

ARTICLE

 Rethinking Peace Education*

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 Abstract

This article discusses peace education in terms of its content and communication form in relation to its context. Content and form involve major choices which are decisive in defining the substance of any education practice, including education for peace, and the implicit or explicit choices made are related to the differing conceptions of peace education.

 Keywords

peace education, participation, communication, transformative processes

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses peace education in terms of its content and communication form in relation to its context. Content and form involve major choices which are decisive in defining the substance of any education practice, including education for peace, and the implicit or explicit choices made are related to the differing conceptions of peace education.

Historically, there are differing opinions on which principles should guide the selection of content and which should guide the selection of learning and teaching methods in peace education. The principles of content selection and form preferences are discussed separately then in relation to each other and in context. It is important to keep in mind that peace education is not limited to formal systems but can also be provided in the setting of voluntary organizations and more informally in the home. Some of these contexts exclude the possibility of selecting certain contents and forms. As a result, content and form are highly related and may be quite different in these three contexts.

It seems obvious that participatory peace education as discussed here assumes some fundamental rights and guarantees: democratic contextual conditions must prevail to ensure that peace education occurs and has a role in creating social change. Linking content, form and context will be discussed as an integral process to establish adequate learning conditions that can lead to social transformation.

1. SEARCHING FOR CONTENT
IN PEACE EDUCATION

It is necessary to define peace in order to discuss the content of peace education. The following three approaches to defining the concept help understand the principles guiding its selection. First, peace is seen in terms of what it is and what it is not. It is seen as the opposite of violence and three forms of violence are discussed, direct, structural and cultural. Secondly, peace is discussed as realities ranging from the individual to the global – that

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is, in terms of close, intermediate and distant realities as seen from the perspective of the individual. Thirdly, it is considered as a relatively permanent state, with peace values enhanced and as a process of interaction within structures which might be more or less peaceful, or violent.

a) Content related to negative and positive peace

There is a long history of understanding peace as the absence of war or any other form of organized physical violence, which is the predominant definition and is incorporated into scientific definitions. Negative peace seems easy to exemplify and define. Negative peace certainly applies to cases where there is an absence of war between nations or civil war within a nation.

Positive peace is when social justice has replaced structural violence. In contrast to negative peace, positive peace is not limited to the idea of getting rid of something, but includes establishing something that is missing. Besides getting rid of structural violence or social injustice, positive peace implies the presence of social justice. Galtung has defined structural violence as the distance between 'the actual' and 'the potential'. This definition allows for many interpretations based on varying opinions about what is actual and potential. It is important to recognize the subjective understandings of present and future realities in peace education content.

Scientific research helps to transcend subjective opinion about what 'is' (in existence) and what 'could be' (potential). The scientific monitoring of human society produces systematic studies of the quality of life in any given society, and a large body of research constitutes our knowledge of 'the actual'. In contrast to the major emphasis in social science on problems of the actual, our knowledge of the potential is less extensive. Questions about what 'could be' have not been dealt with in social science to the same degree as those about what is actually in existence.

This first approach in searching for the content of peace education indicates the importance of understanding human suffering as a consequence of both direct and structural violence. It is apparent that both types often produce the same results in terms of death and human suffering. In a sense, one might argue that direct violence is worse than structural violence because in the latter it is not so clear which actors are involved - they do not have the same visibility and clear exposition. But there is no doubt - structural violence is the worst as it is, in most cases, the real cause of the direct one.

Questions can also be posed about the relationship between direct and structural violence and how they reinforce each other.

The study of violence is an important aspect of peace education content. If pedagogy fails to deal with the issue of violence, education will only serve to legitimize it and make it difficult to develop an understanding of its causes. This includes the possibility of the study of violence being excluded due to pedagogical preferences, an example of cultural violence. This is a third type of violence especially relevant to education which itself could be considered violent if it helped legitimize direct and structural violence. To varying degrees, all cultural agents in a society, including education, may choose to expose issues of peace and violence (religious institutions, mass media, universities, schools etc).

b) Micro and macro level content

In discussing the concept of peace in the search for the content of peace education, the following figure gives a view of close, intermediate and distant realities in terms of space and time.

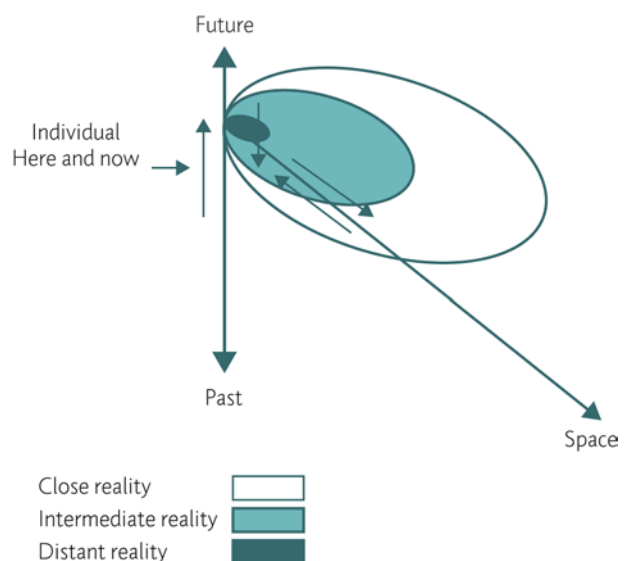


Figure 1. Relationships in time and space (Haavelsrud, 1996, p. 55)

The time axis is vertical and the space axis turns to its right. Their crossing point

(see dark spot in Figure 1) illustrates the "here and now context". This context is constantly changing as time progresses and as situations outside the "here and now" develop. The figure thus puts each individual in the center of time and space.

Time can be visualized in terms of past, present and future. The limits of the present may be drawn for individuals in reference to events such as change of location (e.g. going from home to school), change of activity (e.g. in the

1 Galtung (1999), *Peace by Peaceful Means*.



morning, from sleeping to eating breakfast) or change of social context (e.g. a guest arrives or leaves). The 'present' may also be a moment of *kairos*¹ in which a few moments may seem like an eternity (e.g. waiting to get out of a catastrophic situation or a moment of deep love).

Departing from such "now" contexts the time axis stretches towards the past as well as the future. In figure 1, three points in both directions are indicated to illustrate that time can be seen in terms of its distance to each individual, viz. close, intermediate and distant. The two arrows along the time axis illustrate causality over time. The arrow pointing upwards illustrates that the context at one time will influence the context at a later time. The arrow pointing downwards illustrates the idea behind the self-fulfilling prophecy: expectations, aspirations, hopes and visions of the future influence human behavior at earlier time points (e.g. visions of the future influence our present tactics or strategies for transforming the present towards our visions).

The extreme left is the position of the individual, and the arrow pointing to the right signifies indefinite space in physical terms. As human life is limited to our planet, the crossing point of the outer circle and the space axis points out the physical limits for global society.

The arrow pointing to the left along the space axis, illustrates the influence of society upon individuals living in it. The arrow pointing to the right along the space axis illustrates the fact that society is a human product. Thus, the figure points out that there is a dialectical relationship between world society and each individual.

Space can be measured in physical terms (e.g. meters and kilometers) but also in terms of societal dimensions, such as social, cultural, economic and political realities. As we know, there is a great variation in these realities from context to context. The specific realities of each individual are closely interwoven while being and distantly separated from others. Although dissimilarity between everyday contexts seems to increase as a function of physical distance, there is no simple relationship between physical distance and the social, cultural, economic and political characteristics of two or more everyday contexts.

In a single geographical location there may be greater dissimilarities between two contexts than between two contexts in different locations, for example between rich and poor families in large cities such as New York or London compared to rich or poor families in either city.

When time and space are seen together, it becomes apparent that there are possible causal chains reaching each individual from any time in the past and future and from any position along the space axis. In turn, there are possible causal chains departing from each individual to any point in the future. This influence is not restricted to the

individual's own future, but includes the future of society and the world. Thus, the individual can potentially influence the future world as well as any part of it.

As past interactions among individuals, social groups and institutions have created the present society, it seems clear that 'macro' produces 'micro'. This means that every time direct, structural or cultural violence occurs in a specific close reality, it is more than probable that causes of this violence are to be found outside that micro reality.

The roots of the attitudes, opinions and valuations of people at large, in the multitude of micro contexts in everyday life, are a necessary condition for maintaining the characteristics of the macro society.

The content of peace education may be found in all contexts because violence as a phenomenon is not isolated to a few everyday realities. The specific manifestation of violence (direct, structural and cultural) in the everyday lives of people is therefore part of the content of peace education. But the content stretches to other close realities where the causes of this violence may originate. The links of violence between one close reality and another are to be traced in the search for that content. The concept of peace is relevant to all contexts. If peace was limited to a specific time and place, the relationships between micro and macro as suggested above would not be considered. This might lead to a distorted view of peace, because it is more and more difficult, if not impossible, to find a context which is completely isolated from the rest of the world.

c) Peace content as structure and process

A third way to select the content of peace education is to see peace as a structure as well as a process. A peace structure is by definition one that has institutionalized values of peace, i.e. absence of violence and presence of social justice, participation and diversity. Just like any building, its basic features would enable certain interactions and make other interactions difficult or impossible.

A structure is taken to mean the presence of relatively permanent relations between specific units.² The units can be any social actors ranging from individuals and groups on the micro level to nations and transnational organizations, such as the UN, on the macro level. A structure for peace is a structure that enhances peace values, both those that enhance negative peace (absence of direct violence) as well as those that affirm peace (social justice, participation and cultural diversity). To test whether a specific structure secures peace, an investigation of the interactions among two or more units within the structure is necessary. Looking closer at interactions of this kind, it is possible to identify the extent to which the values of peace are realized over

2 Mathiesen (2001), *Law, Society and Political Action*.



time. If peace values are strengthened we are witnessing a peace process.

Structures established through interactions can be maintained or changed through new interactions. Therefore, a non-peaceful structure can be changed to a peaceful structure through peaceful interactions which can occur within it. If these peaceful interactions are allowed to develop into new patterns, they will eventually become structures of peace within the overall structure of non-peace. At that moment, the new structures may be so powerful that their confrontation with the violent structure may lead to an overall peaceful structure. The opposite, repression of the peaceful structure by the violent structure, might also occur.

History has many examples of such processes. It seems that most interactions based on the value of independence and autonomy during decolonization have led to new structures that were successful in dismantling the status quo. Today, we are witnessing movements for liberation on the part of women, ethnic minorities groups suffering from human rights violations, the working class and the poor, all over the world. Such interactions among various groups are often based on values of peace and begin as interactions among members of these groups beyond the control of those in power. If they are maintained, these interactions involve more and more people, and become structures of peace confronting existing violent structures.

When searching for the content of peace education, it is important to consider peace as both a structure and a process. A peace structure means the presence of relatively permanent relations between structural units that enhance peace values. The idea of 'relative permanence' implies that peace is a state, as opposed to a process. But peace is also the process of interaction between specific units, as long as the interaction is geared to the enhancement of peace values.

2. COMMUNICATION FORM IN PEACE EDUCATION

Everyday life may be characterized by habitual behaviors adapting to violent and non-violent conditions. The embodiment of oppressive elements in these behaviors is one factor that sustains the oppression. Cultural preferences in everyday life may support violence and inhibit peace. It is contended here that the cultural background of the learner is an important factor to take into account in any learning process and that the practical subjective preferences manifested in everyday life are where the learning process

should always begin, even if the subject is a violent actor in that context.

The voices of all learners in dialogue are therefore necessary in peace education. These voices blend into a chorus of communications. 'Dialogic learning'³ is characterized by codification and de-codification processes in which everyday life is discussed in educational interactions. The description of a student's reality is codified by the teacher to give the learner the opportunity to mirror the teacher's model of discussion. If accepted by the learners, the description or theory given by them and codified by the teacher may shed critical light on the initial practice so that it is transformed, based on the insights of the initial discussions.

This transformation from practice to praxis implies that the practical world of everyday life is understood in a theoretical light, arising from the discussions of the participants and accepted as a guide for changes in everyday life. If the codification is not accepted, a new dialogue takes place to gain better insight into everyday life and its possible transformation. In the following figure, the integration of the world of practice and the world of reflection is highlighted.

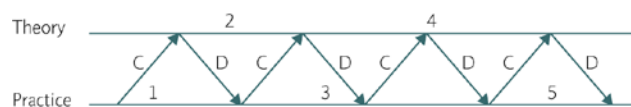


Figure 2. The dialectic between theory and practice

The figure has the form of a large arrow. It illustrates the continuous development of dialectics between theory and practice: it is never static. The numbers illustrate the different phases in this development. Number 1 is the first phase in the dialogic process: the initial meeting of the group and their teacher/facilitator/coordinator is to select the generative theme for continued content development. The teacher uses discussion as material for codification (C), which represents a bridge between the concrete and the abstract.

In the de-codification (D) the more abstract description of the practice or initial theoretical understanding of the practice is tested with reference to the empirical reality that is known to the participant. Further de-codification follows a new phase of codification. C and D are positioned between the lines representing theory and practice. The distance between the processes of codification and de-codification as well as between theory and practice depends on many things, not least of which is how far the participants have progressed in the development of theory starting from their own practice.

3 Freire (1972), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, pp. 45-49.



The process of theory development based on social practices – codification – and the return to practice with new knowledge fed by theory – de-codification – to apply to and enrich the new reality in the next turn of codification, led Paulo Freire to define education as a “practice of freedom”: freedom of practices, freedom of thinking and freedom to build interconnections to create new thoughts in a transformative path. And this is how peace education works.

Peace education can also be a process of liberation, in which people – not as recipients but as knowing subjects – achieve a deepening awareness of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality. Hence peace education is a practice of freedom and not domination – also a conscious act, one of choosing rather than of receiving. Education is an act of cognition rather than mere transfer of information.

Peace education is also a dialogical act – rigorous, intuitive, imaginative and emotional. The educational process has to create conditions for horizontal dialogue. Peace education needs dialogical, communicative rationality and the acts of knowing and thinking are directly tied to one another as knowledge requires communicative expression.⁴ Dialogue does not exclude conflict. Confronting other visions is necessary to arrive at a common understanding of problems and attempt to build joint solutions. There is no democratic growth in society, no civic learning – therefore no peace learning – without different groups exercising the right to discuss and confront ideas. The right to struggle for dreams and hopes, to interact with others with differing dreams and hopes in a challenging process of ‘crossing borders’ in the individual and collective dimension.⁵

If dialogue is the main form peace education uses to build knowledge and understanding for the creation of content and approach ‘the others’, this dialogue is embedded in participation throughout the process.

Participation is a fundamental right of citizenship, the means by which a democracy is built and a standard against which democracies should be measured. Participation means that all the groups of a society are able and invited to gather, discuss and exchange ideas, not only in policy making but also in planning issues related to their daily lives, needs and hopes. They should be able to plan and decide their learning themes and issues according to their needs and realities, which is to say according to their contextual conditions.

In a way, contextual conditions dictate, and at the same time condition, the themes for analysis, discussion and research. In this process, progressing from ‘silent-voting ob-

jects’ to ‘participative subjects’ is a pre-condition for the development of a democratic society.⁶

So the participative component of the peace learning process is also a practice of freedom itself, and a praxis where reflection and action occur.

3. ON CONTENT AND FORM IN PEACE EDUCATION

Peace education is not just concerned about different concepts of *what* you teach but also about *how* you teach and the contextual conditions *within which* you teach. In fact there is a desirable relationship between the content, form and context of the learning process.

If peace education is the pedagogy that has to deal with the goal of change in order to set up an education that does not reproduce the system, it is evident that content and form are linked when considering where those changes have to be made. These changes would produce transformation in the existing contextual conditions. Hence it is highly likely that peace education as an alternative pedagogy will improve the reality.

Content is often selected and taught as an abstract structure with obscure concepts and little contact with daily life and problems. This results in a structure with its own codes for certain people, the only ones able to de-codify the meanings, so that others rely on ‘de-codification experts’ to understand the world, the society, the reality – no matter whether it is near or far.

Peace education content should not start from abstract categories but from people’s needs, captured in their own expressions. The traditional concept of content as the sum of different themes is replaced by the analysis of the micro reality, the selection of problems, their connection with the macro and the emerging dialogue between them. In this learning process, students focus on roots and causes of events and share ideas on possible solutions.

In this process, to know is not to accumulate knowledge, information or data regarding certain themes or problems. To know implies everyday knowledge, taking care of small things and thinking locally and globally in a linked understanding so that the outer world will be part of everyday life as well.⁷ There is no division in instructive significance and everyday educative significance. And while people build knowledge through dialogue, other meanings are incorporated such as how we know, how we produce knowledge and how society uses knowledge. Knowing is

4 Morrow and Torres (2004), *Critical Theory and Education: Habermas and the Dialogical Subject*.

5 See the concept of border pedagogy in Giroux (1997), *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope. Theory, Culture and Schooling: a Critical Reader*.

6 Cabezudo (2013), *Learnings from Democracy, Culture of Peace and Human Rights. A Challenge of Our Time*.

7 See relationships between the micro and the macro in this paper.



also changing attitudes, learning to think critically, establishing relationships and creating links.

The links between form and content are evident. Peace learning itself acquires a particular significance as a dimension of a transformative tool for change for all the actors, not only in their own but also for their potential 'outside' actions.

Content becomes form, in a way form is content. Acting as agents for change, both have great potential to transform contextual conditions.

4. CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS

Life provides the learner with the possibility of 'reading the world'. They can (1) observe and diagnose violence (physical, structural, cultural) in their own context and its external relations to other contexts, (2) search for root causes of the violence, both internal (including the self) and external to their own context, (3) formulate visions of non-violent alternative futures, (4) reflect upon appropriate means of change and (5) act skillfully towards the creation of new peace processes and structures. These five components can serve as an informal guide on how a peace education process directs learners from an initial point of observation and diagnosis of violence towards practical actions to transform that reality into peace and non-violence.

Important contextual conditions for peace education include the types and levels of violence and how that violence is caused by micro and macro forces as explained in figure 1. Contextual conditions also relate to the possibilities for transcending violence by involving the development of desirable visions of the future and possibilities for action. The conditions are therefore both internal and external to the context.

This reflects the main idea in Bourdieu's theory that the habitus of the individual and objective and material structures in the larger society seek harmony. This means that, while the lifestyle and personality of each human being is influenced by the outside world, the individual is also challenged to transform the outside world to fit cultural preferences. This force towards harmony between cultural expressions or lifestyles and the outside world makes changes in both habitus and the outside world possible.

Contextual conditions relate to micro as well as macro realities. Such realities can be described in terms of social, political, cultural and economic perspectives and how they are related to each other. Understanding contextual conditions therefore involves understanding both micros and macros and their relationships. Peace education looks for the relationships between close and distant realities and at how different forms of violence at different levels interact in space and time. This is a practical necessity to find effective spaces for new interactions in the peace process.

A highly relevant aspect of contextual conditions is the educational policies selected by the authorities. The characteristics of formal education systems in most countries are: division of knowledge into specific subjects; teachers with specific competencies in these subjects; grouping of students into classes and the division of time into teaching periods and breaks. These basic characteristics - to which evaluation procedures and disciplinary codes could be added - are important structural components that allow certain types of initiatives for introducing peace education into the curriculum and exclude other types.

If the form of education and the division of knowledge into subjects is regarded as a problem, the peace educator runs into other problems of a structural nature, i.e. the peace education project might contradict the basic characteristics of the structure in which it is introduced. If, for instance, a peace education project is based on the principles of problem orientation and participatory decision-making it encounters difficulties if introduced into a school system which rigidly divides education into subjects, classes and teaching periods. Apart from the rigidity imposed by these three components, the greatest barrier for peace education projects might be the rules laid down in educational systems concerning evaluation of the students, through which students are sorted into categories according to their achievement in school subjects focusing on what is known and not on what is not known.

Through this discussion on contextual conditions, it should be clear that a peace education project might or might not be in harmony with the formal school system. It is possible that so much disharmony exists that the structure itself must be changed before peace education can be introduced.

The question then arises whether the structure can be changed through changes in form and content, or whether this is impossible until changes are brought about in the contextual conditions in the society which has produced the educational structure.

5. CONTENT, FORM AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS

The analysis on how structure can be changed through form and content or whether form and content change due to structure transformation lead the discussion to which is the appropriate scenario for this process. That is to say a scenario to develop peace education in desirable conditions. Conditions that would privilege dialogical form, would allow discussion on contents by all the actors engaged in the learning process and would build critical thinking.

This scenario is without doubt that of a democracy - at the micro and macro level - where guarantees for freedom



of thought and action help start transformative processes at the individual and collective level. A question immediately arises as to the essence of democracy in relation to peace education.⁸

Focusing on a macro framework, a democratic scenario for transformation is a scenario where a 'civilizing process' can be developed in contrast to an 'uncivilized process', characterized by non-legitimization of the political authority combined with the impact of globalization and the emergence of powerful transnational economic forces.⁹ This kind of scenario leads to an explosive combination provoking structural and cultural violence with consequences on direct violence. The contextual conditions do not help peace learning, and content and form reflect this non-peaceful environment, with the ensuing interactions probably creating a new spiral of violence.¹⁰

The key to building democratic peace - that is to say desirable contextual conditions for peace learning - is to break the vicious cycle of violence and to reconstruct relations based on dialogue, agreed rules and mutual understanding. Without democratization of structures, ending violence is very difficult and peace education faces the major challenge of building isolated changes in content and form in contextual conditions that do not help transformation.

Often, democratic contextual conditions are not present and change happens all the same. This has not happened in the formal teaching system that reproduces goals, subjectivities and policies of the macro political structure, but in the diverse non-formal and informal learning settings. With peace education goals in mind, non formal and informal agendas address almost every issue where there is tension between what is explicit and what is hidden, enriching the possibilities to develop concepts and practical skills in real-life situations. The search for harmonic interaction within formal, non-formal and informal education is one of the most difficult challenges and a very serious consideration in peace education.

Non-formal and informal learning challenge structures by offering opportunities to break the 'rules' of non-democratic formal systems and allow peace and non-violent learning as ways of resistance through creativity and imagination. These confront non-democratic realities by developing new strategies rooted in social and collective experiences and actions. Non-formal and informal education bring alternative spaces for peace learning when a specific context created by the structures does not allow

the development of free and critical thinking through constructive autonomous procedures.

The process of learning and exchanging knowledge as a social practice is one of the most important means non-formal and informal education offer to the development of peace education. Its potential has been challenged many times in non-democratic contexts, resulting in transformative social learning. Social practices and knowledge created in this process work as a tool for resistance in those contextual conditions where education is manipulated, denying critical thinking, emancipation and freedom.

Peace education considered as a strategy and a tool for resistance in non-formal contexts is based on the assumption that (a) education is a social production and not merely knowledge transmission; (b) education for freedom is a precondition for democratic life - meaning life with autonomy, sovereignty and real day-to-day decision making power; (c) education implies refusal of authoritarianism, manipulation, hierarchies and exacerbation of ideological control of specific individuals and groups over others.¹¹

Resistance is the path and the way to achieve transformation in violent contexts where conditions do not allow change or actions. The Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, described the concept of resistance as a "state of consciousness"¹² that strengthens the work and actions in difficult contextual conditions where violence prevails. "Resistance is a state of consciousness that leads to active participation" within close or far realities, creating new social conditions through actions.¹³

When contextual conditions block positive changes in society, the motto of collective and individual resistance operates to feed actions and as a strategic tool for transformation. Based on complex, and often violent, present situations, dreams and visions of diverse futures help to lead specific transformative actions towards reality and pave the way to liberation. Resistance is also a collective strategy for making sure one is seen and heard when the context has no interest in, or does not allow, certain people, groups or problems to be discussed at a social or political level.

Latin-American contextual conditions during the wave of dictatorships between 1960 and 1985 are a model of how non-formal education takes on peace learning when the formal system turns its back on it. During this period there was no rule of law and civil, political and social freedoms did not exist. Peoples from almost all countries on the continent - Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador - lived with the fear of being kidnapped, murdered or tortured because of their beliefs,

8 Gadotti (2004), "Paulo Freire. Pedagogy and Democratization process in Brazil. Some views of his theory, method and praxis to introduce a debate".

9 Kaldor and Luckham (2001), "Global Transformation and New Conflicts".

10 See Kaldor and Luckham, ob. cit.

11 Cabezudo (2013), ob.cit.

12 Perez Esquivel (2004). *La gota de agua: relatos de experiencias de lucha y resistencia*.

13 See content on micro and macro levels in this chapter.



hopes or dreams for justice and social change. In Central America and Colombia, the period was characterized by a full-scale war within national parties. The whole region was the opposite of the desirable scenario where contextual conditions can produce transformation and change for peace and democracy. The formal system functioned according to the macro political structure. Schools, universities, colleges and teachers were turned into machines reproducing the dominant ideology.

But change happens. People understood those contextual conditions as a challenge and not as a defeat. People reacted against 'domestication' of their lives by 'others' in a certain space and time - the place and the time where they live. They reacted to contextual conditions where the future was being manipulated in a predetermined way. The future was something inexorable - something that would necessarily occur in a manner decided by these others. By refusing the domestication of time and space the importance of the role of subjectivity in history was recognized. Therefore, challenges for change broke fixed a-priori concepts of possible 'defeats' and visions of hope and non-violent contexts prevailed.

Inexorable futures handled by obscure forces were transformed into desirable futures where social struggles¹⁴ happened. On this assumption, non-formal and informal education settings were where non-violent and peace actions at the micro level worked as alternatives. These alternatives were constructed in 'non-domesticated' places and times confronting difficult macro contextual conditions in the hope of autonomy, freedom and democracy in a true struggle for peace against structural and cultural violence.¹⁵ Along with this process, social movements, civil organizations and individuals developed non-violent forms of resistance in communication and action.

Resistance happens through thought and action and is a peace learning process, also interesting to study and identify in contextual conditions other than the Latin American cases mentioned here.

After the dictatorships, the process of democratization worked along an educational path in which the transformation of the political context changed the way of thinking, acting and reconstructing the reality. This process is a good example of how context interacted with content and form in terms of transformation. Internal and external conditions arose from the democratization process eradicating existing structures and 'liberating' people at the individual and collective level. Therefore, these 'new' internal and external contextual conditions strengthen processes of political, economic and social change.

If we think of education as a continuum of reflection and action producing daily-life praxis and creation of knowledge, the achieved goals are as important as the process itself. The transformative condition in the substance of peace education has moved from a potential to a real-world setting, changing ways of thinking and acting and creating new ones.

CONCLUSION

Peace education should help to build visions of peaceful futures in a world where diversity and plurality can be celebrated without fear and threat. These visions need to be sufficiently realistic for them to be found, and as the distance along the path is unknown, it needs certain milestones along the way to verify the right direction. But, as we have pointed out, no diagnosis, vision or road map is sufficient if this reflection is not combined with education founded on a conception of knowledge that we have summed up as the concept of praxis. Without this combination of reflection and action, peace education may well end up in verbalism or activism.

Here we have also tried to demonstrate that an alternative, peaceful future is defined not only as the absence of open hostilities or negative peace but as the presence of peacemaking processes and contextual conditions likely to ensure a durable, just and positive peace. It implies a state of wellbeing, a dynamic social process in which justice, equity and respect for basic human rights are maximized and violence, both physical and structural is minimized.

Peace education alone will not achieve the changes necessary for peace: it prepares learners to achieve change. It aims to develop awareness of social and political responsibilities, guiding and challenging people to build their own learning. It encourages them to explore possibilities for contributing to resolving problems and achieving better conditions of life for themselves and others.

This approach to peace education emphasizes a critical dimension, questioning existing structures, power, norms and educational values. While we are aware of the limitations of peace education we have seen that it provides hope by demonstrating that people are capable of acquiring the required skills and illuminating creative learning moments.

We support the principle that peace education can definitively help provide the requisite inspiration and direction to move beyond a culture of violence to envisioning and working toward a culture of peace. ■

¹⁴ Cabezudo (2013), ob. cit. Based in conversations with Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and Hebe de Bonafini, President of Madres de Plaza de Mayo.

¹⁵ Galtung (1999), *Peace by Peaceful Means*, on structural and cultural violence.



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