A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF TEACHING- LEARNING APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES FOR CULTIVATION PEACE PROCESS IN PAKISTANI SOCIETY

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Abstract

This study sought to identify teaching- learning approaches and strategies in the cultivation of peace culture in Pakistani Society. Interviews were conducted among selected professors in the department of Education, Arts, and Islamic Study who carry out peace initiatives through courses they teach. Content analysis of the syllabi of the courses that carry out peace concepts was also done. The findings identified holistic, participatory, cooperative, humanist, and experiential approaches evident in teaching courses that carry out peace concepts. It was recommended that the institution formalizes peace efforts if it is really committed to creating a condition conducive to peace whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national, or international level.

Keywords: peace education, peace concepts, culture of peace, transformative learning, peaceable teaching learning process

1. Introduction

An education that promotes a culture of peace is essentially transformative (Castro & Galace, 2010.) It focuses on the knowledge base, skills, attitudes and values that influence the mindsets, attitudes and behaviors of people that may in turn contribute to violent conflicts. This condition may be attained through building awareness and understanding, developing concern and challenging personal and social action. This will enable people to live, relate and create conditions and systems that actualize nonviolence, justice, environmental care and other peace values.

Peace education brings about behavior changes that enable children, youth, and adults to prevent conflict and violence, to create conditions conducive to peace at different levels, and to resolve conflict peacefully. In this process, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed are primarily promoted (UNESCO, 2002)
An education that is “directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations was called in UNESCO’s early declaration on a culture of peace (UNESCO, 1945).

It emphasizes peace education as a humanizing process of teaching and learning, which facilitates human development by counteracting the dehumanization of poverty, prejudice, discrimination, rape, violence, and war. By bringing in the concept of empowerment, Harris (1988) adds to this “humanizing” approach for he believes that peace education is the process of empowerment. This kind of empowerment is expected to enable underprivileged groups to learn, feel, and use their power and influence; thus, students and community members are engaged to resolve their own problems and conflicts.

Harris identifies different stages for empowerment.

These include 1. Overcoming feelings of powerlessness; 2. Confronting deep-seated fears of violence; 3. Increasing awareness of public affairs; 4. Leadership training; and 5. Taking action. The primary concern of peace education anyway is the reconciliation of society, protection of human rights, and development of peace skills (Salomon, 2002).

Peace education that is fundamentally dynamic, interdisciplinary, and multicultural brings together multiple traditions of pedagogy, theories of education, and international initiatives for the advancement of human development through learning. It grows out therefore of the work of educators. Peace education not only builds principles and practices that have evolved over time, but also responds to different historical circumstances. It aims to cultivate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to achieve and sustain a global culture of peace. It centers on understanding and transforming violence.

Peace education as a practice in schools is attributed to Maria Montessori, John Dewey and Paulo Freire, though earlier thought on education for peace is tracked back to Erasmus and Socrates, among other scholars. It is a problem-posing education that builds the universal values and behaviors in every person on which a culture of peace is predicated. It includes the development of non-violent conflict resolution skills and a commitment to working together to realize a shared and preferred future.

1.1 Review of Related Literature

Peace education is teaching for and about human rights, gender equality, disarmament, social and economic justice, non-violence, sustainable development, international law, and traditional peace practices. In the realization of peace education, critical thinking, reflection and participation must be embraced. These, too, should be integrated into the pedagogy of all teaching at all levels of education.
Peace education must first develop an awareness and understanding among the youth as well as adults on the ramifications and roots of particular conflict. They must also know possible alternatives in overcoming such.

They will try to put themselves on the shoes of others and cultivate empathy for the victims of violence and for those whose perspective may also have legitimacy but whose perspective is different from ours. The learning process that is utilized in peace education, therefore, is holistic. It tries to address the cognitive, affective and active dimensions of the learner. Normally, the process includes introduction of relevant new knowledge or reinforced knowledge, posing valuing questions and using discussion and other participatory methods to cultivate concern, and eliciting/challenging/encouraging appropriate personal and social action.

Transformation attempts may include that, that is against prejudice and the war system, or that, that is for social and economic justice. Paying attention to cognitive, affective and active levels increases the possibility that the peace perspective or value that is being cultivated would be internalized. The following figure illustrated this process in graphic form.

**1.2 Why educate for peace?**

Peace education seeks to transform the present human condition by “changing social structures and patterns of thought that have created it” as stated by Betty Reardon, in her book, Comprehensive Peace Education: Educating for Global Responsibility (1988).

She reminds us that peace education has an important social purpose. She carries this perspective forward in her book Learning to Abolish War; Teaching toward a Culture of Peace (Reardon & Cabezudo, 2002 cited in Castro & Galace, 2010). It is also noted in this book that the main purposes of peace education are the elimination of social injustice, the rejection of violence and the abolition of war. Schema of knowledge, skills and attitudes/values Based on a survey of peace education literature and of key informants/ peace educators that was done by the Center for Peace Education of Miriam College, a list of key knowledge areas, skills, attitudes and values that are integral to peace education have been identified. This, though, is not exhaustive and is expected to evolve, as peace education practice and experiences as well as corresponding reflections and insights on these experiences increase.

**1.3 Teaching-learning approaches and strategies in peace education**

Education that is holistic, participatory, cooperative, experiential and humanist are identified compatible with the goals of peace education. Holistic education promotes cognitive, affective and behavioral goals of learning. Transmission of concepts is often the focus of learning. The goals are three-fold in peace education:

1. Building of awareness on the roots of peace
2. Building of concern and the development of the values of empathy, comparison, hope and social responsibility

3. Call to action beginning with the resolve to change personal mindsets and attitudes and doing something concrete about situations of violence.

Harris & Morrison (2003) refer to the second as the development of moral sensitivity culminating in the building of the capacity of learners to care for others.

Participatory education allows learners to inquire, share and collaborate. It gives learners an opportunity to engage in dialogue with the teacher as well as with their co-learners. Broadening of perspectives practice is achieved through articulating and listening to diverse points of view. Teacher acts more of a facilitator in this kind of learning. Teachers encourage students to articulate their own perspectives then invite them to take appropriate action on the issues discussed (Mcginnis, 1984 cited in Castro & Galace, 2010). Participatory education also means veering away from the traditional indoctrination style. The observance of democratic processes in the classrooms can contribute to the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for democratic citizenship (Harris & Morrison, 2003 cited in Castro & Galace, 2010).

Cooperative learning gives opportunities for participants to work together and learn, rather than compete with each other. Aside from increasing motivation to learn, this approach improves relations among students. It challenges individualism; and lessens divisiveness and feelings of prejudice. It reverses feelings of alienation and isolation, thus, promotes more positive attitudes. In a cooperative classroom, students learn to rely on each other.

The success of learning activities depends upon the contributions of each one (Harris and Morrison, 2003).

In Experiential education learning is not through didactic means but through the processing of one’s experience from activities initiated in the classroom. Learners build ideas. They, then form concepts drawn from the experience or activity they went through.

In a humanist classroom, social, personal and affective growth of the learners is emphasized. Individuals are accepted for what they are. Humanist education develops the notions of the self to promote a sense of self-esteem. It sends the messages that are valuable and gifted. Mcginnis (1984) says that “without a positive self-concept or self-image, no one takes a stand, ‘goes public’, or works for change.” He also posits that the more aware we are of our giftedness, the more willing we become to share our gifts with others. Teachers in a humanist classroom show interest and concern for the well-being of students. They are empathetic and affirming.

Care and respect for each other are encouraged among learners. They emphasize value of sensitivity to diversity in the classroom. This kind of education helps breed in learners the seeds of love and compassion which are necessary in building a peaceable society.
Teaching learning strategies are compatible with the holistic, participatory, collaborative, experiential and humanist approaches to develop in a society. Teachers may also consider problem solving, stating positions or issue poll, encouraging action, reading or writing a quotation, web-charting, use of films or photographs, telling stories, and song or poem analysis. Other strategies that are helpful are sentence completion, journal writing or journal completion, go-round, teachable moments, interviews, research, expert resources, reciprocal teaching, twinning, dialogues, exposure trips, use of globes and maps, brainstorming, reading quotations, use of charts and graphs, case studies, collage-making, and, show and tell.

The aforementioned approaches and strategies are important tools to develop students’ intellect, attitudes and spirit for them to be inspired to work for peace.

1.4 Significance

Pakistani Society, being the Regional Center for Peace Education initiates activities that give opportunities to every student and every Pakistani partner to experience a culture of peace. Yet these initiatives may be strengthened if the institution’s attempt to integrate peace concepts in some courses in the tertiary level will be formalized. Through this study, the institution would have a concrete basis on whether or not there is still a need to explicitly integrate concepts of peace in the curriculum of other courses. More so, it will be determined if the approaches as well as the strategies applied by the professors are already enough for the students to realize how important it is to develop an understanding of peace at different levels.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

This descriptive research is a study on the teaching-learning approaches and strategies in the cultivation of Pakistani peace culture. The following questions constitute the problem of this study.

1. Are there academic-related initiatives that pursue peace education?

2. What are the courses that carry out peace concepts?

3. At what year levels peace concepts are being carried out?

4. What key peace education themes are being pursued?

5. What are the different strategies used in carrying out peace concepts?

6. Is there an explicit advocacy of peace concepts using visual media in terms of themes and content?

1.6 Assumption
Visual media is an excellent media for communicating both emotional and behavioral information; thus, have wider breadth in teaching peace concepts.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

This presents the diagrammatic representation of the objectives of this study.
Teaching-learning strategies that are compatible with holistic, participatory, cooperative experiential and humanist approaches in peace education as identified in the book of Castro & Galace, 2010 include discussion, pair share, visualization/imagination exercise, perspective-taking, role-playing, simulation games, problem solving, considering positions/issue poll, encouraging action, reading or writing a quotation, web-charting, use of film and photographs, telling stories including personal stories, song/poem analysis, sentence completion, journal writing/individual reflection, go-round, teachable moments, interview/research, expert resources, reciprocal teaching, twinning, dialogues, exposure trips, use of globes and maps, brainstorming, reading quotations, use of charts and graphs, case studies, collage-making, and, show and tell.

1.8 Key Peace Education Themes

Castro & Galace, 2010 in their book Peace Education: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace identified key peace education themes as follows: 1. upholding human dignity; 2. challenging prejudice and building tolerance; 3. promoting nonviolence; 4. challenging the war system; 5. sharing the earth’s resources; 6. caring for the earth; 7. cultivating inner peace; and, 8. resolving and transforming conflicts.

Method

This descriptive study made use of key informant interviews and content analysis. Key informant interviews involve interviewing a select group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on a particular subject. Interviewees were selected professors of Islamic Studies department, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

The purpose of content analysis is to organize and elicit meaning from the data collected and to draw realistic conclusions from it. The researcher must choose whether the analysis should be of a broad surface structure (a manifest analysis) or of a deep structure (a latent analysis). Four distinct main stages are described in this paper: the decontextualization, the recontextualisation, the categorization, and the compilation. This description of qualitative content analysis offers one approach that shows how the general principles of the method can be used. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. The researcher made content analysis of the syllabi of the courses that carry out peace concepts among BS students of Islamic Studies and M.A Islamic Studies in University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

Results and Discussion

Student leaders may be given special attention as they are the opinion leaders and workshops and/or conferences may be organized to train them and discuss how peace education may be imparted in colleges and universities.

Conclusions
A rapidly deteriorating security situation in Pakistan requires some special effort to promote peace and tolerance at all levels of society. As most of the terrorist attacks are attributed to madrassas, the effort of some NGOs to provide peace education there is appreciable. Moreover, the government of Pakistan should be encouraged to increase budgetary allocation to the education sector on an immediate basis. There are massive irregularities in education sector and there is need for greater accountability.

Activities done by different NGOs must be encouraged especially because of the harsh conditions they operate in. But still these activities do not suffice the needs of 197 million people. Governmental and non-governmental institutions should join hands in an integrated effort to achieve this very difficult, yet possible landmark.

**References**


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