

2015 The Humane League Site Visit: Humane Education Recap

Jon Bockman (ACE's Executive Director) attended a The Humane League humane education presentation given by Beau Broughton at Coleman Tech High School, San Diego, CA on October 6, 2015.

7:45 Met Beau outside building. Discussed frequency of lectures—this is Beau's first of the semester, but he has four scheduled on Thursday, and several other scheduled for later in the semester. It is not unusual for this to be the first time of the semester, as teachers usually want to wait at least a month or more from the start of the semester before inviting guest lectures.

Teacher came and met us in front of the building at 7:50. We arrived at the classroom and Beau began to set up while I sat in the back of the room. Beau asked the teacher questions about the activity level of the classroom, and what they had most recently studied. The teacher replied that they had some "food animal and production" background reading last night, which discussed animal welfare and environmental issues.

As part of the preparation, Beau asked for the wifi login info for guests at the school. Even though he had a video downloaded and ready to be shown for the talk, he wanted to be logged into wifi in the event that something went wrong with the player so he had a backup plan. Unfortunately they had problems logging him into the guest wifi.

Students began filtering in at 8, the lecture started at 8:07 as the teacher took roll. Roll lasted until 8:09. It consisted of 15 students high school students varying in age, sitting at 5 different small round tables. Two students came in 5-10 minutes late. The classroom was a smart classroom so had access to a projector for presentations.

8:10 Teacher introduced Beau. Invited students to hold questions until the end of the class. Said he wanted to create an awareness with students, that he wasn't trying to change things, but that he just wanted to introduce knowledge.

Beau asked the class to provide information on what they had been studying lately, and asked if anyone could provide any thoughts on the materials they had read the day before. Almost no students read it. No one volunteered any information.

Beau said he's going to talk about animal agriculture and why millions of Americans are changing the way they eat, and that he'll end the discussion with a short video.

First Beau started talking about the importance of understanding animals. Asked who had a cat or dog at home (everyone), who liked that cat or dog (everyone), and why they liked those animals. Answers were that pets were cute, and smart, and intuitive.

Beau: Everyone who has been around animals starts to understand things about animals. That they're smart, enjoy pleasures and can experience pain. Their lives matter to them just like they do to us.

Science is showing us lots of new things for us to understand about animals. Played the species guessing game. An example: This animal can think about the future, can deny short term pleasure for long term gratification, teach their children what they've learned, and can deceive the other gender to have sex. The answer is both monkeys AND chickens. The other two questions had answers of dogs/pigs, and cats/fish.

8:15 Summarized the recent info. Asked the class if there's a question of being kind to animals, or being cruel to animals, which they would choose, and of course everyone raised their hand that we should be kind. Talked about how rare it is for everyone to agree on an issue, gave some examples.

Talked about broad history of animal agriculture, starting with 100 years ago, then cultures that live entirely on plants. His point is that the food system is constantly evolving, and that they don't need to be stuck in a rut of what they're eating now.

Asked for thoughts of what they think of when they think of farmed animals in the country. Answers included Charlotte's Web, Temple Grandin, Old McDonald, cute chickens running around in the yard. One student pointed out it's not like that at all, and Beau asked well where do we get these ideas of farm life? He said they'll discuss that soon.

8:20 Today, 99% of animals are raised on a factory farm. Pic of pig in gestation crate. History of factory farming, food shortage after WW2, government gave farmers money to increase production. After the war, number of farms rapidly decreased, and number of animals on each farm increased.

Asked how many laying hens you might think are on a farm. Highest number was 20,000, most thought much lower. Beau explained that you can find 500K birds in a single shed, 20K pigs, 10K cows. Discusses how packaging deceives us, as well as the advertising of farms themselves. Shows realities of numbers in factory farms.

8:25 Beau showed and discussed the average amount of space in an egg laying hen farm. Shows broiler shed. Talks about artificial breeding, sickness of hens. Shows a quote from an ag journal saying that "the less the public knows about the meat before it hits their plate, the better."

Talks about confinement indoors, tight packing of animals. Living in their own waste with serious environmental consequences. Then showed some pics of happy farmed animals for contrast, bringing it back to them having emotional and intelligent lives, and that we'd never confine our cat or dog in such a setting.

Environmental consequences. 9 billion animals raised and killed for food each year in the US. We also get lots of feces from these animals. Shows comparison of a tiny dot representing total waste of humans vs waste of farmed animals in the US. Also points out much of the waste is contaminated. A lot of the waste is stored in manure lagoons etc.

8:30 Discusses climate change. Asks what the biggest contributor to climate change is. Cites the United Nations report. Mentions that plant-based diet can produce 20 times less greenhouse gases.

Discusses resource needs to produce a single pound of meat (20 lbs of plant materials). The water needs to produce the meat equals regular showering for 6 months for a single burger. Compares veggie burger to regular burger (40 gallons vs 620 gallons).

At this point Beau tries to screen the full video of "Someone not Something." Gives some background beforehand. Gives disclaimer that there is some graphic footage, and that they can take a step outside or put their head down and cover their ears if they feel objectionable to it. Unfortunately his file shows up corrupted, and since the wifi didn't work, he wasn't able to show the video.

8:35 Asked whether or not the meat was worth a lifetime of suffering for an animal. Emphasizes cutting out chicken as priority. Talks about health benefits briefly, and a bunch of celebrities. Talks about all the substitutes, and then menus that have vegetarian options, including some fast food.

Important to note that we sit down to eat three times/day, and can save 31 animals/year.

Passes around some resources to class. Mercy For Animals starter kit. HSUS Guide to meat free meals.

8:40 Class starts to ask questions about Beau and if he was veg, where to eat. Asked about a suggestion on where to volunteer. Students looked through materials during the questions section.

Question about if it was ok to be a pescetarian. Beau explained that fish have feelings
Question where do cows live in the wild, where would they go if we just released them?
Beau explained that we've domesticated them and the numbers are incredibly large.

Question about CA laws now that eggs have to be cage free here. Beau explained there was some progress legally in recent years, discussed Prop 2 and how it doesn't mandate cage-free, but just that they have a tiny bit more space, and the animals still end up at the slaughterhouse at the end of the day.

Question about nonindustrial farms, Beau explained 95% come from factory farms.

8:45 At this point no more student's raised their hands, so Jon tried to help by offering his computer to screen a short version of MFA's Farm to Fridge. The teacher didn't know how to work the projector, properly, and at that point the projector failed. Beau went back to the question about volunteering, mentioned internships for college credit and that THL is also looking for high school students. Answered question about specifics of what type of work they needed help with by saying that they could help find teachers who want this type of presentation, and also that they go to concerts and colleges and restaurants to do a variety of outreach.

8:50 Question if they do Sea World protests and stuff like that. Beau said nope.

Question if there was ever an opportunity to meet some farmed animals. Beau mentioned planning a field trip in the spring to a sanctuary in LA as an opportunity.

Teacher came in at the end to highlight that this wasn't just a US problem, but a world-wide problem. Then pointed out that we can all make a difference personally, and encouraged people to keep this info in their mind and make their choice accordingly.

Beau left his business cards at the front and offered an opportunity for them to contact him.

8:55 Teacher picked up the business cards and walked around to students handing them out to those who wanted one. Teacher reminded students of obligations to volunteer, and how it's important to have perspective on things and gain awareness. Heard one student say that they were going to go vegetarian, and a friend nearby said they'd do it too, and that they'd go vegetarian together – it's unclear how serious they may or may not have been. Beau stuck around until students needed to get to their next classroom. Class ended.

From Andrea Gunn, in response to a question about the average class size and whether THL always presents in classrooms or also in auditoriums:

“Jon, we keep records of the audiences for Humane Ed by day, so we know the total number of students spoken to each day that we present. The issue is we don't always know the total number of classes in that day (probably something we should start keeping track of!), but it wouldn't be difficult to determine by looking back through office calendars. I do have that data for Charlotte, though, which is the city where we get the 2nd largest number of presentations. The overall average number of students per class in Charlotte is 30 students. See below for detailed info (some days I logged the number of students per class, other times just the total students for the day divided by the number of classes).

We are definitely able to get auditoriums as well, up to probably 300 students in a class (but typically more like 100 or so). However, at least anecdotally, sometimes it seems that large audiences aren't necessarily more effective, because with a huge audience there is usually less Q&A and discussion after, and a greater likelihood of social pressure as students are typically allowed to sit with their friends (though that could also lead to social pressure for positive change as well).

If you'd like, I'd be happy to put together for you a list of the total days of Humane Ed (with number of classes varied) and the total number of students presented to for 2014 and 2015 so far. Just let me know, and please let me know if you have any questions in addition to this!”

The Humane League Humane Education Classes Data

Date	Number Students	Number Classes	Avg. Students per Class	Class	Level of Education	School
10/04/2013	10	1	10	Oceanography	High School	Independence High School
10/10/2013	129	3	43	Middle School Health	High School	NW Academy of the Arts
10/11/2013	95	3	32	Middle School Health	High School	NW Academy of the Arts
10/16/2013	15	1	15	Earth Science	High School	NW Academy of the Arts
10/28/2013	11	1	11	Ethics	College	UNC Charlotte
11/06/2013	109	3	36	Health/PE	High School	Philip O Berry High School
11/07/2013	106	3	35	Health/PE	High School	Philip O Berry High School
11/08/2013	104	3	35	Health/PE	High School	Philip O Berry High School
01/31/2013	85	3	28	AP Enviro Science	High School	W.A. Hough High School
02/03/2014	79	3	26	AP Enviro Science	High School	W.A. Hough High School
02/24/2013	33	3	11	Health Sciences	High School	Rocky River High School
03/05/2014	22	1	22	Human Geography	High School	Philip O Berry High School
03/06/2014	18	1	18	Human Geography	High School	Philip O Berry High School
03/12/2014	20	1	20	Animal Law	College	Charlotte School of Law
03/14/2014	6	1	6	SALDF Club	College	Charlotte School of Law
03/21/2014	135	4	34	AP Human Geo	High School	Ardrey Kell High School
03/24/2014	23	1	23	AP Human Geo	High School	Hopewell High School
03/25/2014	70	2	35	Philosophy	College	UNCC
03/26/2014	109	3	36	AP Human Geo	High School	Ardrey Kell High School
03/27/2014	14	1	14	N/A	Other	Healthy Home Market
03/30/2014	9	1	9	N/A	Other	Healthy Home Market
03/31/2014	78	3	26	Enviro Science	High School	Z.B. Vance High School

07/14/2014	20	1	20	Animal Law	College	Charlotte School of Law
09/19/2014	61	3	20	Science	High School	Harding University High School
09/25/2014	42	3	14	Health Science	High School	West Charlotte High School
10/09/2014	100	3	33	World History	High School	Renaissance at Olympic HS
10/10/2014	28	3	9	Social Studies	High School	Hawthorne Academy of Health Science
10/14/2014	15	1	15	Civics and Economics	High School	Garinger High School
10/17/2014	67	3	22	American History	High School	West Charlotte High School
10/24/2014	53	2	27	Psychology	High School	Harding University High School
12/17/2014	317	3	106	Science, Gym, Health	High School	Independence High School
12/19/2014	62	3	21	Earth/ Enviro Science	High School	South Mecklenburg High School
01/14/2015	18	1	18	Intro Writing	College	UNC Charlotte
01/15/2015	36	2	18	Intro Writing	College	UNC Charlotte
02/18/2015	49	2	25	Psychology	College	Johnson & Wales University
02/19/2015	34	1	34	Psychology	College	Johnson & Wales University
03/17/2015	33	1	33	Health	High School	W.A. Hough High School
03/18/2015	21	2	11	AP Environmental Science	High School	Cato Middle College High School
03/19/2015	16	1	16	AP Human Geography	High School	Vance High School
03/19/2015	41	1	41	Psychology	High School	West Mecklenburg High School
03/25/2015	32	1	32	Science & Technology	College	UNC Charlotte
04/02/2015	179	3	60	Earth/ Enviro Science	High School	West Charlotte High School
04/27/2015	55	2	28	Psychology	College	Johnson & Wales University
04/28/2015	66	2	33	Psychology	College	Johnson & Wales University
04/30/2015	27	1	27	Business Ethics	College	Johnson & Wales University
05/18/2015	38	1	38	Health	High School	W.A. Hough High School

05/20/2015	77	2	39	Health	High School	W.A. Hough High School
05/21/2015	102	3	34	Health	High School	W.A. Hough High School
05/26/2015	238	3	79	Earth/ Enviro Science	High School	Ardrey Kell High School
06/22/2015	7	1	7	N/A	Neither	Whole Foods Southpark
06/23/2015	7	1	7	N/A	Neither	Whole Foods Southpark
06/23/2015	7	1	7	Animal Law	College	Charlotte School of Law
Total	3128	103	30			