself, or with friends, to avoid paying royalties. Failing that, use royalty-free music.