
Inter-Disciplinary Approach to Developing Curriculum for Peace

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Accepted: June 10, 2012 Published: July 09, 2012

Doi:10.5296/ijld.v2i4.2071 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijld.v2i4.2071>

Abstract

This paper discusses the issues of peace building in our contemporary society and highlights the importance of peaceful co-existence in a multi-plural configuration like Nigeria. In this article, peace is viewed more in terms of ideological inclination at solving societal problems rather than merely chronicling incidence of war and other conflicts that might be a time bomb for resolving political, economic, social as well as religious differences in society. The paper emphasizes the value of peace in a democracy as this has the mechanism and the capacity to resolve global and regional issues that might give rise to conflict situation arising from lack of justice, equity and fairness in human interaction. Finally this paper sees a clear link between developing a positive attitude towards peace and peaceful co-existence and the obvious need to gradually tailor our curriculum along that direction.

Introduction

The concept of developing a curriculum for peace should be viewed more as an interdisciplinary approach than a linear study. This is because what constitutes peace in any society is a delicate balance of political, economic and social views of the people, aggregated together in a single entity that is based on justice, equity and mutual tolerance. Therefore, an inter-disciplinary approach that encompasses these subjects mentioned above are very important in developing the curriculum content for peace in our educational institutions as a reflection of the larger society which is the end result of curriculum development.

Thus, if an inter-disciplinary approach to designing and subsequent development of peace curriculum is recognized, it will then be plausible to consider a working definition of peace and how the concept can be integrated into the school curriculum. Peace has always been among humanity's highest values. For some, it is supreme, can be considered at any price. Yet to some,

they hold such opinion as "the most disadvantageous peace is better than a just war". Others still hold similar view as peace is more important than all justice, for instance, many other people prefer the most unjust peace to the justness war that was ever waged. Rummel (1987) further agreed that there never was a good war or a bad peace.

In spite of all these lofty statements, people agree little on what is peace. Perhaps the most popular (western) view is an absence of dissension, violence or war, a meaning found in the "New Testament Bible" and possibly an original meaning of the Greek word for peace "Irene". Pacifists have adopted this interpretation, to them all violence is bad. This meaning is widely accepted among irenologists and students of international relations.

However, peace is also seen as concord, or harmony and tranquility (Lopez, 1989). It is viewed as peace of mind or serenity. It is also defined as a state of justice or goodness, a balance or equilibrium of powers (Smith, 2006). Such meaning of peace according to Cortright (1989), functions at different levels. He believed that peace may be opposed to or opposite of antagonistic conflict, violence, or war. It may refer to an internal state (of mind or of nations) or to external relations or it may be narrow in conception, referring to specific relations in particular situation (like peace treaty) or overarching, covering a whole society (as in world peace), peace may be a dichotomy (it exists or it does not) or continuous passive or active, empirical or abstract, descriptive or normative or positive or negative.

The problem with all these assumptions is that, peace derives its meaning and qualities within a theoretical framework. For this reason different groups and organizations like Christians, Hindus, Moslems and Buddhist, all see peace differently, as will pacifists or internationalists. So also socialists, fascists, and libertarians have different perspectives, as do power or idealistic theorists of international relations. In all these diversity of meaning, peace is not different from such concepts as justice, freedom, equality, power, conflict, class and indeed any other concept.

Since we have been able to craft a definitional concept of peace, this paper will adopt a social contract approach to peace in this discussion. This perspective to peace can best be understood through a number of social principles; one of which is the conflict principle. This concept according to Rummel (1987) is that conflict is a balancing of powers among interests, capabilities and wills. He argued that peace is a mutual adjustment of what people want, can get, and are willing to pursue. He contended that conflict behaviours, whether hostile action, violence, or war is then a means and manifestation of this process. In expanding his argument to cover other aspects of the social contract theory, Rummel identifies co-operation principles which depends on expectations aligned with power. He opined that through conflict in a specific situation, a balance of power and associated agreement are achieved. This balance he argues is a definite equilibrium among the parties; interestingly capabilities, and wills; the agreement according to him is a simultaneous solution to different equilibrium of power, and hereby the achievement of a certain harmony or structure of expectation. He believed that the core of this structure is a status quo or particular expectation over right and obligations. This

conflict interfaces and interlocks a specific balance of powers and an associated structure of expectations. Therefore, cooperation whether contractual or familistic interactions depends on a harmony of expectations, a mutual ability of the parties to predict the outcome of their behaviours. Such behaviour for example, is the major value of a written contract or treaty. And this structure of expectation depends on a particular balance of powers. Thus, cooperation depends on expectations aligned with power.

In the same vein, another theoretical concept to social contract of peace is the gap principle which states that a gap between expectations and power causes conflict. This is because according to this theory, a structure or expectation once established has considerable social inertia, while the supporting balance of powers can change rapidly. Interest can shift; new capabilities can develop, will can be strengthened or weakened. The theory further stated that, as the underlying balance of powers changes, a gap between powers and the structures or expectations can form, causing the associated agreement to loose support (Lopez, 1989). Lopez argued further that the larger this gap, the greater the tension towards revising expectations in line with the change in power, and thus the more likely some random event will trigger conflict over the associated interest. Such conflicts he stated will then serve to create a new congruence between expectations and power. He concluded his argument by stating that, conflict and cooperation are therefore interdependent. They are alternative phases in a continuous social process underlying human interaction; now conflict, then cooperation, and then again conflict. Cooperation thus involves a harmony or expectations congruent with a balance of powers achieved by conflict.

Finally, in discussing the social contract theory of peace, Vayrynen (2006) advocated for the Helix principle where according to him conflict becomes less intense and cooperation more lasting. His analysis is based on the premise that if interaction occurs in a closed system or is free from sudden and sharp changes in the condition of relationship, the through conflict and cooperation people gradually learn more about each other, their mutual adjustment comes easier, their expectations more harmonious and lasting. Conflict and cooperation thus form a helix, that is moving upward on a curve of learning and adjustments, which in turn bring cooperation in a more familistic and durable manner. However, in a closely related argument, Kaldor (2001) postulated the social field theory, where she stated that conflict is a balancing of powers-conscious or subconscious negotiation of opposing interests, capabilities and wills. This process, she stated determines some implicit or explicit subconscious or conscious social contract. It is social in involving a relationship or interaction between two or more wills. It is a contract in that there is an agreement that is harmonization of expectations. Kaldor stated that, it is this social contract that is peace within social field theory. Peace then is determined by a process of adjustment between what people, groups or states want, can and will do. Peace based on a subsequent balance of powers and involves a corresponding structure of expectation.

EVOLUTION OF CURRICULUM CONTRACT FOR PEACE

In contemporary times, the evolution and development of curriculum content for peace started after the Second World War. However, before that time, the book of Isaiah in the Holy Bible called believers to study war no more but offered little instructions for peace. The study of peace has been neglected over the ages and has emerged as a proper discipline only in recent decades (Lopez, 1989). The first academic programme and scholarly institutes dedicated to peace did not appear until after World War II; and referred journals such as the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* and *Journal of Peace Research* did not begin publication until 1957 and 1964 respectively (Cortrigh, 1998). He identified pioneers in this field of study which included authorities like Kenneth and Flise Boulding, who helped create the Centre for Research and Conflict Resolution at the University of Michigan in the 1950s also, Jhan Galtung founded the International Peace Research Institute in Norway in 1959; while Adam Curle, who was the first Chair of peace studies programme in Britain, at the University of Bradford in 1973. Cortright (op cit) revealed that major studies and books about peace appeared in earlier decades but he stressed that the systematic application of rigorous scholarship and empirical analysis to the problem of peacemaking did not begin until quite recently.

This may probably explain in part, the inadequacies of the many theories of peace. Nevertheless, for much of history; the cause of peace has predominantly been a religious concern. Cortright stated that moral reformers embraced the teachings of love and compassion in religious doctrines. For example, Jesus said that peace makers are to be blessed as children of God, in the real world they are often dismissed as utopian dreamers or worse, quaking defeatist who live in denial of reality. But proponents of this ideal often over looked the challenges of political realism. So also, classical liberals extolled the virtues of democracy and free trade, but often under-estimated the virulence of nationalism and the power of imperialism. In all of these content articulation of peace curriculum, it was perhaps Immanuel (1978) who probably came close to crafting a comprehensive philosophy of peace, but his theory fell short of addressing issues of social equality.

Meanwhile, socialist and feminists have broadened the argument by bringing these issues to the fore in the agenda for peace by including the problems of economic injustice and patriarchy. However, in recent times social scientists and political theorists have made progress in verifying and explaining the components of the so-called Kantian triad such as mutual democracy, economic interdependence, and international cooperation-as predicates of peace. By and large, links have also been discovered between gender equality and a lessening of violence. Unresolved political grievance and a lack of economic development have been identified as factors that contribute to armed conflict. In fact, most wars in developing countries, particularly in Africa and indeed the armed struggle in the Niger Delta can be explained in this context. Although, one may argue that the first phase of curriculum development in Nigeria does not cover issues of peace, this might be understood in the sense that our political independence as a nation, state was a mutually negotiated agreement from the colonialist. However, the practical application or incorporation of peace making stratifies into

the Nigerian society immediately after the thirty months old Nigerian civil war in the late 1960s.

Such as the establishment of the National Youth Service scheme and the Unity school project were direct response to provide for peaceful co-existence and inclusiveness. Consequently, the foregoing discussions made it abundantly clear that philosophical basis for developing any curriculum is upon the shoulders of government. Thus, Esu, Enuokoha and Umoren (2004) agrees that curriculum decisions at both the national and state levels are taken by politicians and government bureaucrats often with complete disregard of the obvious concerns of the people and education experts and teachers who operate at the level of implementation of the curriculum. Esu et al (2004) further stated that the 1977 National Policy on Education which resulted from the national curriculum conference of 1969, is the best attempt at formulating a policy for education in Nigeria since the colonial era. The curriculum that emanated from the 1969 conference reflected mainly on citizenship education with a clear emphasis on nationalism as a form of building a cohesive nation state so as to dilute inter-ethnic rivalry within the Nigerian trips and her satellite minorities. There is no mention of economic and social justice which is the ingredients of building a peaceful society. Therefore it is imperative to state that peace education or incorporating peace studies in the national curriculum is quite a recent development and can only be fully realized when the issues of economic and social justice are established in the curriculum during the development stage in line with the principle of social contract theory.

Implementing Peace Curriculum through Role Playing

This article has established a clear link though inter disciplinary approach to the development of peace curriculum in our educational institutions. We will like to use role playing strategy as a form of implementing peace curriculum in the practical classroom scenario. The role-playing strategy according to Joyce and Weil (1980) may be considered a kind of an assumption or initiation of a particular appearance or form. They stated that when a male child puts beards and moustaches on his face and a little girl serves the dishes to him, they are said to be engaged in role playing, that is, imitate the acts of their parents and elders. They further stated that through such role playing, the children get the opportunity of learning or training themselves for the activities of future life. For the players, the essence of role playing is the personal experiencing of emotions and perceptions by assuming a role in defined situation and acting out its relevant behaviour. In the classroom situations, we may consider the role-playing as a teaching-learning technique or strategy in which a well planned situation is dramatized by a group of students by playing specific roles, under the direction of a teacher for deriving useful educational experiences. For example, the students for learning peace-building principles, requires an enactment of the "Kantian triad" which borders on mutual democracy, economic interdependence and international cooperation as predicates of peace in any society. Thus, to ensure the tenets of mutual democracy in a classroom situation, students require a working experience of building a strong democratic institution. Such as the parliamentary or legislative institutions, judiciary and executive arms of representative government. In other words,

parliamentary of legislative assembly may dramatize the scene of these democratic institutions by appointing students to play specific roles either parliamentary speakers, ministers, the ruling and opposition party member of parliament, independent and strong judicial system and enlightened police force to maintain law and civil liberty in a typical school setting.

Also, in the areas of economic inter-dependence and international cooperation for peace building, students are required to build sustained partnerships through inter collegiate summit to understand the benefit of peaceful coexistence and consider the economic potential of their school or locality as jointly held in trust for everybody by the teachers or their proprietors. Student's participation in the classroom throughout the economic and intercollegiate cooperation process will ensure improved policies such as youth friendly schools, providing new sources of water and sanitation facilities as well as better forms of child protection. However, building strong partnership requires a link to national structures such as the civil society to build a strong coalition and local ownership which is essential for success.

National and community ownership beyond the central government level is essential for sustainable result-oriented solutions to the delivery of goods and services, and the empowerment of vulnerable populations to ensure absolute peace within the school context and the wider society.

Conclusion

Developing curriculum for peace as stated earlier in the course of our discussion requires an interdisciplinary approach that is buried in the depth of social contract theory. The theory sees peace as a mutually negotiated and agreed principles that governs any society. Its building blocks are strong and sustainable democratic institutions forming international partnership and international cooperation as well as justice and the rule of law. Quite recently, development scholars have extended the curriculum content for peace studies to include themes such as gender issues, unresolved political grievances, lack of economic development for minorities and socially disadvantaged groups especially in least developed countries. These content issues and many more are universally accepted predictors of violent situation in most LDC's societies. Nonetheless, the spotlighting of peace issues in curriculum development in Nigeria is very timely as violence or different level and categories have been witnessed in recent time. Some has religious colouration like the Boko Haram in the North Eastern and Central Nigeria while the Niger Delta has been agog with protracted arms struggle in the pretext of resource control and equitable distribution of natural resources.

Consequently, it is important that students at academic level should understand the reason for peaceful coexistence as their position is essential for the part of peace building. As the future of their country, they represent the hope for tomorrow that is better than today and the quintessential motivation for a war-torn society to start re-building and healing process. Students as young adults are vital in accomplishing any peace building process. This is because; the pursuit of peace is integral to the fulfillment of child right, including their right to physical safety, health and wellbeing.

Children and young people as students are key players to peace building solution. Young people have distraught needs and distinct capacities for recovering and contributing to peace building. They mentor and tutor other children through role playing and provide friendship and companion for one another. They often generate a livelihood for themselves and families and take on leadership roles.

Recommendation

1. It is therefore suggested that there is need for good governance for peace to be achieved by all stakeholders
2. There is need to develop a functional curriculum that may bring about lasting peace and development.
3. Then it is important to build the capacity of teachers and trainers in the implementation of the said curriculum.

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