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Looking for Peace in the Australian National Curricula

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Looking for Peace in the Australian National Curricula

Abstract

Education can be a source of cultural attitudes—a transmission belt—a cultural institution that can dispense communal values and cultural ideals in both teaching and curriculum. This empirical mixed-methods study utilizes the methodologies of directive (qualitative) and summative (quantitative) content analysis to analyse the national curricular statements of Australia (*Early Learning, Foundation to 10 and, Senior 11-12*) to determine if three elements common in peace education programs appear: recognition of violence (direct, structural or cultural); addressing conflict nonviolently; and, creating the conditions of positive peace. It finds that despite a copious amount of violent content, overall, the curricula does not recognize such deeds as deliberate acts of harm, that the curricula encompasses limited content regarding transforming conflict nonviolently and that aspects that contribute to positive peace are infrequent and largely lack the intention of creating equanimous space.

Keywords: *peace education; content analysis; curriculum; PECA project; Australia*

Author Bio(s)

Katerina Standish is currently a Lecturer at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago. She is interested in cultural violence, nonviolence, gender, education, peace curriculum and critical pedagogy. Her previous publications include content related to cultural violence and gender, cultural nonviolence and peace, conflict and education. Dr Standish is the creator and primary researcher for the Peace Education Curriculum Analysis (PECA) Project.

Looking for Peace in the Australian National Curricula

Katerina Standish

Introduction

In this mixed-methods study the national curricula of Australia (at early childhood, primary, and secondary levels) is assessed for three components common in peace education programs: recognition of violence (direct, structural, or cultural); addressing conflict nonviolently; and creating the conditions of positive peace (Galtung, 1996).

Socialization is an interpersonal and intercommunal process of learning. During socialization, humans turn cultural information into knowledge about how the world works and how one should perceive of the self, others and the ecosystem. But, are some people socialized for violence while others are socialized for peace? Scholars have made connections between the role of education in forming social values and the ability for cultural preferences to be mass mobilized by national educational systems (Noddings, 2012; Harris & Morrison, 2013; Harber & Sakade, 2009; Lange, 2012; Davies, 2004/2005). Indeed there is evidence that education systems are capable of positive and negative outcomes depending upon which information is shared, how information is shared, and what chance students have to participate in the co-creation of knowledge (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Freire, 2001).

In 2013 the Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon dedicated the International Day of Peace to peace education, intoning “education is vital for fostering global citizenship and building peaceful societies” (Ki-moon, 2013, para 2). Peace education is a form of organized learning (either formal or informal) that seeks to socialize learners towards the goals and outcomes of what Galtung (year) terms *positive peace*, the absence of harm (or the threat of harm) and the absence of inequality, discrimination, and prejudice (structural violence). Indeed, while many peace education programs are technique- or toolkit-based—imparting information that either aids in nonviolent resolution of conflict, or tools to manage conflict—other forms of peace education are concerned with social perception, interpersonal discord, or personal violence management (Salomon & Nevo, 1999; Salomon & Cairns, 2010; Iram, 2006).

In 1999 UNICEF defined peace education as the “process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will...prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace” (Fountain, 1999, p. 1). Although this statement considers the *prevention of violence*, the *peaceful resolution of conflict* and the *creation of conditions* conducive to peace, this study will seek to uncover the recognition of violence (which precedes prevention), nonviolent conflict transformation skills (nonviolent skills refer to specific techniques, whereas *peaceful* can have many meanings), and nine elements that support positive peace.

Building Peace with Education

Education is not merely a one-sided endeavour that ‘banks’ material into humans—depositing supposedly neutral information. It also inhabits a social space that exhibits ways of thinking, being, and living (Freire, 2001). Education that only replicates the values and beliefs of dominant social hegemony conveys *cultural capital* to pupils that can result in the duplication of existing cultural inequalities. This directly leads to structural forms of marginalization, discrimination, and uneven life chances (Galtung, 1996; Bourdieu, 1977).

Education can be a source of cultural attitudes—a transmission belt—a cultural institution that dispenses communal values and cultural ideals in both teaching (pedagogy) and curriculum (Schönpflug, 2001). The values and cultural ideals transmitted in education can be seen in the difference between *normal*, or *everyday* (non-peace), education, and peace education. Normal teaching tends to replicate the existing requirements of society, conditioning students to be the next generation of citizens, employees, and social participants. Peace education is hopeful, transformative, and oriented to the preservation of human rights, environmental consciousness, social justice, and positive peace—harmonious relations (Harber & Sakade, 2009).

Peace education, simply put, is a transformational pedagogy—concerned with affecting positive change regarding social mores and attitudes. Since schools are cultural institutions, they are often places where cultural disparities lead to social disadvantages. Peace education acknowledges that schools can be locations of structural violence and uses imagination, commitment, and the resolution to change patterns of cultural dominance (Carter & Vandeyar, 2009).

Curriculum and Culture

Modern education is composed of three interconnected components:

1. Explicit curriculum—expectations of what a student is expected to learn;
2. Implicit curriculum—expectations of how students act in school and;
3. Null (hidden) curriculum—“the options students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know” (Eisner, 1985, p. 107).

Null, or hidden curricula, can include content that is discarded (outmoded information), dismissed as problematic (contested histories), or disregarded as socially or culturally undesirable.

There is something of a paradox involved in writing about a curriculum that does not exist. Yet, if we are concerned with the consequences of school programs, and the role of curriculum in shaping those consequences, then it seems to me that we are well advised to consider not only the explicit and implicit curricula of schools but also what schools *do not* teach...what schools do not teach may be as important as what they do teach...because ignorance is not simply a neutral void; it has important effects on the kinds of options one is able to consider. (Eisner, 1985, p. 97)

In addition to types of curriculum, schooling can espouse various ideological positions. Eisler (2000) recognizes two cultural ideologies: partner and dominator style. Briefly, partnership cultures are egalitarian, creative, caring, and empowering, whereas dominator cultures are violent, unequal, segregatory—based on fear, force, obedience, and punishment. Education that uses a partnership model embraces learning platforms that engage with multiple learning capabilities, teaches through caring, and uses conflict to find creative and respectful ways of addressing discord. Education that uses a dominator model reproduces social and cultural inequalities, is hierarchal, competitive, disciplinary, and contributes to marginalization, dehumanization, and violence.

Curricular statements refer to what a student is expected to learn—what is considered important—and they contain both explicit and null (hidden) forms of curriculum. Though the overall schooling environment may include a variety of subjects, textbooks, learning tools, and teacher pedagogies, this study limits its scope to investigating extant statements of curricular intentions—textual statements regarding curricula that refer to intended outcomes, learner experiences, and

understandings about the goals and objectives of learning. This study seeks to both find what is present in national curricular statements, and what is missing.

Peace Curriculum

The Hague Appeal for Peace states:

A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems; have the skills to resolve conflict constructively; know and live by international standards of human rights, gender and racial equality; appreciate cultural diversity; and respect the integrity of the Earth. Such learning cannot be achieved without intentional, sustained and systematic education for peace. (Hague Appeal, 1999, para 3)

There is no single peace curriculum; peace learnings can encompass a wide array of subject matter (delivered in a myriad different ways to a variety of audiences) (Boulding, 2000). However, all peace curricula that aim to contribute to a culture of peace follows Eisler's (2000) partnership culture model and is both critical of, and destabilizing of, the dominatory culture model. Peace curriculum needs to teach by, about, and for peace (Boulding, 2000); the methods of teaching need to model peace practice, and should include content about peace and nonviolence—not merely war and violence. Peace curriculum needs to recognize violence in order to prevent it; it needs to discard violent methods to resolve conflict; and it should contribute to a positive peaceful society by supporting equality in our diversity and responsibility in our endeavors. The children of tomorrow (Eisler, 2000) cannot possibly grow a culture of peace if peace (the subject, the practice and the objective) remains in the hidden curricula.

The PECA Project

This investigation is a component of a systematic, global peace education curricular analysis (PECA) project that uses content analysis to examine the context and substance of national curricular statements at early childhood, primary, and secondary levels (Standish & Kertyzia, 2015). As the PECA project is a long-term study of national curricula for peace education qualities, each time that a curricular board produces a new national curriculum, analysis will ensue that measures future curricula against an existing baseline created in this primary tier of analysis. The PECA Project seeks to be a global, multilingual, perpetual study of peace education

elements in national curricula; as such, it represents the first study of its kind that will create and support international academic partnerships in the investigation of curricular statements for peace education qualities. The PECA Project (pecaproject.org) seeks to not only build global academic relationships but to bolster them.

Methodology

Content analysis is a scientific technique used in textual inquiry and is ideal for discerning the use of narratives—recognizable stories within communicated expressions (Johnston, 2005). For the purposes of this analysis, it is important to recognize that when utilizing textual documents (in this case curricular statements), the manuscripts under review represent the result of a process of manifestation (undertaken by committees and stakeholders involved in the creation of a particular curriculum), so curricula become receptacles of the standards or principles agreed upon when selecting criteria—what is both included and excluded from the final form. It is important to note that while the role of a curricular statement is to guide educative agents, the *subject* of any given curriculum is the learner. Further, the *outcome* of curricular statements is the society at large. Curiously, in this productive endeavour both the *subject* and the *outcome* of curriculum are largely absent during its creation.

A valuable discussion exists concerning what comprises curriculum and although the concept of curricula is considered by some to include both the pedagogical (teaching) techniques of teachers and/or the materials used in organized learning (textbooks, etc.) this study confines itself to governmental curricular statements concerning intended consequences, learner capabilities, and understandings about the aims and intentions of learning (Spencer 2006).

The role of a researcher in content analysis is to place the product of a communication under scrutiny such that the content and/or omissions within a particular product permits the scholar to ascertain whether specific values (in this case the three elements of peace education) are either present or absent. Simply put, if the three elements of peace education cannot be found, it may be assumed that they are not valued. Or, in the reverse: when the presence of any or all of these three elements of peace education is located within curricular statements, they appear valued and revealed to be meaningful constructs to the creators of the curriculum.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, three elements (Figure 1) of peace education are examined: recognizing violence, nonviolent conflict transformation, and positive peace.

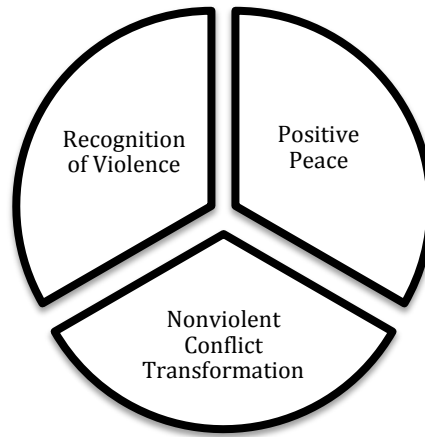


Figure 1 Three Elements of Peace Education

Element One: Recognizing Violence

To be considered *recognition of violence*, a passage needs to semantically indicate that something is an undesirable type of violence. Violence is specified in this study to be *deliberate human acts that cause harm*. Violence is distinct from danger or hazards (which can be ecological or environmental), as violence is deliberate and avoidable harm done by humans to other humans, or to the more-than-human world. This element uses Galtung's (1990) conceptualization of violence and includes cultural violence (violence that emerges from a worldview), structural violence (violence that is an invisible social process), and direct violence (an action or threat of an action that causes deliberate harm).

Element Two: Nonviolent Conflict Transformation

Nonviolent conflict transformation involves techniques that permit individuals to address conflict *without using violence*. Peace education considers that conflict transformation tools or techniques should strictly be nonviolent (Harris, 2004). This means, for example, that a conflict resolved using weapons is not an instance of nonviolent transformation, as violence was used to attain the aftereffects. There are many examples of nonviolent approaches, but all involve using behavioural (actions), affective (emotional), and cognitive (mental) techniques that do not cause injury or result in harm. Some examples (there are many others) of nonviolent conflict

transformation techniques include: group problem solving, collaboration, negotiation, mediation, diplomacy, nonviolent resistance, dialogue processes, and compassionate listening. In this study, a technique utilized in transforming conflict nonviolently is coded as an example of nonviolent conflict transformation—even if the technique is not explicitly being used to transform conflict.

Element Three: Positive Peace

Positive peace (Galtung, 1996) is peace that is more than a cessation of direct violence (negative peace), but the presence of structural nonviolence (Standish, 2014). Positive peace encompasses nine fundamental factors of positive perception, beliefs, and behaviours (Galtung, 1996; Boulding, 2000; Synott, 2005; Noddings, 2012; Harris & Morrison 2013), including:

1. Peace Zone (safe spaces where violence is absent)
2. Peace Bond (positive relationships characterized by kindness and empathy)
3. Social Justice (presence of fairness or equality)
4. Eco Mind (harmonious living between humanity and nature)
5. Link Mind (perception of interconnectivity and/or interdependency)
6. Gender Mind (awareness of gender as an important facet of understanding)
7. Resilience (ability to absorb calamity: personal, social, or environmental)
8. Wellbeing (health, wellness, and taking responsibility for self or others)
9. Prevention (knowing ways to stop violence before it starts)

Data Collection

This analysis involves a comprehensive and detailed examination of over 1400 pages of curricular documents including a section from the Australian Curriculum Foundation to year 10 entitled *General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum*. The curricula under review in this study were obtained from the Australian Government Department of Education and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). In this study early childhood education curriculum (Belonging, Being and Becoming) was accessed online from http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf whereas the Foundation to year 10 and senior secondary curriculum (year 11 and 12) was accessed online from <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>.

Commonwealth of Australia

The continent known as Australia is located in the Southwest Pacific Ocean—west of New Zealand and south of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. The nation of Australia was originally inhabited by hundreds of indigenous tribes and subsequent to European contact by the Dutch and British; the territory became the independent Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 (Macintyre, 2009). Australia is now composed of six former colonies (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, West Australia, and Tasmania) and two territories—the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Australian Curricula

The Australian National Curriculum is divided into three documents that are analyzed in this paper: The 2009 *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (hereafter referred to as AUS ECE), the 2013 *Australian Curriculum Foundation to 10* (hereafter referred to as AUS F-10), and the 2013 *Australian Senior Curriculum 11-12* (hereafter referred to as AUS 11-12).

Findings

The next section will show empirical evidence from each curriculum (AUS ECE, AUS F-10, and AUS 11-12) regarding three elements common in peace education. Element one contains three aspects: recognition of cultural violence, recognition of structural violence, and recognition of direct violence. Element two will showcase text that communicates tools or techniques utilized in the nonviolent transformation of conflict, and element three will demonstrate the semantic findings relative to nine aspects of positive peace. Each section will include exemplary quotations from the curricula under review to demonstrate various themes, as well as a summative graphic showing the presence of peace education elements in each curriculum. In this analysis, a single reference is composed of a segment of text (title, subtitle, bullet item, or complete sentence), italics are used to indicate textual passages taken directly from the curriculum under review, and the page number of an exemplary quotation is shown in brackets.

AUS ECE

Element One: Recognizing Violence

AUS ECE contains no references that recognize violence in cultural, structural or direct forms. AUS ECE does refer to *safe environments* (30), but as violence (or threats of violence) in this study is defined as deliberate, avoidable, and harmful human interactions, there are no references in AUS ECE that can be considered instances where violence is recognized.

Element Two: Nonviolent Conflict Transformation

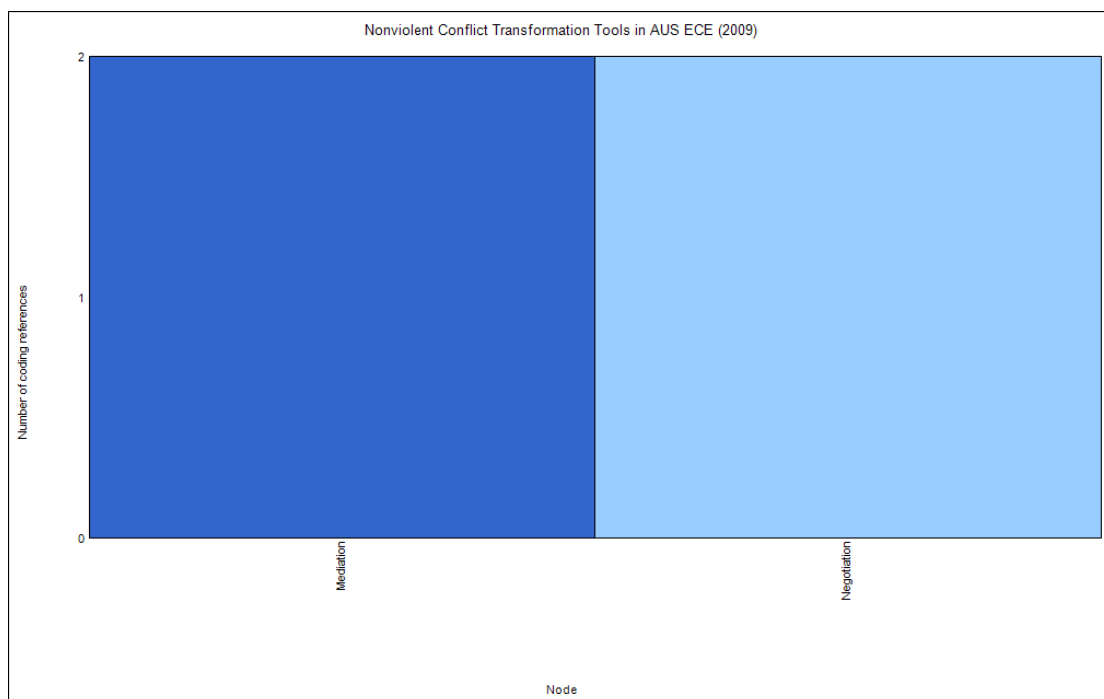


Figure 2 Nonviolent Conflict Transformation Tools in AUS ECE (2009)

Although an AUS ECE passage on intentional teaching refers to nonviolent methods by suggesting that teachers *use strategies such as modelling and demonstrating, open questioning, speculating, explaining, engaging in shared thinking, and problem solving to extend children's thinking and learning* (24), only two nonviolent conflict transformation tools were used in AUS ECE: mediation and negotiation. Although neither term is defined in the AUS ECE glossary, the following statement (used twice) refers to mediation by intoning that one should *mediate and assist children to negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others* (22, 31).

While there are three occurrences of the term *negotiate* in AUS ECE only two references can be contemplated as possible examples of nonviolent conflict transformation: the immediately previous quotation from page 22 and 31 and the passage that urges children to *negotiate play spaces to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others* (32). As only limited semantic meaning can be derived from the following recommendation to teachers that *they respond to children's expertise, cultural traditions and ways of knowing...and the strategies used by children with additional needs to negotiate their everyday lives* (14), it was not coded as a tool for transforming violence. As negotiation is a technique that involves discussion by at least two individuals, assisting children to *negotiate their everyday lives* (14), does not suggest the relational content required for a negotiation and can be considered instead to be analogous to expressions such as *manage* or *navigate*.

Element Three: Positive Peace

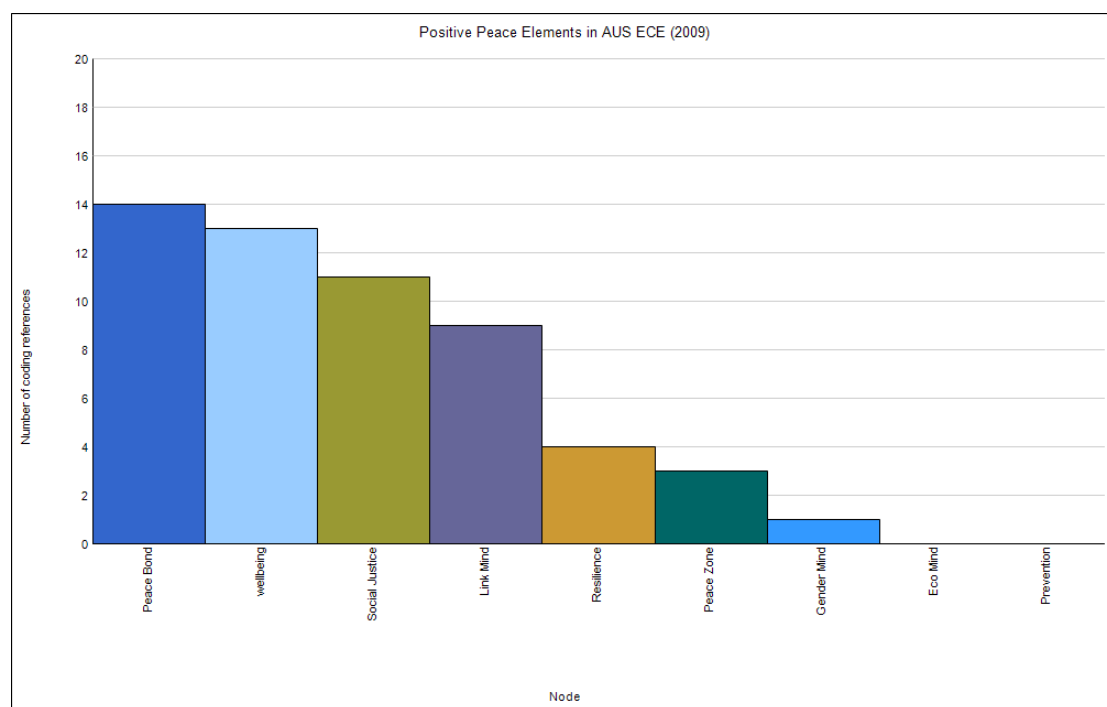


Figure 3 Positive Peace Elements in AUS ECE (2009)

AUS ECE presented narrative content concerning several elements of building positive peace. The most numerous references related to *Peace Bond* and *Wellbeing*. Passages spoke of interacting *positively with others* (12), acting *with compassion and kindness* (28), expressing *concern for others* (24, 27), and that educators should *model care, empathy and respect for children, staff and families* (24). Students are urged in

AUS ECE to *gradually learn to 'read' the behaviours of others* (26), to demonstrate increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others (22), and to *see patterns in their feelings, ideas, words and actions and those of others* (43).

Wellbeing is defined in AUS ECE as *good physical health, feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and successful social functioning* (30). AUS ECE promotes children acquiring competence in *care and safety for themselves and others* (32), and encourages teachers who *give priority to nurturing relationships* (12). Wellbeing is achieved in AUS ECE by learning about *healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, personal hygiene, physical fitness, emotions and social relationships* (30), and by making certain that children are *happy, healthy, safe and connected to others* (32).

Issues of fairness or equality (Social Justice) composed the third largest content area in AUS ECE and were characterized by statements urging students to *develop the ability to recognise unfairness and bias, and the capacity to act with compassion and kindness* (28), to find new ways of *working fairly and justly* (11), and that early childhood educators should *draw children's attention to issues of fairness* (28). Children are asked to consider advantage and disadvantage (13), to *support the inclusion of all children in play* (13), to *become aware of fairness* (26), and to *develop the ability to recognise unfairness* (28).

Narrative content relating to interconnectivity and/or interdependence (Link Mind) were illustrated by passages that encourage students to *develop an increased understanding of the interdependence between land, people, plants, and animals* (29), to look for *examples of interdependence in the environment and discuss the ways the life and health of living things are interconnected* (29), and to *acknowledges children's interdependence with others* (7). In addition, AUS ECE advocated children to develop their emerging *inter-dependence* (21), and to urge educators to *help children to learn about their responsibilities to others, to appreciate their connectedness and interdependence as learners, and to value collaboration and teamwork* (12).

Evidence of Resilience (measures that assist an individual to absorb sudden disaster) in AUS ECE related to helping children *cope with the unexpected* (22), and *manage change* (31). Passages encouraged educators to provide *children with the capacity to cope with day-to day stress and challenges [and the] readiness to persevere when faced with unfamiliar and challenging learning situations* (30).

As Peace Zones are considered safe spaces where violence is absent, AUS ECE considered that learning centres should be *safe environments* (30), where children are encouraged to *negotiate play spaces to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others* (32).

The solitary reference to gender (Gender Mind) in AUS ECE is located in a passage defining inclusion: *inclusion involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances, and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes* (24). The positive peace elements of preventing violence (Prevention) and harmony between humanity and nature (Eco Mind) were not depicted in the AUS ECE text.

AUS F-10

Element One: Recognizing Violence

One-hundred and thirty-seven descriptions of violent acts or mindsets exist in AUS F-10 including: *colonisation* (157), *prejudice* (701), *use of the atomic bomb* (317), *racism and sexism* (657), *battle* (317), *bullying* (682), *persecution of Jewish People* (303), *being hung, drawn, and quartered* (299), *slavery* (289), *landscape that is threatened by human activities* (199), *forcible removal of children from their families* (281), *cultural inequalities* (689), *attacks on monasteries* (298), *dispossession* (200), *the Holocaust* (317), *stereotyping* (99), *massacres* (310), *propaganda* (311), *cyber bullying* (682), *war* (61), and *forced movement* (169). Such passages contribute to the communication of violent acts without specifically defining them as forms of violence (deliberate and avoidable acts of human harm). However, seven passages can be found in AUS F-10 that do conceive of violence as a harmful human interaction.

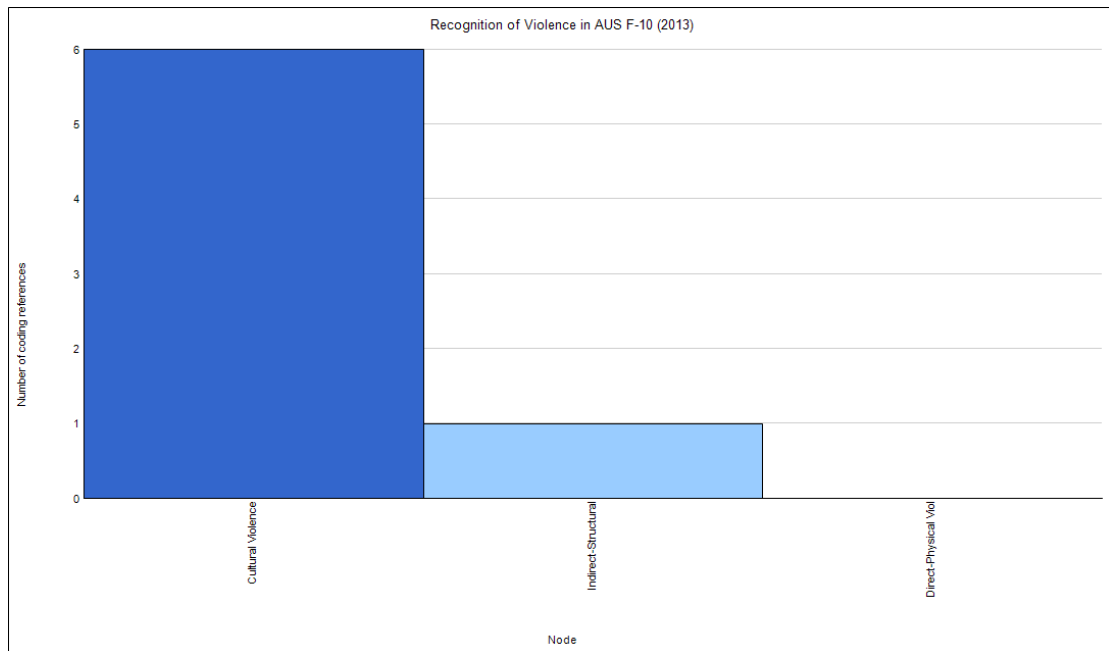


Figure 4 Recognition of Violence in AUS F-10 (2013)

The AUS F-10 narrative content related to cultural violence refers to challenging *stereotypes* (159 & 558), racism and sexism (657), and *prejudice* (558, 693, & 701) and conveys to students that, *through opportunities to study the lives, cultures, values, and beliefs of people in different places, students learn to appreciate and interpret different perspectives and to challenge stereotypical or prejudiced representations of social and cultural groups where they exist* (156).

The lone passage related to structural violence refers to discrimination and encourages students to *build their capacity to critique societal constructs and forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism* (657).

Element Two: Nonviolent Conflict Transformation

AUS F-10 contains four tools that can be used for transforming conflict nonviolently: collaboration, dialogue, mediation and negotiation.

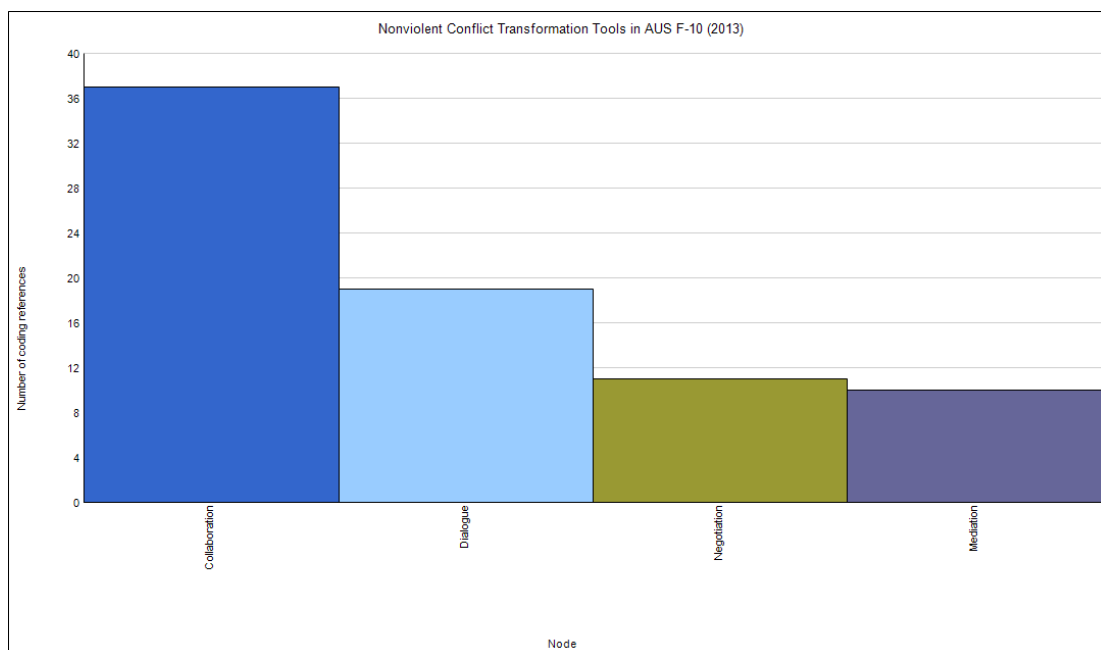


Figure 5 Nonviolent Conflict Transformation Tools in AUS F-10 (2013)

The act of collaborating is well represented in AUS F-10 and there are abundant passages that encourage the behavior of participating in learning with others. This curriculum defines collaboration thusly: *work with others to perform a specific task* (547) and speaks of *positively contributing to groups* (657), *working for a common goal* (671) and *working to identify cooperative behaviors* (670). The act of collaboration is considered a technique for building individual social capacity where *by working collaboratively in the classroom and in the field, students develop their interpersonal and social skills, and learn to appreciate the different insights and perspectives of other group members* (156).

The practice of dialogue is present in AUS F-10 and students are invited to *identify positive ways* (669) to initiate discussions with others and use *effective strategies for dialogue and discussion* (76). AUS F-10 encouraged students to *share experiences* (502), to *exchange views with other students* (666), and to *listen to others' ideas, and recognise that others may see things differently* (672).

There is minimal evidence of the practices of negotiation and mediation in AUS F-10, and although both techniques are referred to positively, neither are defined. Negotiation is intoned through passages that urge students to *negotiate positive outcomes to problems* (672), to *negotiate solutions* (643), and *negotiate and resolve conflict* (657). Examples of mediation include phrases such as *use mediation skills* (672), to *use mediation skills to support people holding different views* (672),

and to, *generate, apply and evaluate strategies such as active listening, mediation and negotiation to prevent and resolve interpersonal problems and conflicts* (672). AUS F-10 contains a section entitled 'General Capabilities' that includes several passages that urge students to *mediate cultural inequalities* (689), *mediate cultural difference* (693), and *recognise the challenges and benefits of living and working in a culturally diverse society, and the role that cultural mediation plays in learning to live together* (702). Despite the repeated references to mediation and culture, the curriculum leaves the practice of cultural mediation (702) undefined.

Element Three: Positive Peace

All but one aspect of positive peace was present in AUS F-10, with the most numerous passages related to interconnectivity and/or interdependency (Link Mind) in both the social and natural world. The curriculum mentions interconnections (146), interrelationships (151), and interdependence (252), and defines the concept of interconnection by emphasizing that *no object of geographical study can be viewed in isolation* (150), that *places and the people and organizations in them are interconnected with other places* (150), and that *holistic thinking is about seeing the interconnections between phenomena and processes within and between places* (150). AUS F-10 relays that as students *investigate the interconnection between people and places and the meaning and significance that places hold, they come to appreciate how various cultural identities, including their own, are shaped* (156). In addition, students are asked to consider how *interconnections between places, people and environments affect the lives of people* (198) and that *sustainable patterns of living rely on the interdependence of healthy social, economic, and ecological systems* (708).

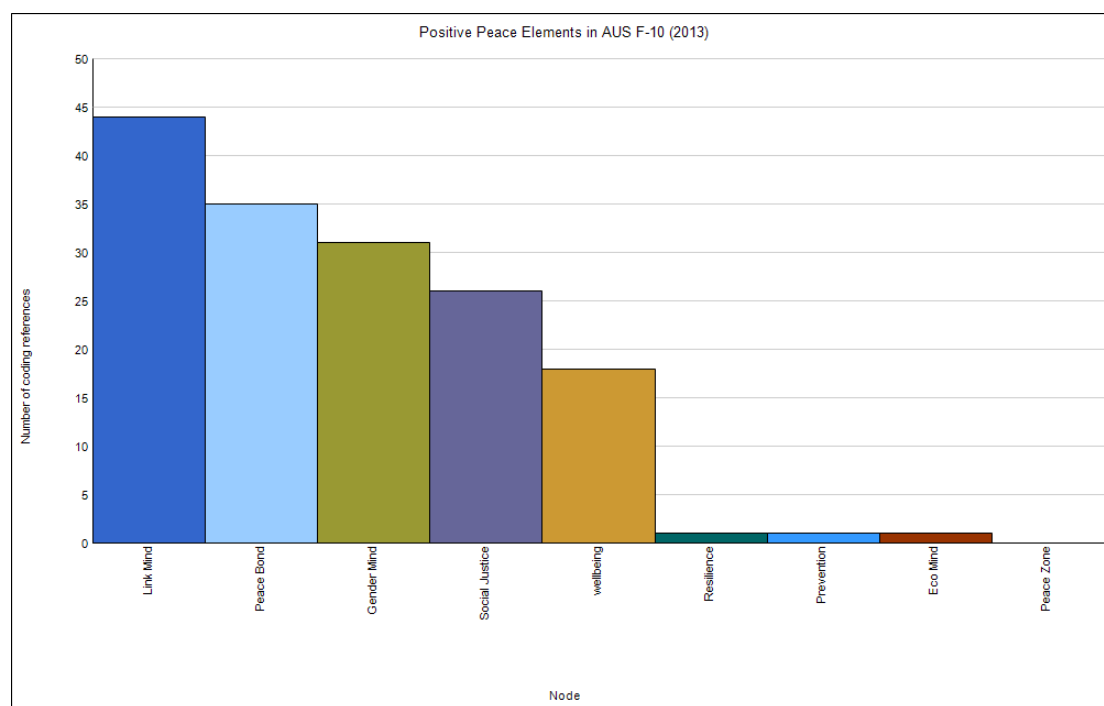


Figure 6 Positive Peace Elements in AUS F-10 (2013)

Peace Bonds are encouraged in AUS F-10 through students *developing empathy for, and understanding of, others* (155), by creating *connections* (156), and by *building positive relationships* (651). AUS F-10 seeks to *develop students’ abilities to empathise with others* (689), to *imagine and describe their own feelings if they were put in someone else’s place* (699). Empathy is defined in AUS F-10 as an *understanding of the past from the point of view of a particular individual or group, including an appreciation of the circumstances they faced, and the motivations, values, and attitudes behind their actions* (329).

Gender (Gender Mind) is referred to in AUS F-10 in both sociological and biological terms. Passages coded for Gender Mind in this curriculum include content that references the *responsibilities of women* (291), the *role of men* (297), and text *examining gender roles, concepts of family, or relationship to the land* (695). Despite referring to sex characteristics of male and female, biological terms that refer to reproduction were not coded as Gender Mind as they do not refer to social expectations and/or experiences of the sexes or gender as an important facet of identity.

Gender was relevant in Social Justice passages relating to the *status of women* (282), *gender equality* (322) and *women’s movements* (316). Social Justice is defined in AUS F-10 as: *the concept that all people have the right to fair treatment and equal*

access to the benefits of society (239). Other issues relating to fairness and equality refer to beginning to *better understand and appreciate different points of view* (239), to develop an awareness of *fairness* (502), *justice and fair play* (247), and to work to create a *socially just world* (708). Ethical theories in AUS F-10 introduce *concepts such as equality, respect and connectedness* (691), *truth and justice* (681), describe instances of *fair and unfair treatment* (681), and the importance of *giving everyone a fair go* (685). Passages in AUS F-10 show evidence for Social Justice by *exploring instances where equality, fairness, dignity and non-discrimination are required* (693).

Regarding Wellbeing, AUS F-10 asks students to explore programs designed to *reduce the gap between differences in wellbeing* (211), to *reduce regional inequalities in wellbeing* (214), to *improve the wellbeing of remote Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities* (214), and asks *how can we look after the places we live in* (160). In addition, AUS F-10 refers positively to *individuals who can manage their own wellbeing, relate well to others, [and] make informed decisions about their lives* (556).

The sole reference regarding Resilience in AUS F-10 urges students to manage risk and utters that ethical understanding *involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict, and uncertainty* (675). The solitary reference regarding Prevention in AUS F-10 intones that each environment has specific hazards *determined by both natural and human factors [that] can be reduced but not eliminated by prevention, mitigation and preparedness* (150). Although hazards are not included in the definition of violence in terms of ecological or environmental concerns, the previous passage suggests that human behavior can affect the impact of some dangers (that human action can prevent the severity of threats), so it has been coded as Prevention. Moreover, AUS F-10 contained brief statements urging students to manage *context, conflict, and uncertainty* (156) by *identifying* (150), and *reducing risks* (515).

No content in AUS F-10 related to the positive peace notion of safe space (Peace Zone). Despite 99 separate references in AUS F-10 that related to sustainability there was only a single reference relating to natural-human harmony (Eco Mind), *describing how harmonious relationships with the natural world were reflected in Indian belief systems* (290).

AUS 11-12

Element One: Recognizing Violence

Although several [129] examples of violence exist in AUS 11-12, such as *anti-Semitism* (252), *marginalization* (107), *infanticide* (162), *discrimination* (244), *repressive acts* (237), *efforts to exterminate minorities* (252), *child labour* (247), *sex discrimination* (243), *poverty* (150), *mass-killings* (255), *inequality* (224), *illegal organ and tissue trafficking* (465), *stolen generations* (243), *state-created famine* (253), *assassination* (172), *colonization* (244), *persecution* (156), *terrorism* (261), *war* (150) or *battle* (149)—AUS 11-12 contains no references that signify such acts are a form of violence (a deliberate, avoidable, and harmful human interaction).

There are three instances where acts of violence are indeed termed ‘violence’ in AUS 11-12, including a passage regarding *changing ideas about violence and imperialism* (154), *the role and impact of violence in Roman politics* (172), and *campaigns against violence* (243). However, each instance uses violence to describe other acts and none of these references characterizes violence as undesirable and/or avoidable.

Element Two: Nonviolent Conflict Transformation

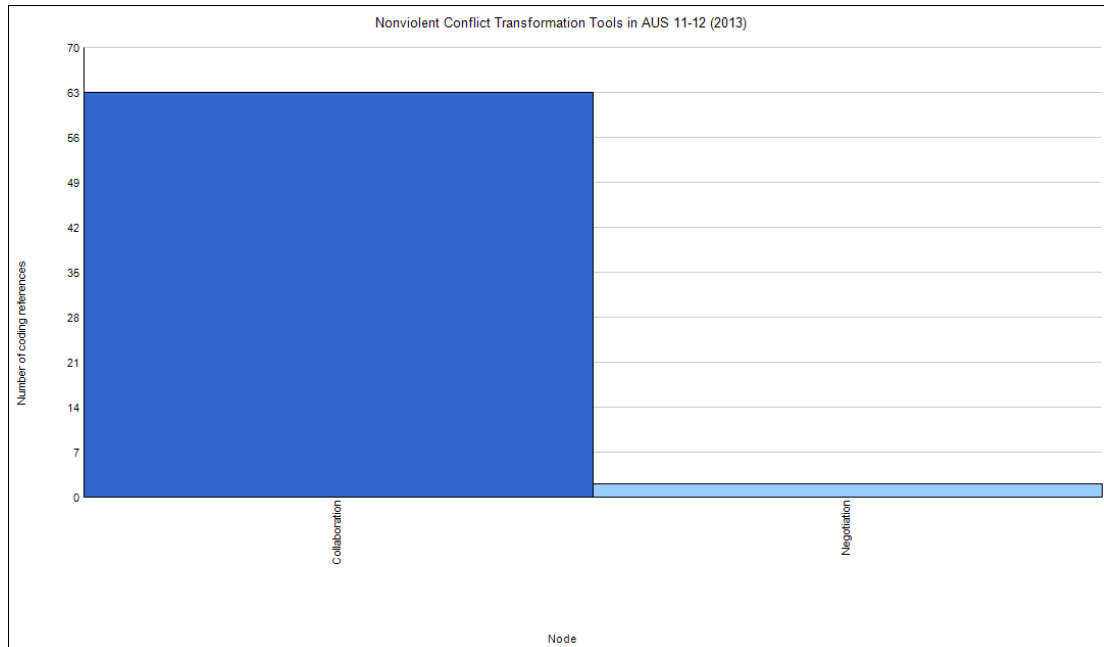


Figure 7 Nonviolent Conflict Transformation Tools in AUS 11-12 (2013)

Although there were limited tools or techniques included in AUS 11-12 that communicate nonviolent conflict transformation, collaboration across several subjects was considered a desirable personal and social capability where:

Students develop and practise skills of communication, teamwork, decision-making, initiative-taking, and self-discipline with increasing confidence and sophistication. In particular, students develop skills in both independent and collaborative investigation; they employ self-management skills to plan effectively, follow procedures efficiently and work safely; and they use collaboration skills to conduct investigations, share research and discuss ideas (453, 493, 539, & 581).

AUS 11-12 has one passage regarding negotiation provided in two separate sections claiming to provide *the opportunity for students to discuss and listen to differing perspectives, draw conclusions, negotiate, problem-solve, persuade, as well as engage audiences for a range of purposes and in different contexts (93& 106)*. In addition to the nonviolent conflict transformation tools of collaboration and negotiation the curriculum makes mention of several other forms of nonviolent defiance referring to *local and national boycotts, direct action, and political agitation (244)* and *the role of individuals and groups who supported the movement for indigenous recognition and rights, including the methods they used and the resistance they encountered (243)*. Although AUS 11-12 mentions these other methods of nonviolence, they are presented as subject matter, left undefined, and not presented as a capability for students to acquire.

Element Three: Positive Peace

Of the nine elements of positive peace considered in this study AUS 11-12 contains seven. Several passages relate to the concept of interconnectivity and/or interdependence (Link Mind) seen in statements that communicate the notion of interdependence (202), interrelationships (212), and interconnections (219). AUS 11-12 perceives of the biosphere as composed of *interrelated and interacting ecosystems (455)* and considered it important that students *understand and can express the interdependence of language, culture, identity and values (20)*. Most references to Link Mind in AUS 11-12 reiterate that there are *interconnections between people, places, and environments (194, 210, & 219)*.

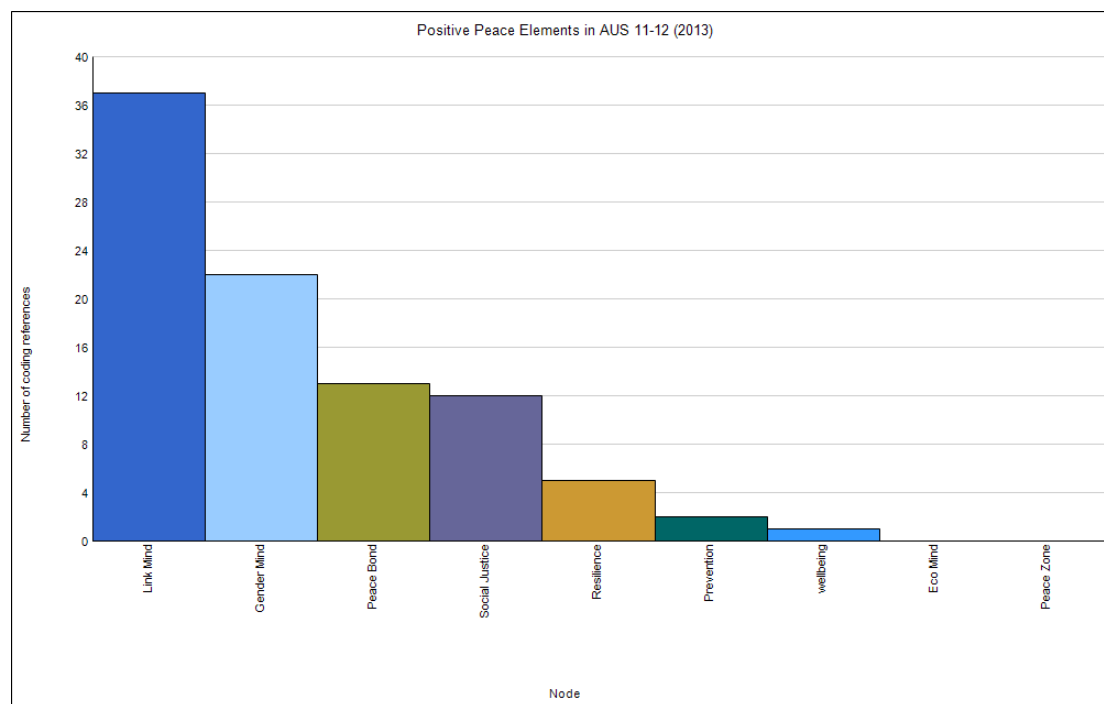


Figure 8 Positive Peace Elements in AUS 11-12 (2013)

Gender Mind is in evidence in AUS 11-12 in passages that investigate *the role and status of, and attitudes towards, women* (160), *variations in gender behaviours* (47), *examine cultural variations in symbolism, classification and gender behaviours* (47) and *explore different concepts of the family, family structures and family ties...including the role and status of women* (162). Women, as a social unit are investigated in AUS 11-12 along with many other human groups including: *slaves* (160), *children* (238), *men* (161), *commoners, subject peoples* (168), *activists* (243), *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (252), *Hindus, Muslims, [and] Backward Castes* (254). AUS 11-12 content regarding global and local social, cultural, and political movements to emancipate women is an optional curricular unit.

While Peace Bond statements in AUS 11-12 do not refer to relationship building, they do refer to developing the *capacity to empathise with and appreciate the perspectives of others* (19). AUS 11-12 defines Empathy as: *an understanding of the past from the point of view of a particular individual or group, including an appreciation of the circumstances they faced, and the motivations, values, and attitudes behind their actions* (191). Although the word *respect* does not connote the connectivity and warmth of empathy AUS 11-12 does urge students to cultivate a *sense of wonder and curiosity about life, and respect for all living things and the environment* (445).

Social Justice is defined in AUS 11-12 as *the concept that all people have the right to fair treatment and equal access to the benefits of society* (224). Statements referring to Social Justice include content referring to movements toward recognition and rights such as *the Civil rights movement in the U.S.A.* (244), *the role of individuals and groups who supported the movement for indigenous recognition* (243), and *continued efforts to achieve greater recognition, reconciliation, civil rights, and improvements in education and health in Australia* (243). Further curricular content related to fairness and equality are present in passages that communicate *significant developments in the modern period that have defined the modern world, and the ideas that underpinned them such as liberty, equality, and fraternity* (330), *the significant changes that occurred as a result of the Enlightenment, [such as the] belief in equal rights* (236), and *post-war changes in social conditions affecting women, [including] the achievements and legacies of women's movements* (243).

There are two passages relating to Prevention in AUS 11-12 and both echo the concept introduced in AUS F-10 referring to risk management: *preparedness, mitigation and/or prevention* (197). Risk Management in AUS 11-12 means: *Identifying risks and managing those risks to eliminate or minimize harm to people and the environment. Risk management, in this particular context, refers to prevention, mitigation, and preparedness. Prevention is about things we can do to prevent a hazard from happening* (202).

The sole reference referring to Wellbeing refers to bio cell technology and intones that *one potential application of this technology is the sequencing of all babies at birth, in order to enable doctors to identify genetic conditions and structure individualised healthcare, dietary, and exercise regimes that will lead to better health* (471).

AUS 11-12 contains no passages that relate to the positive peace elements of Eco Mind and Peace Zone.

Discussion

Element One: Recognizing Violence

Although an early learning framework is currently available in Australia the bulk of Australian students will study the Foundation-10 (AUS F-10) and Senior

(AUS 11-12) curricula. The language used in these two curricula to describe significantly violent historical events in AUS F-10 uses neutral language urging students to examine *the nature of contact between Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islanders, and others* (273), *the impact of the conquest* (302), *the effects of contact* (310), *forms of British influence in India* (309), and to explore *whether the interactions between Europeans and Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander peoples, had positive or negative effects* (273). In AUS 11-12 students are, for example, encouraged to explore the *nature of Nazi ideology* (252), *of Japanese imperial expansion* (253), *of the occupation and its effects on different groups* (254), *of Egyptian imperialism* (168), *the nature and impact of tyrants* (169), and *the nature of power and authority in the society and the ways in which it was demonstrated through political, military, religious, and economic features* (165). Both curricula progress through an historical and geographical exploration of violence that overall does not recognize the acts as deliberate acts of harm that are avoidable, undesirable, and use neutral language to describe historical experiences of violence.

Element Two: Nonviolent Conflict Transformation

The sole reference to nonviolence from all three levels of the Australian curricula is found in the senior curriculum (AUS 11-12) and contains this passage referring to the *development of post war peace movements...and the use of non-violence* (261). Generally speaking, the three levels of curricula in Australia have very limited content regarding transforming conflict nonviolently. As there are few passages that recognize violence in the Australian curricula it may be concluded that the curricula do not distinguish violent acts from nonviolent acts and do not, therefore, promote the acquisition of more nonviolent tools or techniques in the learning platform.

Element Three: Positive Peace

Although AUS F-10 contributed an understanding that students should challenge stereotyping there was no mention of school as a violence-free place (Peace Zone), and safety in AUS F-10 and AUS 11-12 refers to working safely in school experiments and the impact of the sense of safety (in relation to crime) on the liveability of places.

There are two emerging curiosities in regard to AUS ECE: regular references to the notion of respect (p. 11) and the concept of sustainability (p. 29). Although the

curriculum does refer to kindness and compassion, by far the greatest social quality cultivated in AUS ECE is that of respect: *respect for all children* (31), *respect the perspectives of others* (40), *respectful relationships* (11), and *respect for the natural environment* (14). As respect can be considered having regard for another it may be argued that respect is a form of empathy. In this study, empathy is not only awareness of others but a sharing of the feelings of others. From this understanding, respect cannot be considered a form of empathy. Also, although AUS ECE refers to the surrounding environment in custodial and caring terms as children are urged to *embed sustainability in daily routines and practices* (29), the concept of sustainability is left undefined and without greater elucidation cannot be considered an example of Eco Mind: harmonious living between humanity and nature.

Dissimilar to AUS ECE, the concept of sustainability is utilized repeatedly in AUS F-10 and AUS 11-12, and is defined specifically. In AUS F-10 sustainability is defined in two ways, as *the capacity of the environment to continue to support our lives and the lives of other living creatures into the future* (AUS F-10,150) and that *sustainability is about the ongoing capacity of the environment to sustain human life and wellbeing* (177). Similarly, in AUS 11-12 sustainability is expressed *as a way to evaluate decisions and proposals, as well as to measure the capacity of something to be maintained indefinitely into the future* (225). Despite numerous content that relate to sustainability, this study considered the goal of sustainability to be the maintenance of the environment for human benefit. The human-centric quality of livability—mentioned repeatedly—refers to the *space and the built environment* of humans (223) presumably warranting spaces good for humans as more livable. While environmental concern is a positive outlook, Eco Mind perceives of harmony between human and natural worlds as a desirable objective of positive peace. Passages simply referring to the environment in terms of human advantage (sustainability, livability) were not coded as Eco Mind.

Ultimately, the General Capabilities contention that *reflecting on and interrogating core ethical issues and concepts underlie all areas of the curriculum* [including] *justice, right and wrong, freedom, truth, identity, empathy, goodness, and abuse* (675) is unsubstantiated. It must be considered that although the Australian curricula makes mention of the notion of justice, empathy, relationship building and appreciating diversity, the curricula does not value these *core ethical issues* (675) enough to advocate them. Mentioning positive qualities such that they are considered

of equal value with negative qualities is not educating for peace. In order to assess the Australian National Curricula as educating for peace it must show how the aspects of positive peace are valued higher than those of negative peace and it must specifically recognize violence. If not, acts of harm and alternative ways of addressing harmful behavior (violence, discrimination, prejudice) may not be learned in school and cannot be prevented.

Recommendations

Element One Recommendations

AUS F-10 and AUS 11-12 contain copious references that describe violent acts but fail to categorize such human actions as avoidable, deliberate and undesirable.

- Define conflict, violence and nonviolence.
- Use language that describes violence and violent events as harmful.

Element Two Recommendations

In order to act nonviolently a choice must be made or advocated for to act toward conflict or violence *without* using violence.

- Communicate the understanding that there are violent and nonviolent ways to transform conflict.
- Develop learning platforms that model nonviolent conflict transformation.
- Define tools used in nonviolent conflict transformation, for example: negotiation, dialogue, mediation, and cultural mediation.

Element Three Recommendations

To foster peace the Australian National Curricula needs to contribute content that supports and embodies facets of positive peace.

- Affirm the importance of loving human relationships.
- Declare that schools spaces where violence is not tolerated.
- Proclaim equality for all members of the human family.
- Assert ecological (human-nature) harmony.

Conclusions

In *Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint For Partnership Education In The 21st Century*, Eisler (2000) states:

It is not enough for parents and teachers to preach to children about sound values such as kindness and sensitivity rather than cruelty and insensitivity, democracy and equality rather than tyranny and inequality, and environmental responsibility rather than irresponsibility. *What counts is what our homes and schools model, and what the school curriculum itself communicates about values* (italics in original). (pp. 29-30)

Using directive and summative content analysis this paper has empirically analyzed what the national curricula of Australia communicate. The results of this mixed methods analysis reveal that no text in AUS ECE or AUS 11-12 recognizes violence (either cultural, structural, or direct) and in AUS F-10 six instances of cultural violence are mentioned, one instance of structural violence, and zero examples of direct violence.

Tools and techniques of nonviolent conflict transformation are limited throughout the document but amount to two tools in AUS ECE (mediation, negotiation), two tools in AUS 11-12 (collaboration, negotiate) and four tools in AUS F-10 (collaboration, dialogue, mediation, and negotiation). With the exception of collaboration these nonviolent conflict transformation tools are left undefined. As these tools or techniques for transforming conflict nonviolently are mentioned and characterized as desirable, there is ample room in the Australian curricula to both add additional tools or techniques, and to fully and clearly define such tools for interested readers.

Aspects that contribute to positive peace are infrequent and largely lack the intention of creating equanimeous space. Overall, while replete with examples of violent acts, the Australian Curricula seem unconcerned with the acknowledgement and prevention of violence. In conclusion, while there are some learning opportunities in the Australian Curricula conducive to the creation of positive peace, there are ample opportunities to include content and learning orientations in the future that value the creation of violence-free zones, the prevention of violence (as opposed to environmental or ecological hazards), and the perception of the environment as more than a resource for humans.

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