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Educating for Ethical Values and Peace Discussing a Curriculum Approach

Alicia Cabezudo erläutert und entfaltet – zusammen mit Magnus Haavelsrud – die Interdependenz von ethischer Erziehung, Werteerziehung und Friedenserziehung. Sie geht dabei von einem weiten, ganzheitlichen Friedensbegriff aus, der ein lebendiges, Konflikte gewaltlos lösendes, solidarisches, partnerschaftliches, Differenzen respektierendes und ökologisch bewusstes Zusammenleben beinhaltet. Was das für die erzieherischen Aufgaben bedeutet, wird systematisch entfaltet. Ziele und Inhalte sind dem ganzheitlichen Ansatz verpflichtet: Sie werden für die kognitive Ebene, für die Verhaltensebene und die Ebene der Werte-Einstellungen so ausformuliert, dass deutlich gezeigt werden kann, wie hier verschiedene Lernorte – schulisch und außerschulisch – und die verschiedenen Akteure in den Lernprozessen – Lehrende und Lernende – auf wechselseitige Ergänzung angewiesen sind, wie dabei aber auch an den institutionellen Rahmenbedingungen und den Konkretionen im einzelnen sorgfältig gearbeitet werden muss. Die dazu entwickelten Schaubilder verdeutlichen die Vielfalt der Interdependenzen, die dabei im Blick gehalten werden müssen.

Introduction

In the late twentieth century many of the major dilemmas facing our world relate to issues leading us to ethical values, peace and conflict: the spiraling arms race and the threat of nuclear holocaust; human rights violations; the gap between rich and poor countries, ecological imbalance, and cultural violence at the interpersonal, community, national and global levels. Such issues inescapability impact, in varying degrees, on our daily lives and on the consciousness of children at school and out of school, including their hopes, aspirations and dreams.

The last decade has witnessed a growing concern that schools should take notice of global problems such as these both at the micro and macro levels. This fact is illustrated by an increasing range of curriculum initiatives in multicultural education, non-sexist education, environmental education, development education, Aboriginal studies, religious education and pastoral care, education for human rights, and future studies. Overlapping with these other contemporary movements for curriculum innovation has been the development of broadly based peace education and non violent - ethics movement everywhere .

In this context, it is increasingly maintained that the school curriculum and community learnings should provide opportunities for realistic and informed appraisal of contemporary problems of our world without reinforcing negative images of an “inevitable” gloom and doom future. At the same time it is argued that there is a need for the development of inquiry and the reduction of violence, and for greater opportunities in the school curriculum for creative and rational discussion of diverse views on alternative futures.

Like the widened conceptual understandings of health implied in preventative medicine, the concept of peace tightened to Ethics in contemporary peace research literature and peace education is defined broadly rather than narrowly (see Figure 1). Peace is considered conceptually on a variety of scales and levels from the personal to the global.

One of the great traditional words for peace is the Hebrew ‘shalom’, the Arabic ‘salam’. It comes from a root meaning ‘wholeness’. Rather than defining peace negatively, as the interval between wars or outbreaks of physical violence, it is defined in a positive and integrated way. It is taken to denote not only the absence of open hostilities but also the presence of peacemaking processes and conditions likely to ensure a secure, durable peace. It implies a state of well-being and an active process in which justice, equity and respect for basic human rights are maximized and violence, both physical and structural, is minimized.

A broad rather than narrow concept of peace is taken as the basis for discussion here and basically as the upper value for an ethical work where Peace must prevail over all.

1. The purpose and aims of Ethics Education and Education for Peace

Purpose

Educating shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 26

This paper provides a succinct expression of the purpose of educating for peace as education for a new Ethics and Understanding . It raises important issues about the professional responsibilities of teachers and the role of schools in cultivating global awareness and peace perspectives across the curriculum as well as the important role of non formal education . The principles of the Universal Declaration are given legal force by the International Convention against Discrimination in Education, the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The legal standards of Article 26 are reaffirmed in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Principle 10 states that children shall be educated in “ a spirit of understanding, tolerance among people, (and) peace ...”

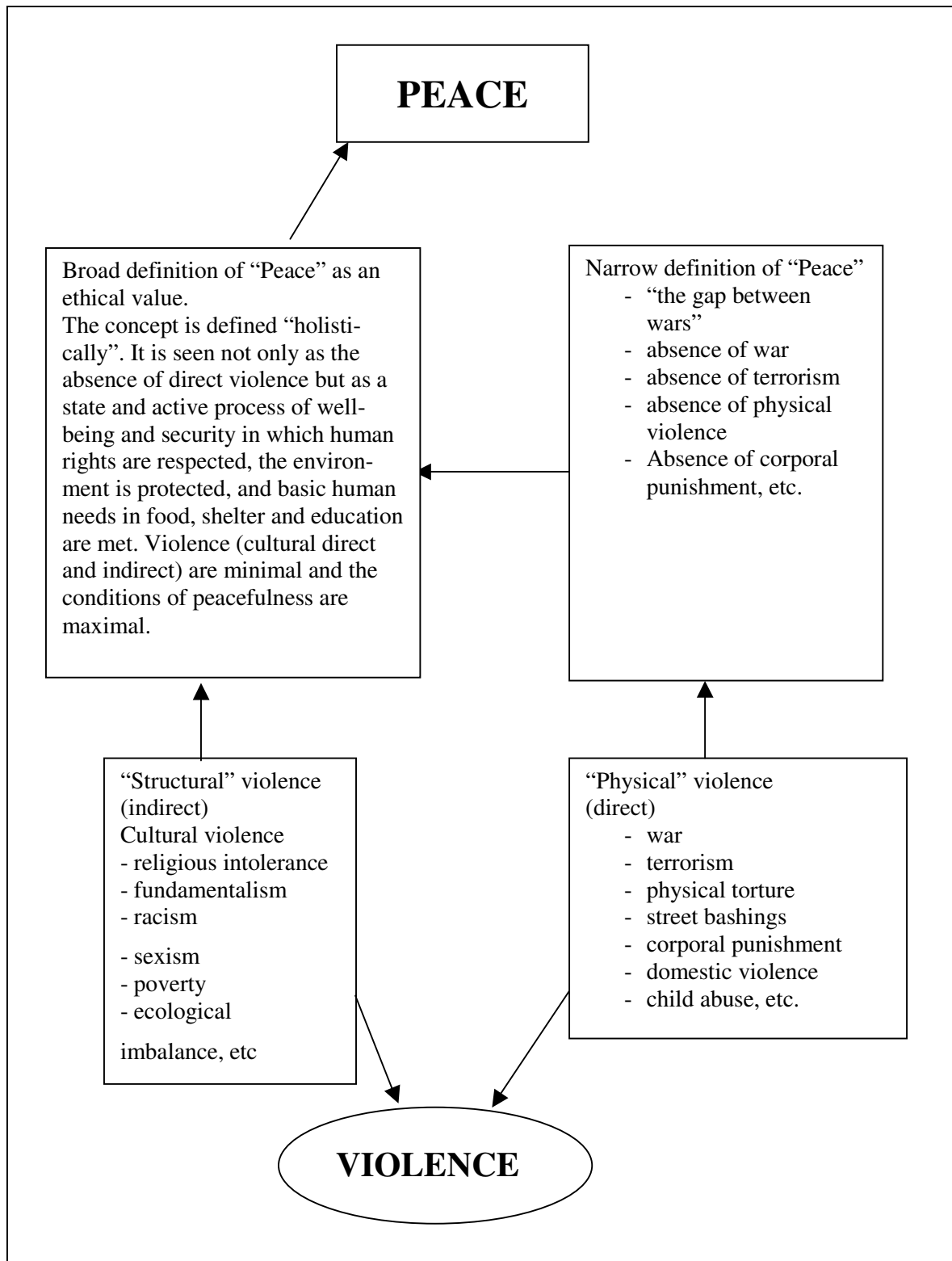


Figure 1: Defining Peace as an Ethical Value

Aims

Educating for Ethics and peace should aim to:

- Help students understand some of the complex processes leading to violence and conflict at the individual, group, national and global levels, and be aware of some of the ways in which these conflicts may be resolved.
- Cultivate attitudes that lead to a preference for constructive and non-violent resolution of conflict.
- Help students develop the personal and social skills necessary to live in harmony with others and to behave in positive and caring ways that respect basic human rights.
- Develop 'humane learning communities', in which students and teachers are encouraged to work together cooperatively to understand and find solutions to significant problems.

2. The objectives of educating for peace as an ethical value

Knowledge

Knowledge objectives relate to the following concepts:

Conflict

Students should investigate a variety of historical and contemporary conflicts from the personal to the global and should consider attempts to resolve such conflicts. They should also explore ways of resolving such conflict non-violently in everyday life.

Peace

Students should investigate different concepts and examples of peace, both as a state of being and as an active process, on a variety of levels and scales from the personal to the global. They should consider case studies of individuals, groups and organizations working for peace, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

Justice

Students should investigate issues of justice and injustice on various levels - personal, school, local, national, global. They should develop an understanding of the causes of physical violence and the means of creating the conditions of peace. They should consider case studies of individuals, groups and organizations working for justice and observance of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Power

Students should investigate issues to do with power and ways in which the exercise of power affects people's lives. They should look at case studies of ways in which indivi-

dual and groups have exercised power over their own lives, and are participating in democratic processes.

Social Change and Continuity

Students should investigate the processes of social change, violent and non-violent. They should understand how societies preserve what is valuable to them and modify what is undesirable.

Gender

Students should investigate issues to do with discrimination based on gender. They should understand the historical background to these issues, examine the ways in which sexism operates against the development of non-violent relationships, and consider options for the future.

Ethnic and Religious Groups

Students should investigate issues to do with discrimination based on ethnicity and diverse religions . They should understand the historical background to these issues, examine the ways in which racism and religious intolerance perpetuates hatreds and violence, and consider options for the future.

Role Models

Students should have direct experience of positive role models of peace making through teachers and community members and investigation of appropriate case studies.

Ecology

Students should investigate ecological issues at local and global levels. They should understand the historical background to these and consider whether changes are needed in order to live in harmony rather than conflict with the planetary ecosystem.

Interdependence

Students should investigate the impact which the decisions and actions of groups may have at various levels. In this way they can understand the increasing economic environmental and communications interdependence of the people of the Earth.

Futures

Students should investigate a range of alternative futures, both probable and preferable. They should critically explore the implications of various options, and make up their own minds which scenarios and actions are most likely to lead to a less violent, more peaceful and secure world.

Skills

Education for Ethics and Peace should develop in students,

Critical Thinking

Students should be able to approach issues with an open and critical mind and be willing to change their opinions in the light of new evidence and rational argument. They should be able to recognize and challenge bias, indoctrination and propaganda.

Cooperation

Students should be able to appreciate the value of cooperating on shared tasks and be able to work cooperatively with other individuals and groups in order to achieve a common goal.

Empathy

Students should be able to imagine sensitively the view points and feelings of other people, particularly those belonging to groups, cultures and nations other than their own.

Assertiveness

Students should be able to communicate clearly and assertively with others i.e. neither in an aggressive manner which denies the rights of others nor in a passive manner which denies their own rights.

Conflict Resolution

Students should be able to analyze conflicts in an objective and systematic way and be able to suggest a range of solutions to them. Where appropriate they should be able to implant solutions themselves.

Social Literacy

Students should be developing the ability to influence decision- making thoughtfully and constructively, both within their own lives and local community, and also at national and international levels, with a view to building peace.

Values

Education for Ethics and Peace should equip a student to analyze, clarify, judge and acquire values in the areas of:

Self- respect

Students should have a sense of their own worth and pride in their own particular social, cultural and family backgrounds different to their own.

Respect for Others

Students should have a sense of worth of others, particularly of those with social, cultural and family backgrounds different to their own.

Global Concern

Students should have a sense of Australian identity (?) which recognizes the essential interdependence of life on planet Earth.

Ecological Concern

Students should have a sense of respect for the natural environment and our overall place in the web of life. They should also have a sense of responsibility for both the local and global environment.

Open-mindedness

Students should be willing to approach different sources of information, people and events, with a critical but open mind.

Vision

Students should be open to, and value, the various dreams and visions of what a better world might look like both in their own community, in other communities and in the world as a whole.

Social Responsibility

Students should value genuinely democratic principles and processes and be ready to work for a more just, secure and peaceful world at local, national and international levels.

3. What is an ethical and peace perspective in the learning process?

What's distinctive about a peace and ethical perspective in the learning process? Its distinctiveness lays in the particular importance that teachers and schools implementing this perspective give to areas such as the following:

- fostering international understanding and a sense of global responsibility
- Investigating the causes of conflict and violence and the conditions of peacefulness in individuals, in institutions and in societies.
- Assisting students to develop social literacy skills for dealing constructively with conflict on a variety of scales and levels from the personal to the global.
- Offering a range of learning opportunities within various subject areas for a future dimension, including open-minded enquiry on issues relating to building a more secure, just and sustainable world society.

- Working towards a “unity of learning” between the formal and informal curriculum. Educating ethically for peace is not simply teaching about peace within particular subject areas. The achievement of reasonable levels of compatibility between the “what” and the “how” of teaching is seen to be of central importance to good classroom practice.

Procedural values

In teaching style, a teacher in a peaceful classroom seeks to incorporate fully, basic, procedural values, such as open-mindedness, fairness, respect for truth and respect for reasoning. It is recognized that open-minded inquiry flourishes best in a peaceful learning environment. Tolerant, warmly supportive, caring, learning environments are just as important as the question of content. A peace perspective relates closely to teaching about and teaching in peace.

Programming and teaching ideas

For teachers and schools to implement a peace perspective is both a challenging and exciting task. Already, positive developments are occurring- at the primary and secondary school levels. Many classroom teachers are pursuing educating for peace objectives in their teaching programs and classrooms activities.



TOWARDS A PEACE and ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Non-sexist policy (reduction of direct and indirect violence based on gender)

- Diverse religious perspectives. (interfaith learning)
- Multicultural education policy (intercultural awareness and international understanding)
- Multi ethnic education policy (non- racist)
- Environmental education (living in harmony rather than in conflict with our planetary ecosystem)
- Personal development (learning peaceful relationships, conflict resolution skills)
- Student welfare policy (“humane learning communities”, peaceful classrooms and school ethos)

SKILLS

1. critical thinking
2. cooperation
3. empathy
4. assertiveness
5. conflict resolution
6. social literacy

KNOWLEDGE

1. conflict
2. peace
3. justice
4. power
5. social change
6. gender
7. ethnicity
8. role models
9. ecology
10. interdependence
11. futures

Figure 2: Towards a peace and ethical perspective in Education. Formal / non-formal .

