



INSTITUTE FOR  
HUMANE EDUCATION

## Teaching for a Positive Future

A month-long distance learning course for educators who want to inspire their students to become leaders and change-makers for a healthy, peaceful, and sustainable world.

### Sample Exercises

#### What is Education For?

Watch Sir Ken Robinson's talk at the TED conference here:

[www.ted.com/index.php/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity.html](http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html).

Then write your thoughts on these questions:

1. What is education for? Is your teaching currently aligned with your response to this question?
2. Reflect upon your students: What qualities, capacities, and talents can you identify in each of them? How does reflecting upon this question influence how & what you wish to teach?
3. Why do you teach?

#### We Can All Be Heroes

Spend time reading the stories of those featured in the documentary *The New Heroes* from [www.pbs.org/opb/thenewheroes/](http://www.pbs.org/opb/thenewheroes/). This series profiles 14 people who've made a stunning difference for other people. Also peruse the section "For Teachers." Next, watch "The Power of One", <http://ca.youtube.com/watch?v=y9dz3wUn818> and visit The Janus Center, <http://thejanuscenter.com> to read about The Hero Workshop and its curriculum. Then consider the following: What role models for heroism can you offer in your classroom? How can you inspire ordinary heroism among your students? If you are a language arts teacher, you may wish to select books and short stories with protagonists who act in heroic ways. If you are a social studies or history teacher, you may wish to invite students to do a project on a historical figure whose courage, perseverance, and compassion largely defined their role in history. If you are a science or math teacher, you may want to profile science or math heroes, such as Galileo or Darwin, to illuminate the ways in which courage may mean defying societal pressures in pursuit of knowledge and truth. Use your time today reflecting upon both great heroism and ordinary, everyday heroism, and assess your own relationship to the concept of heroic acts. Lastly, write down some thoughts in answer to this question: How might I model more ordinary heroism for my students.

#### Both/And

Often issues are presented to us in either/or terms. For example, we're given the option of protecting logging jobs or the environment but not both. Comprehensive humane education draws connections among all forms of oppression and destruction, with the goal of solving problems in ways that benefit everyone: all people, all species, and the environment. Today, identify an issue that has been largely presented in either/or terms. This could be an issue in which humans and animals come into conflict, or one in which individual rights conflict with societal needs or the environment, or anything that's been in the media recently that has drawn sides. Then come up with ideas for solutions that do not take sides but seek to meet all the stakeholders' needs. Finally, consider an issue in your curriculum, within your class, or at your school that is contentious, and create an idea for bringing the concept of both/and to create a positive solution.