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## Mapping the Current State of Human Rights Education in Journalism Education (abstract)

Shayna Plaut  
*Simon Fraser University*

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**The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy**

2015 Conference of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center

Oct. 2-3, 2015, Dayton, Ohio

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**Research Panel:** Human Rights Education

**Presenter:** Shayna Plaut, Simon Fraser University

**Title:** Mapping the Current State of Human Rights Education in Journalism Education

**Abstract:** Utilizing a mixed methods approach, we map and analyze the current state of human rights education within journalism education. We aim to answer the question: If the role of a journalist is to both “educate and inform” a citizenry in order hold those in power accountable, what kind of training does a journalist need to cover a story about human rights and how can that best be provided?

Through compiling and categorizing 627 journalism programs in eight countries, surveying 88 professional journalists and conducting in-depth interviews with 25 journalists, journalism educators, human rights practitioners and funding organizations we found an almost absolute absence of human rights education within formal journalistic institutions. In addition we noted a resistance to a human rights frame within formal educational institutions. This lack was based on financial constraints, institutional assumptions of audience interests as well as a journalist’s distrust of what they assumed to be an “advocacy angle” by human rights organizations.

With these findings we then proceed to discuss how journalists can best use their professional skills of rigor and skepticism to speak truth to power and offer suggestions for better cooperation in the journalism, human rights and philanthropic sectors.

**Biography:** Shayna Plaut, PhD, is the Simons Postdoctoral Research Fellow in International Law and Human Security at the School for International Studies in Simon Fraser University. Her work focuses on human rights and journalism and journalism education with a specific focus on people who do not fit well into the traditional understanding of the nation state. Shayna has conducted extensive fieldwork in Macedonia, Hungary, and Sapmi (the traditional homeland of the Saami people in the current Nordic countries). (Source: The Communication Initiative Network)