

Topic: Women's Rights in the Western Saudi Arabia

Grades: 6-7

Planning Framework: Romantic

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Planning Framework for Middle/Secondary School Teachers: Employing the Cognitive Tools of Romantic Understanding

1. Identifying what “heroic” human qualities are central to the topic, what emotional images do they evoke, and what within the topic can best evoke wonder?

Main heroic quality: Self-sacrifice

Alternative(s): Perseverance



(Religious Freedom) by Angelina Wrona

Description: The case of women rights has been one of the most crucial issues all over the world. This issue has been significantly increased in some countries such as Saudi Arabia since many years ago. We are talking about mothers, students, nurses, doctors, teachers, and scientists who have been affected or became part of this issue. Those who once had a dream to become one of the above; unfortunately, had to sacrifice their dreams because they had NO RIGHT literally to make it come true. They have been treated as a half human with a deficient mind, unable to make the right decisions or be responsible for themselves. This common belief is one of the cultural impacts among some of the Arab world. The belief has become a mainstream in which influenced women's minds and led them to believe that they are actually inferior to men and can't live independently without relying on them. It is important to me in

teaching this topic to show how women are suffering emotionally and physically around the world in different situations. Some women whom I know and I lived with are asking for their basic right to be counted as an important member in their society and have equal rights as any other human being in this world. In addition, there are some women who are fighting for their rights by sacrificing their own dreams in the sake of making other women's dreams come true. By raising awareness of women rights among students in the 11- 13 age groups I believe it will effect societies and encourage communities to defend women, support them, and help them achieve their success.

2. Shaping the lesson or unit teaching shares some features with news reporting. Just as a reporter's aim is to select and shape events and to showcase them clearly towards their true meaning and emotional importance for readers or listeners, your aim as a teacher should be to present your topic in a way that engages the emotions and imaginations of your students. To do so, consider which of the following dimensions of your students' emotional and imaginative lives can be used to shape your lesson or unit—all related to the skills the good reporter works with:

2.1. Finding the story or narrative: What is “the story” on the topic? How can the narrative illustrate the heroic qualities of the topic?

Woman's role in the society is very important. However, some countries treat women as a half person or an underdeveloped human being in which she doesn't have the complete freedom to travel, learn, work, issue her governmental documents (e.g., personal ID, passport...etc.), have medical treatment, drive a car and so on. In SA there is a guardianship rule in which takes the complete freedom of women to practice their basic rights such as, having their own identity. The guardianship rule in SA treats women as minors in which it keeps them under the mercy of their male counterpart in every step they want to make. It is sad to find out that a pregnant university student had to give birth to her baby in the classroom she was in because of the university doctor not allowing her to take an ambulance to the local hospital without her guardian's permission. In such a society, men derive their strength and authority from customs and traditions as well as from women's weaknesses. It is important to me to provoke awareness within various students positive and enthusiastic emotions towards those women who did not give up from fighting for their rights and end up in jail (look up The Drive for Freedom by Manal Al-Sharif in the recourses section).

Some Saudi women believed and accepted when their basic rights have been taken away as a reality and that there is no ways to change it. The life of those women who accepted the truth of living dependently on men, has become a mainstream or a custom of the society. It has been recognized as a fact, and it should be that way. Some ladies do not accept this fact and start to fight for their freedom and others' as well, unfortunately for them, they pay the ultimate sacrifice with their lives. Some of those ladies such as Wajiha Al-hwaidir, Manal Al-Sharif, and others lost their jobs, marriage, and more importantly their freedom. They have been threatened from the public through social media and in person and have been asked to stop what they are doing. That didn't stop them; indeed, it gave them more strength and power instead of holding them back. So, my goal through this unit is to arise respectfulness and support to those women among students and leave them with high enthusiasm in defending and supporting women in their family/society.

2.2. Finding extremes and limits: What aspects of the topic expose extremes of experience or limits of reality? What is most exotic, bizarre or strange about the topic?

It is known that Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world that does not allow women to drive. This is one of many other rights that have been abused. To encourage students to find more about this topic, students will conduct a project called "Women Deserve to be Count as one". The teacher could ask them to make a survey, interview, and research about what are the levels of freedom given to women in Canada as a start (high freedom/ low freedom) and then broaden their search worldwide. Also, after they collect information, they can make a graph or a pie chart that represents those levels of freedom in different countries around the world. Another activity can be discovering those women in power. Who is the most powerful woman and how she became what she is? Did she fight for it or the environment she was living in helped her achieve what she wants? Bring images and tell stories.

2.3. Finding connections to human hopes, fears, and passions: To what human hopes, fears, and passions does the topic connect? What ideals and/or challenges to conventions are evident in the content? Through what human emotions can students access the topic?

What are the most important things that you value so much and you would not allow anyone to take away from you? What you will do to prevent anyone from taking it from you? How far you will fight for it? Imagine that it has been taken from you by force. How would you feel/react? (Create a story of yourself getting back what has been taken from you). This activity will remind students with their precious things (the things they value the most) in which they never thought they might lose it one day, how to protect them from being stolen from them, and finally appreciate them? Also, the teacher could offer some novels, bios, books that she think it may help students to find connections within themselves and the stories they've read. It is not necessary to share their connections but the important task is to connect emotionally and put themselves in the position where they can have the breadth of knowledge.

2.4. Employing additional cognitive tools of Romantic understanding: What kinds of activities might you design to deploy other tools in your students' cognitive toolkits? Consider the following:

- Collections and hobbies: What parts of the topic can students explore in exhaustive detail? What activity might engage students in learning everything they can about some aspect of the topic?

Have the students come up with their own definition of freedom and rights. Then they may collect images or draw pictures, which represent/align with their own definition. There are other women in different parts of the world are fighting for different objectives. Students can collect those women's stories and find connections between them and the Saudi women. (Make a collage/ poster with a message on it). Collect images of men defending women's rights. Bring images and discuss in the class.

- Change of context: What kinds of activities could change the context in the classroom? How might drama or role-play be employed or how might students engage the body's senses in learning?

I believe this topic can best be presented by drama and role-play. Also, making a play is always entertaining and engaging at the same time. In this activity, I will organize a short meaningful play in which engages student's somatic and philosophic kinds of understanding. Basically the play is about a woman called Manal Al-Sharif, one of the students will act her role. She will enter the class wearing the Saudi traditional outfit with many cards stuck on her clothes with a Velcro. It is written on these cards some rights (education, travel, work, medical treatment, and driving). She will introduce herself and hand in other card which have written statements such as, women in Saudi Arabia are not allowed to travel anywhere even out of their houses without their guardian's permission/ company. So, she will ask them to come and take away any card that should not belong to her. After they tear out all the cards except the driving card, she will pretend driving since there is no law doesn't prohibit woman from driving. Here comes a police officer and arrests her after a short argument between the two.

This activity will engage students somatically especially when they rip off those cards. The sound of the Velcro and the feeling of taking something by force from someone, all engages student's emotions. Also, the feeling of the actress when her rights have been taken away from her. The emotional connection between students and those women who are fighting and went to jail will increase dramatically by time and enhance their recognition and appreciation of the freedom they have in the future. Furthermore, students will wonder about the story behind this play. Why women do not drive in SA? What is wrong with women driving cars? Do the royal families women drive? What is the reason to not allow women driving? Do these reasons make sense? Asking these questions will evoke student's philosophic thinking, and try to see the issue from other point of view.

- **The literate eye: How could graphs, lists, flowcharts or other visual formats be employed in learning about the topic?**

Students can make their own student's classroom rights list. For example, all students will get together and vote for which rules they want to change/add in the classroom. Then if they decided on a certain rule, they could ask to change/add it by collecting student's initials. After that, they discuss it with teachers, the school, or the principle and give them good reasons and evidence to support their argument. This activity will encourage the students' courage to take the risk for the sake of achieving what they want. So that in the future when students face these kinds of situations in their life, they will know how to react to it in a proper way.

- **The sense of wonder: What kind of activity might evoke students' sense of wonder? How could you use that sense of wonder to draw students forward in thinking about further dimensions of the topic?**

How do those women feel when their basic rights are taken from them? How would you react if one of the most important right to you has been taken from you (e.g., the right to speak your native language, the right to play your favorite game...etc.)? Discuss the students' feelings and tell stories. What would you do if you had put into a position that you take others people's rights?

- **Embryonic tools of philosophic understanding: Consider how to frame the topic in terms of a general idea or theory. How can students begin to move from the particular aspects of what**

they have been learning to a more general explanation? How can students' sense of agency be engaged?

Going back to the heroic quality of self-sacrifice, which really means acting for the good of others without thinking of yourself, challenge students to demonstrate it in the classroom. How can they help others? Show acts, kindness, support, respect and work as a team. Moreover, when they support each other and give love and respect to each other that will increase the sense of empathy and decrease the hatred and bullying between the students.

3. Resources What resources can you use to learn more about the topic and to shape your story? What resources are useful in creating activities?

YouTube videos discusses the women's rights issue:

1- An interview with the Saudi princess Ameerah Al-Taweel:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_LYZFXOAIpk

2- An interview with one of the most well-known Saudi women's rights activist Wajeha Al-Hwaider with English subtitles:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnFO2tDKIVs>

3- A talk by Manal Al-Sharif (The Drive for Freedom):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PXXNK-3zQ4>

4. Conclusion how does the narrative end? How can one best bring the topic to a satisfactory closure and how can students feel this satisfaction? Alternatively, what new questions can draw students to think more deeply about the topic? How can you extend students' sense of wonder?

Those women who still fighting for their freedom influenced the government in considering their issues and started to take action in some parts of SA. The government started to allow women to work in malls and restaurants, not just being limited to teaching and nursing. Because of those women who said what they want outlawed, the government has been taken them into account and studied their cases. Women in SA still counted as half person, but at least they are not over looked anymore. This all is due to those ladies who scarified their dreams, marriage, jobs, and freedom, in sake of other women's dreams come true. However, the question is: by allowing them to work in shops and restaurants, did they earn their complete freedom? What is freedom according to them? Do you think are they happy with the changes they've made so far?

Students will prepare a presentation at the end of the unit in which they represent what they've learned about the topic and discuss women issues in Canada/in the world. Also, in light of what they've searched, students will make a plan to help/support women who are suffering from any kind of problem and take action by fundraising, giving out brochures, and bake sales...etc. All in all, I believe planting the seeds and discuss these issues with children in this ages can make a difference in the future.

To conclude, I believe this topic of Women's Rights can be also taught as Human's Rights. Just shift things around a little and play with words and activities.

5. Evaluation How can one know that the content has been learned and understood and has engaged and stimulated students' imaginations?

Students will be assessed by the teacher while they are working on their projects. The teacher will evaluate how the students were emotionally engaged with the topic by participating in different activities and showing their interest in the topic. Did students understand and grasp the content? Finally, they could also be evaluated on the basis of their concluding presentations.