
Global Education, Peace Education and Language Teaching

Kip A. Cates, Tottori University

As language teachers in the 1990s, we live in critical times. Our world faces serious problems of violence, ethnic conflict, social inequality and environmental destruction.

"Hardly a day goes by without an announcement of terrorist activities, the newest lake poisoned by acid rain, the latest crisis brought on by a volatile energy market, the suffering of displaced people in refugee camps, or the violent repression of people seeking their human rights" (Kniep, 1987, p. 69).

There are doubts about whether young people are being properly prepared to cope with these problems. Surveys consistently find, for example, that American youth have little knowledge of other cultures, are suspicious and ethnocentric, and have little interest in global issues (Kniep, 1985, p. 11). How then can we prepare our students to deal with the challenges facing our planet? What is our responsibility as language teachers in a world of war, prejudice, poverty and pollution? How can we respond to appeals by such international figures as Edwin Reischauer?

"We need a profound reshaping of education . . . humanity (is facing) grave difficulties that can only be solved on a global scale. Education is not moving rapidly enough to provide the knowledge about the outside world and the attitudes toward other people that may be essential for human survival" (Reischauer, 1973, p. 4).

A growing number of language teachers concerned about these issues are turning to the fields of global education and peace education for ideas of how to promote social responsibility, peace and international understanding. In this article, I'd like to give a brief overview of these two new fields and give examples of how innovative language teachers are integrating peace and global education ideas into their classroom language teaching.

Global Education

"Global education" is an exciting new area of teaching which arose from the field of social studies. In the UK, where it is also known as "world studies", it has been defined as "education which promotes the knowledge, attitudes and skills relevant to living responsibly in a multicultural, interdependent world" (Fisher & Hicks, 1985, p. 8). An American definition states that "global education consists of efforts to bring about changes in the content, methods and social context of education in order to better prepare students for citizenship in a global age" (Kniep, 1985, p. 15). A global education approach to language teaching, therefore, aims at enabling students to effectively acquire and use a foreign language while at the same time empowering

them with the knowledge, skills and commitment required by world citizens for the solution of global problems.

The goals of a "global" approach to education are generally divided into the four domains of knowledge, skills, concern and action. One of the most comprehensive models of what these entail is given in Figure 1 (Pike & Selby, 1988, p. 69).

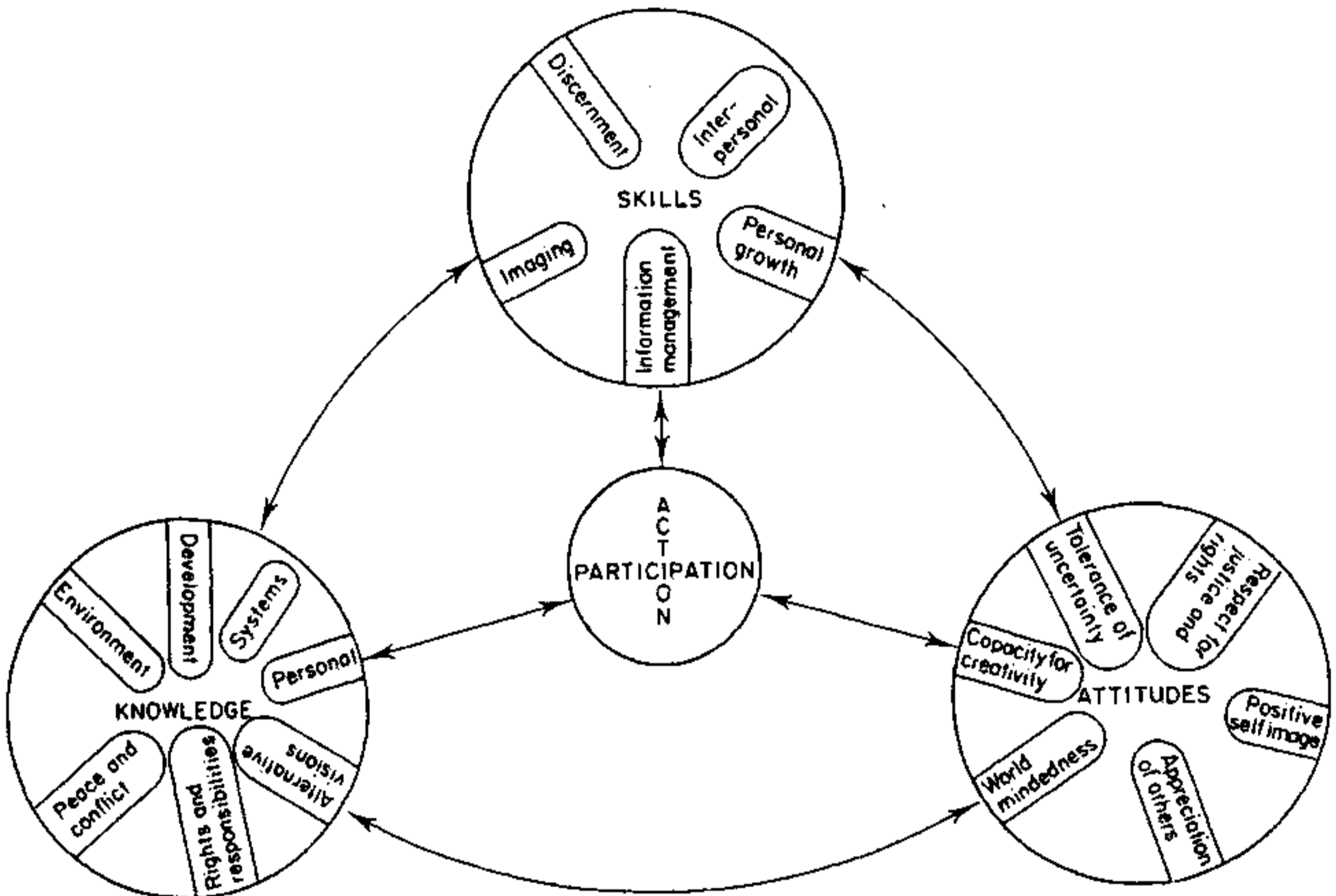


Figure 1. The Objectives of Global Education (Pike & Selby, 1988)

Knowledge about world problems is the first goal. If we want our students to really work for a better world, then they must at least know the nature of world problems, their causes and viable solutions. Acquiring skills necessary to solve world problems is the second goal. These are generally considered to include communication skills, critical and creative thinking, empathy, multiple-perspectives, co-operative problem solving, non-violent conflict resolution and informed decision-making.

Concern is the third goal. With many of the world's problems perpetuated by selfishness, cynicism, apathy and despair, it is vital to help our students (and ourselves) break through these negative attitudes to develop positive feelings of commitment and concern. Action is the final, most important goal. When we know

what the problems are and have the necessary skills and commitment to solve them, then we must take action and do what we can.

Global education comprises a number of component sub-fields, including anti-racist education, anti-sexist education and multicultural education. Global educators, however, usually designate the fields of peace education, human rights education, development education and environmental education as the four core content areas of global education.

Peace Education is an attempt to respond to an appeal enshrined in the UNESCO constitution: "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed". A narrow view of peace education limits the field to issues of war, disarmament and conflict resolution. However, when mentioning the term "peace education", most experts are referring to "comprehensive peace education" (Reardon 1988)—a broad field which covers human rights, the environment and development issues such as world poverty. Comprehensive peace education thus covers much the same territory as global education only with a slightly different focus. Many educators use the terms "peace education" and "global education" interchangeably.

Peace educators generally identify four main kinds of violence (Figure 2). The first is direct violence, involving actual physical harm done by one person or group to

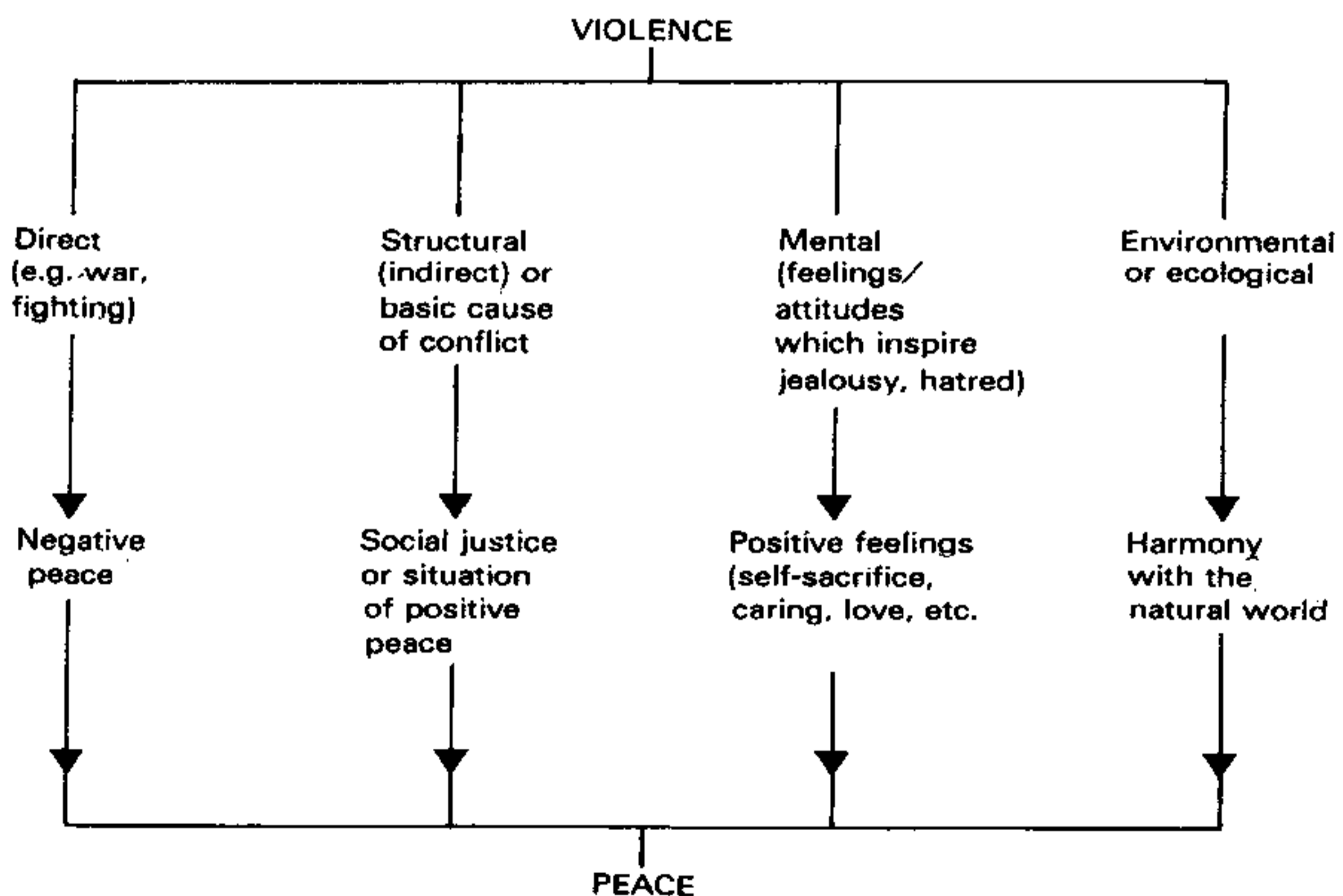


Figure 2. Four Types of Peace & Violence (Leeds, 1987)

another, which may range from fist fights to gang violence to full-scale war. The second is structural violence, a situation which, though there may be no direct violence, involves systematic oppression, exploitation, discrimination or social injustice—all of which can easily lead to actual conflict. The apartheid system in South Africa is one example; another is illustrated by Gandhi's quote "poverty is the worst kind of violence". The third kind of violence is psychological violence, referring to attitudes of prejudice, hate or jealousy, while the fourth kind is environmental violence, violence against nature through such actions as pollution or tropical forest destruction.

For each type of violence, there is a corresponding type of peace. Lack of direct violence leads to what is called "negative peace", negative because a society with no overt physical fighting may still feature oppression or injustice, prejudice or hatred. A situation of both non-violence and social justice, in contrast, is labelled positive peace. This would also include psychological peace, where people have feelings of goodwill, compassion and altruism, and environmental peace, with people living in harmony with the natural world. Peace educators also recognize different levels of peace such as inner peace, interpersonal peace, inter-group peace and international peace, each of which peace education aims to promote.

One of the most significant attempts to deal with language teaching and peace is UNESCO's "LINGUAPAX" seminar series. LINGUAPAX I, held in Kiev, USSR in 1987, brought together such groups as the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA), the International Association for the Development of Crosscultural Communication (AIMAV) and the World Federation of Modern Language Associations (FIPLV) to discuss "The Content and Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages and Literature for Peace and International Understanding". The resulting "Kiev Declaration" made four specific recommendations to foreign language teachers: 1) to be aware of their responsibility in furthering international understanding through their teaching; 2) to increase language teaching effectiveness so as to enhance mutual respect, peaceful co-existence and co-operation among nations; 3) to exploit extra-curricular activities to develop international understanding; and 4) to lay the basis for international cooperation through classroom co-operation using language teaching approaches responsive to students' interests and needs.

Global Education in the Language Classroom

Though much traditional language teaching makes vague references to peace, this has mostly remained wishful thinking. As Rivers (1968, p. 262) says: "It may be well to ask ourselves whether international understanding, let alone world peace, can be said to have been promoted by the considerable amount of foreign-language teaching in the world. Diligent learning of foreign words and phrases, laborious

copying and recitation of irregular verb paradigms, and the earnest deciphering of texts in the foreign language can hardly be considered powerful devices for the development of international understanding and good will." If language students are really to become socially responsible world citizens, then, peace education concepts and the global education goals of knowledge, skills, concern and action must appear explicitly in the curriculum.

Course design is one area where teachers can experiment with global education themes. A course I have developed for my Japanese university students, for example, is titled "Global Issues". In this course, students focus each week on a different world problem—the environment, human rights, apartheid, world hunger—and explore in English the issue, its causes and solutions through such activities as video, games, quizzes, discussions, role plays and simulations. A number of language teachers have devised courses about "cultures of the world", in which students practice English skills as well as deepen their interest and understanding of foreign countries. Global themes can even be integrated into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Friel (1991, p. 24), for example, has designed a 20-hour intensive English-for-Engineering course aimed at producing socially-responsible, environmentally-aware engineers. The course concerns the building of an imaginary dam and involves students in reading pro- and anti-dam arguments, role playing loggers and environmentalists, and presenting oral and written environmental assessments of the project.

Language teachers can also integrate peace and global awareness themes into such areas as grammar. Starkey (Pike & Selby 1988, p. 239) describes how teaching the past and future tenses becomes much more meaningful when students study the historical background of world problems and do future-oriented activities concerned with solving them. Similarly, comparatives can be practiced through comparing human rights in various countries or inequalities of First World wealth and Third World poverty.

Reading, writing, listening and speaking can also be integrated with global content. One British English instructor, for example, has based an English skills lesson on the human rights organization Amnesty International (Sandilands 1989, p. 22). This begins with listening and discussion activities about Amnesty International, reading from its English newsletter, and writing English letters calling for the release of prisoners of conscience around the world. Another teacher has her students choose and make reports on "socially-conscious" organizations such as UNICEF and the Red Cross. Yet others have their students practice reading, writing and speaking by arranging for their classes to adopt Third World foster children.

Many language teachers use audio-visual resources such as songs, films and videos in their classes, yet their criteria for choosing materials rarely relate to global education objectives. This is beginning to change, however. One university EFL

teacher, for example, has built an entire college English course around the movie *Gandhi* which aims at improving students' English skills while at the same time allowing them to explore themes such as apartheid, fascism, colonialism and non-violence. Other teachers have built language teaching units around videos such as *We Are The World* (about Third World famine) and songs such as John Lennon's "Imagine" (where language students express their own ideas about what they imagine a peaceful world to be).

Methods and Materials

Peace education and global education are as much a matter of how we teach as of what we teach. Some global educators, citing Nazi war criminals (who were "just following orders"), refer to the dangers of excessive obedience to criticize traditional teaching methods which produce passive students. Others ask how respect for world peace and human rights can be achieved in language classes characterized by teacher authoritarianism, violation of learners' rights and negative competition. In contrast, global and peace educators propose new approaches to teaching methodology including cooperative learning, so that students can learn to work together, experiential learning, so students can experience other perspectives through role plays and simulations, and whole-person teaching, which deals with student attitudes and values while fostering commitment and action.

Finding good teaching materials is a major challenge for language teachers involved in peace and global education. In many traditional textbooks, world problems are conspicuous only by their absence. Even when textbooks do touch upon global issues, they often tend to treat them trivially as an overlay on the linguistic syllabus. Starkey goes further to criticize the tourist-consumer flavor of many language textbooks and concludes "foreign language textbooks are amongst the most fertile grounds for discovering bias, racism and stereotype" (Pike & Selby, 1988, p. 239).

Thankfully, more language textbooks now include occasional lessons dealing with peace-related topics, though these often require adaptation to make them more than just a language lesson. Other texts are now appearing which deal specifically with global issue themes—titles like "Heal the Earth" (Dawn Press) and "Green World" (MacMillan), for example, focus on environmental issues such as rainforests, acid rain, recycling and Earth Day. Yet other language teachers, dissatisfied with language teaching texts, are turning for ideas to books from the field of global education itself. Texts being adapted in this way include titles such as "Global Teacher, Global Learner", "World Studies 8-13", "Educating for Global Responsibility" and "Earthrights—Education As If the Planet Really Mattered" (see Recommended Reading list).

Beyond the Classroom

Extra-curricular activities offer an excellent way for language students to deal with global issues. One foreign language college, for example, holds an annual "International Awareness Seminar" featuring a Third World bazaar and English guest speakers from groups such as UNICEF. Another school involves EFL students in out-of-class volunteer activities such as litter pick-ups for Earth Day and a charity walk-a-thon where students and teachers practice the foreign language while walking 35 kilometers to raise money to help end world hunger.

Overseas school links are a further way to promote international understanding. These may range from class penpal programs to video tape exchanges to overseas school trips and homestays, all of which have the potential to dramatically break stereotypes and open students' eyes to the world. One class of British children, for example, were surprised to find their Dutch EFL penpals insulted by their "windmills/wooden shoes" stereotype of Holland while another teacher saw dramatic student progress in English proficiency and Third World understanding after a summer EFL school trip to India.

If we want our language students to acquire the knowledge, skills and commitment necessary for peace and international understanding, then language teacher training programs will have to include components on peace and global education. One example of such a program is a summer seminar for High School EFL teachers run by the Japan YMCA which attempts to improve trainees' teaching methodology and language skills through using English to explore social issues such as world hunger, environmental problems and medical ethics. Another initiative is a course entitled "Global Issues and Cooperative Learning" offered by Teachers College, Columbia University as part of its MA in TESOL program. This permits graduate students to explore fields such as peace education and environmental education, and to design model language lessons on global education themes.

An Invitation

Peace education and global issues are being increasingly addressed by the language teaching profession world-wide. This interest can be seen in language teaching journals (e.g. the recent peace education article series in the TESOL Newsletter) as well as in the rich variety of presentations at international conferences (ranging from environmental EFL workshops to human rights language learning activities, from AIDS education to creative conflict resolution, and from multicultural materials design to peace education theory and methodology).

Peace education and global education offer language teachers an exciting chance to rethink their language teaching goals, content and methods. These new fields invite us to reconsider the mission of our teaching profession and our roles as educators. They are empowering in that they show us how our language teaching can contribute

to making a better world and to promoting attitudes of social responsibility and international understanding. As Maria Montessori has said: "Establishing lasting peace is the work of education: all politics can do is keep us out of war."

Resources

Global Education Groups:

These publish teaching materials, have newsletters, and run training courses.

1. Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA.
2. Center for Teaching International Relations, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, USA
3. American Forum for Global Education, 45 John Street, Suite 908, New York, NY 10038, USA

Language Teachers' Groups:

1. "Global Issues in Language Education Network" c/o Kip Cates, Tottori University, Tottori, Japan 680 (publishes a quarterly newsletter on global education and language teaching)
2. Petitioning "TESOL Peace Education Interest Section" c/o Anita Wenden, 97-37 63rd Rd. #15E Forest Hills North, New York, NY 11374 USA (plans to establish a Peace Education Interest Section within TESOL)

Recommended Reading:

- Fisher S. & Hicks, D. (1985). *World Studies* 8-13. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd.
- Greig, S. (1987). *Earthrights: Education As If the Planet Really Mattered*. London: WWF.
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About the Author

Kip Cates has an MA in Applied Linguistics and currently teaches English at Tottori University in Japan. He coordinates the "Global Issues in Language Education" Special Interest Group of the Japan Association of Language Teachers and belongs to the organization "Educators for Social Responsibility".