REVIEW

Peace-Instructed Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a pragmatic perspective of peace education, highlighting its importance, objectives, historical evolution, and practical implementation strategies across diverse contexts. Based on recorded literature and theoretical frameworks, this article features the varied nature of peace education, focusing on its role in addressing various forms of conflict and fostering a culture of peace. Through theoretical analysis and practical examples, the article stresses the need for tailored approaches to peace education based on contextual conditions, ranging from environmentally accommodated overt conflict to those identified by human rights violations and warfare. Furthermore, the article offers a set of hypothetical scenarios and classroom activities tailored to different contexts, providing educators with a hands-on model for inculcating values, dispositions, and classroom instructions that best reinforce peace education programs. Conclusively, the article advocates for the operational approach of peace education initiatives to cultivate empathy, tolerance, and mutual understanding, thereby contributing to sustainable peace within communities and societies.

Keywords: Empathy, peace education, peace-instructed, tolerance.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

Navaro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2010) identified two distinct dimensions of consensual peace. The first dimension, peace-making, involves the active participation of conflicting parties in negotiations aimed at establishing a cease-fire, creating preliminary agreements, or developing a framework for resolving future disputes. Peace-making primarily focuses on immediate conflict scenarios but frequently overlooks the deeper systemic issues at play. In contrast, the second dimension, termed peacebuilding, involves the use of (1) economic, (2) political, and (3) educational institutions to cultivate enduring peace. Peacebuilding efforts aim to rectify structural inequalities and promote lasting, positive relationships based on mutual respect and social equity principles. Within such a context, peace education plays a crucial role in solidifying consensual peace and enhancing structural stability.

1.2. The Need for Peace Education

An initial question that imposes itself readily is, 'Who needs peace education?' Peace education addresses three contexts according to the socio-political environment of the target population (Shafer, 2015). No country, region, or community is excluded from these three conditions. In contexts characterized by the absence of violence, hostilities, or any violation of human rights, the role of peace education is to promote individual skills that reject violence and build resilient, harmonious communities. Conversely, in contexts that exhibit overt or implicit human rights violations but no active hostilities, peace education traces and eliminates sources of inequality, injustice, and potential hostilities. Thereafter, peace education endeavors promote mutual understanding of the conflicting parties and nurture a collective, collaborative vision for a sustained, equitable community. The primary function of peace education, however, becomes particularly significant in situations where there is a lack of action towards addressing the hostilities of war. Here, peace education assists dialogue between discordant parties. Thus, it furnishes a common platform that paves the way for consensual talks, a cease of hostilities, and an eventual consensual disposition. Thus, peace education remains indispensable for promoting, nurturing, and sustaining consensual peace across diverse contexts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the years, peace and peace education concepts have significantly transformed. Understanding the complexities of context is essential for defining peace and peace

education, as it allows for formulating relevant goals and adapting strategies accordingly.

2.1. Definitions

The literature on peace education rattles with a broad spectrum of definitions. Mukhopadhyay (2005) inaugurates several definitions: (1) it is the response to conflict, whether local, national, or international; (2) it is the paradigm that embraces love, cooperation, and welfare for mankind; (3) it is the type of education that inspires children to unravel sources of sitting conflicts and the potential ones. A significant issue in the field of education is the need to foster an environment that prioritizes values of peace while addressing violent or aggressive behaviors. This overarching aim is consistent with the principles set forth by Johnson and Johnson (1995), who describe peace education as a holistic approach. They define peace education as the intentional incorporation of key components, knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills necessary for individuals to manage both current and future conflicts effectively. Furthermore, peace education is built on the understanding that attitudes play a crucial role in influencing how individuals and groups respond to conflict situations. Through targeted educational strategies, teachers promote attitudes that emphasize empathy, tolerance, and a dedication to resolving conflicts non-violently. By cultivating these qualities, individuals are better prepared to engage positively with differing viewpoints and navigate challenging situations with dignity and mutual respect.

2.2. Peace Education Across History

Peace education is prospected (Harris, 2003) as the systematic promotion of knowledge concerning the dangers of violence and methodologies aimed at cultivating peace. Its scope transcends conventional classroom settings. Dating back to the earliest human civilizations, societies endeavored to transmit principles of peaceful coexistence through generations. Often, religious and philosophical doctrines have served as a headstream for peace-oriented teachings, although individuals have sometimes distorted these traditions to rationalize/legitimate violent actions.

The roots of structured peace education can be traced back to the early 20th century. As noted by Scanlon (1959), the formation of the School Peace League in 1912, which established chapters in various states across the United States, represented an early initiative aimed at promoting "international justice and fraternity" within the educational system. Influential developments in this area were shaped by individuals like Maria Montessori, whose perspectives highlighted the essential role of education in fostering peace. Montessori (1974) argued that true peace is achieved by freeing the child's spirit, cultivating empathy for others, and rejecting unthinking obedience to authority. She emphasized that educational methods and teaching practices that overlook peace-focused curricula are ineffective in creating a foundation for lasting peace in communities.

In summary, peace education represents a multifaceted endeavor rooted in recent history and shaped by the insights of influential figures throughout pedagogy. Its generic aim is to instill a deep understanding of the consequences of violence while equipping individuals with the tools necessary to actively eliminate conflict and violation prejudices and foster peace and collaborative dispositions within their communities.

3. Objectives of Peace Education

War originates in the human mind; consequently, the creation of peace should commence with shaping human thoughts. This concept is eloquently articulated in the UNESCO constitution (Mukhopadhyay, 2005): "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constructed." An umbrella goal for peace education is to eliminate the culture of violence and eventually alternate with a promoted sensual peace. This goal is not excluded from conflict contexts; Gubair (2022, p. 60) believes that enhancing intercultural competence is necessary for learners to survive and communicate successively in a given multicultural/global society. Therefore, the commencement entails establishing objectives qualified for transiting violent thought dispositions towards favorable coexistence, cooperation, and mutual understanding. Operationally, the goals of peace education circulate simultaneously along with their target population and the nature of the conflict they resolve/relieve. Resolving/relieving violence and violations is preceded by a thorough understanding of the divergent cultures of the clashing communities/cultures. According to Gubair (2022), present-day education requires a fashion that empowers/qualifies learners to function effectively in contexts with diverse languages and cultures. Therefore, educators must reconsider their attitudes towards the material they develop, the disposition they inaugurate, and the instructions they employ in their class communities and cultures. This justifies why the objectives of peace education cannot be excluded from an elected list. Montessori (1974) asserts that every form of violence necessitates an equivalent approach to peace education aimed at addressing the strategies and mechanisms that could alleviate or resolve such issues. Consequently, the objectives of peace education must align with the particular needs imposed by a region or a specific conflict. (1) In regions that experience minimal collective physical violence, peace educators focus on teaching the underlying causes of domestic and civil violence while fostering awareness of global issues such as poverty, environmental sustainability, and the principles of nonviolence. (2) Educators who address challenges related to underdevelopment, hunger, poverty, illiteracy, and human rights deficiencies strive to comprehend the crises prevalent in less affluent nations and to identify potential solutions to underdevelopment issues. (3) Historically, peace educators who have concentrated on the threats posed by warfare have often overlooked the environmental crisis. However, with the increasing urgency of global warming, rapid species extinction, water scarcity, and the detrimental impacts of pollution, a new perspective on peace has emerged.

These examples illustrate the diverse and complex nature of peace education goals. Thus, this discussion

highlights the multifaceted aspects of peace-focused classroom activities.

4. PEACE-ORIENTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

4.1. Classroom Instructions for Peace Education

Even if their goals are alike, each context for peace requires a distinct approach to peace education, shaped by the overarching issues, prevailing conditions, cultural backgrounds, educational frameworks, and the innovative efforts of the educators involved (Bar-Tal, 2002, p. 35). Further clarification regarding the range and variability of peace-focused teaching methods will be discussed in the subsequent subsection.

Diazgranados Ferráns contends that the successful integration of peace education within educational institutions requires a comprehensive approach beyond individual subjects (Shafer, 2015). This integration ought to pervade the entire school environment, be embraced by all staff members, and be exhibited throughout the school day. She outlines several strategies for educators and administrators to instill peace education into their practices. These endeavors hold a particular emphasis on fostering empathetic, accountable, and engaging learners of today and the presumably future leaders of tomorrow:

1. Exemplify compassion and understanding
2. Foster restoration rather than retribution
3. Establish an inclusive environment
4. Implement hands-on learning experiences
5. Amplify the voices of marginalized individuals
6. Promote teamwork within varied groups
7. Engage in conversations about contentious topics
8. Combine community service with educational objectives

According to Mukhopadhyay (2005), peace can be understood through three fundamental perspectives: inner peace, social peace, and peace with nature. A single peace-instructed classroom activity may simultaneously address more than a perspective of peace context; however, several activities may emphasize a single perspective while contributing to the broader concept. Peace education is inherently interdisciplinary, unlike traditional academic subjects such as mathematics, science, and history. Consequently, peace education programs are typically integrated into existing school subjects or developed separately as extracurricular and social benefit initiatives. Peace education should be devised across the curriculum in separate or integrated programs.

4.2. Peace Practice Activities

For additional elucidation, two hypothetical scenarios or contexts are proposed for developing peace-focused activities and the aforementioned activities.

Hypothetically, A is a context that suffers unrest due to human rights violations. This context is experiencing significant social strife consequential to discrimination based on ethnic and/or political disposition. Those endeavors of inequality and violation of human rights resulted in social and political tensions. In response, an appropriate contextual peace education program should encompass a variety of activities that eliminate the sources of those violations. The following are two sets of applicable activities for A's disposition:

1. Empathy-building activities: Engage students in activities that promote empathy and understanding toward individuals from different ethnic or political backgrounds. These could include storytelling, cultural exchange projects, or empathy-building exercises. The storytelling example is further elaborated under Section 5.
2. Role-playing activities: Assign students the roles of individuals from diverse backgrounds facing discrimination or conflict. Encourage them to empathize with each character's perspective and brainstorm/preach peaceful solutions to the presented challenges. Again, an adaptation to this role-play is exemplified later in Section 5.

The aforementioned activities are comprehensive and flexible for educators to moderate up and down regarding linguistic and non-linguistic skills. Similarly, educators are expected to follow those teaching strategies highlighting the unfriendly sequences of discrimination, inequality, and rights violations, coupled with the relevant peace-instructed activities. Educators may also develop community benefit projects to foster unity and cooperation among ethnic and socio-economic groups. Additionally, art and literature (folk stories) are used as media to explore themes of tolerance and diversity. This activity is extendable, convertible, and open to comprehend a broad spectrum of educators' and scholars' imaginations and aspirations.

In contrast, context B is of two or more parties clashing against each other over a deluded resource scarcity (whereby resources are abundant), leading to conflicts over land and natural resources. Those basic sources of conflict have been fuelled by intruding ethnic and social dispositions. Here, peace education embraces ecology-oriented instructions. Educators carefully highlight the interdependence of all living organisms and the importance of equitable management of resources to ensure fair distribution of current supplies as well as provisions for future generations. Moreover, they elaborate on eliminating the unjustifiable imposition of social features to the conflict. On the other hand, students engage in hands-on projects such as community collaboration, resource care initiatives, and environmental conservation efforts. Additionally, the curriculum incorporates wisdom and traditional social and ecological knowledge, honoring the cultural heritages of the community and instilling a deep respect for nature and the community as a whole unit. Special attention is paid to the nobility of unification and diversity; alternatively, the disgraceful sequences of community combating and disunity are underscored and exemplified. The umbrella goal would be eliminating the mind of scarcity and nurturing values of collaboration and mutual benefit.

Although both contexts needed a peace-instructed orientation, the specific content, methodologies, and approaches vary significantly based on each context's uniqueness, values, and peace demands.

This article urges a blueprint for peace-oriented education, specifically emphasizing extracurricular methodologies. These methodologies are fancied/hoped to offer a structured framework for implementing peace education initiatives. Their potential significance extends to peace education advocates, educators, relevant institutions, and scholars engaged in curriculum development.

Nevertheless, the same activities modeled for context '**A**' above could be converted, amended, extracted, and moderated in convenience to target contexts, subjects, and groups.

5. Models for Peace Instructed Classes

According to Navaro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2010), nurturing values of peace and tolerance requires exposing children to diverse, authentic contexts. Earlier in the literature review of this article, it has been clarified that peace education is interpreted according to its context. In sequence, peace educational programs are invariably oriented to (1) contexts where no violations of human rights nor overt conflicts, hostilities, and misunderstanding are exhibited; (2) in converse are contexts where undeniable proof of human rights violations and/or hostile behaviors are in action; (3) the critical context of hostilities, conflicts, violations of human rights elevate to warfare. The following endeavors for peace-instructed classes are hypothesized to address these contexts individually.

5.1. Contexts Exhibit no Violation

The contextual framework is directed towards adverse environmental scenarios, with a narrative constructed for an environment-oriented classroom setting. The peace-oriented context visualizes an environment characterized by unattended garbage accumulation. A gigantic trash can is placed next to a school. A pupil approaches the trash and gets sick. After he was admitted to the town clinic, his classmates visited him. Subsequently, the pupil is absent from a few classes, and his mates must help him make up for missing classes. In sympathy to their mate, the school pupils decide to make a difference and to look after their school and the surrounding environment. The narrative concluded with a voluntary school campaign named "gets clean; get healthy." Diverse elaborations are accessible: the story could be read aloud, role-played, and assisted with pictures/drawings for further guessing and speculation games, among others. The class is wrapped up with recommendations on dispositions, resolutions, voluntary work initiatives/orientation, etc. Although this scenario is intended for a basic/primary school context, educators may fit into divergent target age groups and intended social ventures.

5.2. Context with Human Rights Violations

A hypothetical scenario could be an extracted dialogue/-play depicting a situational sketch at a civil service office where an applicant to a vacancy is given an undeserved advantage over other candidates out of social and/or political disposition. Subsequently, oppressed candidates exhibit disregard and hold grudges. An open discussion could follow, and consensual recommendations could be made to resolve similar violations.

5.3. Contexts of Warfare

Navaro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2010) claim that lack of intolerance to differences is a pivotal source of war. The context highlighted concurrently is no exception. An effective warfare-sensitive class instruction elaborates on inspecting the root/initial causes of the conflict. Educators begin by opening the platform for a discussion of those sources of the current warfare. Educators facilitate the discussion on the conflict, including intolerance, prejudice, and lack of communication. Additionally, the activity may relate to historical, social, and political factors contributing to the ongoing strife.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, peace education is a powerful tool for nurturing understanding, empathy, and cooperation in the face of human rights violations, hostile conflicts, and warfare. Through the cultivation of critical thinking, encouragement of open dialogue, and the promotion of values such as tolerance and respect, peace education empowers individuals with the essential skills and mindset needed to create a more just, equitable, and peaceful society. As educators, stakeholders, and communities prioritize peace education endeavors, they pave the way for a future where conflicts are resolved through understanding rather than violence and where the culture of peace prevails in thought and attitudes.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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