Peace Education in the ESL/EFL Classroom: A Framework For Curriculum and Instruction

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Peace education is one of the hottest topics in pedagogy today. The increasing complexity of our modern world has prompted educators to explore and conceptualize the problems and prospects of incorporating peace education into school curricula. Because of the exacerbation of physical, economic, political, psychological, and ecological violence at the interpersonal, communal, national, and international levels, peace education has gained wider acceptance as an academic discipline in its own right. Furthermore, the applications of peace education are now beginning to find their ways into other academic disciplines. As the American peace educator Betty Reardon notes, the "goals, content, and methodology" of peace education "should be incorporated and adapted to all forms of learning and used by educators as an added perspective from which to plan and evaluate their endeavor" (Wenden, 1992, p. 1).

Reardon's call for incorporating peace education in all forms of learning was echoed by the Organization of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, (TESOL). Thus, at the 1989 convention in San Antonio, a panel of TESOL professionals focused on issues relevant to peace education and cross-cultural understanding. The discussions addressed the rationale behind involving TESOL professionals and the nature and methodologies of their contributions to a more peaceful world. Shortly after the convention, many TESOL professionals began to express their views regarding incorporating peace education into English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) practice. For example, they proposed changes in educational policies(Ashworth, 1990), suggested curricular guides (Fine, 1990), called for priority lists of research topics (Jacobs, 1990), as well as developed instructional units (Stempleski, 1993).

The above eager and spirited responses are quite natural as the ESL/EFL discipline lends itself very well for peace education. The wide linguistic expansion of English as a global language, the very traditions of the discipline as a part of the humanities curriculum, and the cultural and thought pattern variations inherent in linguistic contacts all provide a climate conducive to the development of cross-cultural appreciation, empathy, and understanding. In addition, the long and notable history of foreign language education, especially with the advent of the communicative and humanistic approaches, provides the requisite repertoire of

methodological insights and instructional strategies that facilitate linking peace education to classroom practice.

Clearly, then, the ESL/EFL discipline is well suited as a vehicle for promoting peace education. However, the attempt to incorporate peace themes and conflict resolution skills into regular classroom practice is still in its formative years. Therefore, the purpose of the present research was to devise a framework for curriculum and instruction based on the content, skills, and methodologies involved in a program for incorporating peace education into ESL/EFL practice. A basic premise here is that such a framework would help ESL/EFL practitioners to organize their thinking, and thus facilitate linking peace education to classroom practice.

A Framework For Promoting Peace Education

The framework proposed here is intended to be a useful means for incorporating peace education into ESL/EFL practice. The framework is perceived as a working document which ESL/EFL practitioners can use to match the demands of their curriculum and the needs of their students to those of peace education.

In developing the framework, we adopted the following definition of a framework as a "general pool of constructs for understanding a domain, but is not tightly enough organized to constitute a predictive theory" (Anderson, 1983, p. 12). Consequently, we drew on the works of such noted scholars as Cates (1992), Gudykunst and Young (1984), Seelye (1985), Johnson and Johnson (1985), Fine (1990), Fox (1992), Jacobs (1990), Larson (1990), Ashworth (1991) and others to identify the threads that appear to be running through research, theory and classroom practice in order to provide directions for curricular planning and instruction. Figure 1 shows the dimensions of the framework and corresponding components.

The framework has five main dimensions related to themes, skills, methods, materials and assessment. The dimensions do not exist in isolation. Rather, each dimension occurs simultaneously with the other main dimensions. For example, the theme of communication interrelates with the skill of negotiation and the instructional methods of teaching culture and literature. Also, communication readiness can be assessed through the social distance and semantic differential techniques.

Furthermore, each component of the dimensions is necessarily inclusive of several aspects of peace education. For example, the theme of "Peaceful Coexistence" includes the following subthemes of learning to live together, images of the self and others, celebrating diversity and equity, elimination of prejudice, and recognizing interdependence. What follows in the subsequent sections is a clarification of the framework dimensions and implications of its use.

THEMES	SKILLS	METHODS	MATERIALS	ASSESSMENT
Communication	Negotiation	Cooperative learning	Media	Social distance
Environment	Managing anger	Methods of teaching culture	Literature	Semantic differential
Constructive conflict	Mediating conflict	Literature-based instruction	Games/Puzzles	Checking statements
Peaceful coexistence	Tolerance of ambiguity	Humanistic methods	Amnesty International Report	Forced choice
	Critical thinking		Non-government organizations' reports	

Figure 1. Framework for Peace Education

Themes[1]

There are several relevant peace themes that may be incorporated into ESL/EFL course design. Chief among these themes are cultural variations, crosscultural communication, environmental issues, human rights apartheid, world hunger, peaceful coexistence and so forth. For instance, focusing on cross cultural variation develops better understanding and more appreciation, promotes cultural variations in communication, develops better understanding and more appreciation, promotes cultural relativism, and encourages tolerance. Likewise, introducing such environmental issues as rain forest destruction, pollution, and animal extinction provides a rich source of content, motivates learners, and enhances classroom interaction. Other themes like learning to live together, positive images of the self and others, celebrating diversity and equity, eliminating prejudice, and recognizing interdependence create awareness within students and provide opportunities of meaningful and contextualized language instruction.

Skills[2]

The complexity and interdependence of school life provide good opportunities for developing the skills of negotiation, managing anger, mediating conflicts, tolerance of ambiguity, and critical thinking. Conflicts may arise among colleagues, administrators, parents and students as each party tries to maximize its benefits and achieve its goals. These conflicts as well as other simulated conflicts provide good opportunities for practice in constructive resolution of conflicts through proper definition of issues, revising perspectives, inventing options of mutual benefit, and finally reaching wise agreement (Johnson & Johnson, 1987). The feelings of anger associated with these conflicts provide further opportunities for practice in describing conflicts directly using appropriate verbal and nonverbal means of communication or indirectly through physical expression, psychological detachment, relaxation, and appreciation of one's self upon managing anger constructively. It is also equally important to practice the skills of mediating conflict through breaking up fights and cooling down those involved in conflicts. Besides, ESL/EFL practitioners may develop their students' skills of critical thinking, weighing evidence, and taking the perspectives of others.

Methods[3]

There are several instructional methods that lend themselves well to peace education. These methods can be broadly classified into (a) cooperative learning, (b) methods of teaching culture, (c) methods of literature-based instruction, and (d) humanistic foreign language (FL) methods. Cooperative learning is essentially a series of pro-social methods of instruction which involve students working together

to accomplish some common goals. CL methods can be classified into three main categories: (a) generic methods, (b) content-specific methods, and (c) task specialization methods. The CL methods of Student-Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) and Team Games Tournaments (TGT) belong to the category of generic methods. Meanwhile, Team Assisted Individualization (TAI) and Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) are intended to teach math and English respectively. Task-Specialization methods include Group Investigation, CO-OP CO-OP, and Jigsaw II. In addition, there are other CL structures such as think-pair-share, numbered heads, and mixer review that can be used to promote the themes and skills of peace education. (See Note 3 for suggested further reading.)

Likewise, the techniques of teaching culture such as (a) assimilators, (b) culture capsules, and culture clusters, as well as such techniques common to literature-based instruction and the FL humanistic methods as role-play, games, quizzes brainstorming, video, discussions, simulations, can also be used to achieve the goals of peace education.

Materials

The materials needed for incorporating peace education in the ESL/EFL context are available in various forms and from different sources. Many ESL/EFL practitioners have already developed courses to promote peace education. For example, Cates (1992) designed a course called "Global Issues" with a different problem being dealt with each week (environment, human rights, world hunger etc.) through video, games, quizzes, role play, discussion, and simulation. Instructional units built by other teachers around the movie "Gandhi," or around songs like "We Are the World" and "Imagine" are also available. Along similar lines, Derwing and Cameron(1991a, 1991b) and Stempleski (1993) developed instructional materials and videos that use environmental issues in ESL practice.

There are many organizations pursuing a variety of peace goals. These organizations have developed materials and information which can be used in the ESL/EFL context to promote peace education (Larson, 1992). Indeed, ESL professionals have reported significant results in achievements and interest using Amnesty International materials for the study of human rights. Equally interesting are the materials produced by the National Issues Forum of the Kettering Foundation in Ohio. These materials are used in their abridged form in teaching literacy.

On the other hand, the vast body of world literature in English provides ideal reading materials in the form of short stories, poems, and abridged books with international themes and cross-cultural ethos. Moreover, practitioners of peace education can draw on social studies materials as English cuts across the curriculum as a medium of instruction.

Assessment

The dimension of assessment is significant in any serious attempt to integrate peace education in the ESL/EFL context. Such assessment should go beyond simplistic measurement of superficial knowledge to valid and reliable assessment of skill development and attitudinal shifts.

The easiest and most logical way to measure attitudinal changes is by giving a pre-test at the beginning of the course and then a post test at the end through the techniques of social distance and semantic differential. In addition, there is a variety of assessment methods which measure attitudinal changes such as classroom checklists, objective tests, audio tests, and oral exams.

The Use and Implications of the Framework

As indicated earlier, the framework is intended to help peace educators organize their thinking in the ESL/EFL context. Thus, educators adopting the framework might work for achieving the main goals of creating awareness within their students about variations in communication, environmental hazards, and all forms of violence. Educators need to also develop their students' skills of effective negotiation, managing anger, and resolving conflicts constructively. Furthermore, the framework has implications for classroom practice as it advocates cooperative, humanistic, communicative methodologies of language teaching. Thus, the roles of both the teacher and students differ from those in traditional instruction and are more inclined toward facilitation, problem-solving, critical thinking, and cooperation.

Furthermore, teachers need to be trained in the dynamics of cooperative learning in order to use the framework. Likewise, although instructional materials are available in various forms, these materials need to be adapted by qualified teachers to control for linguistic and cultural difficulties as well as to develop effective exercises.

Notes

1. Communication is a universal process that involves encoding and decoding of thoughts, feelings, emotions, and attitudes through written, verbal, nonverbal, musical, and mathematical symbols. The decoding of these symbols is influenced by the decoders' experiential background and shared cultural knowledge. Thus, effective communication necessitates an understanding of the cultural, psychocultural, sociocultural and environmental influences on communication.

For interested readers, a reference on communication:

Gudykunst W.B. and Young Y.K. (1984). *Communicating With Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication.* New York: Random House.

2. Interested readers in the processes and strategies for developing the skills of conflict resolution are referred to Johnson and Johnson's book *Creative Conflict,* Minneapolis: Cooperative Learning Center.

3. For interested readers some references to methods of instruction:

a) Cooperative Learning: Slavin, R. (1990). *Theory, Research, and Practice.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

b) Teaching Culture: Seelye, N. (1988). *Teaching Culture Strategies for Intercultural Communication.* Lincolnwood: National Textbook Co.

c) Literature-based Instruction: Ghaith G. (1993). The problems of teaching non-native literature in the light of schema theory and beyond. *Al-Abhath,* 41, 49-75.

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Wenden, A. (1992). Peace education: What and why? *TESOL Matters*, 2, (1).

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