

*Form and Content of Peace Education**

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INTRODUCTION

When the peace research movement started at the end of the 1950s, the universities did not, in general, welcome it. Rather, the idea was picked up by research institutes, often with no attachment to teaching institutions at all. Today, we still bear the consequences of this: a movement strong on research and action, but weak on education, generally failing to bring findings into schools and universities. In short, despite the many professions to the contrary, peace education has probably not developed as significantly during the last decades, particularly in contrast to the considerable advances made in the fields of peace research and peace action.

One reason for this is the stranglehold of established educational institutions in most countries that affects all levels of education. What is taught usually reflects the past, which is simply handed over to the present so as to secure continuity into the future in conformity with national ideology and upper class thinking. Sincere peace research or peace action will often contrast with this type of perspective. One might assume that this would encourage more peace research groups and action groups to add peace education programs to their activities, but in general this has not happened, largely due to lack of funds, under-staffing and over-concern with research and action. Peace education in schools and for the general public lags behind.

It is high time for this sad tradition to be broken and for peace education to be taken seriously. This would be one part of a larger transformation in which peace research, peace action, and peace education would become integrated into a natural whole. Keeping them apart is more a reflection of division of labor tendencies in surrounding societies than of any real necessity. In fact, the three fields could hardly be more intimately related.¹

For example, a very important thread in peace research is historical: understanding how slavery was abolished, how socialist policies improved the material conditions of the masses, how anti-colonization movements came into being and ultimately were somewhat successful, how emancipist and feminist movements improved the lot of women, and how mobilization against structural violence in general is possible.² These are all obvious themes for peace education, as well.

There could also be research programs within peace education - not only research on images of peace, but on how and why they change, with or without peace action. Particularly significant would be research on unconventional communication, on new forms of peace education that are not only communicative but also can be seen as pure education at a high level that can function as vehicles of social change.

* This chapter is a highly re-edited version of Galtung, J. (1968/1975). *Peace: Research, education, action. Essays in peace research, Volume 1* (pp. 317-333). Copenhagen, Denmark: Christian Ejlers. Originally delivered as lectures in 1971-72.

¹ For a theory of this approach see Galtung, J., (1977). Chemical structure and social structure: An essay on structuralism. In J. Galtung, M. Bunge, and M. Malitza (Eds.), *Mathematical approaches to international relations* (pp. 389-417). Bucharest, Romania: Romanian Academy of Social and Political Sciences.

² For a discussion of these societies, see Galtung, J. (1970). Pluralism and the future of human society. *Challenges for the future: Proceedings from the Second International Futures Research Conference, Norway*, 271-308.

There are other linkages, as well. Both peace research and peace education will ultimately lead to peace action, if they are of any value, and any peace action will have its research and educational spin-offs and benefits. Nonetheless, because of how we divide labor, outside institutions should play a stronger role in shaping the need for peace education, and ultimately also the content, particularly if peace researchers and activists are caught unaware.

All over the world today there is talk about peace research and education. Examples of this trend are that (1) Peace education chairs are appearing in several universities; (2) There is a *demand* for peace curricula at all levels of education; but those who demand have only vague notions of what they ask for, and that is not necessarily their fault (Galtung, 1972). It is our fault as peace educators and researchers that we have not been able to present a sufficiently rich *supply* of information and materials to participate actively in this process. But it is not too late; we are still only at the beginning. It is in order to stimulate active participation in this process that this article has been written.

THE FORM OF PEACE EDUCATION

It may seem strange to start with the *form* rather than with the *content*, but there is a simple reason: the form may open some new possibilities that should also be reflected in the content. I hope to show here that there is a wide range of opportunities available to all who want to enter the field of peace education in one way or another. Although there is always room for expansion, we do not actually make effective use of all of the available options: lectures at universities, pamphlets and books, seminars and conferences, newspaper articles and magazine essays are just some of the possible vehicles of communication.³

First, the *form* of peace education has to be compatible with the idea of peace, i.e. it has in itself to exclude not only direct violence, but also structural violence. This is important because schools and universities are still important means of education, and in the structure is the message.

Only rarely is education nowadays packaged with direct violence; the days of colonialism and corporal punishment are more or less gone. But structural violence remains and takes the usual forms: a highly vertical division of labor manifesting itself in one-way communication; the fragmentation of those on the receiving end preventing them from developing horizontal interaction that will allow them to organize and eventually turn the communication flow the other way; and the absence of true multilateralism in the education endeavor. All of this relates only to form, and if the content of education is also included, the structural violence of education becomes even more apparent.

Fundamentally, peace education should attempt to do away with this type of inherent violence. Any educational form should be evaluated in terms of its structure and the following questions should always be asked: Does it permit feedback? Does it bring people together in a joint endeavor rather than keeping them apart? Does it permit general participation, and is the total form of education capable of self-generated change? In short, is there dialogue that engages learners, rather than simply a message conveyed in educational settings.

A second basic problem has to do with the relationship between peace education and the traditional structure of formal schooling that is divided into primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. The question is usually asked: Why not incorporate peace education into the curricula at all three levels? Yet the answer may not be so obvious. It may in fact be true that at all three levels, the form of

³ An excellent proposal in this field has been made by Vithal Rajan. See Rajan, V. (1972). War and peace: Adult education in peace education. *Millennium Journal of International Studies*, 1(3), 50-66.

schooling itself would effectively counteract the very idea of peace education, and hence be harmful. It is naïve to believe that the content of a message will survive regardless of the form in which it is presented; in fact, the form may turn out to be even more important than the content.

Many students, at all educational levels, share the experience that their leisure reading provokes deeper insights and is more interesting and gratifying than their required reading for school. For many, the moment something is added to the curriculum, it accumulates dust and becomes gray and flat like everything else.

Additionally, in many countries the school system is centralized under one Ministry of Education with almost dictatorial powers over the curricula, controlled by bureaucrats or committees unable to reflect new ideas or quickly incorporate the demands of younger generations. The average age for the committee members is often very high, and the capacity for self-generated change after their own studies is so low that committees, at their best, reflect the dominant thinking of when they were young and, at worst, the dominant thinking of when their teachers or professors were young. In a quickly changing society—and particularly in a society where conceptions of development, conflict, and peace are changing so quickly--this is unacceptable. Something innovative may be squeezed through such machinery, but at the risk of becoming so flattened out that, even if the form of education was untouched, there would be little of the original content left.

Furthermore, even in countries that are highly decentralized, there will always be one state, province, district, city, or municipality more advanced than the others, more ready to experiment with new things than other, and more conservative locales. However, even if innovations are implemented only in one school or class, they can be valuable on a wider scale because of the demonstration effect.

Yet another difficulty is the strong tie between traditional schooling institutions and the social practice of sorting people into categories, and even classes, with the examination as the physical manifestation of this link. Using education as a sorting device is problematic for peace educators, since the idea of peace itself is antithetical to vertical social relations and hierarchies in any form. Hence, peace education should be seen as a way of achieving, individually and collectively, a higher level of consciousness, an awareness of social reality and solidarity in a joint learning community, not as a mechanism social classification. There should be no examinations of any kind in connection with peace education, no basis for an emerging class of peace specialists. Such devices may have a place in military academies and business schools, but not in institutions promoting peace insights.⁴

THE CONTENT OF PEACE EDUCATION

With an arsenal of possible forms at one's disposal, what can be communicated through peace education? In fact, it is only by keeping peace research, peace education, and peace action together that a strong formula for content can be developed.

One way of approaching content derives from the five phases of a peace research project. Of course, there are divided opinions on these phases. The five phases are as follows:

1. Analysis
2. Goal-formulation
3. Critique
4. Proposal-making
5. Action (Galtung, Empiricism, 1972)

⁴ The most promising approach here seems to be the International Games, in the tradition started by Harold Guetzkow.

Analysis of our present, real world describes basic facts to the extent that they are relevant to peace problems and at the same time pointing to major trends. The analysis would be *dynamic* in the sense of presenting a time perspective and *static* in the sense of giving an image of such major factors as the war system and the preparation for war. It also relates to problems of equity and freedom, which are both antonyms of dominance, but for different arenas and from different ideological traditions. Thus, this is the place to present and theoretically explain relevant facts, keeping in mind that there is always more than one theory that can be applied to the same set of data.

If this were all, peace studies would not differ from any other social science found today, and peace education would mirror education in, say, physics or geography. Hence, it is the subsequent four points that add the special flavor to both of these fields.

Goal formulation is an indispensable part of peace education. There has to be something concrete and explicit in the idea of peace: the world we would like to see. It is not enough to say that peace is the absence of something or the other; much more concrete images must be provided. Peace research, being born inside the traditional empiricist tradition, whether of the conservative or progressive varieties, has largely failed on this point. Rather, analysis has prevailed at the expense of goal-formulation, the latter being rejected rather summarily as "utopianism." And yet it is exactly these kinds of images that, throughout history, have driven people into great action, including the types of movements mentioned in the introduction.⁵

As a part of this aspect of peace research and peace education comes the general question of whether the goal is just any type of utopia, or is it a viable utopia? For instance, is it possible to have the absence of direct violence, equity in social interaction, and freedom for a considerable degree of human self-expression or self-realization? Or is it true, as some might assert, that of these three values, we can only have two and we shall have to choose which two, or even, as the pessimists might assert, one or even none at all? This type of discussion is rarely found in any educational curriculum at any level, probably causing a tremendous crippling of individual and collective human imagination in search for a better future combining that which cannot be combined.

Third, the critique. For any type of critique to be of interest, both data and values have to be present, which are made available in the first and second phases, respectively. The values become like a net thrown over our world, leading to very concrete conclusions in terms of highly value-oriented language, and where nobody can turn away from terms like "good" and "bad," or even language considerably more explicit than that.

This third phase goes beyond analysis to diagnosis, based on the more static aspects of empirical analysis, and prognosis based on the more dynamic aspects. An effort should be made to call the same dimensions by the same name, whether they refer to past, present, or future. After these phases, we will end up with critical images of these three different worlds, including dimensions that can be used to define both the preferred world and the real world.⁶ That makes it possible to accommodate the real world, using data; the preferred world, the *utopia*, using values; and possibly also even more highly criticized world, a *dystopia*. To understand better the struggle of

⁵ However, a basic finding of the book entitled *Images of the World in the Year 2000*, published in 1976, coordinated by the European Social Science Center in Vienna, is exactly the very low level of future-oriented thinking, especially in the field of political affairs, according to the results of 9,000 interviews in 10 countries, 8 of them in Europe, with 200 questions.

⁶ This is the basic idea of the social indicator movement: to present values as dimensions that also can be used for ordinary descriptive analysis.

moving from the real world towards utopia, we need to understand what prevents the real world from becoming worse and even sliding into dystopia.

Fourth, proposal-making deals with how to get from the real world to the preferred world. Finding a transition path is a question of proposals about *what* to do, *who* should do it, *when* and *where*, *how*, and *why* it should be done. Proposal-making should be seen as a basic part of any peace education program. Indeed, no part would be more ideal for general participation than this. Any successful peace education program would make the participants really feel the tension between the preferred and the real worlds, and the danger looming from the rejected world would make participants feel it so intensely that proposal making becomes a necessity.⁷

This then leads into the fifth phase: peace action. One cannot suddenly truncate a process because it can no longer be contained within articles and books, paper and pencil exercises, or even discussion, but it becomes driven by necessity into something much more concrete: action.

This does not necessarily imply that each and every peace education program should include an action component such as a demonstration, a peacekeeping activity, or a peace building component.⁸ We would, however, advocate discussions of concrete action, like a search for new forms of peace education or participation in a practice-oriented organization. In any other educational program, a non-verbal component is usually taken for granted: the laboratory exercises in chemistry, physics, and biology; the visit to civic and social institutions as a part of sociology, and so on. It can be so in peace education as well.⁹

There are problems connected with peace action, but with time, we are gaining much more experience with this aspect of education. Also, this is the point where peace education, peace action, and peace research really come together. For instance, students at a particular school might decide to recognize an emerging nation (such as East Timor or Montenegro) before their own government does. If thousands of schools did the same, according to clear peace criteria, this could even become an important form of non-governmental foreign policy, and hence, have a widespread democratizing effect.¹⁰

In concrete school situations, as already mentioned, there are many examples of structural violence, and hence, many areas in which problems of peace can be actualized, such as bullying. It is naive to think that peace education can be contained within the school systems of most countries without having some repercussions on the political system.¹¹ Traditional teaching of peace studies has been that of peaceful men--Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ, St. Francis of Assisi, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King Jr. being some of the prime examples--often with a heavy emphasis on their beliefs and attitudes rather than their action and behavior. This approach tends to focus on actors rather than structures, and is unacceptable from the point of view of peace studies, which would argue for including both.

⁷ The idea was very simple: to ask all participants as a conclusion of four weeks with discussions of peace theory and peace practice to come up with some image of their ideal world and the steps needed to attain it. Since most people are asked to present their image of the present world and how to criticize and analyze it, it is not strange that there is an untapped reservoir in the direction indicated.

⁸ For a concrete proposal combining the elements treated under this heading, see Galtung, J. (1970). Towards a World Peace Academy: A proposal. *Essays in Peace Research*, 1(14), 291.

⁹ See Galtung, J. (1972, September). *Empiricism, criticism, constructivism: Three approaches to scientific activity*. Paper presented at the Third World Future Research Conference, Bucharest, Romania.

¹⁰ See initiative headed by Professor Ivan Supek, which had a council of representatives from several universities.

¹¹ In Norway, for instance, an oath of loyalty to the King is required of university professors.

Any analysis of structures would lead to pupils and students to use this analytical machinery on the school situation as well. In so doing, they would start asking questions about the division of labor (why are we treated as raw material to be processed through the school machinery?), about participation (why do we not participate more in the decisions regarding how schools are run and curricula developed?), and so on. In other words, students may not only have demands concerning the content of school curricula (why do we not learn about our country's military-industrial complex? about the weapons export of our country? about the true relations between rich and poor countries?), but also about the school structure itself. A higher level of consciousness among students can have the same effect at the secondary level of education as it has already had at the tertiary level in terms of action including strikes and boycotts to back up demands.

CONCLUSION

Four related and central topics often arise in courses, seminars, and discussions on peace and a brief explanation is provided for each of these:

Development: gives the opportunity to present basic values, trends, the state of affairs in the world in general and turn the discussion of peace towards positive peace, equity, and harmony;¹²

Conflict: gives the opportunity to discuss what happens when goals, values, and interests are in conflict and discuss conflict creation, conflict dynamics, and conflict transformation and resolution;

Peace: gives the opportunity to discuss how development and a creative approach to conflict can come together in the fight against direct as well as structural violence; and

Future: gives the opportunity to project all of this onto the screen of the future, analyzing trends, and making proposals for action.

Everyone, however, must develop his/her own unique format and formula; there is no standard to be adhered to, as that would be contrary to the whole idea of autonomy in peace education.¹³

Finally, one note about the role of peace education: it should not overshadow peace action. One may object that peace education is needed for peace action, but the relation is not that simple. Peace education will work on the mind, although it may also imply some training. It is a fundamental bias of intellectuals, however, to believe that we human beings think first and then unleash our well-considered action. Very often we act first and if it works, we may develop a theory about it; if it does not work, some rationalization will take place.

That does not mean that a much higher level of peace consciousness may not change this state of affairs. The fact is that we do not even know what that would mean, what kind of world that would be. But it would certainly be a world where people would be less easily manipulated, and it is in pursuit of that kind of world that peace education would be a contribution.

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¹² It might perhaps be pointed out that conceptions of development, perhaps also conflict, seem to be changing much more quickly than conceptions of peace, which still to many seem to be related to balance of power and disarmament ideas, without going much deeper into the origins of peacelessness.

¹³ For an elaboration of this proposal, see Galtung, J. (1968). Training of peace specialists: A proposal. *International Peace Research Newsletter*, 2.

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