PCS 207 PEACE EDUCATION

Part I Lesson 2

PEACE EDUCATION DEFINITIONS

Learning Objectives

- At the end of this section, students will:
    - 1. Understand different definitions of peace education
    - 2. Understand the breadth and scope of peace education
    - 3. Develop their preliminary definition of peace education

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Guiding Questions

- Consider the following questions:
  - 1. What peace education definition applies best to my context?
  - 2. Why do we need peace education?
  - 3. What makes peace education hard to define?

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Overview

- ◻ 1. Definitions of peace education
- ◻ 2. Breadth and scope of peace education

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Quotable Quotes

- *The ultimate goal of peace education is the formation of responsible, committed, and caring citizens who have integrated the values into everyday life and acquired the skills to advocate for them.—Betty Reardon*

- *Unless we teach children peace, someone else will teach them violence. - Coleman McCarthy*

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Introduction: What is Peace Education?

- Peace education as a **concept** and a **field** is difficult to accurately and comprehensively define because:
  - it encompasses so many different sub-topics, theories, and thinkers that a unifying definition has proved elusive.
- Hence, as PE develops, definitions have continued to emerge even till today.
- No one definition is 'correct', as no overarching authority of peace education exists;
- The definition one chooses to adopt is a matter of personal preference.
- It is important to be aware of the various definitions and their implications for classroom practice before deciding which best fits one's own perception and practice of peace education.

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Introduction: What is Peace Education?

- We are all free to define peace education in terms that reflect our values and contexts.

- This section will present samples of the key types of definitions in order to help us formulate their own informed view on peace education.

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Part I

Definitions of Peace Education

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Definitions of Peace Education

☐ As explained by Abebe, Gbesso, & Nyawalo (2006):

□ *Peace education is a unifying and comprehensive concept that seeks to promote a holistic view of education. However, its relevance is inextricably part of and is highly dependent on contextual specificity. UNESCO literature states that Peace Education is more effective and meaningful when adopted according to the social and cultural context and the needs of a country. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values together with the universal human values. It should also be globally relevant. Given such a framework, it is hard to find a universally accepted definition. As such, Peace Education is characterized by its many definitions (p. 14).*

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Definitions of Peace Education

- **John Dewey,** a key thinker of the field, defined peace education as a curriculum

- *… which will make it more difficult for the flames of hatred and suspicion to sweep over this country in the future, which indeed will make this impossible, because when children's minds are in the formative period we shall have fixed in them through the medium of the schools, feelings of respect and friendliness for the other nations and peoples of the world (1923, p. 516).*

- Dewey's emphasis, developed in the midst of two World Wars, was on a sense of **world patriotism** and **peaceful internationalism** that would eliminate the horrific wars of his time, and his definition reflects that **globalist theory.**

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Definitions of Peace Education

- **The United Nations,** from inception support peace education as a catalyst for international respect and human rights, as described in its Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

- *Education 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 (United Nations General Assembly, 1948, p. 6).*

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Definitions of Peace Education

- **Skill development and action**

- Recently, numerous definitions of peace education focus on the development of skills that empower students to tackle real-world issues and thus actively create peace in the world. (Fountain, 1999)

- *Peace education in UNICEF refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level (p. 1)*

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Definitions of Peace Education

- According to Abebe et. al. (2006),
  - Peace Education is process of developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors and values that enable learners to:
    - Identify and understand sources of local and global issues and acquire positive and appropriate sensitivities to these problems
    - Resolve conflicts and to attain justice in a non-violent way
    - Live by universal standards of human rights and equity by appreciating cultural diversity, respect for the earth and for each other (p. 14).

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Education about peace and for peace

- Other definitions emphasize the difference between learning about peace and learning for peace, thus incorporating both background knowledge and practical skills.

- *Peace Education means to learn about and to learn for peace. Learning about peace means obtaining knowledge and understanding of what contributes to peace, what damages it, what leads to war, what does 'peace' mean on each level anyway, what is my role in it, and how are the different levels connected? Learning for peace means learning the skills, attitudes and values that one needs in order to contribute to peace and help maintain it. For example, this means learning to deal with conflicts without the recourse to violence, learning to think creatively, learning to apply the methods of active non-violence or learning to deal with cultural differences in a constructive way (Space for Peace, 2010).*

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Definitions of Peace Education

- Peace education can be defined as:

  - the transmission of knowledge about requirements of, the obstacles to, and possibilities for achieving and maintaining peace; training in skills for interpreting the knowledge; and the development of reflective and participatory capacities for applying the knowledge to overcome problems and achieve possibilities (Reardon, 2000, p. 399).

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Scope

- Definitions can also differ in the level and scope of their focus, as some concentrate on the impacts of peace education on individuals, while others emphasize its impact on the world as a whole.

- *Peace education is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. It is based on philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, co-operation and reverence for the human family and all life on our beautiful planet (Schmidt and Friedman, 1988, as cited in Abebe et. al., 2006, p. 14).*

- *Peace education is an attempt to respond to problems of conflict and violence on scales ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is about exploring ways of creating more just and sustainable futures* (R. D. Laing, 1978, as cited in Abebe, et. al., 2006, p. 14).

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UNICEF's Peace Education Features

- As a final note, below is UNICEF's detailed outline of the many factors that peace education must take into account and incorporate.
- Schooling and other educational experiences that reflect UNICEF's approach to peace education should:
  - Function as 'zones of peace', where children are safe from conflict in the community;
  - Uphold children's basic rights as enumerated in the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child);
  - Develop a climate, within the school or other learning environment, that models peaceful and rights-respectful behavior in the relationships between all members of the school community: teachers, administrators, other staff, parents and children;
  - Demonstrate the principles of equality and non-discrimination in administrative policies and practices;

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UNICEF's Peace Education Features (Contd.)

- Draw on the knowledge of peace-building that already exists in the community, including means of dealing with conflict that are effective, non-violent, and rooted in the local culture;

- Handle conflicts - whether between children or between children and adults - in a non-violent manner that respects the rights and dignity of all involved;

- Integrate an understanding of peace, human rights, social justice and global issues throughout the curriculum whenever possible;

- Provide a forum for the explicit discussion of values of peace and social justice;

- Use teaching and learning methods that promote participation, cooperation, problem-solving and respect for differences;

- Allow opportunities for children to put peace-making into practice, both in the educational setting and in the wider community;

- Provide opportunities for continuous reflection and professional development of all educators in relation to issues of peace, justice and rights (Fountain, 1999, p. 5-6).

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Conclusion

☐ The definitions discussed are a general sampling of those available and utilized in the field of peace education today.

☐ Peace education is a holistic, interdisciplinary field that seeks to promote knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for peace.

☐ Next we will look at the scope of peace education, which encompasses the various disciplines that are included within the broad umbrella of peace education.

☐ While there is no single definition for peace education, this compilation shows the variety of ways that peace education can be defined.

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