

## PEACE EDUCATION VERSUS WAR JOURNALISM

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Feryal CUBUKCU  
Dokuz Eylul University  
Izmir- TURKEY

### ABSTRACT

We are living in critical times. Hardly does a day go without bombs in the Middle East, serial killings in the USA, the suffering of people in refugee camps in various parts of Africa, or a violent repression of people including wallstreet, France, Italy and Turkey. The programs have skyrocketed recently to raise awareness of peace in the world. For example, since 1986, the Grant Program of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has made more than 2,100 grants and invested roughly \$86 million in support of research, education, training, media, and public diplomacy by individuals and organizations engaged in efforts to understand, prevent, manage, and resolve violent conflict. One stumbling block is the terminology used in this field, for instance UNESCO widely uses peace education in all its general documents, but the terminology changes when its country offices collaborate with educational systems and government ministries that prefer other terms, such as peacebuilding in schools (eastern and southern Africa), education for peace (Rwanda), global education (the Middle East and north Africa), education for conflict resolution (Sri Lanka), and values for life (Egypt). Any kind of peace education encompasses four domains, which are regarded as knowledge, concern, skills and action. The purpose of this study is to see how university students feel about peace and violence. For this study a semi-structured interview is given to 110 students at a western public university to see whether they have the knowledge and concern for peace and the results will be juxtaposed with the events reflected in the media to substantiate that peace education braves a great deal of responsibility against war journalism of the postmodern times.

**Key Words:** Peace education, pre-service teachers, violence.

### INTRODUCTION

We have been living in hard times. Each generation has seen too much violence and too many deaths; many kinds of conflicts—international, regional, intergroup, and interpersonal— damage people, communities, and the natural world, change the world, socially and ecologically, and prompt vast human migrations in response to political violence, poverty, and ethnic and religious tensions (Opatov, Gerson & Woodside, 303). Though dreams of peace are as old as humanity, a sustained peace remains elusive.

The terms “peace” and “war” are two of frequently and liberally used words in the media, the public and the private sector as well as in the international arena. Magi (2010, p.16) holds peace is a key term for education, because it pertains to the basic condition of human existence and societal and political embedding. Defining peace is a difficult thing because it encompasses not only a concept but also a plethora of behaviors and conditions that could be necessary to obtain peace. The most common definition of peace states that peace is the absence of war or protracted conflict. Johan Galtung (1969), one of the best known theorists of modern peace research, defines peace through social goals as a major part of a scientific strategy. The terms peace and violence are closely linked to each other, where peace is regarded as an absence of personal (direct) and structural (indirect) violence.

The absence of peace is often a war, although not always. The state of absence of war can be understood as peace, but may not necessarily be peaceful. Violence can be expressed not only in a direct manner (e.g. physical confrontations) but also through structural violence (e.g. circumstances that limit life, discrimination, deprivation of basic human needs, economical oppression). Peace is a concept that motivates and inspires imagination, indicating more than the absence of violence. (Magi, 2010, p.17).

It also encompasses collaboration, dignity, respect and love for each other.

**Positive peace** – The absence of structural violence; a positively synergistic co-existence as a precondition to peace.

**Negative peace** – The absence of direct violence of all kinds.

There are some obstacles preventing people from having peace as (Finn, 1984, p.58) :

1. concrete concepts of war are much easier to grasp than concrete aspects of peace.
2. people have prejudices and they have little information on the enemies
3. people have a strong sense of powerlessness and a lack of inspiring models
4. today's people are cynical at a time when they should be idealistic.

People especially students need to see that they can be peacemakers but this sounds daunting among the media items that promote enmity, "otherness", and wars and conflicts. Obstacles to peace such as fear, prejudice, aggression, ethnocentricity, ideology and propaganda need to be identified and confronted, then individual, social and international peace can be established.

## METHOD

### Participants

110 pre-service English teachers participated in the semi-structured interview. Their views were recorded and transcribed in the course "Community Service".

### Design

The method employed was qualitative, using individual interviews.

The approach and size of qualitative research means that it is not designed to be quantitatively representative of the general population. The smaller sample size associated with qualitative methodology enables more in-depth understanding. Its flexible style of questioning means that the research can focus on, following and explore interviewees' own lines of thought (Lister et al., 2001, p. 9).

The interviews were semi-structured, in order to draw out issues of war, peace and conflict. First, in the open end questionnaire, participants were presented with 9 alphabetically ordered concepts and were asked to express their opinion on the basis of the meaning of the concepts. The instrument consisted of the following concepts: absence of peace, absence of violence, absence of war, global citizen, peace, violence and war. These nine concepts were selected as the core concepts of peace education derived mainly from the literature relating to peace education (Bajaj, 2004; Haavelsrud, 1996; 2008). Secondly, a batch of open ended questions were posed to determine what pre service teachers know regarding war, peace, conflict in neighbouring countries and in the world.

## RESULTS

When pre service teachers are asked to associate the concepts with war, here are the results: They believe that peace is associated with good, beautiful clean, pleasant and slow. However, war is connected to ugly, bad,

unpleasant and fast (they erupt suddenly) as shown in Table 1. Their responses show that pre-service teachers do have clear-cut concepts regarding war and peace.

Table 1: Adjectives about Peace and War

Adjectives	Peace N (%)	War N (%)
Good	110 (100)	
Bad		110 (100)
Beautiful	110 (100)	
Ugly		110 (100)
Clean	110(100)	
Dirty		110 (100)
Pleasant	110 (100)	
Unpleasant		110 (100)
Strong	50 (45.4)	60 (54.5)
weak	60 (54.5)	50 (45.4)
Large	75 (68)	35 (32)
Small	80 (72)	30 (27)
Fast		110 (100)
Slow	110 (100)	
Active	50 (45.4)	60 (54.5)
Passive	60 (54.5)	50 (45.4)
Sharp	30 (27)	80 (72)
Dull	80 (72)	30 (27)

The second section starts with the questions whether pre service teachers think the world is peaceful and safe. 105 of them have said “no”, the rest 5 of them have said it depends on where people live, but in most areas the society is full of chaos, which indicates that pre servic eteachers have a bleak perspective into the world.

When asked what they would do if Turkey joined the war , 70 % expressed sadness and anxiety and 30% showed support for joining the war due to patriotic reasons in Table 2.

Table 2: Pre service teachers's views on a possible war

Views	N (%)
Sad	80 (72)
Anxiety	85 (77)
No feeling	10 (9)
supportive	40 (36)

When they are asked to comment on the possible reasons for wars, they have stated them as economic interests/benefits ( 80%), getting power ( 75), and greed (25%).

When asked whether they have conflicts in their own lives, all accepted it and 65% indicated the use of passive aggression strategies (doing nothing, not talking and waiting) and 35 % of them have stated their desire to solve the problems through talking.

On the same day the interviews were held, the news clips were taken, collected and analysed from major newspapers to see whether media promotes peace or war. Here are the results.

News clips about Israel are about targeting it as the enemy and threatening the country to stop bombs and killings in Gaza. It accentuates the images of the Hell focusing on the imminent apocalypse.



<http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/Haberler.aspx?id=2065&tarih=2012-11-14>

As to Syria, the media is all about the readiness and preparation of the military once they see the syrian planes crossing the borders.

## 'AÇIK NOTA'

**SURİYE JETLERİ SINIRI İHLAL  
ETSEYDİ CEVABINI VERİRDİK**

<http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haberler.aspx?id=2065&tarih=2012-11-12>

Even when the news is about something the newly-elected President Obama's trip to Myanmar, the focus is on Obama's "slave " grandfather, which does not fit into the historical facts. Slavery was already over during the second world war and Obama's grandfather was working as a cook with an English commander's family relocated to Myanmar, however, the news has the war and slavery overtones, leading readers to be misinformed about the real events.



<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/planet/21955231.asp>

## CONCLUSION

For those committed to peace and to peace education, the question of exactly why we should be committed to this endeavour seems moot and the everpresent threat of global or imperial warfare and the continuing injustice of the maldistribution and exploitation of global resources are more than obvious. On a local scale, problems of violence and a culture of violence in personal relationships are also evident almost everywhere (Page, 2004, p.11). It is precisely the overwhelming nature of these phenomena which underscores the importance of developing a thorough rationale for what we hope to achieve through peace education. We need to be able to articulate not only what should be done through education for peace, but moreover why it should be done.

As former UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor (1999) described,

The United Nations initiatives for a culture of peace mark a new stage: Instead of focusing exclusively on rebuilding societies after they have been torn apart by violence, the emphasis is placed on preventing violence by fostering a culture where conflicts are transformed into cooperation before they can degenerate into war and destruction. The key to the prevention of violence is education for nonviolence. This requires the mobilisation of education in its broadest sense—education throughout life and involving the mass media as much as traditional educational institutions. (p. 23)

However, this proper observation of preventing violence is not even visible in the media or in the ideas of pre-service teachers. With the wae journalism which aims at selling more, it seems so hard to establish the prevention of war and establishment peace through the media. What is left is the schools where both educators and school managers thrive in shaping the ideas on war and peace. Maybe the best way is to start with the personal conflicts.

Regarding personal conflict, the steps in using problem solving negotiations are (Johnson & Johnson, 2005) as follows:

1. Describing what you want. "I want to use the book now." This includes using good communication skills and defining the conflict as a small and specific mutual problem.
2. Describing how you feel. "I'm irritated." Disputants must understand how they feel and communicate it openly and clearly.
3. Describing the reasons for your wants and feelings. "If I don't get to use the book soon my report will not be done on time. It's frustrating to have to wait so long." This includes expressing cooperative intentions, listening carefully, separating interests from positions, and differentiating before trying to integrate the two sets of interests.
4. Taking the other's perspective and summarizing your understanding of what the other person wants, how the other person feels, and the reasons underlying both. "My understanding of you is..." This includes understanding the perspective of the opposing disputant and being able to see the problem from both perspectives simultaneously.
5. Inventing three optional plans to resolve the conflict that maximize joint benefits. "Plan A is ... , Plan B is ... , Plan C is..." This includes inventing creative options to solve the problem.
6. Choosing one and formalizing the agreement with a hand shake. "Let's agree on Plan B!" A wise agreement is fair to all disputants and is based on principles. It maximizes joint benefits and strengthens disputants' ability to work together cooperatively and resolve conflicts constructively in the future.

Ultimately, opportunities for the promotion of peace and more equitable practices are closer than many of us can imagine, Friedrich (2007, p.82) claims, from teaching our own students to resolve conflict in constructive and empowering ways, to explicitly teaching peace in the world, to advocating more research on language and peace and the implementation of the findings of such research efforts, we must start to promote and reinforce what works rather than exclusively denounce what does not. There are those who believe that a state of

conflict is a natural part of human experience, a reason why peace is so difficult to uphold. However, whether peace is an idyllic view of a world we cannot go back to, that pre-Babel state of harmony and uni-language, or a more complex combination of alliances and compromises, it is our duty to defend it. The consequences of not having it are too hard to bear.

#### BIODATA AND CONTACT ADDRESS OF AUTHORS



Feryal CUBUKCU is an associate professor at the Faculty of Education, Dokuz Eylul University.

She got her B.A. and M. A. degrees on ELT and Ph. D. on literary theories. Her main interests are literary theories, psycholinguistics, applied linguistics, deconstructionalism, new historicism.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Feryal CUBUKCU  
Egitim Fakultesi  
Dokuz Eylul University  
E. Mail: [fcubukcu@deu.edu.tr](mailto:fcubukcu@deu.edu.tr)

#### REFERENCES

- Bajaj, M. (2004). Human rights education and student self-conception in the Dominican Republic. *Journal of Peace Education* 1, 1: 21–36.
- Finn, M. E. (2001) Peace Education and Teacher Education. *Peace and Change*, 10, 2, 53-70.
- Friedrich, P (2007) Peace Sociolinguistics *World Englishes*, 26, 1, 72–83.
- Haavelsrud, M. (1996). *Education in developments*. Tromsø: Arena.
- Haavelsrud, M. (2008). Conceptual perspectives on peace education. In *Encyclopedia of Peace Education*. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing. 59–66.
- Johnson, D & Johnson, R( 2006 )Essential Components of Peace Education . *Theory Into Practice*, 44(4), 280–292.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (2005). *Teaching students to be peacemakers* (4th ed.). Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.
- Lister, R., Middleton, S. & Smith, N. (2001) *Young people's voices : citizenship education*. Leicester: Youth Work Press.
- Magi, E (2010) Meanings of the Main Concepts Of Peace Education Among Estonian And American, npublished master thesis.
- Mayor, F. (1999). Toward a new culture of peace and non-violence. In *People building peace: 35 inspiring stories from around the world*. Utrecht, The Netherlands: European Centre for Conflict Prevention.

Opotov, S, Gerson, J & Woodside, S From Moral Exclusion to Moral Inclusion: Theory for Teaching Peace, *Theory Into Practice*, 44(4), 303–318.

Page, J.S (2004) Peace Education: Exploring Some Philosophical Foundations, *Revue Internationale de 'Education* 50(1): 3–15.