Ahimsa Center- K-12 Teacher Institute Lesson Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Lesson:</th>
<th>Satyagrah: Social Change vs. Social Transformation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson By:</td>
<td>Vikas P. Srivastava</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade Level/ Subject Areas:</td>
<td>High School: 9-12 Multimedia/ History/ LA</td>
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<td>Class Size:</td>
<td>About 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time/ Duration of Lesson:</td>
<td>About 1 week</td>
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**Goals/ Objectives of Lesson:**

- Students will be able to discuss the difference between social change and social transformation with reference to the Indian revolution for independence from the British Empire.
- Students are able to explicitly define Satyagrah.
- Students will outline a Plan of Action with the intent to transform society by identifying their place in social injustice, setting personal goals and outlining further-reaching Satyagrah methods to change society.

**Lesson Abstract:**

This lesson (2 of 3) examines short-term social change versus long-term social transformation. Incidents from the non-violent revolution for independence led by M.K. Gandhi in India will used as both an example of social transformation through Gandhi’s methods of Satyagrah, as well as, a reflection of the short comings social change as exemplified by the riots during the partition after India’s independence. Students will apply their notion of social transformation to a Project of Action which addresses a current social injustice and applies the principle of Satyagrah to remedy it. (This issue will be the basis of a culminating multimedia project.).

**Lesson Content:**

Social Transformation is built upon personal transformation and leads to the foundation of a equitable future. Preceding this lesson students transform their violent intentions through written reconciliation and embrace Ahimsa in their own lives. Personal reflection/transformation enables the person to embrace Ahimsa as a fundamental principle underlying conflict-resolution. Social transformation through means of Satyagrah is presumes adherence to Ahimsa.

Satyagrah is “an active pursuit of truth through love and nonviolence”\(^1\). Satyagrah extends Ahimsa practiced in our personal lives to the larger socio-political sphere. Adherence to Satyagrah necessitates active engagement in the political pursuit of social justice and equity. In some instances, and in the instance of Indian independence, political independence from a colonizer often results in social upheaval and a native, however oppressive replacement. Though the nation is under home rule, its inhabitants experience poverty, injustice and oppression (in some cases) more than they did under British rule. If the individuals as a “vast majority” have not personally embraced Ahimsa and Satyagrah as a practical application of

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Ahimsa, then any attempt at social equity is short lived. Social change may remove an oppressor; however, transformation removes the oppression. Until all parties are transformed, oppression will continue. This overthrow of the oppressor within is the deepest application of Gandhi’s notion of Swaraj or “self-rule”. In addition, social transformation will only occur if Ahimsa is adhered to in the means.

Whether it is political leadership, business management, school administration or head of a household -- coercion is external, initiative is internal. Coercion is functional so long as the mechanism of force is intact. Initiative remains with the individual. Coercion is in the best interest of the oppressor, initiative is in the best interest of the individual. Satyagrah is built upon the foundation of individual initiative for social justice and equity. Social transformation therefore, must be founded upon individual adherence to Ahimsa and Satyagrah.

See also: Anthony J. Parel, Hind Swaraj and Other Writings.

CA State Content Standards:

Grades 9 Through 12:
History-Social Science Content Standards

10.10 Students analyze instances of nation-building in the contemporary world in at least two of the following regions or countries: the Middle East, Africa, Mexico and other parts of Latin America, and China.

1. Understand the challenges in the regions, including their geopolitical, cultural, military, and economic significance and the international relationships in which they are involved.
2. Describe the recent history of the regions, including political divisions and systems, key leaders, religious issues, natural features, resources, and population patterns.
3. Discuss the important trends in the regions today and whether they appear to serve the cause of individual freedom and democracy.

Guiding Questions:

- How was Gandhi’s personal life intertwined with his political ambitions?
- How is transformation different from change and why is it important?
- Is Ahimsa a force? If so, what kind of force?
- How is Satyagrah related to Ahimsa?
- Can one transform society if they do not transform themselves?

Materials Needed:
Recommended:
- Poster paper/ markers for group sharing
- E.F. Schumacher: Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered, 1989
Lesson Context:
This is lesson #2 of a 3-lesson unit on Music for Social Change. The culminating project will consist of an original composition with the intent to transform society. This lesson builds upon personal adherence to Ahimsa and leads to socio-political application of Satyagrah. It is important for students to digest, discuss and challenge Gandhi’s ideals and applications of Ahimsa and Satyagrah.

Teaching Activities:
A. Review:
   1. Student write definition of Ahimsa in their own words.
   2. Students share their answers in small groups.
   3. Students discuss answers to questions from lesson one.
   4. Teacher and students discuss definitions and answers.

B. Personal Reflection/ Small Group Discussion
   a. Who were the oppressors? Who were the oppressed?
   b. What were the strategic means used to reach the end goal?
   c. How did Gandhi pursue his goals and why?
   d. Was the strategy successful? Why or why not?
   e. Why did violence erupt after the British had granted India’s independence?
   1. Share in small groups.
   2. Groups share with class.

C. Personal Reflection/ Large Group Discussion:
   1. Students individually reflect on the following questions and share in small groups
      a) Why did Gandhi insist on changing his personal lifestyle and adhere to strict personal values as a means to political change?
      b) How are means related to the end?
   2. Large Group Discussion
      a. Why does violence continue in India?
      b. Why does discrimination exist in the U.S.A. despite laws prohibiting it?

D. Lecture/ Discussion: Change vs. Transformation
   1. Discuss change vs. Transformation
      a. What does it mean to change?
      b. What does it mean to transform?
      c. Alternative Questioning: What would it mean to “change” classrooms vs. “transform” the classroom?
      d. How are the two terms similar and/or different?
      e. Which one is more permanent? Why?
      f. Did Gandhi work towards change or transformation?
      g. Why is the spinning wheel so important to Gandhi?
   2. Discuss Satyagrah as a thoery and how Gandhi applied it through out the movie.
      a. The communal farms
      b. His perseverance against untouchability
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<th>c. Self-sufficiency and independence symbolized by the Spinning Wheel</th>
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| E. **Recommended Reading:**  
1. Read Excerpt (Chapter 2)  
2. Write a written reflection based on the article  
3. Discuss “permanence” |
| F. **Independent:**  
1. Students research and analyze a systematic social injustice.  
2. Students identify their part in a wider social injustice; students list a long-term transformation; Students outline short-term changes.  
3. Students discuss possibilities for further reaching change. |
| **Assessment/ Evaluation:**  
Students will be assessed on their ability to distinguish between social change and transformation based on concrete historical examples; completion of written reflection on reading; and performance on Project of Action. |
| **Extension Activities/ Enrichment**  
A “Digital Story” should be the culmination of the unit as a project which illustrates students’ ability to apply Gandhian principles to current events/issues to promote non-violence, truth and sustainability in the present day and future. This project should focus on the deeper roots of social injustice, rather than emphasize specific surface issues. |
| **Bibliography:**  