Human Dignity and Childhood:
Connecting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Primary and Secondary Education

American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) 28th Virtual Colloquium, July 12-14

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Lombardo (APSAC 2021) 1

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE POWER OF DIGNITY AND CHILDHOOD
AND THE POSSIBILITIES IN DIGNITY'S APPLICATION TO HELP IS DEAL WITH
DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION
SIMPLE
ENCOMPASSING
of Problems and Values

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YOUR CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES WITH DIGNITY IN SCHOOL
How many of you went to elementary and high school?
Recognizing Children’s Work is Supporting Children’s Dignity

Before we get started let’s talk about our childhood experiences with human dignity in schools.

SOME EXAMPLES FROM MY CLASS

- Describe a Childhood Experience when an adult in the context of school supported your Human Dignity. What happened? How did you feel?
- Describe a Childhood Experience when an adult in the context of school violated your human dignity. What happened? How did you feel?

Lombardo (APSAC 2021) 3
SOME PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Lucien Lombardo’s Puerto Rican History Class – Celebration of Puerto Rico in NY’s Auburn Prison Summer 1971

Supporting Dignity

Respecting People, Culture and History

In place of disrespect that permeates prison life.

Lucien Lombardo is the one with the hat and color in his shirt!

Creative Reading: How Literature and your life intersect?

WORDS OF INMATE: “We no longer wish to be treated as statistics, as numbers. We want to be treated as human beings. We will be treated as human beings!”

Then, sharp as the crack of a rifle: At the end, 29 Prisoners and 10 correctional staff killed by gunfire from state police and corrections personnel!

Three of the prisoners killed at Attica were students of mine at Auburn Prison!

ATTICA: 50 YEARS AGO

Cries for Dignity and Dignity’s Violation at Attica Prison in New York State September 1971

SEE: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Attica-prison-revolt

September 1971

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From Prisons to Children

Karen A. Polonko, PhD. (Passed 2016)
University Professor of Sociology and Founder, In Support of Children at Old Dominion University

Karen passed away in 2016.

Teaching Course

Violence in the World of Children

GOAL OF COURSE:
Prevent Harm to Children by raising awareness and empowering College students who are or will become parents with a new – child centered – perspective.

Our Prevention focused definition of violence in the world of children: Anything that interferes with children's work!

Violence in the World of Children Course Topics

1. Introduction to Social Ecology of Childhood
2. Developing a Child-centered Perspective
3. History of Childhood and Children's Work
4. Childhood around the World (UNICEF, ECPAT, Child Labor)
5. Human Dignity and Children, Children's Rights (CRC)
6. (CV) Trauma, Neglect and Brain Development and Children
7. (CV) Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and Developmental Assets
8. Violence Contexts – POLY – VICTIMIZATION
9. Violence in Home and School: Corporal Punishment
10. Violence in Schools: Bullying
11. Violence in Communities: Gangs and War
12. Child Protective Services Work
13. Preventing Violence in Children's Lives and Advocating for Children

Expedition to Specific Forms of Violence:

TAUGHT ON-LINE

Learning a Child Centered Perspective

Application to Specific Forms of Violence

Expedition to Specific Forms of Violence

Expedition to Specific Forms of Violence
SCHOOLS WITHOUT DIGNITY: What Dignity Can Help Us Leave Behind!

SIGNS OF TOXIC SCHOOL CULTURE*

1. No clear sense of purpose
2. Hostile relations among staff, students, and parents.
3. An emphasis on rules over people or mission
4. An absence of honest dialogue.
5. More self-preservation than collaboration.
6. Active back channels over formal lines of communication
7. Punishment instead of recognition, and rewards and behavior motivated by the avoidance of punishment.
8. A palpable lack of safety.
9. A small group who controls the conversation
10. An absence of risk taking.


The Road to Dignity, Peace and Justice Goes Through Childhood!

Before we can start children on their way, we adults must reflect on our own journeys!

DIGNITY SUPPORTED

Supporting Dignity also supports violence prevention.

DIGNITY VIOLATED

ALL VIOLENCE IS A VIOLATION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

Violence in the world of Children is anything that interferes with children's work!
OVERVIEW

Linking Adult Concerns with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Childhood Experiences with Dignity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADULT CONCERNS</th>
<th>DIGNITY EXPERIENCES IN CHILDHOOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Treated Fairly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Voice Heard</td>
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</tbody>
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If we can remember – We (today’s adults) did all these things!

What CHILDREN’S WORK means here is: Children Are Active Agents
(What today’s children are doing and what today’s adults did as children)

What ever interferes with children’s work is violence to children.

All children, whether we realize it or not, are actively integrating their everyday experiences into their lives.

They are learning ways of seeing, understanding, and living in their worlds.

They are trying to make sense of the world provided by adults.

They are establishing the templates or models that will guide their behaviors and lives in the future.

Why Focus on Dignity Experiences of Adults in Educational Context:
Links to Social and Emotional Learning
(National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, 2018)

Research reveals that teachers’ own social and emotional competencies influence the quality of the learning experiences they offer their students.54

In addition to the importance of teachers, evidence points to the critical role that principals play in setting the conditions for classroom teaching and learning. Principals are highly influential in setting priorities and goals, providing human and material resources, and establishing and sustaining programs and practices that support social, emotional, and academic development. (P 25)

“We have to start with adults’ social and emotional learning, and then work on kids’ social and emotional learning,” said a 4th grade teacher in Seattle.57

Hope in the appeal of values such as perseverance, hard work, and human decency.
Confidence that young women and men of every background—like generations before them—will be challenged, transformed, and empowered by contact with such ideals, demonstrated in the lives of caring adults around them. (Intro, National Commission Report)
When Adults Deal with Children in Schools (or anywhere) We Deal with Generations of Childhoods

- The Childhoods of Adults (our childhoods – teachers, administrators, staff, parents) (PAST)
  - The Childhoods of the Children with Whom Adults (us) Interact (students), (PRESENT) and
  - The Childhoods of Adults these Children Become”. (FUTURE)

"The Road to Dignity, Peace and Justice Goes Through Childhood"

Definition of Violence in the world of children is anything that interferes with children's work.
(Prevention definition from Dr. Lombardo's Class).

Researchers have found that social, emotional, and cognitive development is especially important for children and youth who have experienced trauma or adversity. These external influences can place our bodies and minds in a constant state of stress or high alert that interferes with learning and growth. (National Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development, 2018).

Two Questions to Start Our Discussion of Human Dignity and Childhood and Relationship to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- How often do you think about or discuss the idea of “Human Dignity”? In What contexts? RAISE HANDS if you have done it at all!
- How often do you think about or discuss the “Human Dignity of Children”? In what Contexts? RAISE HANDS if you have done it at all!

My hope is that the workshop will get you to do both on a regular basis!
Search for DIGNITY in *From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope: National Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Learning* (2018).

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

BY Linking with DIGNITY
What We Would Like to Achieve

DIVERSITY
All the ways in which people differ

INCLUSION
A variety of people have power, a voice, and decision-making authority. How people are able to contribute.

EQUITY
Fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people. One’s identity cannot predict the outcome. Support.

Many types found in student populations but not always in staff populations (especially racial diversity)!

**Common Types of Diversity**

Boxes and Vertical Ranks

- Race
- Age
- Nationality
- Ethnicity
- Culture
- Gender identity
- Physical and mental ability
- Education
- Professional experience
- Political views, opinions, and affiliation
- Spiritual and religious beliefs
- Citizenship
- Location
- Family and marital status
- Socioeconomic status
- Job title, role, or function
- Department
- Seniority
- Union affiliation

Which count in which contexts? Who decides? Do children face implicit bias?

Human Dignity assumes differences provide and reflect different experiences (one not better than another)!

Which are the ‘norms’? Which are different, the ‘other’? As a child, were you ever treated differently/ ‘LESS THAN’ because of some of these?
Dignity and Humiliation: Contemporary Discussions
Process of Marginalization – Other Making

The Abuse of Rankism
Isabel Wilkerson, Caste, (2020) “the container we have built for you”
Donna Hicks, Leading with Dignity (2018)

Marginalization and Other Making: treating as ‘less than’; essence of interactions; leading to absence of diversity, equity and inclusion in organizations.

Books about the rejection of diversity, equity and inclusion – violation of dignity and the need to embrace dignity

Social Construction of Marginalisation – Other Making

Those who want to control say, “Without Norms there is Chaos, Anarchy!”

Which is most important, NORM or DIVERSITY?

The group label / box
The gestalt of Norms and Diversity – Which do we see?

Norm: Distribution – DIVERSITY of Human Experience

Those who appreciate dignity say, “LOOKING PAST NORMS WE CAN SEE AND APPRECIATE THE DIVERSITY!”

See and appreciate the Diversity

The group label / box

Which do we see?

NORM

Which is most important, NORM or DIVERSITY?

Those who want to control say, “Without Norms there is Chaos, Anarchy!”

Which is most important, NORM or DIVERSITY?

Diversity


SEEING DIVERSITY IN CHILDHOOD

One of the stated goals of Anti-Bias Education (ABE) is that each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity, accurate language for human differences, and deep, caring human connections. In the book Start Seeing Diversity, Ellen Wolpert notes a guiding principle of Anti-Bias Education is:

“We are all immigrants in each other’s JAWS”

Mary Catherine Bateson
Full Circles, Overlapping Lives: Culture and Generation in Transition. NY Ballentine, 2000

“it’s not a problem that children notice differences. The problem is that in our society some differences are valued as positive, and some as negative and children absorb and act on those values.”


REJECT – film “You Can’t Say, You Can’t Play”! Union Policy
http://rejectfilm.com/official-trailer/
EQUALITY AND EQUITY

Dignity integrates both!

Whereas diversity refers to all the many ways that people differ, equity is about creating (not letting diversity get in the way of) fair access, opportunities, and advancement for all those different people. It’s about creating a fair playing field, to use a familiar metaphor. Here’s a useful illustration of equity from the Northwestern Health Unit:

Someone needs to decide: What are the rules to decide? What factors to consider? Due Process law? How do we decide what process is DUE? Politics = power

5.1 Learning Impact most on most deprived and traumatised students

AN EXAMPLE OF EQUITY

How Dignity Integrates Equality and Equity

It is a mistake to view social and emotional learning as a “soft” approach to education. Quite the opposite. An emphasis on these capacities is not the sacrifice of rigor. It is a source of rigor. While many elements of a child’s life improve along with the cultivation of these skills, one of the main outcomes is better academic performance. An analysis of more than 200 studies of programs that teach students social and emotional skills found that these efforts significantly improved student behavior, feelings about school, and most importantly achievement, and made schools safer. All students need supportive relationships and nurturing learning environments, but students facing additional stress have a particular need to be surrounded by caring adults who treat them as individuals with potential and inherent worth. And when adults create the environments, children of every background can thrive.

This approach to learning also contributes to educational equity. In this report documents, social and emotional learning benefits all children, of every background. But it disproportionately benefits children from low-income communities, many of whom experience trauma and adversity resulting from insecure access to housing, food, health care, and safety — and violations of dignity. Unfair?

From NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT, 2018

Which did you experience in school? Different at different times, contexts?

Images of Inclusion

Dignity starts here.

Mutual!

Moral Education

Robert Coles

Exclusion

Integration

Segregation

Inclusive of all people (individuals) you can learn from and who can learn from each other and from you and the organization.

Whatever Impedes Children's Work is Violence in Children's Lives

COPING WITH CM* / VIOLENCE IMPEDES CHILDREN'S WORK AND WEEKENS IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

CHILDREN'S WORK
Looking to Contribute
Connecting to Others
Empower self and others
Self Confidence
In touch with emotions
Empathy – Enlightened witness

ILLNESS COPING WITH CM
Looking for threat
Disconnection
Powerlessness
Self Doubt
Numbing Self and Other
Lack of Empathy

INTERGENERATIONAL
Adult Towards Childen
Deception as Threat
Disconnect from own childhood
Need power and control
Need to appear certain
(Save face)
Denial and numbing to pain
Empathy one way [children should feel for adult]

Reflected in ACES, brain-development, Developmental Assets research

LINKS BETWEEN ADULT CONCERNS AND CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES WITH HUMAN DIGNITY

ADULT CONCERNS
- DIVERSITY
- EQUITY
- INCLUSION

CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES WITH DIGNITY (SUPPORTED / VIOLATED)
- AUTHENTICITY
- TREATED FAIRLY
- VOICE HEARD

Supporting Dignity in Childhood
Builds Patterns of Behavior for supporting:
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Childhood Experiences with Dignity
As a Source of Templates for Values!!
Meanings of ‘Dignity’

DEFINITIONS USE DEPENDENT

NOT FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE: RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY IN MEASUREMENT

DEFINING DIGNITY TO ENCOURAGE EXPERIENCES

SUPPORTING AND NOT VIOLATING DIGNITY (Support development – prevent harm)

Some TRADITIONAL Meanings of Human Dignity

Three board philosophical contexts associated with dignity: (In the person – not interactions).

1. Old sense: refined manners associated with high social rank (by definition lower social ranks don’t have it — this view still prevails in our social divisions!) (Somebodies and Nobodies; CAUTION: born to it!)
2. Personal: Self-esteem, integrity (It has to be earned, tied to accomplishments) by definition, those without accomplishments don’t have it!
3. Moralized: inherent, unearned worth or status (The kind of worth everyone has, and has equally, just because we are persons.) Go back to discussion of ‘marginalized groups’


Although dignity may be too complex scientifically to define

EDUCATIONALLY IT IS A LIFE-IMPROVING FORCE

HUMANIZINGLY YOURS AND MINE

How can dignity be given a tripartite semantic interpretation?

BY REPRESENTING IT AS A PROCESS INTEGRATING CHARACTER + CONDUCT + COMMUNICATION
Dona Hicks: THE TEN ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF DIGNITY / Interacting with Difference

Donna Hicks is a renowned authority on dignity and author of Leading with Dignity.

Donna Hicks, 10 Elements of Dignity Continued

- **Treat them fairly and with equality.** (VIOLATE = Treat unfairly) D = Diversity
  - E = Equity
  - I = Inclusion

- **Give them a sense of freedom and independence;** and empower them to experience a sense of hope and possibility. (VIOLATE = don’t provide choices) Violate - Remove choices - Emphasize rule I

- **Seek understanding and give them the chance to explain their experiences and perspectives.** (VIOLATE: Behavior not experience matters) Violate - Zero Tolerance I E

- **Give them the benefit of the doubt** by starting with the premise that they have good motives and are acting with integrity. (VIOLATE: Assume motives are bad) Violate - Suspect all E

- **Apologize and take responsibility** when we have violated their dignity. (VIOLATE: Student always wrong) Violate – Adult always right I E

*Derived from 60 years of undergraduate student responses in the following questions: How would you define human dignity? Describe two examples of where you felt your human dignity was respected as a child? Describe two examples where you felt your human dignity was violated as a child? (Source: "Violence in the World of Children").*
Human Dignity as an Interactional Experience (PROCESS)

How we are treated by and how we treat others!

Human Dignity may be “inherent” (something we all have), but is felt differently from experiences being supported or violated!

Human Dignity is felt as personal – inherent in the individual; but is experienced as interactional and felt as supported or violated in the contexts of interactions with others.

Human dignity of individuals is more likely to be supported and/or violated depending on conditions of social structures (inequalities across social classes).

• Dignity
• Childhood
• Adulthood

Harm of Difference (other / less-than) / Benefits of Commonality (Dignity)

“*All Comparisons are ‘Odious’!*”
Cervantes, Don Quixote

#1 Comparing Children to Adults

Reaction to discussion of need to respect and listen to children, and support their dignity

Of People of Color, Women and Children, etc.

Story from Agrigento, Sicily 2001

Are Children Missing?
**Colonial* Relationships Between Groups:**

Socially Destructive**

**ADULT AS COLONIZER:** the group who has the power and can impose their will and create others in his image.

**CHILDHOOD AS COLONIZED:** the group whose identity is submerged and whose authenticity is eliminated and who is placed in the service of the colonizer through the use of force, threat of force by the colonizer.

*Drawing on Albert Memmi, THE COLONIZER AND THE COLONIZED; Franz Fanon, BLACK SKINS, WHITE MASKS; Paulo Friere, PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED; Alice Miller, FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.; **Comstock and Sanford, SANCTIONS FOR EVIL: SOURCES OF SOCIAL DESTRUCTIVENESS.

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**Why is connecting childhood and dignity so difficult?**

**NOT TRICK QUESTIONS**

- How many of you here today were children?
  
  *I hope everyone answers that they were!*
  
  **Raise Hands**

- Which is the longer period of your life:
  
  Childhood or Adulthood?
  
  **Raise Hands**

  *Most people answer, ADULTHOOD!*
Dignity Perspective Recognizes Children as a CLASS are doing CHILDREN’ WORK:
If we can remember – We (Today’s adults) did all these things!

What CHILDREN’S WORK means here is: Children are Active Agents

• All children, whether we realize it or not, are actively integrating their everyday experiences into their lives.
• They are learning ways of seeing, understanding and living in their worlds.
• They are trying to make sense of the world provided by their social maps.
• They are ESTABLISHING THE TEMPLATES that will guide their behavior and LIVES IN THE FUTURE.
• IS MOVING FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADULTHOOD A Process of Moral Development or A Process of Moral Decay

Adults Connecting to Dignity Experiences in Childhood

Experiences of Dignity in School Contexts

Getting Adults to be aware of, to Model and to Practice Dignity
Recognizing Children’s Work is Supporting Children’s Dignity

How would you define Human Dignity?

Describe a Childhood Experience when an adult in the context of school supported your Human Dignity. What happened? How did you feel?

Describe a Childhood Experience when an adult in the context of school violated your human dignity. What happened? How did you feel?

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

In order to link individual identities and our communities, it is important that the principles of dignity be manifested in four areas: i) self with recognizing our own inherent dignity, ii) in relationships with recognizing each other’s dignity, iii) in the way we treat our environment and the natural world, iv) in the way we organize ourselves and our communities. As we deepen our understanding of dignity, the principles of dignity extend to the realms of socio-political and economic systems and ultimately, societies and nations that are more just, open and peaceful.

Programmatic Use of Human Dignity on Schools

MAKE “Human Dignity” a CENTRAL Organization THEMES for School System

Make part of Mission Statement

DECADE OF DIGNITY:
• Students, Teachers, Counselors, Administrators
• Expand to Parents
• Expand to Community

A FOCAL POINT
• Teacher Recruitment
• Faculty Development
• Curricular Development
• Student Organizations
Embedding Dignity in School System Mission Statement (Proposed)

The mission of the City School District (CSD) is to develop citizens that are capable of meeting the challenges of their future by providing equitable, fiscally sound educational opportunities for all students. The City School District will develop a framework and implement high quality curriculum, instruction, and balanced assessment model for all students. All staff will implement evidence-based practices including high yield instructional strategies that increase higher order thinking, collaboration and creativity, and student achievement.

High Quality Curriculum and Instruction

The City School District will develop a framework and implement high quality curriculum, instruction, and balanced assessment model for all students. All staff will implement evidence-based practices including high yield instructional strategies that increase higher order thinking, problem identification and problem solving, collaboration and creativity, and student achievement.

Leadership and Innovation

All members of the City School District and community are valued and seen as contributors to the goals of the district. Allocation of resources will support sustainable and essential professional development. Dignity and Inclusion is dedicated to promoting creative problem solving and critical thinking, and dignity for all.

We will seek to leverage emergent ideas and insights to realize measurable achievement gains for educators and students, recognizing the diversity of life experiences that students and educators bring to the educational process.

Diversity

Dignity

Inclusion

Humanities Preparatory Academy, NYC

Ethnography of Teaching, Learning and Change

Restoring Dignity in Public Schools

Mari Hantzopoulos

Themes that emerge from these descriptions include:

- teachers as equals
- a culture of trust
- a culture of care
- the concept of family
- and teachers as friends.


Links to Dignity for All Students Act (NYS)

Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) New York State

The Dignity Act was signed into law on September 13, 2012, and took effect on July 1, 2013. The Dignity Act is intended to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff. The legislation focuses on the elimination of harassment, bullying, and discrimination in schools in a manner considered to be consistent with the rights and dignity of all people.

For Teachers:

- Communication-Based Decision Making
- Teacher-Student Meetings
- Teacher-Directed Classes
- Collaboration
- Diverse Leadership Roles

For Students:

- Active agents
- Project-Based Learning and Assessment
- Participation in Decisions
- Respect for cultures and experiences

Notes on page 49
**SOME SOURCES SUPPORTIVE OF DIGNITY EDUCATION**

| Americans Who Tell the Truth                          | International: GLOBAL DIGNITY: |
| ND HIT ZONES: https://subfourms.com/2015/03/21/schools/ | Safe to Learn Project: https://www.endviolence.org/safe-to-learn |

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Parents should honor and empower their children, so that they, their children, and their children's children will live their own truths over long and authentic lives!

This is something 'violating children's dignity will not do'!

*This was lost when the first stone tablets were broken, and it was never replaced. While we traditionally apply the 4th commandment we have to young children relating to adults, it was really meant to apply to adults' relationships to their elderly parents.

**THE LOST COMMANDMENT**

1. I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. YOU SHALL NOT HAVE OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. 
2. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN. 
3. YOU SHALL FOLLOW THE LORD YOUR GOD. 
4. YOU SHALL HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER. 
5. YOU SHALL NOT KILL YOUR NEIGHBOR. 
6. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY. 
7. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE. 
8. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE. 
9. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL YOUR NEIGHBOR'S JOBS. 
10. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL YOUR NEIGHBOR'S LIFE.