

Ideas for Integrating Dignity into Education

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I'm so sorry I had to leave prematurely yesterday so I put together this resource for you and anyone else who is interested in the notion of trying to integrate notions of human dignity into education. I am by no means an expert, but many of these ideas were related to us in our peace education masters programme and I hope you will find them helpful as well. I also include a list of likeminded organizations which have found their way to our campus or who I have come across over the years. Anyway, I hope this will be useful!

1. Different types of Education

Alicia Cabezudo is a visiting professor in the Peace Education programme and Evelin tells me she is also a member of your group. She began her three week course by breaking down the somewhat vague and unwieldy term 'education' into more specific terms and contexts - formal, non-formal and informal. I think this distinction is valuable because it allows the change agent(s) to tweak their message, strategy, pedagogy, based on the context.

Formal - refers to the structured educational system provided by the state for children. In most countries, the formal education system is state-supported and state-operated. In some countries, the state allows and certifies private systems which provide a comparable education.

Non formal -in contrast, non formal education refers to education which takes place outside of the formally organized school. Typically, the term or phrase non formal education is used to refer to adult literacy and continuing education for adults. This education is called non formal because: it is not compulsory, it does not lead to a formal certification, and, it may or may not be state-supported.

Informal - the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment - from family and neighbors, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media.

2. The Content of Peace Education

There are many models and names for peace education and the field seems at times both all encompassing and relatively underdeveloped. But there is one model by Swee Hin Toh and Virginia Cawagas, two peace educators for the Philippines and visiting professors in our programme which we tend to use the most because it is holistic and clear. Swee Hin received the UNESCO prize for peace education in 2000. He breaks down Peace education into six categories, which overlap but are distinct enough to warrant a separate "petal" as he calls it. I've copied the 6 themes and short descriptions below.

Dismantling the culture of war. The world is being more and more militarized, with increasing wars and direct violence, nuclear testing, and the danger of nuclear war.

Living with compassion and justice. Another kind of violence is structural. From 20,000 to 30,000 children die every year due to lack of basic needs. Compassion and justice mean equity for all. Now billions are marginalized, in urban slums and poor rural areas, going hungry every night.

Promoting human rights. They differ among cultures, but principles and values underpin human rights everywhere. Caring for and loving each other are part of protecting human rights. Human rights include basic economic rights (right to food) and cultural rights (people’s languages and ways of life). Schools also need to build a culture of human rights.

Cultural respect, reconciliation, and solidarity. The world is culturally diverse. We need to find the real roots of intercultural conflicts, which may be economic.

Living in harmony with the earth. We must live in peace not only with human beings but also with the Earth. We can learn from the indigenous peoples’ “caring for the seven generations,” based on a vision of land as sacred.

Cultivating inner peace. Everyone needs deep inner peace. Living peacefully with others is related to being at peace with ourselves. How do we cultivate a sense of inner peace while working for world peace?

3. Pedagogy

Another core component to our masters programme is the notion that **how** a teacher/facilitator teaches the content of peace education/dignity education is just as important if not more, than the content itself. Peace education pedagogy is learner-centered, dialogical, participatory, hands-on. The methodology should be consistent with the content expressed.

4. Other Resources

So I’ve been working on a document for a while now of various organizations working in the field of human rights education. I selected a few that I think might be particularly relevant for your group and your work and visa versa. Some you may already know, I don’t know, but hopefully some of these may be useful/interesting.

Peace Education Programme at UPEACE: The programme builds the capacity of educators from around the world to contribute to educational, social, and cultural change through peace education. It is designed to enable participants to effectively engage in peace education at all levels, from the design of educational policy to the development of effective and culturally relevant peace education programmes, to the actual skills of teaching for peace both in and out of the classroom. By providing students with the practical skills and knowledge needed to make positive impacts on formal and non-

formal educational systems, the MA programme will enable students to contribute to educational development and reform within broader social and cultural contexts.

<http://www.upeace.org/programmes/PE.cfm>

World Youth Alliance: “The World Youth Alliance is a global coalition of young people committed to promoting the dignity of the person and building solidarity among youth from developed and developing nations. We train young people to work at the regional and international levels to impact policy and culture. Through this lived experience of the dignity of the person young people are able to affirm life at all levels of society.” The founder was here last July and I have her contact info if you are interested.

<http://www.worldyouthalliance.org/>

Genocide Intervention Network. This is an NGO in Washington that I helped to found a few years ago. My best friend is currently the director. Anyway they work on lobbying, fundraising, and advocacy for the genocide in Sudan and hope to build a global anti-genocide constituency. I was telling Evelin about them – they are now part of Center for American Progress, a left leaning think tank in Washington. So far it has raised several million dollars and has launched some successful congressional lobbying campaigns. This seems like it might be relevant to the work of humiliation and human dignity.

<http://www.genocideintervention.net/index.php>

Teacher’s College Columbia University: I know you all are already extremely well connected to Janet Gerson, Betty Reardon, and Tony Jenkins and the Peace Education Center at Columbia. But they were recently on campus for the Institute for International Peace Education Conference in August and spoke about a new project they are launching called Community Institutes on Peace education (CIPE) – a locally based approach to the support and exchange of ideas and approaches to teaching peace and dignity and human rights. Sounds very interesting and might be worth seeing in December, when your group gathers at Columbia to explore how to integrate your projects?

<http://www.tc.edu/PeaceEd/iipe/cipe.pdf#search=%22peace%20education%20center%20CIPE%22>

Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C: They also have an educational division which develops curriculum for schools and resources for teachers. <http://www.ushmm.org/>

Facing History and Ourselves: for 30 years, Facing History has been engaging students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. By studying the historical development and lessons of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide, students make the essential connection between history and the choices they confront in their own lives. <http://www.facinghistory.org/campus/reslib.nsf>

Betty Reardon's book on Educating for Human Dignity: Maybe you seen this already, but I'll include it just in case. <http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/1559.html>

Anyhow, I've got lots more, but these are the most relevant for the time being. Hope this helps and I'd be happy to answer any questions as well.

Peace through education,
Nick