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## An Alternative to Violence in Education

### Abstract

It is imperative that transformative educators understand how education can be manipulated to serve political and authoritarian agendas and to recognize its subtle manifestations in order to reshape education for the purposes of fostering peace, cooperation and acceptance. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) assert that in its extremes, education can have “two faces”. It can be used as a tool to stimulate political unrest, foster hatred, justify violence and promote inequities; or in the case of peace education, facilitate the reconstruction of fragile states. Yet peace education programs continue to be criticized for their lack of rigorous evaluations largely by those demanding adherence to a positivist paradigm. This paper puts forward the conditions and a methodology that will increase the likelihood of program success and suggests that peace educators need to measure the social action taken by program recipients as well as gains made in knowledge, skills and attitudes.

**Keywords:** *peace education, conflict, comparative education, curriculum, post-conflict studies, marginalization, non-violence*

### Author Bio(s)

Michelle Savard is a fourth-year doctoral student in the Department of Education at Concordia University. Her doctoral research examines to socio-political, historical, cultural and gendered structures that are inhibiting the successful social reintegration of formerly abducted young mothers in Northern Uganda. Her interests include peace and conflict studies, the radicalization of youth, peace education, critical pedagogy, and social justice. She was a co-editor for a *Special Issue of the Journal for Contemporary Issues in Education* and for three years she has assisted in the coordination of an international annual symposium on *Teaching about Extremism, Terror and Trauma* held at Concordia University in partnership with Nova Southeastern University.

## **An Alternative to Violence in Education**

**Michelle Savard**

### **The Dichotomous Context**

Where is hope? That was my question when initially delving into the literature on the impact of political conflict on educational systems. Governments and armed forces engaged in political conflict use education as a tool of war, target schools and children, use schools as military bases, and develop curricula that promote their violent agendas. In effect, children are used as political pawns. How barbaric. Those children who survive political violence have missed years of education; they have seen their schools closed, bombed, raided, and their classmates killed. They develop an identity based on what they have witnessed, which will likely serve to perpetuate the cycle of violence. It is a grim prognosis, but fortunately that is not the whole story.

There is evidence to suggest that children are more resilient than previously believed. A body of research has shown that children can demonstrate “competent functioning,” a type of self-determination and resilience after war (Barber, 2013). Pockets of countries have recognized this potential in children, as well as the important role education can play, post-war. Some societies have used the post-war period as an opportunity to recreate their educational system by promoting human rights, diversity and inclusion, and to move towards ending cycles of violence (Davies, 2004). Re-building an educational system based on the principles of peace education is critical, post-war, as it allows for an alternative way of being and taps into that positive competence of war-affected children.

A common perception about peace education is that it is about “being nice to each other,” when in fact, it is about creating an educational space where perceptions of the “other” are challenged. It is about “learning from people who disagree with you rather than those who agree” (Davies, 2005, p. 365). It is a form of education that fosters critical thinking, outrage for injustice, an impetus for taking action, and a commitment to equality and diversity (Salomon, 2005), and it includes fostering a dialogue about why: 1) we define ourselves through the negation of others; 2) certain societies privilege some and devalue others, and how that leads to violence and frustration; 3) racism, nationalism, capitalism, and sexism exist, and how they

foster marginalization; and 4) it is essential that we take responsibility for our beliefs and the subsequent choices we make (Shapiro, 2005).

Tracing the history of peace education, Maria Montessori (1870-1952) made a significant contribution to both theory and pedagogy, which included the need for students to be taught creative and critical thinking skills (Duckworth, 2008). Montessori pressed teachers to discourage students from being blindly obedient to authority and advocated for moral education that covered global citizenship, personal responsibility, and respect for diversity. She argued before the United Nations that “education was the only genuine means—of eliminating war once and for all” (p. 34).

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) “reconstructed what it means to be an educator... and taught us that education is always political, and teachers are unavoidably political operatives” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 70). Freire understood how the oppressor could impact an individual’s identity and that the educational system was structured to keep the marginalized, poor. He encouraged educators to foster critical consciousness as a means for students to understand the forces that contribute to their oppression and to take social action.

Multiple conceptualizations of “peace” exist, and therefore, the content and form of peace education is fluid; that is, the nature of the curriculum is dependent on the culture, values, politics, and the vision for a desirable society by those designing the curriculum. (This is discussed in greater detail in the second half of this paper.) For example, in Japan, peace education targets nuclear disarmament. In South America, the focus is on human rights, while in the United States, prejudice, violence, conflict resolution, and environmental issues are the focus (Bar-Tal, 2005). Peace education in regions of interethnic tensions focus on alleviating hostilities, whereas peace education in regions of relative tranquillity focus on programs *about* peace instead of *for* peace (Salomon, 2005) What is important is that the program is relevant for that society’s context and local meanings of peace, and that normative or Eurocentric frameworks are avoided (Bajaj & Hantzopoulos, 2016). The common denominator is a humanistic pedagogy that attempts to foster the action needed to further equality (Bar-Tal, 2005) and “to promote understanding, respect and tolerance towards yesterday’s enemies” (Salomon, 2005, p. 4).

Peace education programs have been criticized for not “walking the talk,” for having no impact, and for a lack of rigor in evaluations (Davies, 2005; Mendenhall & Chopra, 2016;

Shapiro, 2005). Education is plagued by a positivist paradigm which demands statistical evidence of its merit. How then is it possible to measure whether a peace education program contributed to stabilizing an intractable conflict or any other long-term outcome related to peace-building for that matter?

Drawing on the academic and the practitioner literature from the field of comparative education, I will examine first the impact of conflict and political violence on education and how education can be used to further violence, promote dominance and discrimination, or as a means to facilitate the reconstruction of fragile states. This purpose of the first part is to underline how education can be manipulated to serve political and authoritarian agendas. Given this knowledge, educators can begin a critical examination of their own programs. I then argue that peace education can interrupt messages that serve to alienate. However, in order for peace education to proliferate, it must satisfy donors and administrators who demand that monitoring and evaluation processes are in place and that programs demonstrate positive social change in communities.

### **The Impact of Conflict on Education**

Although there are fewer conflicts in the world since WWII, “over 90 percent of casualties are civilians (Machel, 2000; Summerfield, 1991; UNICEF, 2009), and children and youth increasingly bear the brunt of violence and atrocities” (Spitzer & Twikirize, 2012, p. 67-68). Children who are abducted into armed groups, exposed to violence—or perpetrate violence—experience an extreme impact on their identity, development, and cognitive capacity. Yet, a study completed on formerly abducted youth in Northern Uganda three years after the civil war (1986-2007) revealed that the largest impact was not psychological in nature, rather it was the delay of education, the impact on their options for a livelihood, and the consequential economic instability (Blattman & Annan, 2008).

The proportion of out-of-school children in conflict-affected countries has doubled in recent years (Davies, 2011; Save the Children, 2013). Globally, approximately 264 million children and youth are not in school. About half are children of primary and lower secondary school age, while the other half consists of youth who should be in upper secondary school (UNESCO, 2016). In conflict-affected areas, over fifty million children between the ages of six and fifteen are denied access to education (Save the Children, 2013).

During the war in Mozambique (1972-1992), half the schools were closed (UNDP, 2013). During the war in Sierra Leone, 70 percent of children did not have access to education,

and two-thirds of the educational infrastructure was destroyed. In Pakistan, the belief system of the Taliban resulted in the attack of schools attended by girls. Through continuous threats, 900 Pakistani government and private schools were closed, which prevented over 120,000 girls from accessing an education (Save the Children, 2013). If young people are excluded from education not only do they become easy prey for exploitation, or recruitment into armed groups, but as mentioned above, their future prospects for financial stability are greatly diminished (e.g., Denov, 2010; Yusuf, 2011).

The Democratic Republic of Congo used forty-two schools as military bases which displaced 1,100 students. A military presence inside a school invites conflict into that school and turns a school into a target (Save the Children, 2013). Attacks on schools are usually reported as collateral damage; these attacks, though, are part of a strategy to undermine the positive impact of education. This is particularly true in regions where education is seen as the key to success. When schools are used to perpetuate violence, then the promise and hope of a better future is lost.

### **Combatting the “Negative Face” of Education with Peace Education**

In their seminal work, Bush and Saltarelli (2000) suggest that education has two faces. While the positive face “deconstructs structures of violence and constructs structures of peace” (p vii.), the negative face uses education to incite violence and to promote a political ideology. In the next section, I will provide examples of schools that promote racism and xenophobia and foster essentialist identities of the enemy; precipitate school-based violence; restrict or prevent access to education; and use indoctrinating methodologies as means of teaching submission to authority. For each example, a counter example is provided that demonstrates how peace education can be used to prevent the perpetration of hate and violence.

### **Shaping Attitudes Toward the Enemy**

Ideological commitment is a means for children to make meaning or explain why hardships occur during political violence. It can manifest through the glorification of war, patriotic involvement (a demonstrated readiness to fight), and “othering” the enemy (Punamaki, 1996). In a study that examined the role of ideological commitment with 385 Israeli adolescents, Punamaki found that the more children had been exposed to political violence, the stronger their ideological commitment, and the more they expressed “...a justification of the national war and the readiness to participate in it and to interpret its consequences in favourable terms...” (p. 56).

The researcher also found that those who were high in ideological commitment had fewer symptoms associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. A similar study was conducted by Barber (2008) who surveyed 900 Palestinian youth involved in the second *Intifada*. He found the Palestinian youth “absent of negative functioning” (p. 287); moreover, the youth were able to extract specific historical events that gave meaning to the conflict. Conversely, a survey of 600 war-affected Bosnian youth revealed indicators of personal and social dysfunction. The main difference between the groups was the meaning and the role the youth attributed to the conflict and its impact on positive functioning. While the Palestinian youth had ideological commitment, and spoke with “passion,” “commitment,” and “pride” (p. 287), the Bosnian youth “were pre-occupied with trauma” and reported “everything was turned upside down” (pp. 288-289).

When education creates pejorative representations of the “other,” children and youth are heavily influenced by these narratives and use them to create meaning about the violence they are experiencing. For instance, pre-genocide, the Rwandan curriculum promoted a version of history based on the colonial past favouring Hutus, and it portrayed Tutsis as outsiders and as the conquerors. These narratives had a fundamental role in fuelling the 1994 genocide (McLean, 2011; Warshauer, Weinstein, & Murphy, 2014). Although the history curriculum was revised in 1999 so that the “truth” could be told, which for a short time included multiple perspectives, in 2008, “genocide ideology laws” were used to discourage teachers from discussing the genocide in the classroom. This type of “institutionalised racism” leads pupils from the “other” ethnic groups to feel excluded (Davies, 2005); it normalizes hatred and fosters the ideological commitment of the dominant group.

To post-structuralists, whatever is “normalized” is made to look natural and is not to be questioned. In an examination of Pakistan’s social studies and Urdu language textbooks for Classes 3, 4, and 5, the notion of nationalism, patriotism, and citizenship is achieved by normalizing militarism, authority, discipline, and a gendered social hierarchy. This is put forward by glorifying military battles between Pakistan and India. Over 50 percent of the content of these textbooks covers the victories of military heroes and nationalist leaders and excludes Nobel Laureates, women, artists, scientists, journalists, and all minorities (Naseem & Savard, 2017). Thus, the texts establish the role models as well as those to be obscured from the national consciousness. “The texts in question all dehumanise the Hindu/Indian. Consequently, by the time these pupil-citizens embark on their adult lives, they already possess deeply entrenched

images of India and Hindus as the ‘other’ (or the enemy)” (p. 31), which provides the meaning they need to make sense of the political violence.

As an alternative to presenting essentialist identities, such as those developed by the Rwandan and Pakistani governments, Quaynor (2012)—in a global review of research on citizenship education in post-conflict societies—found that democratic classrooms and participatory methods of teaching increased students’ acceptance of others, civic engagement, and knowledge about democracy. The researcher also found studies that indicated students want to discuss controversial issues, and many students, teachers, and community members have a “desire for active political participation and dialogue in the classroom” (p. 47).

### **Violent Educational Environments**

The Gulbenkian Foundation analyzed 40 years of research and found that “hitting children increases the chances of a child becoming physically aggressive, delinquent, or both” (Harber, 2002, p. 12). Nonetheless, there remain countless schools that use corporal punishment. For example, in Mozambique, teachers were found to frequently beat children, insult them, put them to work in their fields, and punish them by making them spend hours kneeling on brick floors (Harber, 2002)—though there is evidence that this practice is beginning to change. For example, the whipping/caning of girls has been reduced considerably from 52 percent in 2009 to 29 percent in 2013, (Parkes & Heslop, 2013, p. 25).

In a systematic review of the literature written after 2001 on school-related gender-based violence, with regard to eliminating corporal punishment, Leach, Dunne, and Salvi (2014) found that single interventions are ineffective in creating behavioural or policy change. They advocate a comprehensive approach that engages many categories of stakeholders. As an example, they suggest “gains at the micro (school) level can be consolidated through awareness-raising and capacity-building at the meso (district/community) level, and feed into policy and legal reform at the macro (national) level, and vice versa” (p. 34).

Based on research completed in schools in post-war Sierra Leone, Sharkey (2008) examined the experience of girls to determine if the normative gender-based violence found in the community would also be present at an all girls’ school. She found that although positive discourses existed within the school, related to “student empowerment, caring and concern” (p. 573), little attention was paid to their harrowing, abusive walk to and from school. The school was in fact inseparable from the violent surrounding environment. The principal of the school



advocated for the development of confidence and self-esteem for the girls, yet the environment was authoritarian. Corporal punishment (usually in the form of caning) was implemented for being late, for “thinking too highly of oneself,” and for not learning quickly enough (p. 574).

As Leach, Dunne, and Salvi (2014) suggest, for schools to address violence and truly empower students, a broader socio-ecological approach needs to be considered. This approach can be likened to a set of Russian dolls whereby the smallest doll at the centre represents the individual and is seen as inseparable from the broader layers. For the purpose of this paper, the broader layers are the social context. If the school was indeed concerned about building the self-esteem of these girls, they would have abolished corporal punishment (as it is demeaning), and investigated and addressed the nature of the abuse the girls experienced on their way to school. They no doubt would have discovered that oppressive patriarchal norms were at play. They could then have critical discussions with the girls about sexism and their rights as children and girls. Conversely, *Villa Libertad*, a public school offering both primary and secondary education, situated in one of the worst slums in Managua, found a means to address school violence.

Surrounding *Villa Libertad* were several gangs active in the drug trade. The community and the school saw these youth as dangerous criminals, which served to maintain the discourse on punitive crime control (Maclure & Sotelo, 2004b). The Ministry of Education said that the problem needed to be “fixed through the conventions of punishment, re-education, and rehabilitation” (p. 418). The school itself had a lot of violence and a high drop-out rate. In the early 1990s, clashes started between students or teachers and gang members. The principal stated, “There were nights that I would take youths who had been beaten up, shot, or stabbed to the Carlos Marx Hospital. School desertion was tremendous, especially for the night shift, because that is when they attacked the most” (p. 97). Police refused to attend calls from the school as it was too dangerous or demanded overtime pay. The Ministry of Education did nothing, so the principal formed the *Social Action Committee* with parents and community members to address the violence.

The committee decided to approach the gang members and invited them to the school for a discussion. They were able to come to an agreement. In exchange for a gang-free perimeter around the school, the school would organize recreational activities and dances. Within two years, the violence drastically reduced. The committee then began to do outreach and enticed many of these gang members to return to school. Within ten years, over 100 gang members

completed their high school, seventy-eight went on to further studies, and five received scholarships (Maclure & Sotelo, 2004a). In the previous section, I discussed how Bosnian youth felt marginalized, and how difficult it was for them to make sense of the war. In the case of *Villa Libertad*, the youth joined gangs in order to escape marginalization and to experience a sense of belongingness (Maclure & Sotelo, 2004b).

### **Restricting or Preventing Access**

Education can be used as a means to marginalize a group, when barriers are created to accessing education. This was evident in the *Villa Libertad* example, where youth associated with gangs were problematized and marginalized. Another example can be found in Uganda. Since colonization, northern Ugandans have been marginalized by the south (Finnström, 2008). The civil war (1986-2007) between the Lord's Resistance Army in the north and the government forces in the south resulted in the abduction of over 30,000 youths, which interrupted or ended their education (Annan, & Blattman, 2006; Schomerus & Allen, 2006). At the height of the war, most of the public schools had been closed, leaving 250,000 children in the north with no education at all (Eichstaedt, 2009).

Significant steps have been made by the current government to increase access to education; however, the majority of secondary school graduates in the country still come from the south and central regions of Uganda, while a minority of the youth in the north get access to vocational training (Mino, 2011). While 89 percent of the Baganda and 70 percent of the Ugandan population is literate, only 13 percent of the Karamojong (people of the northeast region) are literate (Mino, 2011).

Although school fees were abolished in 2001 in Uganda, transfer payments to schools are limited. Thus the expenses are passed onto the parents, which amounts to approximately 10 percent of the national average yearly income (Betancourt et al., 2008). Given the pronounced poverty in the north, and that many households are headed by children or single mothers, the majority cannot afford to pay these fees. In his book, the President describes "The Problem of Northern Uganda":

*Those people* [emphasis added] who were used to government hand-outs because they were members of the UPC or because they were in the army or the intelligence services, feel completely lost now that the approach is totally different. This is why you hear talk

of the North being marginalised...the whole question of the “northern problem” is overdramatized. (Museveni, 1997, pp. 212-213)

How can access to education be improved in Uganda if the President does not even acknowledge the dire situation that these youth face? It appears that education in northern Uganda is not neutral, but a stage for advancing the inequality between the north and the south.

When access to education is provided, particularly post-war, attending class everyday can restore a sense of “normalcy” to children’s lives. In a study with 219 youths in Sierra Leone, Betancourt et al. (2008) found that formerly abducted youth who had an opportunity to return to school and began setting goals (completing homework, attending class daily, sitting exams), developed a sense of purpose. High school served to help re-shape their identity from a soldier to a student. Both child soldiers and caregivers viewed education as a key determinant in their successful reintegration. One of the young males who were interviewed by the researchers said, “The community becomes happy when they see us engage in productive activities such as schooling, trading, mining, or farming; however, if you are stubborn and unsettled, they get worried” (p. 575). This is an example of the positive face of education as it demonstrates that widening access to educational opportunities can reduce tensions between former combatants and their communities.

### **Suppressing Indigenous Language and Knowledge Systems**

The mother tongue plays an important role in absorbing cultural concepts and forming the identity of youth. Since language and culture are inseparable, taking away language can eradicate a culture (Mignolo, 2003). The examples used to describe the impact of this negative face of education are from Canada and South Africa, while a case study from Papua New Guinea illustrates the long-term efforts needed—and the widespread benefits achieved by—protecting indigenous languages.

Residential schools in Canada started in 1876, and the last school closed in 1996. These schools were governed by the Canadian government in partnership with religious organizations, and they served to assimilate First Nation people. All school-aged children were taken away, “often in cattle trucks to residential schools where they were isolated from their families and forbidden to speak their language or practice any part of their culture” (Jack, 2000, p. 1). If the children spoke in their mother tongue, they received corporal punishment. When those children returned home, they were considered culturally illiterate and time and again felt alienated. Often

termed as “cultural genocide,” the experience of residential schools continues to have a profoundly negative social, psychological, cultural, and intergenerational impact on indigenous communities in Canada (Hanson, n.d.). In 2004, after finally acknowledging the importance of indigenous knowledge and language, the *Council of Ministers of Education* made Aboriginal education a priority and mandated inclusive pedagogies and content within all provinces within Canada. Also, in 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), responsible for redressing the legacy of residential schools, mandated provinces to develop and implement a new primary and secondary curriculum for students on Indigenous people and the legacy of residential schools. Yet almost fifteen years later, indigenous languages and content is largely confined to First Nation schools, and provincial curriculums continue to be largely Eurocentric in orientation (Battiste, 2016). Although revisions to the curricula was underway in Ontario in response to the TRC, the plan was dismissed without explanation by the newly elected provincial government (Christou, 2018).

Conversely, Papua New Guinea has well over 800 languages—the greatest number of languages of any country in the world. For about 20 years, educators, members of civil society, and members of the Ministry of Education discussed how to introduce indigenous languages within the school system. Up until the early 1990s, all grades were taught in English—the language of the colonizer. In 1990, they introduced indigenous languages into the school system. As of 2000, they offered kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 in 380 indigenous languages. There is anecdotal evidence that these children became literate more quickly, and parents who were reticent about the English system started sending their children to school (Klaus, 2003). This process was possible through widespread consultation, a gradual methodical approach, developing curricula to incorporate local realities, hiring community members as local teachers, and involving each community in implementing the reform (Klaus, 2003).

### **Submission to Authority**

Authoritarian teaching methods in the extreme are a form of Gounari's (2012) symbolic violence which involves planting slow seeds of fear. Children are taught to obey the authority through the fear of corporal punishment, insults, and alienation, which may “reinforce the sense of powerlessness that students already feel” (Sommers, 2002, p. 7). For Freire (2004) this is indicative of the “banking” concept where educators see knowledge as a gift only to be bestowed by the knowledgeable (the teacher), which quashes the process of critical inquiry.

A central principle of the Norwegian Refugee Council's human rights education program in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan was to ensure “correspondence between the content and how it was taught” (Sommers, 2002, p. 7). The program introduced participatory teaching methods to teachers as part of a new human rights program for students. Although the course was well-received by teachers and students, change was slow largely due to the challenge of altering the hierarchical nature of the teacher-student relationship. A teacher from Armenia reported, “The hardest part was to change my former way of thinking and my authoritarian style” (Sommers, 2002, p. 8). For teachers to make this shift and to use a more collaborative approach to teaching requires altering their worldview. However, the alternative is that teachers continue to take ownership of knowledge, which goes counter to enhancing the potential and criticality of their students (Freire, 2005).

### **Where Do We Go From Here?**

To summarize, I have discussed five dimensions of the two faces of education. The first described how education can be used to create an enemy and foster ideological commitment needed for political conflict. I then provided examples where democratic classrooms and participatory methods were used to help youth make meaning of the conflict and to provide alternative ways of viewing the “other.” The next theme described how violence can be perpetrated within educational environments through corporal punishment and by marginalizing youth. I used the example of the *Social Action Committee* who negotiated a violent-free zone around *Villa Libertad*, and how that resulted in a reduction of violence. The third example came from Uganda where the government uses education, post-war, to marginalize the north region of the country by indirectly limiting access for youth. The counter example came from Sierra Leone where education was used as an opportunity to help post-war youth reshape their identity. The fourth theme, suppressing indigenous languages, provided a description about residential schools in Canada and the profound impact the eradication of indigenous languages has had on their culture, while Papua New Guinea continues to incorporate hundreds of indigenous languages into their curricula. The last theme, education that requires submission to authority, could result in the creation of soldiers for the future, while human rights programs have instilled participatory processes, giving students a voice.

Creating counter narratives; providing multiple perspectives; engaging the community in educational outcomes; using participatory/democratic processes; broadening access to education;

and incorporating indigenous knowledge systems all represent an alternative to violence in education, which points to the critical need for peace education programs at this time. Although peace education does not directly address curricula that promote violent politicized agendas, attacks on schools, or using schools as military bases, it can foster acceptance of the “other,” and the criticality needed for social change, which could lead to the de-militarization of schools. In order for these programs to proliferate, criticisms of peace education need to be addressed namely by: garnering a better understanding of the conditions that make these programs successful; utilizing robust instructional design principles; and developing rigorous evaluation strategies.

The next section begins by addressing the challenge of evaluating peace education programs. I will then propose the use of the *Instructional Systems Design* model which lends itself to measuring outcomes, and I will argue that having specific conditions for success in place will increase the likelihood that peace education programs will have measurable outcomes, achieve their program aims, and have an impact on the broader community. As discussed, conditions for success include: using socio-ecological approach and situating the individual within a broader social context; engaging the community in program development; engaging administrators and teachers in the process and providing adequate teacher training; and developing curricula which serves to raise the critical consciousness of students. The section below provides a roadmap on how to create such a program and begins with suggestions on how to conceptualize evaluation as the foundation for a program.

### **Increasing the Likelihood of Program Success**

#### **The Challenge of Evaluation**

One of the main criticisms of peace education programs is that these programs are rarely evaluated (Davies, 2005; Mendenhall & Chopra, 2016; Shapiro, 2005), as it would entail an impractical, long-term commitment and assessment of values—or as Bar-Tal (2005) argued measuring, “a state of mind”:

It is difficult to evaluate the achievements of peace education, since its objectives pertain mainly to the internalization of values, attitudes, skills, and patterns of behaviors... The tests and exams normally used in schools... do not usually evaluate a state of mind, but the level of acquired knowledge. The evaluation of peace education requires special techniques adapted to measure a different kind of outcome. This implies a special call to

educators to come up with a creative and original solution since evaluation is an essential aspect of peace education implementation. (p. 32)

I would argue that a state of mind is not only difficult to assess, it is unlikely that this information would satisfy administrators or donors, nor would it keep programs funded. One of largest funders, the World Bank, mandates that, “the development community has to be concerned about results, ways to achieve them, and methodologies to measure them” (Feinstein & Picciotto, 2000, p. 11). Consequently, as a minimum, evaluations need to focus on examining whether the conditions for success are in place and then measure the actions taken by program recipients as well as gains made in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. I propose that these success indicators include: a broad, inclusive, participatory planning and implementation strategy; methodical use of Instructional Systems Design grounding the program in civic engagement/activism; effective teacher training; and acknowledgement of the central role/responsibility of teachers. The next part of this paper draws largely on the practitioner literature to garner insights on how to design, develop, and evaluate peace education programs.

### **Inclusive Planning and Implementation**

Education has to be part of a broader movement for change and cannot effect change in isolation (Weinstein, Freedman, & Hughson, 2007). Change must be systemic, as it must respect that to “pull a thread here, you’ll find it’s attached to the rest of the world” (Nadeem Aslam, *The Wasted Vigil*).

The practitioner literature offers some insights on “how-to” implement successful peace education that incorporates a broader socio-ecological approach. The International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) created a handbook to help government and humanitarian workers build “conflict sensitive education” that embeds education into a local context, ensures that there are no biases present towards any group, and includes developing students’ skills in critical thinking, human rights, citizenship education, non-violence, conflict prevention, and resolution (Sigsgaard, in INEE, 2013, p. 26). Conflict sensitive curricula reform requires a process that is gradual, participatory, and informed by a thorough analysis of the conflict. Their focus is on the planning stage and obtaining extensive community engagement. Conflict sensitive education is very much akin to the post-war education system envisioned by Davies (2005), described in the previous section.

The process begins with a conflict analysis which is a systematic study of the background, history, root causes, and dynamics of the conflict. Throughout the conflict analysis process, INEE underline the need for transparency, sharing information, for mobilizing local resources, ensuring local ownership, and collaborating with communities. During the design phase, they emphasize that curricula should be socially and linguistically relevant; learner-centred; promote participation; and include formal and informal education. Teachers should be recruited through a transparent process, trained, and supported. The planning and implementation of educational activities should be integrated with other national strategies, such as: emergency response, poverty reduction, and peacebuilding, in order to create an integrated, systems approach. Community participation and mobilization, which are essential to the process, includes the involvement of parents, teachers, government officials, as well as those representing different power structures, ethnic, religious, or social groups (INEE, 2013). The program should be consistently monitored and evaluated to ensure it is achieving the desired outcomes. “[This includes] variables that measure progress towards education objectives, interaction of activity with the conflict context, assumptions, as well as the degree to which the targeted beneficiaries were actually reached” (pp. 16-19).

Following this model, INEE created *The High School Peace Program* in Columbia between 2008 and 2012. In 2012, the Ministry of Education in Columbia adopted the curricula, learning materials, and teacher training practices, and has implemented this program in different regions of Columbia. The INEE recognizes that measurable outcomes are based on a needs analysis, well-crafted educational objectives, and learning material developed to achieve those objectives. In other words, INEE follows the Instructional Systems Design model.

### **Instructional Systems Design**

Now in its eighth edition, the Instructional Systems Design (ISD) model is based on B. F. Skinner’s behaviourist theory of learning and incorporates a methodical approach to analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of educational programs and materials (Dick, Carey, & Carey, 2014). Following this model, ensuring that educational outcomes are observable and measurable, facilitates the evaluation process. Based on the ISD model and best practices found in the literature, the instructional design approach includes the following.



## **Analysis.**

- **Embedding programs.** This is based on the recognition that programs need to be embedded within a much larger intervention which ultimately addresses the drivers of conflict. In other words, programs cannot operate in isolation and need to incorporate a much wider systems approach (e.g., Bajaj & Hantzopoulos, 2016; Mendenhall & Chopra, 2016). The analysis phase uncovers and aligns these other programs and systems.
- **Using a participatory approach.** The analysis phase needs to include consultation with all key stakeholders, institutions, community members, teachers, and students to create a shared vision and to chart a path forward collaboratively (Soetoro-Ng & Urosevich, 2016).
- **Analyzing the local context.** As mentioned, a complete analysis of the local context needs to be conducted with consideration for inclusion, diversity, culture, context, and the nature of the conflict as well as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that need to be nurtured (i.e., leadership, critical thinking, peacebuilding, systems thinking) (INEE, 2013).

## **Design.**

- **Focussing on action-oriented outcomes.** Overarching program goals need to go beyond measuring an increase in respect for human rights, equality, diversity, and so on. Rather, programs need to measure the action taken by program participants for social change, for instance: teaching others about human rights, engaging communities in discussions about inclusion, or working to change unjust policies. Program sustainability will be achieved through the program participants, not the program (Zakharia, 2016), and their civic actions will provide the concrete measures for program evaluations (Feinstein & Picciotto, 2000).
- **Creating educational objectives.** Learning objectives need to be observable and measurable. They also need to be student-centred; address socio-emotional health; nurture peacebuilding skills and pro-social attitudes; breakdown stereotypes about the “other” and foster acceptance of “yesterday’s enemies” (Salomon, 2005). Furthermore, as mentioned in the first part of the paper, Freire (2005) encouraged educators to facilitate student understanding of the forces that contribute to their

oppression. This in turn fosters critical consciousness which is necessary to take social action. For example, some educational objectives to raise critical consciousness could include: *At the end of this course, students will be able to:*

- Explain the nature and impact of stereotypes
- Provide examples of intolerance found in their school or community
- Plan and implement an activity to address intolerance in their school or community

### **Development.**

- The methodology needs to stimulate dialogue, engagement and critical thinking. Content needs to be aligned with learning goals which are relevant and of interest to students (Cruz, 2013).
- In the first part of the paper, I gave examples of how education can be used to foster ideological commitment by creating pejorative representations of the “other.” In the development stage of program design, particularly if using existing material, there is an opportunity to create inclusive education by:
  - Checking for alienating or biased language in lesson plans and textbooks.
  - Asking, how is power is distributed in these materials? Who will benefit most from this pedagogy? That is, is it solely for the mainstream learner?
  - Ensuring the material reflects the lived experiences of students, the culture, and avoids Eurocentric values.
  - Considering if any given group is being valorised (i.e., using national military male heroes as models) and ensuring fair and equal representation of women, minorities, indigenous people, people with disabilities, and so forth.

### **Implementation.**

- **Creating an educational climate that is aligned with the values the program is attempting to promote.** This means at the heart of the program, all educators and stakeholders involved sincerely believe in the unlimited potential of youth and in their students’ ability to take on social change. Educators hold the belief that knowledge is not a gift to be bestowed by a teacher, rather that knowledge is co-constructed. In practice, peace educators model and nurture mutual respect and understanding, openness to diverse ideas, and cooperation. Freire (2004) suggests adopting

“education as the practice of freedom,” which is grounded in dialogues about reality and power structures. The subsequent knowledge constitutes a co-construction between teachers, students, and parents. As Sharkey’s (2008) disturbing study in Sierra Leone revealed (described above): on the surface, the school promoted human rights and empowerment of their young female students, yet caned them for “thinking too highly of themselves.” It is imperative that peace educators internalize the values of peace education and walk the talk; and that programs are implemented with policies in place that prohibit corporal punishment, discrimination, bullying, and other acts of school-based violence.

### **Evaluation.**

***Conducting a Level 3 evaluation.*** Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) describe a four-level standard for educational program evaluation. Most programs are not evaluated beyond Level 1, which measures student reaction to training. Some programs attempt Level 2, which measures gains in knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA). A Level 3 evaluation, however, measures the transfer of KSA and subsequent action. In order to satisfy donors and increase the esteem of peace education programs, Level 3 program evaluations are needed that include specifically measuring the civic action taken by program recipients.

Guidance on conducting this type of evaluation for human rights education is available (see Equitas & UNCHR, 2011). As an example, an evaluation was conducted for the *Civitas Education Program*, which measured social action. This program is a highly interactive, student-centred, civic education program developed for youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is offered as an optional program for primary and secondary students. The purpose of the program is to foster the development of knowledge and participatory skills directly related to addressing public policy issues and to instill positive democratic attitudes and values. The program begins by students critically analyzing concepts such as authority, power, responsibility, and justice. Students consider how rules and laws are developed, the relationship between power and authority, and how conflict can arise between competing responsibilities (Soule, 2000). Students then move to *Project Citizen* where they are taught how to monitor and influence public policy. Students work together and develop consensus-building skills and political awareness by evaluating public policy.

Soule surveyed almost 2000 primary and secondary students who represented over ten different ethnicities within this program. The researcher compared the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values between students who had and had not completed *Project Citizen*. The students of *Project Citizen* made the most gains in participatory skills, research skills, and in knowledge about local government. Participating students were more likely to have spoken with a government official about problems in their community; contributed to policy change; contacted a public official; met with members of interest groups; attended council meetings, called political talk shows, and taken part in protests. Participating students also demonstrated greater political acceptance towards other groups. Success of this program is attributable to multiple factors, one of which would be the student-centred approach and the highly engaging nature of the program.

### **Effective Teacher Training and Engagement**

In a literature review of citizenship education programs world-wide, Quaynor (2012) found that teacher training was often lacking, stating, “If stakeholders in post-conflict societies wish to promote democratic civic engagement, schools must be supported with teacher education programs and curricular materials that include democratic participation and the development of critical thinking” (p. 48). As INEE also suggested, teacher training and support from school system officials, principals, and teachers is essential for success. Training is necessary particularly in cases where teachers use authoritarian methods. Peace education requires learning a new curriculum, addressing contentious issues, and it also often requires teachers to re-think the way they teach.

Oraisón and Pérez (2009) conducted a two-year action research project in one Argentinean high school. The project was based on the premise of “thoughtful education” and assumed that “knowledge is constructed through the mutually helpful activities of teachers, students and parents” (p. 528). The researchers established a group of students, parents, school officials, and teachers to meet and attend workshops to foster civic engagement. At the beginning of the project, forty teachers participated and by the end, only five remained. The project fell apart as teachers saw their participation as unpaid work, and the issues they had with parents as collaborators were never resolved. Without the active engagement of well-trained teachers, education reform is simply not possible. To establish that engagement, the efforts and the challenges on the part of teachers need to be acknowledged and addressed in a meaningful way.

## Conclusion

This article began with a dark and rather hopeless perspective on education. Several examples were given to demonstrate how schools produce, as opposed to reduce, violence. Such examples include: promoting racism and fostering essentialist identities about the enemy; precipitating school-based violence; restricting or preventing access to education; and using indoctrinating methodologies that foster ideological commitment. This negative face of education needs to be viewed, to use Salomon's (2005) phrase, as “yesterday’s enemies” (p. 4). It is critical for educators to understand how the purpose of education can be manipulated to serve political and authoritarian agendas, which needs to lead to deep reflection on their own programs.

I then presented counter examples describing programs that used multiple perspectives, and democratic and participatory methods, to help youth make meaning of conflict and facilitate healing after political violence. I then provided examples of programs that helped post-war youth reshape their identity, and others that enhanced critical thinking and led to a commitment by students to work for social change. It is these large-scale and grassroots programs, grounded in respect, equity, and dignity for all, that offer hope for education.

To increase the likelihood of program success, and to satisfy the results-oriented needs of donors and administrators, I drew on the practitioner literature and described best practices such as: using the ISD model, and a methodical, consultative, socio-ecological approach to program planning; identifying and including multi-level stakeholders in program design and evaluation; paying close attention to systems, policies, and other sources of resistance; creating action-oriented outcomes, and delivering effective teacher training. The research review conducted by Quaynor (2012) found that students have a desire to undertake controversial topics. Moreover, students, teachers, and community members want to engage in dialogue and participate politically. Therefore, fostering an open climate on topics such as privilege and power, the nature of marginalization, and civic responsibility, raises critical consciousness which is necessary for students and communities to engage in social change.

Once peace education becomes more commonplace and is embedded within a larger socio-ecological framework, programs can consider conducting Level 3 evaluations focusing on specific actions taken by program participants and the larger social impact of those actions. Future research in this area could then include longitudinal studies that assess the outcomes of

well-designed peace education programs at the individual, community, and national levels using “creative and original solutions” as Bar-Tal (2005) suggested. Evaluations of these programs would then provide the evidence that peace education programs can indeed have a profound ripple effect within layers of a society.

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