



Building a Culture of Peace in Everyday Life With Inter- and Transdisciplinary Perspectives

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In this article, peace is emphasized as a vital condition for all aspects of our existence, as individuals, as a society, and in our planet. The importance of inter- and transdisciplinarity in promoting a culture of peace and peace education is presented. Some examples of initiatives aimed at cultivating a culture of peace from diverse areas of knowledge are also provided. The paper presents a current and interconnected viewpoint on peace study, as well as some ideas for combining peace with education in the everyday routine of teaching and research work, regardless of discipline.

Keywords: culture of peace, peace, peace education, higher education, interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinary education

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INTRODUCTION

Peace is a global concept that is more relevant than ever in today's society. It is not simply a concern for countries and governments; it is also a concern for individuals in their relationships with others and with the planet. According to Capistrano (2020), peace is linked to the harmonious coexistence of individuals in their environment, which depends on principles such as social justice, sustainability, democracy and tolerance. A culture of peace can be fostered and promoted *via* education not only in large projects but also in everyday life. As stated by Cuéllar (2009), ordinary life is a key object of philosophical reflection from which “a humanism up to the mark of our time” can be derived, and everyday life is “where we begin to forge ourselves as people, where we can completely fulfill ourselves, in terms of work, production and rest, in married and family life, in the experience of love, freedom and recognition of the other.”

This article highlights the importance of promoting peace education and a culture of peace through inter- and transdisciplinarity. The paper also provides examples of initiatives aimed at fostering a culture of peace from diverse areas of knowledge. Additionally, various concepts for integrating peace with education in everyday life are given, regardless of discipline.

AN IMPERFECT AND EVERYDAY PEACE

When asked “what is peace?” we tend to define it in terms of the absence of war, warlike conflicts, or discord. Known as a negative conception of peace, this perspective has persisted since ancient times. Conversely, positive peace emphasizes the promotion of values, respect, justice, equity, communication, collaboration, empathy, collaboration, and non-violence. Positive peace desires peace and wellbeing and avoids conflict at all costs. However, this concept appears perfect, utopian, or unattainable. As a result, a new approach termed “imperfect peace” has been developed (Comins-Mingol, 2002). The reason it is imperfect is that we are perpetually reconstructing it; it is a dynamic,

continuous, and multifaceted concept. Imperfect peace admits that peace and conflicts coexist. Acosta Oidor et al. (2021) explain that peace and violence are both present in every aspect of daily life and not only in a single field such as politics. Furthermore, they quote that peace is a road and not a state. Imperfect peace alludes to the imperfect nature of every human. The concept of imperfect peace is a productive field on which we can produce from our regular work routine.

CULTURE OF PEACE

Culture of peace refers to “lifestyles, belief patterns, values, behaviors, (...) wellbeing, equality, equitable administration of resources, security for individuals and families, (...) non-violence, and harmony” (Cabello et al., 2016). Culture of peace is inclusive and complex because it incorporates knowledge, values, and communication. It also integrates physical, biological, and social aspects. Culture of peace is all-encompassing. Page (2008) defines peace education as “the process of acquiring values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, others, and the natural environment.” Peace education encompasses personal, social, and planetary dimensions. Thus, can we integrate peace into every facet of our lives? Is it possible to improve coexistence between people to foster a culture of peace? Personally, I believe we may achieve both goals through our daily life activities.

RATIONALE FOR INTER- AND TRANSDISCIPLINARITY

Should we continue to foster a culture of peace by focusing on a single discipline or collaborating on several? According to Edgar Morin’s complex thinking (Morin, 1994), our contemporary reality, phenomena, and problems are complex by nature. Complexity entails more than just difficulty; it also signifies that the problems are interconnected in a framework spanning several knowledge domains. Accordingly, to address problems and better comprehend our reality, they must be regarded as interconnected and inseparable in a feedback loop, that is, from a holistic and collaborative perspective of multiple disciplines. For this reason, reductionist perspectives are no longer enough for a pertinent understanding of our reality. In this context, two key elements emerge, namely the integration of diverse specialties and collaborative work, which facilitate inter and transdisciplinary work.

According to the literature, the concept of inter- and transdisciplinarity derives from an advanced and mature level of collaboration between multiple disciplines (Escobar, 2010). First, disciplinarity occurs from specialization in a single area of knowledge. Then, multidisciplinarity emerges when several fields study the same object without interacting with one another. Pluridisciplinarity is the result of uncoordinated collaboration between different areas of knowledge. Finally, inter- and transdisciplinarity are achieved when some methodologies are transferred between disciplines (the former) and when a

comprehensive and holistic perspective supports collaborations between disciplines, through them, and beyond them (the latter) (Klein, 2010). In transdisciplinarity, cognitive schemes intersect disciplines. As a result of this advanced level of collaboration, disciplines often face problems, difficulties, or challenges. Transdisciplinarity itself is not an exception; the different approaches to its conceptualization have led to contradictory points of view. For Rigolot (2020), these contradictions can be surpassed, by considering transdisciplinarity both as a discipline by itself and as a way of being. As a way of being, transdisciplinarity is fully incorporated into the human life and cannot be reduced to professional activities. This vision is compatible with that of Edgar Morin, who fully integrated transdisciplinary work with his personal life experiences (Rigolot, 2020).

INTER- AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY PEACE EDUCATION

Considering the aforementioned perspectives, effective peace education should be inter- and transdisciplinary. But how can we develop peace education through these approaches? First, embracing a complex conception of reality. In other words, reality should be viewed and understood from a broad perspective to avoid self-serving simplifications that prevent us from collaborating across disciplines. Second, our education should connect key issues such as life, humanity, culture, the planet, complexity, literature, art, philosophy, sustainability, and values regardless of field of knowledge. Third, teaching-learning processes should be adaptable, allowing teachers and students to see each subject as part of a complex whole interconnected through various mediations.

Accordingly, Lappin (2009) explains that it has been well acknowledged that peacebuilding is complex; however, there is a long-standing tendency to address peacebuilding from the point of view of a single discipline. Nicolescu (2012) adds that there is a direct and inexorable link between peace and transdisciplinarity and that any fragmented way of thinking is incompatible with peace research. Hence, education and the university must evolve to welcome a new humanism and adopt transdisciplinarity in their organization and conceptions. Along the same vein, Galtung (2010) asserts that true transdisciplinarity must be present in all aspects of the human condition, as multiple restricted or skewed perspectives will not provide a clear overview or an encompassing understanding of the whole.

Cabello et al. (2016) advocate that peace should be built on “education for justice and freedom; for reconciliation and brotherhood; for critical conscience and solidarity; for integral development and democracy; for the common good and participation; for human rights, and all the values that support and enable a culture of peace.” Acevedo Suárez and Báez Pimiento (2018) explain that educating for peace is inviting to act in the school microcosm and at the macro level of social structures. They conclude that peace education is a necessity that every educational institution must assume. París Albert (2019) exposes that peace education is also a primary tool to achieve

the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda; this tool consists of creativity to imagine careful alternatives to face daily situations, as well as situations of injustice, social inequalities, environmental crises, and sustainable development.

Now comes the question of how we can educate for peace in our daily teaching and research work. Some guidelines (Zurbano Díaz de Cerio, 1999) include cultivating values, learning to live with others, facilitating positive experiences, educating in conflict resolution, developing critical thinking, combating violence, educating in tolerance to diversity of dialogue, and rational argumentation. Furthermore, as educators, we must remember that our example is a powerful ally in all educational processes. We can deliver beautiful and eloquent speeches, but it is our everyday example that sows the most seeds of peace in others. We are also educating for peace *via* our own actions. We, as teachers, may encourage active listening, empathy, depersonalization of conflicts, and respect for limitations and opinions. In this approach, we may take small steps toward strengthening our coexistence and promoting a culture of peace.

Peace education must also be established at all levels, for all ages, and for all people. However, peace education has a significant impact on youth. Peace education is crucial during childhood and youth because the seeds we sow in them when they are young will flourish henceforth and bear fruit in the future for the benefit of our society. For this reason, youth represents both present and future peace and play a key role in peace education.

Currently, several discourses, initiatives, and indicators from different disciplines describe peace education. Many of them, though, remain limited to inert speeches. Peace, on the contrary, requires action (Jordan et al., 2021). We can make peace education a reality in our teaching activities through inter- and transdisciplinary approaches. Teachers can have influence in everyday life by building meaningful relationships between education and research, as well as by consistently implementing curricular and extracurricular activities that foster a culture of peace through formal and non-formal training.

EXAMPLES OF PEACE-BUILDING INITIATIVES FROM INSTITUTIONS, RESEARCH, TEACHING AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Initiatives aimed at fostering a culture of peace are commonly promoted by institutions, researchers or teachers. For example, the study by Jordan et al. (2021) highlights an institutional peacebuilding initiative at the University of New Mexico School of Engineering and Health Sciences Center, where summit of the World Engineering Education Forum and Global Engineering Deans Council were hosted. The theme was “Peace Engineering” with the focal point of science and engineering-based solutions to the world’s transcendent challenges. The event responded to the urgent need for engineers to reflect, understand, measure, and anticipate the intended and unforeseen implications of their work in a global context. The results of these events comprised establishing academic programs, starting new areas

of education, research, and innovation relating to climate change, water, healthcare, food security, ethics, transparency, resilience, sustainability, social equity and diversity, as well as face-to-face and virtual academic events addressing peace, and engineering concerns.

In the research context, the project by Del Río Fernández et al. (2019) attempts to promote peace *via* the use of plastic and visual languages. The researchers gained this interdisciplinary experience with early childhood education student teachers through photographic exhibitions and mural workshops. They focused on developing respect for the ideas and beliefs of others, improving peaceful community life, and fostering pacific conflict resolution. This project is a clear illustration of how peace can be promoted from a variety of perspectives, such as the plastic arts.

In the teaching field, Miralay (2020) found that according to teachers’ perceptions, the awareness of the culture of peace by students through arts education would promote individual and social peace. They also found that families, school administrators and governmental institutions have an essential role in promoting peace. Also, it was evident that there are deficiencies in the institutions while performing this process. On the other hand, the work of Domínguez and Ordinas (2019) describes the application of a novel methodology to promote socially equitable education in university teaching in courses involving the past and present of relations between human societies and cultures on a global scale. The aim of their work is to use ludic methods instead of traditional methods of study. Their students were encouraged to have a critical, pluralistic, cooperative outlook on the meaning of peace. This pedagogical approach has enriched the way of teaching and generating historical knowledge by using cooperative games in the classroom.

I can present my personal experience with teaching software development. In the classroom I have incorporated agile approaches which recognize that software development has a strong human dimension. Thus, people take precedence over tools (Beck et al., 2021). When these approaches are used in the classroom, students not only learn to program but also to collaborate while also learning to be tolerant. The principles of Egoless Programming (Waychal and Capretz, 2018) are also addressed during the practical lessons to help students understand the importance of good interpersonal relationships when collaborating. These approaches have been incredibly helpful in software development teaching because they strengthen understanding, respect, empathy, tolerance, and collaboration among students. In addition, I have found through quantitative and mixed research approaches that collaborative programming can produce software with better attributes than those of individually developed programs. For example, pair programming has produced elevated levels of acceptance and well-structured programs in our sessions.

CONCLUSION

Peace and peace research are pertinent needs in our society. As teachers, we must promote peace education and a culture of

peace from various angles. However, this is not an exclusive duty of teachers, but also requires the enthusiastic collaboration of institutions, students, parents, families, and communities. In this process, it is important to reflect on the contributions to peace that we can make in our everyday practice. Then, let us promote collaboration, dialogue, respect, active listening, and inclusion, using a cultural vision and living example of our behavior, thereby creating a culture of peace based on values and love in our daily lives as teachers or researchers.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material,

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