



## **About PEACE EDUCATION**

Chicago Build the Peace Committee ([buildthepeace.org](http://buildthepeace.org))

Prepared for Chicago Public Schools and the

United Nations International Day of Peace

Barry Weisberg, JD, PhD(ABD) Email: [barryweisberg@att.net](mailto:barryweisberg@att.net) Webpage: [barryweisberg.info](http://barryweisberg.info)

The idea of a municipal “peace day” was pioneered in 1978 by The Peace School in Chicago ([www.peaceschool.org](http://www.peaceschool.org), [www.buildthepeace.org](http://www.buildthepeace.org)). In 1981, the United Nations designated an International Day of Peace, observed annually since 1982 on September 21 worldwide. A theme is selected by the United Nations Secretary General each year and in 2013, the theme is “Education for Peace.” However, what should constitute “peace education” is as poorly understood as the idea of peace itself.

Many peace education efforts center on violence, crime or conflict prevention. But In order to transition from the Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace, what is needed is to combine violence prevention with peace promotion ([www.barryweisberg.info](http://www.barryweisberg.info)) such as peace teaching and curriculum, daily peace building and peace breathing (inhale World, exhale Peace. For peace education, what is promoted is even more important than what is prevented.

The transition toward a Culture of Peace must focus on what Eleanor Roosevelt<sup>1</sup> called “small places”: individuals, families, schools, communities, cities, and eventually, countries. Yet most advocates of peace focus on international conflict and not local violence, even though local violence far exceeds international conflict (Swiss Foreign Ministry, Graduate Institute, 2013).

To change this, we must simultaneously address values, attitudes, behaviors and institutions, replacing those of the Culture of Violence with those of a Culture of Peace. This is essential in families, where worldwide many traditions of violence and domination persist, providing the first “schools” for violence, as well as in pre-school, K-12, higher education, and adult education, in formal and informal education. In each instance peace education must work to restore our moral compass. In the words of the musician, Jimi Hendrix, (1942-1970) “When the power of love overcomes the love of power, we will know peace.”

Peace education is simultaneously what is taught, how it is taught, how it is learned, and how it is lived. It is an everyday way of life, not a destination to be reached. Peace education must be moved from the outskirts to the mainstream of education at all levels.

<sup>1</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady of the United States from 1933-1945, was primary drafter of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1946.

While a global movement for a Culture of Peace is growing (see the UN 2000 Culture of Peace Manifesto <http://www.unesco.org/bpi/eng/unescopress/99-38e.htm>), peace education has made very little progress as an alternative to formal education. That is because, in part, such idealist ideas as “an end to violence” or “an end to war,” or even instances of less violence or conflict, have not led us toward peace. Nor is it realistic to think that most existing school systems, almost always burdened with government curriculum and requirements, often facing budgetary deficits, will adopt a curriculum that is not effectively integrated into the existing curriculum.

Although there exists hundreds of “peace curricula” worldwide, they have little impact on formal education. They do not serve to stop the intergenerational transmission of the Culture of Violence. Successful peace education, and peace curricula, must be integrated into existing pedagogy in the physical, natural and social sciences, and the humanities, adapted to the particular city, country and culture. One way to start, as the Chicago Build the Peace Committee has done since 2008, is to have the Public Schools distribute peace education materials to all schools in conjunction with the United Nations Peace Day every September.

Peace education is required in all aspects of daily life. As Lao-Tzu, the Chinese philosopher understood 2600 years ago, “If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations. If there is to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities. If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart.”

## **BEGINNING READINGS ON PEACE EDUCATION**

- Culture of Peace News Network (CPNN) [cpnn-world.org](http://cpnn-world.org)
- Monisha Bajaj, 2008. Encyclopedia of Peace Education. Teachers College, Columbia, NY.
- UNESCO, 2002. Mainstreaming the culture of peace.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001263/126398e.pdf>

## **HOW ABOUT A VISIT TO YOUR SCHOOL?**

If you would like a speaker to visit your school to talk to teachers or students about violence prevention, peace promotion, peace education, or offer a workshop on Peace Breathing, please contact Jennifer Kim at the Chicago Build the Peace Committee. [jenniferkim@peaceschool.org](mailto:jenniferkim@peaceschool.org) 773.248.7959.

## ***Two Examples of Integrating Peace Education into Existing Curricula***

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**Our goal is to work with the public school systems to incorporate peace education into the physical, natural and social sciences, and the humanities. This requires us to examine the existing kindergarten through high school curriculum in detail and to propose documented peace education materials as appropriate. This could include text, photography, music, etc.**

### **1. Social Science**

The social sciences seek to offer scientific knowledge about society and social groups through studies such as sociology, anthropology, history, education, or law. This work can either be empirical or qualitative in nature.

#### **Education Example**

History education is most often about conquerors, kings, governments, nation-states, and their wars. This focus on domination and violence is what Riane Eisler (1987, 2000, 2002) has called a dominator model of culture rather than a partnership model. History should be taught from the standpoint of learning about both models, about the relationship between conflict and cooperation, at both the macro and micro levels of society, and the values that motivate each model.

#### **Activity**

Make a list of two ways in which people are unequal, and equal. Or two examples of everyday conflict and everyday cooperation. Or two examples of a dominator and a partnership relationship. Then discuss these examples and determine which you prefer, and why.

#### **Readings**

Riane Eisler, 1987. The Chalice and the Blade, Our History, Our Future. San Francisco: Harper and Row

-2000. Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint for Partnership Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Boulder, CO: Westview Press

### **2. Natural Science**

The natural sciences seek to provide a scientific understanding of the universe, and our planet, including all species, through disciplines such as astronomy, biology, chemistry, the Earth sciences, and physics.

### **Education Example**

Charles Darwin's analysis of evolution as *natural selection* is often reduced to Herbert Spencer's idea of the "survival of the fittest," which distorts Darwin. Evolution is not unrestrained competition as the later Social Darwinists argued, but rather, both conflict and cooperation. More often than not, Darwin's teaching on cooperation, morality and love are ignored. David Loye, in [Darwin's Lost Theory](#), states that "*What primarily drives human evolution, Darwin wrote in page after page of the long ignored writings that complete his theory, are "the moral qualities." These, he said, are "advanced, either directly or indirectly, much more through the effects of habit, by our reasoning powers, by instruction, by religion, etc., than through natural selection."*

In teaching evolution, it is essential to teach Darwin's insights on morality and love. In this way we present a more accurate portrayal of the natural world and the human species. We must learn how to use our moral compass to maximize empathy, caring, and creativity rather than insensitivity, cruelty, and destructiveness.

For this to be achieved, we must deepen our understanding of and capacity to love other people, other species, and our environment. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. argued, "Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives." ([www.wearethebelovedcommunity.org/bcquotes.html](http://www.wearethebelovedcommunity.org/bcquotes.html))

### **Activity**

Ask students to identify two forms of competition and two forms of cooperation, preferably one form that is desirable, and one form that is undesirable. Students can then discuss their answers.

### **Readings**

-Charles Darwin, 1871. [The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex](#). Reprint from the University of Michigan Library.

-David Loye, 2007. [Darwin's Lost Theory: Who We Really Are and Where We're Going](#). Benjamin Franklin Press.

Another example of peace education school resources is the text and photo exhibit in twenty panels, **The Past, Present and Future of Peacebuilding**, by the Chicago Build the Peace Committee. It is displayed every September in Daley Plaza and is available for display in Chicago schools. [www.buildthepeace.org/?cat=3](http://www.buildthepeace.org/?cat=3)

**Understanding Violence and Peace, An Incomplete Roadmap**, by Barry Weisberg. It includes a list of the word "peace" in over 150 languages. Please request from [barryweisberg@att.net](mailto:barryweisberg@att.net).