EDUCATION FOR PEACE IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

Borislava Manojlovic[1]

Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University

Abstract: Teaching about peace, human rights and tolerance in diverse societies requires a thoughtful and sensitive approach that promotes understanding, empathy, and dialogue. This study poses a question of how to integrate theory and practice of peace in the educational programs at academic institutions of higher learning in diverse multicultural and/or divided contexts. The method of inquiry was qualitative. Data was collected from multiple sources: interviews and surveys with professors and students (109 participants) were complemented by the review of the relevant literature on the topic of multiculturalism and tolerance. Purposive selection of the people of interest that possess knowledge or offer a variety of perspectives about the studied phenomenon contributed to elaborating and deepening of initial analysis. The goal of the research was to explore if and how the field of conflict and peace studies can stimulate fresh perspectives and approaches in the AI era that would better equip future generations to deal with diverse multicultural or divided contexts.

Keywords: multiculturalism, peace, human rights, diversity, higher education

Introduction

A peaceful society where people and communities coexist in an atmosphere filled with respect, tolerance, and understanding can be seen as both an ideal social condition and a utopian wishful thinking. When we look at the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, political polarizations and strengthening of authoritarianism around the world, it seems like the ideals of peace are almost impossible to attain. The way we study and teach about conflict and peace is at a crossroads. There is a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the traditional approaches and theories, both in what we have learned and what we are passing on to the next generation (Davies, 2003; Ahmed, 2018; Kester, 2017; Maley, 1988). Those of us

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[1] bmanojlo@gmu.edu

who truly care about this field feel an urgent need to rethink our strategies and find a new, more effective path forward. The main concern for scholars studying peace and conflict revolves around identifying our mistakes and finding more effective ways to advocate for peace. This study takes a closer look at some key ideas in the field of peace and conflict studies, identifying main challenges and laying out a practical plan for moving forward in how we approach the field and how we teach future generations.

One of the main contributions of conflict and peace studies' field is the idea that all conflicts can be resolved constructively, which means non-violently. A truly peaceful society prioritizes nonviolent means of conflict resolution such as open dialogue, negotiation, diplomacy, mediation, and compromise to address differences and resolve conflict. All violent conflicts eventually end at a negotiation table, where the parties involved must establish communication to reach a resolution. The challenge is that the non-violent means do not always work or they are not properly utilized. They depend on the parties and context of the conflict. Not all parties involved may be willing to engage in an open dialogue or negotiations with their adversaries due to deep-rooted hostilities, power differences, ineffective communication and lack of trust and guarantees. When conflicts are escalated, it is much more difficult to talk. Although these challenges are well-known, the solutions provided so far have been superficial and anecdotal.

Education has often been hailed as a tool for leveling the playing field (Dewey, 1915), offering opportunities to individuals based on their merit and scholarly achievements. However, education also has the potential to reinforce and perpetuate existing social inequalities (Bourdieu, 1973; Nash, 1990). This research delves into the limitations of educational systems in shaping individuals thought processes, particularly in the postmodernist era where the emphasis on relativity of knowledge and truth is increasingly evident, particularly through the influence of social media, which aims to shape our thoughts and behaviors through curate content. This study contends that education needs to focus more on teaching fostering critical thinking, creativity, and imagination. This is where the field of peace and conflict studies becomes crucial—it can equip students with innovative approaches to addressing conflict, embracing diversity, and overcoming adversity. Education, like other societal structures, is under considerable strain as individuals are increasingly shaped by virtual reality, which dictates their thoughts and delineates right from wrong through various systems of reward and punishment. This diversity of perspectives creates uncertainty and relativism in beliefs and values. As a result, it fosters confusion and anxiety in the modern individual, leading to a sense of existential futility. Today's person is not only susceptible to manipulation but also increasingly disengaged.

In the emerging era of AI, education holds the power to provide direction and meaning for the modern individual. This article examines how foundational principles in peace and conflict education can inspire new perspectives on conflict and explores effective ways to integrate peace studies into diverse higher education curricula.

Literature Review

The social malaise experienced by a modern individual has found resonance in the realm of social sciences through critical theory. Critical peace education underscores the significance of critically analyzing power dynamics, disparities, and injustices that fuel conflict and violence. It encourages learners to develop a deep understanding of root causes of conflict, such as social, economic, political, and cultural factors, and to explore ways to address them through nonviolent means. Critical peace education aims to empower individuals to become active agents of positive change in their communities and beyond. This study has been partially influenced by Salomon (2011) critical peace education ideas. He emphasizes the need to promote critical thinking skills among learners to challenge dominant narratives and ideologies that perpetuate violence and conflict. Monisha Bajaj (2015) is also known for her work on critical peace education, particularly in the context of addressing issues such as social justice, human rights, and sustainable development. She emphasizes the importance of fostering empathy, dialogue, and solidarity among learners to build a more just and peaceful world. The theoretical propositions of these scholars serve as theoretical underpinning for this research. Specifically, this study highlights the evolving nature of peace education, emphasizing critical analysis, interdisciplinary collaboration, and empowerment needed for positive social change.

The structural and cultural aspects of education for peace cannot be truly understood without the pioneering work of the late Johan Galtung (1989) who emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and addressing conflicts. He has promoted the concept of as a comprehensive process that involves multiple stakeholders and disciplines working together to transform conflict dynamics. Reardon (2000) is another important scholar known for her work on peace education and human rights, advocating for an interdisciplinary approach that integrates insights from diverse fields to promote a culture of peace and nonviolence. She emphasizes the interconnectedness of peace, human rights, and sustainable development, and the need for comprehensive educational strategies to address root causes of conflict. This study expands upon the concept of interdisciplinary, advocating for the integration of peace studies into broader discussions within the social sciences and humanities to promote peace and nonviolence.

Another set of ideas about education that influenced this study come from public intellectuals Yoval Harari (2018), and Jordan Peterson (1999) who argue that the conflicts need to be understood through the prism of narratives. Conflicts are not solely driven by tangible factors like resources and territories; they are also fueled by the narratives we uphold. This study delves into the influence of stories in education, a notion that aligns with long-standing assertions by narrative scholars in conflict studies spanning over six decades. Our realities and thought processes are shaped by the narratives we embrace, often revolving around materialistic concerns such as resources, land, water access, and employment. Initially rooted in concrete material concerns, these narratives transcend into mythological realms to captivate and

manipulate audiences, often justifying violence through tales of identity, security, justice, and power. Conflict narratives are stories that perpetuate polarization, competition, and can ultimately lead to violence. As they proliferate through media and political discourse, they solidify into dominant discourses, propagated through memes. However, the drawback of narrative research is its fixation on power which can restrict scholars from seeing a more comprehensive broader view of conflict and peace.

This study is also influenced by mimetic theory (Girard, 1979; 1987) which suggests that mimetic desire (for resources, recognition, identity) naturally leads to rivalry, conflict, and scapegoating. Education must help students recognize how imitation fuels conflict narratives, particularly simplistic "us vs. them" stories. Such narratives often begin by defining a desired outcome, then demonizing opponents. Social media amplifies these narratives, as individuals align themselves publicly to display loyalty and virtue. Dissenters are quickly silenced through ostracism, shame, or cancellation, reinforcing collective opposition and identifying scapegoats, a process Girard (1989) called the "scapegoat mechanism". Historical examples, such as Nazi Germany's scapegoating of Jewish people, illustrate how this mechanism can unify societies around a common enemy. Today, cancel culture mirrors this process on social media, where the battle for narrative control has become a struggle for visibility—essential to one's existence in the virtual world. Those ostracized may regroup, form alliances, and intensify competition within this digital sphere.

The significance of grasping the influence of narratives in education for peace lies in the realization that narratives are adaptable, contestable, and disruptive. The conflict resolution methods, including mediation, dialogue, problem-solving, and negotiation, seek to change or destabilize the initial narrative of conflict in favor of crafting a mutually acceptable alternative. Constructive conflict resolution, as advocated by Morton (1994), underscores the importance of seeking solutions that benefit all parties, establishing common ground, and addressing underlying concerns to foster mutual understanding. This endeavor hinges on the ability to construct a as proposed by Sara Cobb (2013), a fresh narrative that remains our coexistence with perceived adversaries in a manner that is acceptable to all involved in the conflict.

The new age of education will be about search for 'better stories' which will incorporate different views with the use of imagination and innovation and without a cooky cutter prescription that would fit all. Creating a better narrative of peace through education involves fostering critical thinking, empathy, interdisciplinarity and a deep understanding of the complexities of conflict and peace building processes. By integrating peace education into school curricula and lifelong learning programs, individuals can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become active agents of positive change in their communities.

Methodology

The methodology used in the study was exploratory, and the method of inquiry was qualitative. The exploratory methodology is a research approach used to investigate a topic when there is limited existing knowledge or understanding. This method is often employed at the initial stages of a research project to explore and gain insights into a phenomenon, problem, or area of interest. Data was collected from multiple sources: interviews and surveys with professors and students (130 participants) were complemented by the review of the relevant literature on the topic of peace education, multiculturalism and tolerance. Purposive selection of the people of interest that possess knowledge or offer a variety of perspectives about the studied phenomenon contributed to elaborating and deepening of initial analysis.

Research Aims

The aims of the research was to explore if and how the field of conflict and peace studies can stimulate fresh perspectives and approaches in the AI era that would better equip future generations to deal with diverse multicultural or divided contexts.

Research Question

By examining core principles of peace and conflict education, the study investigates how to integrate peace theory and practice into educational programs at higher learning institutions in diverse multicultural or divided contexts. The specific questions focus on three key components: 1) peace as a universal value in education; 2) effective methods for teaching peace; and 3) envisioning a peaceful society.

Participants

The present study was, conducted at the University of Nis in Serbia, engaging participants primarily comprising professors and students from the aforementioned institution. The sample encompassed 109 student participants aged between 18 and 25, alongside 21 professor participants aged between 35 and 55. Interviews and surveys were administered in English, given the proficiency of the majority of participants in the language. Regarding gender distribution, 88 female students constituted the majority participants, while there were 19 male students and 2 individuals identifying as other. Among professors, 7 identified as male, and 13 as female. With respect to educational level, the student participants were all undergraduate, whereas all professors held doctorates. All students took part in the survey, while 7 professors were interviewed, and 15 engaged in the survey component of the study. The professors and students belong to different departments at the University including psychology, sociology, philosophy, pedagogy, and andragogy.

Instrument and Procedure

Data was collected from multiple sources, including document analysis of relevant academic and online sources pertaining to the topic, a survey and interviews. The same five open ended questions were used in both survey and interviews[2] Survey also included demographic questions which enabled categorization of participants according to age, profession and gender. All questions were developed by the author. The in-depth zoom interviews were conducted only with professors, while surveys with open ended questions were primarily aimed at students in order to collect as much data as possible across different departments. Participants were accessed through established connections with local academic institutions. The survey was distributed electronically through the Qualtrics platform, with prior consent and ensuring participants' anonymity. The confidentiality of the collected data was ensured by saving it on a password protected external drive.

Data Analysis

This study relies on a qualitative analysis of data generated through document analysis, survey and interview responses. The data analysis began with looking into academic and non-academic sources (journal articles, books, newspaper articles, blogs, etc.) which enabled initial examination of the topic. Content analysis was used to uncover and compare patterns across respondents' replies to open-ended questions. Comparisons among different sources of data, probed into intersexuality by searching for convergence of patterns and themes in different texts. Inductive coding was used as a ground-up approach to derive themes from the data.

Discussion of Findings

Peace as a Universal Value and Its Place in Education

Based on the content analysis of data elicited through qualitative survey and interviews, two major themes emerged around the topic of peace as a universal value and its place in education: a) Violent conflict is not inevitable; and b) Peaceful societies and promotion of diversity, tolerance and multiculturalism in education.

1) Violent Conflict is not inevitable

The majority of participants of this study reflected on the nature of war and human propensity to conflict when discussing the value of peace. Most participants point to the fact that they have been taught, not only in school, but also through other

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[2] Interview and survey questions: 1. Is peace a universal value that should be promoted through education? Explain your reply. 2. How should we teach about peace and conflict to the students in divided societies? Provide examples. 3. Should peace education be integrated into the curriculum at the institutions of higher learning and why? 4. Can you think of some concrete examples of behaviors that contribute to peaceful communities? (Provide examples from the media, your friends/family or own experience). 5. How do you envision peaceful societies?

sources, such as media, books and stories of family members, those violent conflicts are inevitable because conflict is inherent in human nature. Some respondents argue that competition for resources and power are ingrained in human behavior, but that people are also capable of collaboration in resolving issues.

One interviewed professor highlighted the environmental activism aimed at protecting the Šar Mountain region as a notable example of human agency and collective efforts to peacefully address environmental conflicts in Serbia. The Šar Mountains, known for their rich biodiversity and natural beauty, face threats from development projects like mining and infrastructure. In response, local residents, environmental activists, and civil society organizations have united to advocate for the protection, organizing protests, petitions, and awareness campaigns to emphasize its ecological importance. Through these efforts, they have drawn attention to the need for conservation, engaged in dialogue with policymakers, conducted scientific research, and collaborated with international organizations to promote sustainable practices. Despite ongoing challenges from resource extraction interests and limited government responsiveness, this activism exemplifies a peaceful approach to resolving environmental conflicts and preserving natural ecosystems for future generations.

The participants' responses indicate that education can play a pivotal role in learning about peace and conflict. While some respondents argue for the inevitability of conflict, most of them agree that the violent conflict is not inevitable.

When looking into the history, philosophy, political theory and psychology, there are many renowned scholars who presented excellent arguments for the inevitability of conflict among humans. Evolutionary psychology certainly suggests that humans have evolved with competitive instincts that can lead to conflict, as seen in the struggle for survival among early humans. In his work "Leviathan", Hobbes (1651, reprint. 1967) famously described the state of nature as a condition of perpetual conflict, where individuals compete for self-preservation. He argued that in the absence of a strong central authority to enforce order, humans are driven by their inherent self-interests, which inevitably lead to conflicts, including war. Carl von Clausewitz (1832, reprint 2007), a Prussian military theorist, is renowned for his work "On War" in which he posited that war is an extension of politics by other means. He emphasized the role of competition for power and dominance among states, driven by their respective interests and objectives. According to Clausewitz, the pursuit of these interests can culminate in armed conflict. An Austrian ethnologist and Nobel laureate, Lorenz explored the biological and evolutionary roots of aggression in animals, including humans. In his book "On Aggression" Lorenz (1966) argued that aggression and competition are innate instincts shaped by evolutionary processes. He suggested that these instincts predispose humans to engage in conflict, including warfare, as a means of securing resources and ensuring survival. Finally, Hans Morgenthau (1948) a prominent figure in the field of international relations, realism and political theory, perfectly encapsulates the idea of inevitability of war in his seminal work "Politics among Nations". He argues that states act primarily to pursue their own interests in a self-interested and power-driven manner. In an anarchic

international order, states prioritize their security and survival, often employing strategies such as balance of power and deterrence to maintain their position and protect their interests.

However, when we look at the recent warfare in Europe-Russo-Ukrainian conflict, we cannot but think about it as an anomaly and a remnant of the Cold war attitude that hardly fits in the new age. The great powers have become increasingly reluctant to engage in open and direct wars and occupations. The idea of a classical warfare exemplified in the Cold war, occupation of Iraq and war in Yugoslavia in the modern time seems anachronistic in the present day.

We are moving into the age of distant conflict in which terrorism, atrocities and destruction will be moved into the periphery until they finally become anachronisms. Occupation, terrorist attacks, seizing of territory is on its way out. While it will exist in the peripheries of the great powers' blocks, it will be more and more absent from the imagination of an ordinary citizen. The Foucauldian 'spectacle of gallows' will be moved once again into the shadows (Foucault, 1995). The unpalatability of violent destructive conflict for the modern individual indicates that a significant struggle will be taking place in the realm of narratives and in the sphere of virtual reality in which the AI will be taking an even more prominent role.

2) Peaceful Societies and Promotion of Diversity, Tolerance and Inclusivity in education

Most participants agree that peace is a universal value that underpins other important values such as inclusion, empathy, care for other's diverse identities etc. The value of peace is important for individual as well as community as it is a precondition for human development. One student participant captured this idea in the following citation: "I consider peace to be a universal value that should be promoted in education. At our university, we discuss certain universal human values that indirectly contribute to peace and stability in a society, family, and community. Values, such as tolerance, diversity, etc., influence the individual level as well; they can awaken someone to offering peace to others (tolerance, acceptance, support, etc.), and make the individual feel safer and more peaceful within their community". There were few participants who disagreed with the idea of peace being a universal value saying that "peace only seems like universal value, but it is actually really subjective depending on what party is speaking about peace". This view needs to be taken into consideration as it points out a main challenge to the idealistic view of peace that no one can really achieve. It points to the fact that peace always comes with some caveats. One cannot have peace without justice; one cannot have justice unless there is equality; to be equal means to have access to the same opportunities; but the opportunities are often taken by those who are either more skillful, talented, aggressive or have better connections than us. So equality is arguably an impossible endeavor due to the fact that the human nature is such that we do like to compete as much as we like to collaborate; we are selfish and self-interested just as we are magnanimous and empathetic. The disparity lies in the contradiction between the prevailing reality, marked by widespread inequality, and the ideal of equality as the

cornerstone of an ideally peaceful society.

In some societies with more homogenous populations or different cultural norms, the emphasis on multiculturalism, equity, tolerance and diversity in education may be less pronounced or even contested. In some cases, there may be resistance to inclusive education due to concerns about cultural assimilation, national identity, or political ideologies. This is, for example, the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the existence of segregated schools as an effort to preserve specific cultural identities and language. Equity which recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the appropriate resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome may be very important for the minority communities, but they can also contribute to the exclusion of other groups. For example, equity seems to be in opposition to inclusivity in the implementation of affirmative action policies in college admissions. While affirmative action aims to address historical and systemic inequalities by providing preferential treatment to underrepresented racial or ethnic groups, it can sometimes be perceived as excluding or disadvantaging individuals from other groups, particularly those who may have achieved higher academic or merit-based qualifications. The discriminatory admission policy toward Asian students in Harvard is such a case. Critics argue that Harvard′s admissions process, which considers factors beyond academic performance such as extracurricular activities and personal qualities, may inadvertently disadvantage Asian American applicants by imposing higher standards on them compared to applicants from other racial or ethnic groups. This situation raises questions about fairness and equity in college admissions, as well as concerns about the impact of diversity initiatives on inclusivity. In such cases, the pursuit of equity in access to educational opportunities for marginalized groups may appear to conflict with the principle of inclusivity, which emphasizes creating diverse and inclusive environments that welcome individuals from all backgrounds.

This tension underscores the complexities involved in balancing the goals of equity and inclusivity and the importance of carefully considering the impacts and implications of policies aimed at addressing systemic inequalities. Peace and conflict education can offer a more nuanced view that would address the tension between inclusivity and equity by fostering critical thinking, empathy, dialogue and social responsibility among students.

How to Teach Peace and How to Integrate It in Higher Education

Teaching about peace in education is essential for nurturing compassionate, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals. The participants of this study provided many good examples on how peace can be taught in a variety of different subjects and fields stressing the pervasive value of peace that can be learned. Based on the analysis of data elicited through qualitative survey and interviews, two major themes emerged: a) Curriculum integration, conflict resolution skills, and media literacy, and b) Experiential learning and multicultural education.

1) Curriculum Integration, Conflict Resolution Skills, and Media Literacy

Learning about peace can be incorporated into various subjects such as social studies, history, literature, and even science. For example, history can take a more nuanced approach by exploring different types of conflicts and its aftermaths by looking at ways and efforts made to resolve them peacefully and highlighting key peacemakers and their contributions. Conflict resolution field can take a more nuanced approach by studying different forms of government, and their impact on peace, wellbeing, and lives of individuals. Literature classes can include texts promoting empathy and understanding, and science can emphasize collaboration and consensus building as skills necessary to address global issues like climate change and sustainable development. One of the professor respondents encapsulated the power of examples that need to be included into the curriculum: "We should teach about peace by giving examples of good and successful people that contributed to peace in the past and how it has positively affected humanity and we should also teach students about the bad examples and how they negatively affect us today". Several respondents talked about the example of Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani education activist, known for her advocacy for girls' education and human rights. After she survived a brutal Taliban attack, her activism gained international attention, leading to the establishment of the Malala Fund, which aims to ensure every girl has access to twelve years of free, safe, and quality education. But there are many more lesser known advocates for peace and education that we should know about such as, Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmentalist and political activist, Nobel laureate, Irom Sharmila, advocate for peace, justice, and human rights in conflict-affected regions of India, or Hadiqa Bashir, a Pakistani activist who has been advocating against child marriage and for girls' education in her community.

Some student participants argue for introducing in curricula of different disciplines standalone courses or modules specifically focused on peace studies, conflict resolution, and nonviolent communication which could contribute to students' understanding of conflict analysis, mediation skills, human rights, and global citizenship. Different social sciences, humanities as well as other fields of knowledge could benefit from students learning about cross-cultural communication, respectful engagement, and conflict resolution.

A professor argues: "It is important to hear both sides of the story. We cannot negate victims on either side of the conflict, but teach and inform about crimes, causalities, and innocent victims no matter to which ethnic or minority group they belong to." One student adds: "It would be great to learn practical skills for resolving conflicts peacefully." Peace education is about teaching skills such as active listening, empathy, negotiation, and compromise, which are key for promoting peaceful behavior. Conflicts often arise due to misunderstandings, differing perspectives, or historical grievances. By learning how to listen to different sides, individuals gain a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying issues, motivations, and experiences that have led to the conflict. This understanding is essential for finding common ground, addressing root causes, and working towards sustainable solutions. Hearing different sides of a story also humanizes the parties involved and fosters empathy.

Since we live in the era of social media that permeates our lives, the peace education also needs to help students to critically analyze media representations of various social phenomena and especially, conflicts and stereotypes, and encourage them to question biases and propaganda, develop their own informed opinions, and engage in constructive dialogue with others. This can create opportunities for dialogue, reconciliation, and building trust, ultimately paving the way for peace.

2) Experiential Learning and Multicultural Education

Some participants pointed out the need for more culturally interactive study abroad programs, hands-on activities, simulations, and role-playing exercises as key to understanding the complexities of conflicts in diverse societies.

One professor summarizes it well: "We need to encourage students to engage in structured dialogues, workshops and other projects with their peers from different backgrounds to better understand each other's experiences and perspectives." Another student adds: "Conflicts often arise from a lack of understanding of other cultures, so I think it would be very beneficial to encourage interaction through various lectures, travel, collaborations, and exchanges."

Experiential learning programs cultivate peaceful behavior in students by immersing them in real-life situations where they must navigate diverse perspectives, collaborate with others, and practice empathy.

By actively engaging with the communities, students learn to appreciate the value of cooperation, compassion, and mutual support, laying the groundwork for peaceful behavior both within and beyond the classroom.

Furthermore, conflict resolution simulations and peer mediation programs offer students opportunities to practice peaceful negotiation and communication skills in a structured and supportive environment. By role-playing various conflict scenarios and exploring alternative solutions, students learn to empathize with different perspectives, listen actively, and seek mutually beneficial outcomes. These experiences empower students to become effective mediators and peacemakers, equipped with the tools and confidence to resolve conflicts peacefully among their peers.

Imagining Peaceful Society

Questions about imagining peaceful society allowed participants of this study to express some innovative ideas and future scenarios that resulted in three major themes: a) Fostering trust, responsibility and collaboration, c) Language of peace, and c) Involvement of different community members in education and teachers' training.

1) Fostering Trust, Responsibility and Collaboration

Education can reframe the approach to peace and offer a wider perspective. As one professor said: "Peace is not pacification." Disagreements and conflict exist in peaceful societies. But in a peaceful society people have respect for each other, they accept that it is normal to agree to disagree and live with those who have different

views." The study of conflict resolution is an invitation to think differently, to behave responsibly as conflicts are complex situations which require smart and meaningful responses. Smart responses can be encouraged through peace education by fostering collaboration, inquiry, and feedback. As one student participant posited: "Only through collaborative learning practices we can gain a wider picture and integrate multiple voices." Encouraging collaborative reflection on both issues and processes can help create truly integrated peaceful communities in which different actors can be partners in their quest for peace. Peace is a process that requires engagement with others. Education for peace, therefore, has a role in fostering responsibility, trust, collaboration, and inquiry. A professor summarized it well: "Teaching students to question, assess and think independently is a peaceful way to address problems that we face."

2) Language of Peace

This study also looked at narratives communicated within educational settings highlighting the importance of language, which can be used both constructively and destructively. As Deutsch (1973) has noted in his classic work on competitive (confrontational) conflict, competitive processes tend to produce "unreliable and impoverished communication that reinforce the pre-existing orientations and expectations toward the Other" (p. 353). The language represents and invaluable source of knowledge about the level or magnitude of deprivation in a given society (Kriesberg, 2007) or institution. In educational settings, narratives and the very language can provoke a reaction that can move the system toward conflict. As one student pointed out: "Learning together through mutual trust, recognition and respect can contribute to overcoming any problems and differences." Learning how to communicate peacefully and nonviolently and learning how to avoid harming or hurting others communicatively can be very important in this context. Language itself can be used as a tool to escalate conflicts because of its salience for individual and group's identity. For example, providing minority with the right to use their language in educational and other public settings may diffuse tensions, but true transformation can only take place by creating safe conditions for free, fearless and open interaction between different groups.

3) Involvement of Different Community Members in Education and Teachers' Training

To ensure success of any educational initiative, parents, teachers and other relevant community members need to be involved. The role of parents and teachers can be key for students' engagement in the analysis of various sources of knowledge as well as for the quality engagement and the development of critical consciousness. As one professor pointed out: "Projects and partnerships with local organizations, peace activists, and community leaders provide students with real-world opportunities to engage in peace building initiatives and exercise peaceful behavior". Service-learning projects and internships enable students to apply classroom knowledge to address community issues. Parental involvement plays a crucial role in contributing to the peace education of children by providing support, guidance, and reinforcement

of values both at home and in the broader community. Parents serve as primary role models for their children, modeling behaviors such as empathy, tolerance, and conflict resolution in their interactions with others. By demonstrating these values in everyday life, parents reinforce the importance of peaceful behavior and create a supportive environment for children to learn and practice these skills. Additionally, parents can actively engage in discussions with their children about topics related to peace, social justice, and global issues, encouraging critical thinking and empathy. By fostering open communication and creating a safe space for dialogue, parents empower their children to ask questions, explore different perspectives, and develop a deeper understanding of complex issues.

Teachers are key mediators of meaning in education and they are the facilitators engaging in the process of inquiry and collaborative learning with students. The teacher can play a key role in enabling the process of collaborative, keeping in mind values of tolerance, respect, civility and freedom of choice. However, as one professor pointed out: "We need to equip teachers with the necessary skills and resources that enables them to effectively integrate peace education into their classrooms. According to another professor: "Teachers need help in dealing with challenging behaviors in classroom and beyond." By offering professional development opportunities for educators to enhance their understanding of peace education principles and teaching methodologies, teachers can create a safe space in which learning about peace can take place.

Conclusion

The results of the study show that violent conflict is not an inevitable part of human existence. While we must acknowledge a tendency towards competition and conflict in humans, most participants agreed that collaboration and peaceful conflict resolution can be learned through education. Most participants affirmed that peace is a universal value essential for promoting diversity, tolerance, and inclusivity, and they advocated for the integration of peace studies into various academic disciplines, highlighting the importance of teaching conflict resolution skills and cross-cultural communication. The study also identified the need for fostering trust, responsibility, and collaboration among students through experiential learning and community involvement. Engaging diverse community members in peace education initiatives is viewed as crucial for creating a supportive environment that promotes peaceful behavior and critical consciousness. Several avenues for further research could include: a) study on how peace education is implemented in different cultural and educational contexts. For example, more insight is needed into the effectiveness of various pedagogical approaches to peace education in homogenous versus diverse societies; b) exploring the role of digital media and technology in facilitating or hindering peace education. Specifically, it would be good to understand how social media influences perceptions of conflict and peace, as well as how online platforms can be utilized to promote dialogue and understanding in diverse contexts.

By empowering individuals with the tools to promote understanding, respect and cooperation, peace education lays the foundation for a collective narrative of peace that values diversity, respects human rights, and seeks to create a stable and sustainable society. A route to peace leads through the change of narrative about the inevitability of conflict and, as the findings of this study have suggested, the conditions for such change already exist within communities and they start with each individual's choice. For positive peace to occur, people must come to an understanding about what peace really means and how to foster it. This can happen only if we engage in interactive processes of learning and inquiry about each other, the structures and fundamental questions of peace.

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OBRAZOVANJE ZA MIR U RAZLIČITIM VISOKOŠKOLSKIM USTANOVAMA I KONTEKSTIMA

Borislava Manojlović

Karterova škola za mir i rešavanje konflikata, Univerzitet Džordž Mejson

Apstrakt: Nastava u kojoj se podučava o miru, ljudskim pravima i toleranciji u različitim društvima zahteva promišljen i osetljiv pristup koji promoviše razumevanje, empatiju i dijalog. Ovo istraživanje bavi se problemom kako integrisati teoriju i praksu mira u obrazovne programe visokoškolskih ustanova u različitim multikulturalnim kontekstima. Metoda korišćena u istraživanju je kvalitativna. Podaci su prikupljeni iz više izvora: intervjui i ankete sa visokoškolskim nastavnicima i studentima (109 učesnika) dopunjeni su pregledom relevantne literature na temu multikulturalnosti i tolerancije. Selekcija ispitanika koji poseduju znanja ili nude različite perspektive o proučavanom fenomenu doprineo je razradi i produbljivanju inicijalnih podataka. Cilj istraživanja bio je da se istraži da li i kako učenje o miru može podstaći nove perspektive i pristupe u dobu veštačke inteligencije. Takvim pristupom bismo adekvatno pripremili buduće generacije za suživot u različitim multikulturalnim kontekstima.

Ključne reči: multikulturalizam, mir, ljudska prava, različitost, visoko obrazovanje