PEACE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Peace education encompasses the key concepts of education and peace. While it is possible to define education as a process of systematic institutionalized transmission of knowledge and skills, as well as of basic values and norms that are accepted in a certain society, the concept of peace is less clearly defined. Many writers make an important distinction between positive and negative peace. Negative peace is defined as the absence of large-scale physical violence - the absence of the condition of war. Positive peace involves the development of a society in which, except for the absence of direct violence, there is no structural violence or social injustice.

Accordingly, peace education could be defined as an interdisciplinary area of education whose goal is institutionalized and non institutionalized teaching about peace and for peace. Peace education aims to help students acquire skills for nonviolent conflict resolution and to reinforce these skills for active and responsible action in the society for the promotion of the values of peace. Peace education may be defined as the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment.

Introduction

Peace education encompasses the key concepts of education and peace. While it is possible to define education as a process of systematic institutionalized transmission of knowledge and skills, as well as of basic values and norms that are accepted in a certain society, the concept of peace is less clearly defined. Many writers make an important distinction between positive and negative peace. Negative peace is defined as the absence of large-scale physical violence - the absence of the condition of war. Positive peace involves the development of a society in which, except for the absence of direct violence, there is no structural violence or social injustice.

Accordingly, peace education could be defined as an interdisciplinary area of education whose goal is institutionalized and non institutionalized teaching about peace and for peace. Peace education aims to help students acquire skills for nonviolent conflict resolution and to reinforce these skills for active and responsible action in the society for the promotion of the values of peace. Therefore, unlike the concept of conflict resolution, which can be considered to be retroactive - trying to solve a conflict after it has already occurred - peace education has a more proactive approach. Its aim is to prevent a conflict in advance or rather to educate individuals and a society for a peaceful existence on the basis of nonviolence, tolerance, equality, respect for differences, and social justice.

Meaning

Our global existence depends on learning to live together without the threat an awareness of the processes and skills that are necessary for achieving understanding ,tolerance and good-will in the world today.According to Carolyn Duffy, Educating for peace means ,Examining and discussing our values and attitudes towards diversity ,cultural differences,tolerance and human dignity.

Developing languages and social interaction skills to promote peaceful relations among people,among nations,and between human beings and the natural environment. Learning to solve problems and to think critically regarding issues of conflict and violence.

Definition

Peace education may be defined as the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment.

Ian Harris and John Synott have described peace education as a series of "teaching encounters" that draw from people: their desire for peace, nonviolent alternatives for managing

conflict, and skills for critical analysis of structural arrangements that produce and legitimate injustice and inequality.

James Page suggests peace education be thought of as "encouraging a commitment to peace as a settled disposition and enhancing the confidence of the individual as an individual agent of peace; as informing the student on the consequences of war and social injustice; as informing the student on the value of peaceful and just social structures and working to uphold or develop such social structures; as encouraging the student to love the world and to imagine a peaceful future; and as caring for the student and encouraging the student to care for others" .

The Development of Peace Education and Its Basic Principles

The understanding of the concept of peace has changed throughout history, and so has its role and importance in the educational system from the very beginnings of the institutionalized socialization of children. When discussing the evolution of peace education, however, there have been a few important points in history that defined its aims and actions. The end of World War I (1914 - 1918) brought powerful support for the need for international cooperation and understanding and helped instill a desire to include these ideas in educational systems. The League of Nations and a number of nongovernmental organizations worked together on these ideas, especially through the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, an organization that was the predecessor of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). World War II (1939 - 1945) ended with millions of victims and the frightening use of atomic weapons against Japan, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In 1946 UNESCO was founded as an umbrella institution of the United Nations, and it was charged with planning, developing, and implementing general changes in education according to the international politics of peace and security. The statute of this organization reinforced the principle of the role of education in the development of peace, and a framework was created for including and applying the principles of peace in the general world education systems. The cold war division of the world after World War II and the strategy of the balance of fear between the so-called West and East blocs redirected the peace efforts.

The peace movement began concentrating on stopping the threat of nuclear war, halting the arms race, and encouraging disarmament. Somewhat parallel to this, the issues of environmental protection and development found their place in peace education programs. The contemporary sociopolitical environment (particularly the events in eastern Europe since the early 1990s, the fear of terrorism, and the increasing gap between developed and undeveloped countries) has created new challenges for the understanding of peace and for the development of the underlying principles of responsibility and security.

Peace Education Discrepancies: Individual, Group Conflict

In the active process of achieving positive peace, peace education is faced with a few basic discrepancies: discrepancy between the individual and the group, discrepancy between groups within one society or from different societies, and the discrepancy of conflict as an imbalance of different interests that need to be resolved without violence.

Discrepancies between individual and group. The modern liberal theory puts the individual's equality, values, and rights in the center of a successfully functioning society. This basic thesis is the beginning of the philosophy and practical protection of human rights. From the individual psychological point of view one thinks in terms of educating a complete person. In the educational system this does not mean transmitting only the facts, but it includes the complete social, emotional, and moral development of an individual; the development of a positive self-concept and positive self-esteem; and the acquisition of knowledge and skills to accept responsibility for one's own benefit as well as for the benefit of society.

The development of a positive self-concept is the foundation for the development of sympathy for others and building trust, as well as the foundation for developing awareness of interconnectedness with others. In that sense a *social individual* is a starting point and a final target of peace education efforts.

Discrepancies between groups. People are by nature social beings, fulfilling their needs within society. Many social psychologists believe that there is a basic tendency in people to evaluate groups they belong to as more valuable than groups they do not belong to. This ingroup bias is the

foundation of stereotypes, negative feelings toward outgroups, prejudices, and, finally, discrimination. In the psychological sense, the feeling of an individual that his or her group is discriminated against, or that he or she as an individual is discriminated against just for belonging to a particular group, leads to a sense of deep injustice and a desire to rectify the situation. Injustice and discrimination do not shape only the psychological world of an individual but also shape the collective world of the group that is discriminated against - shaping the group memory that is transmitted from generation to generation and that greatly influences the collective identity.

Therefore, peace education is dealing with key elements of individual and group identity formed by historical and cultural heritage, balancing the values of both of these, and trying to teach people how to enjoy their own rights without endangering the rights of others, and especially how to advocate for the rights of others when such rights are threatened. This motivating element of defense and advocating for the rights of others is the foundation of shared responsibility for the process of building peace.

Conflict and its role in peace education.

Conflict is a part of life, and its nature is neither good nor bad. On the interpersonal and intergroup level, conflict describes an imbalance or an existence of difference between the needs and interests of two sides. It becomes negative only when the answer to a conflict is aggression. It is possible, however, to resolve the difference positively, by recognizing the problem and recognizing one's own needs and interests and also acknowledging the needs of the opposing sides. In this way, constructive nonviolent conflict resolutions are possible. An important aspect of conflict is that it includes potential for change, and it is in this context that peace education addresses the issues of conflict and conflict resolution by teaching students how to take creative approaches to the conflict and how to find different possibilities for the conflict resolution. Thus students gain knowledge and skills that encourage personal growth and development, contribute to self-esteem and respect of others, and develop competence for a nonviolent approach to future conflict situations.

Peace Education in Schools

From the very beginnings of the development of systematic peace education, there has been discussion about whether it should be added as a separate program in the schools, or if the principles of peace education should be applied through the regular school subjects. The variety of approaches and attitudes on what peace education actually is leads to the introduction of a series of titles, such as multicultural training, education for democracy and human rights, and education for development. Many in the field, however, believe that the implementation of *principles* of peace education into the institutionalized educational system is a better approach, especially within the subjects encompassing the cultural heritage of the dominant society and the ethnic groups belonging to it. Consistent with this view, Aspeslagh in 1996 wrote about the need to internationalize national curriculum. For example, including within the curriculum the contributions of minority groups to literature, history, art, the general cultural heritage, and the development of the particular nation-state may significantly contribute to intercultural closeness and understanding.

The Principles and Theoretical Foundations of Peace Education Programs

Since the psychologist Gordon Allport formulated his well-known contact hypothesis in 1954, this theoretical framework became the most applicable principle for programs whose main goal is to change the relationships between groups in conflict. According to Allport's theory, for the intergroup contact to be successful and accomplish positive changes in attitudes and behavior, it must fulfill four basic conditions: the contact groups must be of equal status, the contact must be personal and manifold, the groups must depend on each other working for a superordinate goal, and there must be institutional support for the equality norm.

The key problem of peace education is not the interpersonal conflict but the collective conflict between groups, races, nations, or states. Therefore, the issue of transferring the positive attitudes toward members of other groups - attitudes achieved in safe environments such as classrooms, schools, workshops, and the like - to all members of the outgroup and all other outgroups remains the pivotal issue of peace education. Children learn about peace and the need for peace in safe protected environments and then return to a wider society where there is still injustice, asymmetry of power, a hierarchical structure, discrimination, and xenophobia. Therefore, each program for peace education must not only strengthen the capacity of an individual for critical thinking but also strengthen the individual's ability to resist the majority, if the majority is one that discriminates. As stated by Ervin Staub in 1999, for change to happen and spread there is a need for a *minimum mass of people* who

share attitudes, a culture in which they can express those attitudes, and a society that accepts the attitudes.

Based on the contact hypothesis, a very successful technique was developed for improving the relations among groups, highly applicable as a general teaching and learning method. It is the *cooperative learning technique* in which a smaller group of students study in face-to-face interaction, cooperating to complete a common task. This technique was very successful both in lower and higher grades of elementary school, not only as a teaching method but also for creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom, reinforcing students relationships, and creating intergroup friendships.

On the other hand, based on the idea that adopting knowledge and developing skills is the basis for gaining positive attitudes and behavior, *intercultural training programs* were also developed. These basically involve a group of techniques that accept the primary notion that differences between cultures are what lead to misunderstandings and conflicts between groups. Such programs assume that information about the values, customs, and practices of the members of a different culture contributes to better understanding of others, thereby reducing prejudices, negative stereotypes, and tensions between people who belong to different cultures. Research has shown that ignorance about others plays a significant role in the development and perpetuation of prejudices. Educating students about both cultural similarities and differences is a significant factor in reducing prejudice.

Programmes on peace education
"Peace Education" as Conflict Resolution Training

Peace education programs centered on conflict resolution typically focus on the social-behavioural symptoms of conflict, training individuals to resolve inter-personal disputes through techniques of negotiation and (peer) mediation. Learning to manage anger, "fight fair" and improve communication through skills such as listening, turn-taking, identifying needs, and separating facts from emotions, constitute the main elements of these programs. Participants are also encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to brainstorm together on compromises. In general, approaches of this type aim to "alter beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours…from negative to positive attitudes toward conflict as a basis for preventing violence" (Van Slyck, Stern and Elbedour, 1999, emphasis added).

"Peace Education" as Democracy Education

Peace education programs centered on democracy education typically focus on the political processes associated with conflict, and postulate that with an increase in democratic participation the likelihood of societies resolving conflict through violence and war decreases. At the same time, "a democratic society needs the commitment of citizens who accept the inevitability of conflict as well as the necessity for tolerance" (U.S. Department of State, The Culture of Democracy, emphasis added). Thus programs of this kind attempt to foster a conflict-positive orientation in the community by training students to view conflict as a platform for creativity and growth.

Approaches of this type train participants in the skills of critical thinking, debate and coalition-building, and promote the values of freedom of speech, individuality, tolerance of diversity, compromise and conscientious objection. Their aim is to produce "responsible citizens" who will hold their governments accountable to the standards of peace, primarily through adversarial processes. Activities are structured to have students "assume the role of the citizen that chooses, makes decisions, takes positions, argues positions and respects the opinions of others": skills that a multi-party democracy are based upon. Based on the assumption that democracy decreases the likelihood of violence and war, it is assumed that these are the same skills necessary for creating a culture of peace.

"Peace Education" as Human Rights Education

Peace education programs centered on raising awareness of human rights typically focus at the level of policies that humanity ought to adopt in order to move closer to a peaceful global community. The aim is to engender a commitment among participants to a vision of structural peace in which all individual members of the human race can exercise their personal freedoms and be legally protected from violence, oppression and indignity.

Approaches of this type familiarize participants with Human Rights; and promote tolerance, solidarity, autonomy and self-affirmation at the individual and collective levels. Human rights education "faces continual elaboration, a significant theory-practice gap and frequent challenge as to its validity".

"Peace Education" as Worldview Transformation

New approaches to peace education are starting from insights gleaned from psychology which recognize the developmental nature of human psychosocial dispositions. Essentially, while conflict-promoting attitudes and behaviours are characteristic of earlier phases of human development, unity-

promoting attitudes and behaviours emerge in later phases of healthy development. H.B. Danesh proposes an "Integrative Theory of Peace" in which peace is understood as a psychosocial, political, moral and spiritual reality. Peace education, he says, must focus on the healthy development and maturation of human consciousness through assisting people to examine and transform their worldviews.

Worldviews are defined as the subconscious lens (acquired through cultural, family, historical, religious and societal influences) through which people perceive four key issues: 1) the nature of reality, 2) human nature, 3) the purpose of existence, 4) the principles governing appropriate human relationships. Surveying a mass of material, Danesh argues that the majority of people and societies in the world hold conflict-based worldviews, which express themselves in conflicted intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, and international relationships. He subdivides conflict-based worldviews into two main categories which he correlates to phases of human development: the Survival-Based Worldview and the Identity-Based Worldview. It is through the acquisition of a more integrative, Unity-Based Worldview that human capacity to mitigate conflict, create unity in the context of diversity, and establish sustainable cultures of peace, is increased - be it in the home, at school, at work, or in the international community.

Conclusion

Peace education is a diverse field that includes the theoretical, research, and practical activities of experts from many disciplines assembled in a number of professional and research associations. The best known among these is the International Peace Re-search Association, which was founded in 1964. The programs of peace education exist within the academic discipline of peace studies on many universities, especially in the United States. The dissemination of research results and theoretical approaches is ensured by the existence of a number of periodicals, for example *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology; Journal of Peace Research*; and *Peace and Change..* The measure of the success of these efforts will be seen in the ending of conflicts between countries and nations, in a more just distribution of goods, and in reducing the differences in economic development and life standards between the countries of the underdeveloped and developed worlds. For the culture of peace to become established, it is necessary to accept the principles of uniqueness in diversity and to establish the social norms of respect, dignity, and the rights of every individual.

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