

Sponsored Teachers Training College, Purulia
Study Material on

Peace and Value Education

Course-1.4.11(optional)

Unit-1.2 (BARRIERS OF PEACE EDUCATION)

1) Educational barriers:

i) Curriculum-

- Curriculum is powerful in maintaining exclusive and violent structures e.g. Subject discrimination, weighting of subjects e.g. sports vs. arts; sciences (hard subjects) vs. humanities (soft subjects); commercialization of curriculum. ☐
- Syllabus and work program content limitations, plus time constraints of crowded curriculum leave no room for peace. ☐
- Limits to teachers' experience with concepts of peace.
- Glorification of violent activities, especially contact sports. ☐
- Religious impact on content e.g. intelligent design vs. evolution. ☐
- Lack of critical discourse analysis e.g. 'Dumbing-down' of curriculum, especially in English.

ii) Behavior Management- ☐

- Ignorance of students' backgrounds. ☐
- No clear school philosophy. ☐
- Discipline and control vs freedom to be who you are; punishment as normal. ☐
- Fear of change both personal and structural ☐
- Lack of relationships of trust between all levels of school functioning

III) Assessment ☐

- Competition between students as a motivator. ☐
- Outcome-based education – tests/results focus. ☐
- Narrow assessment forms advantage some and disadvantage others; ranking and failure are accepted / normal.

iv) Pedagogy ☐

- Lack of recognition of prior learning and other ways of knowing. ☐
- Acknowledge only hegemony and homogenous western-centric systems of learning. Conformity expected of all – lack of attention to practical skills in learning style diversity. ☐
- Classroom process – teacher out front - unequal power dynamic – need for partnership learning.
- Bullying in classrooms, disrespectful teaching styles, ignorance of nonviolence. ☐
- Pace set by institution, not by students. ☐
- Focus on teaching rather than learning.

v) School structure ☐

- Strong hierarchy and unequal power relations. ☐
- Few learning support staff – teacher’s increasing and constantly changing workload.
- Business minded schools – choice of priorities and competition based on commercialism.
- Principal’s vision for the school, or lack thereof. ☐
- Marginalization of minority groups. ☐
- Exclusivity, righteousness and superior attitudes in some schools – ‘us and them’ thinking.
- Single Sex schools: attitudes formed towards and with opposite sex. ☐
- Insufficient support for students by way of counselling.

vi) Environment

- Physical classroom layout. ☐
- Timetable – need flexible attendance options. ☐
- Environment restrictions – need comfortable, flexible outdoor spaces for diverse learning opportunities.

2) Political barriers-

i) Global issues

- Economic rationalism – well considered policy subsumed in economic expediency.
- Patriotism – the ‘other’ as enemy. ☐
- Definitions of peace vary widely. ☐
- Government as exemplar in conflict – first strike.

ii) National issues ☐

- Compulsory schooling ☐
- Policies that yearn for ‘back to the past’ – visions for the future from the government prioritise technology over relationships. ☐
- Tyranny of democracy and weight of demographics – marginalized voices remain unheard.
- Subjective political policies not open for discussion across/between schools: who is in power, what the govt wants, instead of what schools want. Less importance placed on critical analysis. Interference of nationalism in the formation of history syllabuses. White Australian history taught at the expense of Indigenous perspectives. ☐
- Militarism in schools e.g. cadets, public/private partnerships with the aviation industry have militarist ends, defence force recruiting at city periphery schools. ☐
- Funding disparity between public and private schools; and insufficient funding, especially for non-commercial subjects.

iii) Local issues ☐

- Restrictions on who may attend schools – exclusivity and exclusion. ☐
- Bureaucracy: rigidity; decision making structures can be exclusive and hierarchic; communication channels can be restrictive; access to resources inequitable; staff politics, interpersonal staff relationships, personal agendas remain invisible and unexamined within the school hierarchy; paperwork prevents experiential, co-operative and open-ended learning. ☐
- Power relations amongst school community used to reinforce inequity and conformity. ☐

- Attitudes and beliefs: school administration, teachers and parents, harbor traditional beliefs; authoritarian, command and control structures; avoid controversial issues; discrimination – gender, ethnicity, ability; single sex education as inhibiting. ☒
- QSC – students judged in relation to their schools, not on their own merits. ☒
- Competitive struggle to be ‘top’, system of appointing captains, awards. ☒
- Teachers impose personal beliefs in a closed environment – classrooms. ☒
- School funding and expertise goes towards disciplinary actions rather than peace building in the school community. ☒
- Lack of listening – students, teachers, administration. ☒
- Students need to contribute to learning goals.

3) Psychological barriers-

i) Personal beliefs ☒

- Alienation, low self esteem and depression. ☒
- Insecurity and uncertainty about dealing with diversity in the classroom. ☒
- Lack of psychological and emotional safety. ☒
- Personal perceptions, values, beliefs, life experiences, lack of experiences. ☒
- Desire for dominance and control and fear of being insignificant. ☒
- Self esteem issues – victims or legends. ☒
- Motivation – lack of or hyper. ☒
- Lack of confidence to deal with conflict. ☒
- Need to succeed in competition, fear of failure. ☒
- Fear and belittling used to control students. ☒
- “I am just one person, I can’t make a difference”.

ii) Disorder / Dysfunction ☒

- Mental health issues e.g. ADHD, autistic spectrum disorder, bipolar disorder, anxiety, obsessions, depression. ☒
- Ignorance about these and lack of treatment. ☒
- Learning disabilities, communication issues. ☒
- Troubled family background – violent, abusive family, substance abuse. ☒
- Lack of self awareness. ☒
- Social exclusion of students with special needs and reaction to others’ need for acceptance.

iii) Group beliefs ☒

- Teacher dominant, student submissive. ☒
- Clique culture of segregated groups and discrimination, prejudice: eg locality (country versus city), gender-based, sexuality, intellectual competence, racism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, social-economic group, physical condition, age of teacher. ☒
- Need to belong – peer group pressure and pressure to conform. ☒
- Fear of being different, both teachers and students. ☒
- Macho syndrome culture. ☒
- Baiting teachers seen as student ‘sport’.

iv) Wider Social beliefs

- Parental and family beliefs, attitudes and expectations.
- Punishment as first response to transgression.
- Marginalisation for religious/political beliefs.
- Feelings are discouraged.
- Acceptance of violence as 'natural' and belief that humans are inherently violent.
- Effects of media violence.
- Media treatment of violence in current affairs.
- Lack of belief in possibility of peace.
- No awareness of peaceful societies.

4) Cultural barriers-

i) Adversarial cultures

- Binary positioning among students e.g. rich vs poor, brains vs brawn, attractive vs unattractive, sub-cultures e.g. emo vs skaters vs nerds vs jocks etc, sexism, us vs them, ingroup and out-group dynamics.
- Ethnocentrism and national pride at the expense of 'aliens' or difference.
- Demonising the 'other' e.g. students are against teachers and vice versa, teachers and administration think parents are inadequate, parents are demanding and hostile to teachers and administration, teachers disrespected by administration and employer.
- Culture of competition.
- History written by the victor.
- Militarism and machismo as hegemonic masculinity, opposed to other forms of masculinity.
- Western exportation and imposition of market economy and democracy makes us enemies.
- People are taught to fear or fight the 'other' rather than learn from and celebrate with each other.

ii) Cultures of fear and conformity

- Standardized testing – fitting students onto a 'grid'.
- Narrow definitions of gender roles and promotions of stereotypes.
- Nostalgia for homogeneity – promotion of sameness rather than belonging.
- Uniforms.
- Submitting to 'groupthink' rather than dealing with conflicting ideas.
- World events (terrorism) portrayed as culture- and religion-based, thereby promoting fear between cultural groups.

iii) Cross-cultural issues

- Language – narrow range, testing in and preeminence of Standard Australian English.
- Different forms of deep cultural practice, different ways of being are not recognized e.g. ways to show respect, deal with conflict, negotiate, ask permission, act morally, be inclusive, prioritize relationships etc.
- Misunderstanding cross-cultural communication – verbal and nonverbal.

- Unwillingness or inability to accept other cultures/religions due to avoidance, inaccurate data, lack of information, fear. ☒
- Not enough diversity in some schools, overwhelming diversity in others. ☒
- Tokenism or the 4D approach to multiculturalism – dance, dress, diet and dialect.
- Difficulty in negotiating firm beliefs in a climate of relativism.

MR. PRODIP KARMAKAR