

Chapter 10

Implementing and Assessing Transformative, Multidimensional Peace Language Activities Designed for Future Teachers and Their Students: Educating for Peace

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ABSTRACT

This chapter reports on a study exploring the value of preparing pre-service teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) to teach peace in their classrooms in an Argentine setting. The practicum approach drew on elements of the contemplative, holistic, and experiential learning modes to incorporate multidimensional peace language activities to raise awareness of peace and help pre-service teachers become peacebuilders. Four purposefully selected participants practiced peace language activities in the practicum and implemented similar activities in their EFL classrooms. Data were collected through various qualitative sources before, during, and after the practicum, and were subjected to thematic and content analysis. Results showed that the four participants felt the peace activities were transformational both for language students and for themselves. However, two participants were distinctly more adept than the other pair in weaving the peace activities into their teaching. The chapter offers explanations and draws significant educational implications.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings from a transformative study of foreign language teachers. The study participants, four pre-service teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) within a larger university practicum class, encountered, used, and reflected on multidimensional peace language activities (MPLAs) in a two-part setting in Argentina: a university language-teaching practicum and a public elementary school. The transformation involved helping these pre-service teachers recognize themselves as peacebuilders (facilitators of a culture of peace as described by, Galtung, 1996) and learning to use the interesting MPLAs in their practicum and in the school with their EFL students. Their university practicum teacher offered practice, ideas, and support within the nurturing practicum environment. The challenge to the pre-service teachers was to implement the peace language activities in a relevant way with their own EFL students in the school, outside of the practicum. This chapter tells the story.

BACKGROUND

The first section of this chapter starts with the theoretical elements of the study: a definition of peace, differences between negative and positive peace, and an overview of the language of peace and its dimensions. The second part of the section is a brief status report on teacher education, which (like higher education) has generally tended to overemphasize cognition at the expense of other aspects of the human being. The last part expands the vision of teacher education by exploring overlapping teaching modes (e.g. contemplative, holistic, and experiential) that are relevant to teaching the language of peace.

Some Fundamentals of Peace for This Study

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (2001) defined peace simply as harmony attained by working productively with conflicting perspectives. He argued that peace involves overcoming “the disease of fear” by means of “love” rather than “hatred or bitterness” (King, 2001, p. 90). Peace should not be viewed primarily as *negative peace*, i.e., the absence or cessation of violence (Galtung, 1996). Peace is more fruitfully described as *positive peace*, involving the presence of positive relationships, intergroup harmony, supportive social systems, human rights, and constructive conflict resolution (Galtung, 1996; Groff, 2008; Oxford, 2013, 2014; Wenden & Schäffner, 1995).

One of the essential elements for such peace is positive communication, more explicitly known as the *language of peace*. The language of peace is “[a]ny form of communication - verbal or nonverbal - that describes, reflects, expresses, or actively expands peace” (Oxford, 2013, p.3). Use of the language of peace fosters harmony in multiple dimensions: (a) within the person (inner peace); (b) between individuals (interpersonal peace); (c) between or among groups, nations, and cultures (intergroup, international, and intercultural peace); and (d) between people and the environment (ecological peace) (Oxford, 2013; 2014; 2017). Because of the multiple dimensions of peace, this study refers to certain activities as “multidimensional language of peace activities” (MPLAs).

Some sages have emphasized that peace begins inside each person. For example, the Dalai Lama’s 2000 message to the United Nations was that “[i]nner peace is the true foundation of world peace” (quoted by Zalben, 2006, p. 30). Similarly, Miall (2000, p. 6) highlighted Lao-Tzu’s *Tao Te Ching* (*Book*

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