

Chapter 100

Combating Terrorism through Peace Education: Online Educational Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on peace education as a vital resource to combat terrorism. It is herein established that an everlasting solution to terrorism could only be reasonably expected if individuals' states of minds are altered. Accordingly, it is further determined that such changes are feasible through peace education, which will ultimately provide a firm basis for fact-based, non-violent, analyses of situations, and resolutions of issues. Furthermore, the authors of this chapter have further incorporated how peace education through online educational classrooms and courses will be extremely useful in the twenty-first century as more activities are conducted through cyber systems.

INTRODUCTION

“What is the point of learning this?” utters many students as they journey through their academic careers. Whilst a multidisciplinary approach to all subjects can answer students' individual questions about the necessity of learning specific information, a broader view of education can aid in the recognition of why and how education can, not only improve the knowledge and wisdom of students, but also can contribute to the combating of terrorism and the securing of nations. Universities and colleges are bastions and repositories of learning and culture. Accordingly, universities and colleges could also play an important role in combating terrorism and bringing about a culture of peace through re-education, re-training, and rehabilitation. This is another prime reason why governments and private entities support the work of education.

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Primarily, individuals view education as a means by which to gain knowledge to benefit one's own academic and professional life. Whilst this is certainly true, education is a resource that can also benefit an entire society. Education not only teaches subject matter, but also promotes the adoption of a diverse, fact-based, accepting perspective to global issues. Whilst it may be difficult for students to develop an understanding of how education can provide benefits that are not immediately identifiable, it is imperative that they are not swayed against education as a result of their lack of comprehension. Therefore, while general education can be useful in the establishment of a non-violent mindset that aids in the recognition of the harmful effects of terrorism, peace education focuses on specifically designed curricula that more effectively prevents individuals from turning to terrorism. For instance, according to a 1999 UNICEF report, peace education is described as,

...the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level (Fountain, p.1).

In general, peace education can enable one to alter their worldly view; thus, transforming their perspective of the world in a manner that focuses on conflict resolution through peaceful processes, especially through a reliance on education, training, and peaceful discussions. It may seem that peace education requires the standard brick and mortar classroom environments that provide a sense of strong guidance to pupils; however, as technology revolutionizes the twenty-first century, online education will surely provide the most convenient pathway for such peace education to be promoted, especially to those with limited educational centers. A reliance on online education will not only lessen costs related to peace education, but will provide students with novel opportunities to engage with curricula that effects a positive and necessary change. Moving forward, the University for Peace was “established in 1980 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, with the mandate to support the Peace and Security objectives of the United Nations through a world-wide programme of education for Peace” (University for Peace Accreditation, 2015). Accordingly, the University for Peace Distance Education (www.elearning.upeace.org) is an example of the shift in reliance from traditional educational processes to online and distance education to offer degree in peace education.

Therefore, the authors of this chapter have sought to provide a clear understanding of the reasons why peace education should be offered at all levels, especially through online courses and classrooms. This chapter provides an overview of how peace education will be useful as the world witnesses the rise of radical and terrorist organizations. The authors acknowledge the beneficial nature of traditional educational processes, yet, for the purposes of this research, have placed a focus on an online educational perspective to discuss the topic of peace education as a way to discourage individuals from turning to terrorism and encourage peaceful resolutions of issues.

BACKGROUND

As is the case with all topics and issues, there are diverse, varying opinions that do not align. The topic of peace education is that which welcomes wide-ranging discussions and analytical analyses. There are some individuals who would argue that peaceful resolutions are not, in their entirety, the most successful

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