

Activities to Encourage Peace and Tolerance in the English-language Classroom

Peace Education is concerned with helping learners to develop an awareness of the processes and skills that are necessary for achieving understanding, tolerance, and good-will in the world today. It has grown out of the interdisciplinary and multicultural work of educators such as John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Paulo Freire, Elise and Kenneth Boulding. Educating for peace has been expressed as:

- Examining and discussing our **values and attitudes** towards diversity, cultural differences, tolerance, and human dignity
- Developing language and social interaction **skills** to promote peaceful relations among people, among nations, and between human beings and the natural environment;
- Learning to use that **knowledge** to solve problems and to think critically regarding issues of conflict and violence (from U.S. State Department, Forum Online <http://exchanges.state.gov/FORUM/JOURNAL/peaintro.htm>)

Implementing peace education in the language classroom can be achieved when problem-solving and critical thinking strategies are used across the curriculum. There are several documented strategies for use in classrooms. Using topics that raise the issues related to peace and cultural understanding in our classrooms, language teachers can give students basic information to help them develop positive attitudes and values related to "peaceful" living".

- Engaging in instructional activities that encourage *cooperation, consensus building, and reflective listening* gives students the skills they need to meet and resolve conflicts. Cooperative language learning classroom structures developed by Spencer Kagan and Robert Slavins, focus on small group success in the classroom rather than individual success. Small groups are organized by the teacher for maximum effectiveness and mixing.
 - Classroom Rules: Ask the students what the class rules should be and why that rule is important. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to write 5 rules that can be used in the classroom keeping in mind how they talk to or about other students. They should be able to say: "We agree to _____ because _____." Post each group rules and discuss with the whole class, selecting the 5 most common and agreed upon rules as the Classroom Rules. Focus on working toward coexistence, cooperation and interdependence.
- Listen to and respect what others say and feel.
 - *Paraphrasing* means to restate another person's thoughts or ideas to demonstrate that you understand. In this activity students *integrate* skills by reading a statement, listening to the statement then paraphrasing the meaning of it.
 - ✓ Students form two lines, paired up facing each other. Student 1 reads a statement then Student 2 paraphrases what is heard. The

students then switch roles. The teacher should write the statements based on the age and English level of the students. Examples:

- I have to buy my mom a late birthday present. Her birthday was last week and I forgot about it.
- I like to go to parties because many of my friends will be there too. I hate to miss them.
- Guide students to use language that focuses on the problem and not on the person perceived as causing the problem.
 - Focus on the “*I message*” that takes the blame out of the message:
 - ✓ **I feel** _____ (say your feeling) **when you** _____ (what happens) **because** _____ (say why the action connects to your feelings) **and I would like** _____. (how to correct the situation)
 - ✓ Compare with the “*You message*.” When you attack the other person, say negative things about them and sometimes call them names.
 - ✓ Also use “*I messages*” to express positive feelings
- Confronting issues and problems will provide opportunities for students to develop *problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills* along with the use of communication skills to express themselves clearly and convincingly about topics.
 - Hot Buttons (from the U.S. Institute of Peace Education) – form groups and ask students to create a list of what makes them angry, i.e. when someone criticizes us, when we witness something bad, when someone wants to do it their way, etc.
 - Have students individually make boxes on their paper and respond to these questions in the boxes.

What people/things/situations make me angry?	What people/things/situations upset me?	What behavior or words make me stop listening?
What people/things/situations annoy me?	What makes me uncomfortable?	What people/things/ situations make me frustrated?

- Follow up discussion: What did you learn about yourself? Do you think your actions can make others as angry or frustrated as they make you? How does it help to know our hot buttons? How is it helpful to know others’ hot buttons?
- Read stories aloud to your class that have themes and character action that exemplify behaviors when someone is tolerant of others behaviors or beliefs. Discuss the story action thoroughly, highlighting the exemplary behaviors.

Teacher Resources:

- Milofsky, A. *Creating a Culture of Peace in the English Language Classroom*. US Institute of Peace. www.usip.org/class/guides Guide on conflict resolution Trust building, defining conflict, prejudice awareness and reduction, communication and conflict resolution.
- Reardon, B. A. (1988). *Comprehensive peace education: Educating for Global Responsibility*. NY: John Wiley. (Language teaching chapter begins on p. 79.)
- Sommers, M. (2001) EPAU Papers on Refugee Education. "Peace Education and Refugee Youth." <http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/3b8a1bd84.pdf>
- Hafernik, J.J.; D.S. Messerschmitt, and S. Vandrick. (2002). *Ethical Issues for ESL Faculty: Social Justice in Practice*. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Explores ethical issues & concerns encountered by ESL teachers in practical terms.
- Slavin, R.E. "Synthesis of Research on Cooperative Learning." *EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP* 48, no.5 (1991): 71-82.
- Harris, I.M., Morrison, M.L. (2003) *Peace Education*. McFarland Press.
- Reardon, B.A. (1995) *Educating for Human Dignity*.
- Harris, I.M., Morrison, L.M.. (2003) *Peace Education*. "Moving Forward with Peace Pedagogy: The Basics for Teaching Peace." Chapter 10: Pages 207-226
- Iram, Y. (2003) "Education of Minorities: Problems, Promises, and Prospects- An International Perspective." In Iram, Y., and Wahrman, H. (eds.) *Education of Minorities and Peace Education in Pluralistic Societies*. Chapter 1: pages 3-12
- Saloman, S. and Nevo B. (2002) *Peace Education: The concept, principles and practices around the world*. NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Blanchard, L.A. (1998.) *Peace Education in the Language Classroom*. JALT: The Language Teacher. <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/files/98/jul/blanchard.html>
- de Matos, F. G. (2002). *Teaching Vocabulary for Peace Education*. ERIC659457. http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ659457&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=EJ659457
- Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy. (1995) UNESCO. http://www.unesco.org/education/nfsunesco/pdf/REV_74_E.PDF
- Peace Education: Teacher as Learner. <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/peace/frame.htm>
- Duffy, Carolyn. *Peace Education*. In U.S. State Departments, *English Teaching Forum's* electronic journal *Language and Civil Society*. <http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/journal/peace.htm>
- Use the Minimal Standards for Education in Emergencies to assure equity in education. <http://www.ineesite.org/>

Books for Students to Read:

- Durell, A. and Sachs, M. (1990). *The Big Book for Peace*. NY: Dutton Children's Books. Collection of original stories, fables and poems about peace.
- Scholes, K. (1989). *Peace begins with you*. CA: Sierra Club Books.
- Radunsky, V. (2004). What does peace feel like? NY: Simon & Schuster Publishers. (The word Peace in many languages.)
- Melamed, L. (1999) "The Mission Sugihara would be Proud of" in Kinue, E. (Ed.) *Courage to Remember: Interviews on the Holocaust*. Chapter 9: pages 93-108
- Fleming, L.B. Yamazaki, J.N. (1995) *Children of the Atomic Bomb: An American Physician's Memoir of Nagasaki, Hiroshima, and the Marshall Islands*. "Born in America" Chapter 2. Pages 12-20
- Buzo, A. (2002) *The Making of Modern Korea*. "The Dark Gulf: 1931-1945" Chapter 2: Pages 38-49
- Kids Health. www.kidshealth.com. Lots of activities for young children and teens.

Organizations

- United States Institute of Peace. <http://www.usip.org/class/index.html> Simulations, teacher guides and sponsor of the National Peace Essay Contest.
- International Education for Peace Institute. 20 hour online core curriculum for secondary students. <http://www.efpinternational.org/index2.html>
- Center for Positive Practices: Peace Education and Evaluation. Good bibliography up to 2002. <http://www.positivepractices.com/index.html>
- Peaceful Schools International and Students for Teaching Peace (Canada) <http://peacefulschoolsinternational.org/> and <http://sftp.ca/>
- Cooperative Learning Theory and Classroom Strategies <http://www.cooperativelearning.com/AboutKaganFrame.html>
- Peace Education Center at Teachers College Columbia University. <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/PeaceEd/>
- Hague Appeal for Peace. Peace Lessons from around the World. <http://www.haguepeace.org/>
- Educators for Social Responsibility. <http://www.esrnational.org/> (Curriculum for all ages available.)
- A project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. www.tolerance.org
- Facing Fear: Helping Young People Deal with Terrorism and other tragic events. <http://www.redcross.org/disaster/masters/facingfear/> Download lesson plans and activities.
- African Centers for Peace Education and Training. <http://www.peace.ca/africa.htm>
- University of Peace. <http://www.upeace.org/> A Master's Degree program is offered in Peace Education through its home campus in Costa Rica.