PEACE EDUCATION IN LEBANON: A CASE STUDY IN THE UNIVERSITY CONTEXT1

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Peace Education encompasses a diversity of pedagogical approaches within formal curricula in schools and universities and non-formal popular education projects implemented by local, regional and international organizations. It aims to cultivate the knowledge and practices of a culture of peace. In Lebanon, this culture has mainly been promoted since the late 1990s by non-governmental organizations, engaged intellectuals and artists. Additionally, grassroots student dialogue clubs have flourished in a number of secondary schools. However, in the university context, it is considered a rare phenomenon. This paper first introduces the issue of Peace Education in Lebanon. It then presents the conceptual characteristics and examples of applications of a Peace Education approach I developed and adopted in my classrooms from 2007 to 2014 at three universities (St Josef University of Beirut, Notre Dame University and Holy Spirit University) with three thousand students of different religious, cultural, socio-economic and political backgrounds. In conclusion, it identifies the positive changes the various class activities produced in students' perceptions and relationships, and the obstacles that this approach faced in a context of continuous physical and psychological war.

Keywords: Lebanon, Southwestern Asia, Youth, War Memory, Peace Education.

Introduction

In *An Agenda for Peace,* the former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali introduces the concept of post-conflict Peacebuilding as "an action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict."[2] Following this report and the work of many scholars studying contemporary wars and their effects on local populations, sources of violence would henceforth be identified as diverse - political, ideological, economic, social, ecological, historical and psychological - war would not be reduced to battles, alliances and treaties; the absence of military battles alone would not be perceived as ensuring local, regional and international peace, nor would simple peacekeeping initiatives.

In *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War*, Nel Noddings explores the psychological factors that support war, such as nationalism, hatred, religious extremism and the search for

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[1] The subject of this paper is also tackled in an article in Arabic, to be published by Dar el-Machreq - St Josef University of Beirut, Lebanon - in 2016.

[2] Ghali, B. *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping*. New York: United Nations, 1992. Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992.

existential meaning.[3] In *Le virus de la violence* (*The Virus of Violence*), the late Lebanese psychiatrist Adnan Houballah identifies two interrelated aspects of war: physical (perpetrated by groups of active fighters and armies) and psychological (war-related traumas and their outcomes within civilian populations, including behavioral and affective post-traumatic stress disorders, latent tensions, the inability to relate to others, and different mental illnesses, such as depression and schizophrenia).[4] In that perspective, peace cannot be achieved unless these sources are dealt with and both aspects of war are addressed. To that end, the fulfillment of a Peacebuilding process is required, including better political governance and economic systems, human rights, social justice and responsibility, intercultural and interfaith dialogues, ecological awareness, and Peace Education.

Peace education encompasses a variety of pedagogical approaches within formal curricula in schools, universities and non-formal popular education projects implemented by local, regional and international organizations.[5] It aims to cultivate the knowledge and practices of a culture of peace. In the classroom, teachers can do little to reduce the economic and political causes of wars, but they can do a great deal to moderate the psychological factors that promote violence by engaging students in a journey of understanding the forces that manipulate them; introducing them to relevant psychological and pedagogical principles, such as the contact experience, conciliation through personal storytelling, reckoning with traumatic memories and injuries [6]; understanding the socio-emotional aspects of reconciliation and discovering alternatives to violence; fostering mutual respect and building bridges across differences. Wars start in the human mind, and Peace Education plays an important role in individual and collective mindset changes from classrooms to communities and from grassroots peace activists, peace-movement organizations and international non-governmental organizations engaged in Peace Education to societies and local governments.[7] It contributes to the deconstruction of the so-called invincible aura surrounding wars and to its transformation into a dim light bulb.

In Lebanon, a country affected by wars since the second half of the 20th century, Peace Education is mainly promoted by non-governmental organizations and engaged intellectuals and artists. Additionally, grassroots student dialogue clubs have flourished in a number of secondary schools. However, it is considered to be a rare phenomenon in the university context. In the absence of any national-level coordinated efforts by the government and the Lebanese university/school system to provide Lebanese youth with a history textbook that incorporates a diversity of war narratives and peace programs, I developed and applied a Peace Education approach in my classrooms at three universities from 2007 to 2014 (St Josef University of Beirut, Notre Dame University and Holy Spirit University) with the aim of contributing to deconstructing stereotypes, building bridges, and making youth aware of the importance of peace and their role in the peace process.

I focus on the psychosocial aspect of Peacebuilding in my work, which consists of thinking about trauma from both psychological and social perspectives to understand youth's senses of identity, their perceptions of others and Lebanon's history, and their roles in conflicts and Peacebuilding. The term psychosocial "attempts to express the recognition that there is always a close, ongoing circular interaction between an individual's psychological state and his or her social environment."[8] Thus, "a psychosocial approach takes into consideration, for instance, the effects of structural and armed violence on the emotional state and the everyday social relations of individuals, as well as on social and political

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[3] Noddings, N. *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War.* Cambridge, UK*:* Cambridge University Press, 2011.

[4] Houballah, A. *Le virus de la violence.* Paris: Albin Michel, 1998.

[5] Carter, C. C. *Conflict Resolution and Peace Education: Transformations across Disciplines*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

[6] Salomon, G., and B. Nevo. *Peace Education: The Concept, Principles, and Practices around the World.* New York: Psychology Press, 2012.

[7] Harris, I. *Peace Education from the Grassroots.* Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2013.

[8] Bergh and Jareg cited in Agger, I. "Psychosocial Assistance during Ethnopolitical Warfare in the Former Yugoslavia." In *Ethno-political Warfare: Causes, Consequences and Possible Solution*, edited by D. Chirot and M. Seligman, 305-318. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2002.

structures."[9] In other words, "psychosocial" addresses the well-being of individuals in relation to their environments.

I also focus on reflections of learning and teaching experiences within the classrooms to further understand the challenges of Peace Education in Lebanon as a particular Southwestern Asian/Middle Eastern case and provide valuable insight into the advantages and difficulties of teaching and learning Peace in the Lebanese university context. The usual approaches, such as those of El-Amine and Frayha [10]generally study curriculum design and development and the extent to which the educational aims and objectives of citizenship education and national development for political socialization, including cohesion and the unified identity stated at the Taif Agreement[11], were implemented in the education reform plans. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the data collected from my research must not be used for generalizing the case of Lebanon, but instead should be regarded as one of many exploratory approaches in Middle Eastern studies and Peace Education in Southwestern Asia.

This paper introduces the issue of Peace Education in Lebanon first. It then presents the main characteristics of my approach and examples of applications in my university classrooms' settings with three thousand students of different religious, cultural, socio-economic and political backgrounds. In conclusion, it identifies the positive changes the various class activities produced in students' perceptions and relationships, and the obstacles that this approach faced in a context of continuous physical and psychological war.

Peace Education in Lebanon

The Context: War and War Memory

"You cannot erase everything and start again ... We need to continue …. Suffering is everywhere here, there, everywhere. Life is everywhere here, there, everywhere. Ignorance kills it …. We must not drown. Dig in and come out alive. Write while I am still alive."[12]

The war in Lebanon, especially that of the second half of the 20th century, had - and still has - an impact on individuals and whole communities. It inflicted psychological and physical harm and undermined social relationships, as well as individuals' senses of national belonging. How can endless stays in shelters, the infernal noise of bombing, the demarcation lines, the snipers, the forced migration (exile), the black markets to buy bread and kerosene at exorbitant prices, the power and water outages, the war games reproducing struggles of adults, the "holiday homework" when schools were closed, the destruction of houses and public infrastructure, the dreadful and only news on the radio and television being counts of the dead, disappeared and wounded, all be forgotten…?

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[9] Becker, D., and B. Weyermann. "Gender, Conflict Transformation and the Psychosocial Approach- Toolkit." Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. *Opsi Consult*.
http://www.opsiconsult.com/publication/92880853292022.pdf

[10] El-Amine, A. "Curricular Reform in the Context of Conflict: Case Study- Lebanon," 2003, Unpublished paper presented for UNESCO: International Bureau for Education training seminar for curriculum developers in Bosina and Herzegovina, Geneva; Frayha, N. "Developing Curriculum as a Means to Bridging National Divisions in Lebanon. In *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, edited by S. Tawil and A. Harley, 159-205. Geneva: UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2004.

[11] The Taif Agreement (October 1989), or The National Accord Document as it came to be known, constituted the outcome of a process of a certain political compromise among Lebanese militia leaders and deputies. It had the support of Syrians, Arabs and the International Community, and it tackled many essential points pertaining to the structure of the political system and to the sovereignty of the Lebanese state. It contained the correct formula for ending the war internally; however, it required the acceptance of incomplete sovereignty over a considerable period of time. The Taif Agreement constitutes a step forward, but does not yet provide the basis for a more stable and democratic system in Lebanon.

[12] Farhoud, A. *Jeux de patience*. Montréal : VLB éditeur, 1997, p. 76.

Some Lebanese chose to forget. They turned the page, and many fled to other countries. They even changed their names and chose not to teach their children their mother language. Perpetrators (ex-militiamen, for example) did so because they feared vengeance; while victims chose to forget because they preferred leaving the horrors they experienced behind them. Still, the vast majority of Lebanese people living in Lebanon are struggling with a continuous dilemma in spite of the 1989 Taif Agreement, the 1991 Amnesty Law,[13] and the famous *Tabula Rasa* applied by all of the Lebanese governments and major political parties for the last two decades.

To forget or to remember? This is a sensitive question that many Lebanese, especially those who were born and raised during the 1970s and 1980s, have tried to dismiss at some point in their lives, often without any success.[14] No matter how hard people may try, the horrors they experienced cannot be eradicated from their minds. This dilemma sums up the tragedy and suffering of hundreds of thousands caught between amnesia, hypomnesia - abnormally poor memory of the past - and hypermnesia - abnormally strong memory of the past. Some may believe that forgetting will help them build a better future. Others think that remembering only the past glories in history, the golden times of the Phoenicians, the Byzantine Empire, and the Arab caliphates, will comfort those in the present. However, without a critical remembrance of the more recent past, atrocities will continue to be perpetrated, and the culture of violence will prevail.[15]

In this sense, it has become just as urgent to work on the transformation of society and social conditions as it is to help victims, survivors, and their descendants address the impact the conflicts have had on them. The local situation and the specific socio-political context in Lebanon shaped my Peace Education approach. In the absence of national memory building or a common national history book used in schools and universities,[16] one major goal of my approach is to contribute to the needed memorialization process by shedding light on existing narratives of the past and encouraging young students to construct their own while trying to find common truths with others. It becomes more urgent in a context where a culture of silence is pervasive in many families and where intergenerational dialogue is lacking. "It is quite common that members of the generation immediately succeeding the one that endured periods of extreme violence have trouble making sense of entire segments of their lives, not to mention their identity, as a result of the silence maintained by their parents, and, more generally, by the adults of the community."[17]

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[13] Lebanon has passed a General Amnesty Law in March 1991. The law, which was passed by a parliament closely allied to the various warring militias, gave amnesty for all politically-motivated war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the 1970s and 1980s, with a few exceptions. This has effectively allowed most warlords to escape prosecution and hold high posts in later governments up to the present day. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that neither the Israeli nor the Syrian authorities have satisfactorily investigated any cases in which their forces were alleged to have been responsible for gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws. The international community has shown no interest in opening inquiries at an international level. Also, with regard to enforced disappearances, the fates of thousands of Lebanese and other nationals who have disappeared in Lebanon since 1975 remains unknown despite years of campaigning by families of victims and non-governmental organizations. For more information, refer to: Amnesty International. Document-Lebanon: A Human Rights Agenda for the Elections. http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE18/003/2009/en/6f6b390d-e815-438e-a03c-f5998a44b85a/mde180032009en.html

[14] Chrabieh, P. *Voix-es de paix au Liban. Contributions de jeunes de 25-40 ans à la reconstruction nationale.* Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 2008. This book presents the results of qualitative research conducted in 2006-2008 with 25-40 year-old Lebanese Peace activists.

[15] Choueiri, Y. *Breaking the Cycle. Civil Wars in Lebanon.* London: Stacey International, 2007. Refer also to the publications of the Center for Lebanese Studies (Oxford University).

[16] The history book ends at 1943-46, when Lebanon became independent from the French Mandate. There was an attempt to design an official common history book, but it did not succeed.

[17] Pouligny, B. "The Forgotten Dimensions of Transitional Justice Mechanisms: Cultural Meanings and Imperatives for Survivors of Violent Conflicts" in *Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs*, 10 (2004). http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/themes/re-imaginingpeace/va/resources/forgotten_dimensions_pouligny.pdf

Indeed, based on my studies, I learned that the younger generation born during the 1990s needs to receive specific attention as "it is the generation that inherits the experience of violence as still living memory, and which molds and converts this remembrance into some form of collective memory or historical knowledge. It is in this crucial interval that the past can be frozen into fixed mythology or comprehended in its historical complexity, and in which the cycles of revenge can be perpetuated or interrupted. The moment of transmission is important to dwell on because it is a moment of real danger; but also of genuine hope and possibility."[18] I recognize that many of the reasons why this process of critical reflection of the past is absent in the new generation may lie in the Lebanese education system and in the absence of a large-scale Peace Education program. My approach was an attempt to undertake this process in the university context.

Peace Education and the Role of Civil Society

Peace Education in Lebanon is mainly promoted by non-governmental organizations. Usually these are interreligious groups, such as Nahwa al-Muwatiniya (Towards Citizenship), Adyan (Religions), the Arab Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue, the Forum for Development, Dialogue and Culture (FDCD), the Initiative of Change, Umam, IPRA, Mouvement Social, Offre-Joie, etc., as well as artists, intellectuals and online activists.[19] Many initiatives in civil society have contributed to promoting tolerance and peace since the late 1990s, and especially in the last decade. Grassroots student dialogue clubs have flourished in a number of secondary schools.[20] They conduct off-campus programs and learning projects, weekend workshops, artistic events, summer camps, and participate in virtual social platforms. All share common goals: increasing tolerance, deconstructing stereotypes, reducing prejudices, changing visions of self and other, building interreligious/inter-sectarian bridges, reinforcing a sense of collective identity, contributing to conflict resolution, etc.[21]

International organizations are also involved in the Peacebuilding process. In particular because the end of the 1990s, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Lebanon and the Arab Region Office of the Global Youth Network Association (GYAN), based in Beirut have actively promoted measures for positive youth action.[22] In 2013, the UNDP gathered 10 national non-governmental organizations for a training program in Truth and Reconciliation issues: the Permanent Peace Movement, Development for People and Nature Association, ALEF, Nahwa al-Muwatiniya, Peace Initiative, Volunteers Without Borders, Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace, NGOs Platform of Saida, Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue, and the Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training. In fact, the UNDP Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon Project has been supporting the process of a national civil society platform on civil peace since 2011. As a result of the process and this 2013 gathering, a National Campaign for Truth and Reconciliation was launched that included practical steps to be implemented. This led up to a national reconciliation conference in 2015. These were: 1) research the causes, events and outcomes of the diverse wars in Lebanon, 2) implement field research with various sectors of Lebanese society to understand their perception of the causes, lived experiences, and impacts of the war in Lebanon, as well as experiences in remembering and commemorating it, 3) take stock of international reconciliation experiences and the possibility of applying them in Lebanon, 4) consult with a wide spectrum of segments of Lebanese society in a process that leads

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[18] Hoffman, E. "The Balm of Recognition: Rectifying Wrong through the Generations." In *Human Rights, Human Wrongs*, edited by N. Owen, 29. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[19] Chrabieh, *Voix-es de paix au Liban.*

[20] Chrabieh, P. *La gestion de la diversité religieuse au Liban. Visions de jeunes du secondaire*. Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 2009.

[21] For more information, refer to Chrabieh, *Voix-es de paix au Liban.*

[22] United Nations Country Team. "UN Task Force on Youth: Terms of Reference". *UNDG*. 2003. www.undg.org/archive_docs/4394-Youth_Theme_Group_TOR__Lebanon_.doc; United Nations Development Program. "National Human Development Report: Youth and Development. Executive Summary: 4. 1998.

to the development of the national agenda, 5) organize a national reconciliation conference, and 6) support civil society Peacebuilding initiatives.[23]

Social Cohesion Education in Schools

A survey of the national curricula shows that, throughout the 20th century, authorities have viewed education as a potentially unifying force.[24] The official curricula launched after 1943 consistently articulated a desire to bring together the various confessional factions to form a cohesive nation through civic education, but apparently with little success. According to Frayha,[25] social studies curricula and textbooks have been lacking an important theme in educating students about their society, that is, pluralism. In *Rethinking Education for Social Cohesion* (edited by Maha Shuayb),[26] the authors of several chapters state that Lebanon placed considerable emphasis on developing an educational system geared towards promoting social cohesion and that the Taif Agreement proposed education as a major means for promoting social cohesion. Consequently, the main objective of the curriculum was to promote citizenship education and social cohesion. The agreement called for schooling that socializes children into national unity within the framework of Lebanon's Arab identity. The subsequent Plan for Educational Reform emphasized national integration through instruction with a mandatory standardized history and civics curriculum in all schools.

However, the sectarian groups opposed the plan. Consequently, a New Framework for Education in Lebanon was conceived with two broad aims: the development of individuals able to address others in a spirit of responsible, cooperative citizenship, who could build a cohesive Lebanese society, and who would be willing to put the common good ahead of personal interests. The new curriculum was issued in 1997, but the new national history curriculum and textbook have not yet been approved, mainly because of the controversy surrounding recent history. In Shuayb's analysis, this curriculum was developed from an authoritarian approach, neglecting humanitarian ideologies in citizenship education and instead overemphasizing the role of the citizen rather than the development of the personality.

Schools now determine what history they teach and the concepts are, in most cases, contradictory. My students often expressed their frustration at knowing that what they were taught was one-sided and/or inaccurate. There is fear among many historians and educators that because no consensus about a common version of recent history has been reached and taught in schools, new generations are doomed to repeat the past, with most of them learning history from their parents, sectarian political parties and the media.

Peace Education in the University Context

Peace Education in the university context, i.e., including undergraduate and graduate courses on Peace or even a pedagogical approach related to Peace issues in the Humanities academic curriculum, is considered to be a rare phenomenon. Little attention has been paid so far to the inclusion of Peace programs in universities. They are considered to be low priorities along with other fields within social studies and the humanities. Many avoid giving too much attention and too many resources to Peace Studies programs out of fear that the program may become politicized. Additionally, more emphasis is

[23] UNDP. "Lebanese NGOs Join Effort to Contribute to Truth and Reconciliation in the Country." June 2013. http://www.undp.org.lb/communication/publications/downloads/nl3_en.pdf

[24] Ghosn, I. K. "The Quest for National Unity: Rhetoric and Reality of School Curricula in Lebanon." In *Curriculum Development: Perspectives from around the World*, edited by J. Kirylo and A. Nauman, 208-224. Chicago: Association for Childhood Education International, 2010.

[25] Frayha, N. "Religious Conflict and the Role of Social Studies for Citizenship Education in the Lebanese Schools between 1920 and 1983." PhD diss., Stanford University, 1985.

[26] Shuayb, M. *Rethinking Education for Social Cohesion. International Case Studies*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2012.

placed on subjects considered to be tangible and have practical value for competition in the local, regional, and global marketplaces.[27]

Some exceptions can be noted, however, that link Peace Education to Interfaith Dialogue: St Josef University offers a Master's degree in Muslim-Christian Relations. Other universities, such as Balamand, founded Centers for Interfaith Dialogue. Al-Makassed, a single faith-based organization that owns a university with an Institute of Islamic Studies, offers courses in Christianity taught by Christian believers. It also organizes gatherings between Christian and Muslim villages. The Imam Sadr Foundation works on reconciliation through academic institutions (conferences and workshops) and through development projects to improve the living conditions of the underprivileged.

Secular initiatives also exist: In 2005, the Lebanese American University (LAU) signed a five-year partnership with the United Nations Association of the United States of America to implement the "Global Classrooms" methodology and bring in the United Nations model to five hundred students from seventy seven different high schools. Far beyond training in international diplomacy, students were taught life skills – a set of personal and professional attitudes that are important for the future leaders of an increasingly interdependent world (cultivating a true sense of humility, assuming multiple responsibilities, acquiring work ethics, tolerating diversity, shunning prejudices, etc.).

My Peace Education Approach: Characteristics and Application in the Lebanese University Context

I began to develop my own pedagogical approach at the University of Montreal (Quebec, Canada), where I used to teach World Religions and Interfaith/Intercultural Dialogue (2004-2006). Back in Lebanon, I had to adapt my knowledge and experience to the local context at St Josef University of Beirut, Notre Dame University and Holy Spirit University (USEK). Fortunately, I was given relative freedom, especially at St Josef and USEK, to expand and apply my methodology for teaching about religions, cultures and politics in Lebanon and Southwestern Asia. My classes were attended by three thousand undergraduate and graduate students from 2007 to 2014. They were from different religious (25% Muslim, 40% Christian, 7% Druze, and 28% other religious and non-religious affiliations), political (30% March 8 alliance and 35% March 14 alliance, the two major political movements in Lebanon, both including a variety of political parties/sectarian branches, with the first one defined as aligned with the Syrian regime and the second opposing it, and 25% politically independent students) and socio-economic (25% from upper class and 75% middle-class) backgrounds.

Major Characteristics

My Peace Education approach is interdisciplinary in nature. It combines Sciences of Religions (socio-historical approach, interfaith/intercultural dialogue), Irenology,[28] Conflict Resolution,[29] and the Psychosocial approach.[30] Apart from addressing the issues of political, economic, and cultural reconstruction and development, my approach also stresses the importance of dealing with the consequences of physical war on the Lebanese population, supporting the reconciliation process, protecting human rights and establishing a sense of social/national belonging. It further aims to encourage

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[27] Chrabieh, *Voix-es de paix au Liban.*
[28] Refer to Article 17 - "University Programs and Degrees" - of The International Agreement for the establishment of the United Nations University of Peace in Costa Rica (Resolution 31/111 of 14 December 1979, and Resolution 35/55 of 5December 1980).
[29]Refer to Fischer, R. "Sources of Conflict and Methods of Conflict Resolution."
http://www.aupeace.org/files/Fisher_SourcesofConflictandMethodsofResolution.pdf
[30] Interdisciplinarity is used here for several purposes: it allows for creativity and flexibility; our research topics fall in the interstices among traditional disciplines. Practical problems tackled in the classroom require interdisciplinary approaches.

research on Lebanon's national memory and history, a memory and history that would include diverse narratives,[31] paving the way for future generations in their fight to prevent physical violence.

This approach also includes an intercultural approach to education, with the aim of actively fighting against xenophobia, discrimination and ethnocentrism.[32] It is hoped that intercultural approaches will lead to increased and differentiated understandings of cultures and a desire to increase one's own knowledge of cultural customs, concepts, and values. Students begin the process of developing cultural awareness and communication strategies in an intercultural setting. They also learn how to revise or dispel stereotypes in a constructive way. By learning to reflect on the subjectivity of their own thoughts and language, they also learn to step outside boundaries and develop more critical literacy.[33] However, my Peace Education approach is not reducible to the cultural or religious/sectarian aspects, even if the Lebanese social-political system only addresses religious/sectarian diversity. Students are taught to understand and experience unity in human diversity beyond the religious/sectarian worldview. The basis of this educational pedagogy is the human being, who is perceived as a "whole". The goal of the approach is that students are neither uprooted from their multiple affiliations (religious, cultural, political, economic, sexual, etc.), nor from their personal experiences and stories.[34]

My approach shares common characteristics with other dialogic pedagogies that have stressed the educative potential of teacher-pupil interactions, refer to, for instance, *dialogic instruction*, which is characterized by the teacher's uptake of student ideas[35]; *dialogic inquiry*, which stresses the potential for collaborative group work and peer assistance to promote mutually responsive learning in the zone of proximal development[36]; and *dialogic teaching,* which is collective, reciprocal, cumulative and supportive.[37] Dialogue here is not "a mere technique to achieve some cognitive results; dialogue is a means to transform social relations in the classroom and to raise awareness about relations in society at large. Dialogue is a way to recreate knowledge as well as the way we learn. It is a mutual learning process."[38] Dialogue is obviously an important component of my approach.

One of the most pronounced weaknesses of the Lebanese education system is the lack of platforms for dialogue that encourage the sharing of students' visions and practices and a positive relational dynamic with the professor. Under the rigid Lebanese education system, the professor is the only one who can teach something to the students, who must in turn simply regurgitate the knowledge thrown at them without critically assessing it, and without the chance to offer any contributions. By engaging the students

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[31] Narratives play an important role in interpreting and fueling a conflict, thus they can play an equally central role in facilitating conviviality. Memorialization and history work can be used or mobilized to promote either conflict or Peacebuilding.

[32] Cambria, A. "L'Interculturel dans le Cadre Européen Commun de Référence."
http://www.hyperbul.org/numero7/refl/refl7_ac.htm
Messarra, A. "La religion dans une pédagogie interculturelle – Le cas du Liban." *Revue internationale d'éducation* no. 36 (2004): 101-110.
Gundara, J. *Interculturalism, Education and Inclusion.* London: Paul Chapman, 2000.

[33] Furstenberg, G., S. Levet, K. English, and K. Maillet. "Giving a Virtual Voice to the Silent Language of Culture". *Language Learning & Technology* 5, no. 1 (2001): 55-102.

[34] Refer here to Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: Continuum, 1999. This classic work describes a revolutionary approach to pedagogy as the education of all humans, especially those who exist on the margins of society, to be transformed from controlled objects to empowered agents. Dialogue is at the heart of Freire's pedagogy. Through their dialogical encounters with others, which are first facilitated by teachers and educators, people develop the capacity to think and act critically in the world.

[35] Nystrand, M. *Opening Dialogue: Understanding the Dynamics of Language and Learning in the English Classroom.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1997.

[36] Wells, G. *Dialogic Inquiry: Towards a Sociocultural Practice and Theory of Education.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

[37] Alexander, R. J. *Towards Dialogic Teaching: Rethinking Classroom Talk.* Thirsk, UK: Dialogos, 2004.

[38] Shor, I., and P. Freier. "What Is the Dialogical Method of Teaching?" *Journal of Education* 169, no. 3 (1987): 11-31.

through dialogue, the professor creates a more equal and safer environment where students feel they can contribute to a discussion and express themselves more freely.

Dialogical interaction and action are essential to allowing students to share their individual and collective narratives of the war before the professor can start offering the students the tools to critically deconstruct those narratives and reflect upon them for the purpose of promoting peace. For this reason, many of the methods used in my Peace Education approach include dialogical interaction between the students and the professor and among the students themselves. I strive not only to stress the importance of established facts (forensic truth) but also to introduce two other notions of truth (narrative truths)[39]: the notion of the subjective, which organizes personal and collective memories and lends sense to them; and what is composed in the realm of fantasy and art (imagined), which prevents what happened from being forgotten and occurring again. Most young people feel they have nothing extraordinary to tell. I challenge this idea by having students participate in cooperative sharing activities, which allows them to gain confidence in sharing their own experiences.

Through interactive practices and an emphasis on cooperation, students are provided with space – a boundless, multi-dimensional continuum that is itself an entity, a relationship between entities, and a part of a conceptual framework – in which to deconstruct misconceptions, undergo constructive analysis, and develop their own identities and a sense of national belonging. There, others can exist and everyone can coexist, share responsibility for the act of learning, and become social actors and creative citizens working on both individual and collective projects.[40] My approach is aimed at fostering participatory attitudes and creating links between the students and with myself.

Application in Classrooms' Settings

Below are examples of activities I have implemented in my classrooms as applications of my Peace Education approach and their learning outcomes:

a) Group workshops (Restorative Justice versus Punitive Justice; Conflict Resolution in the Southwestern Asia; Youth and Peacebuilding in Lebanon/Project Proposals – planning for joint community activities; Christians in the Southwestern Asian region – current situation and future perspectives; Muslim-Christian dialogues – forms, obstacles, future perspectives; *Putting Yourself in the Other's Shoes* – Racial profiling in an airport; Banning alcohol in Saida –South Lebanon).

b) Documentary screenings and analyses (War in Lebanon: Al-Jazeera series and 'West Beirut' by Ziad Doueiri, Peacebuilding: 'Against the Current' by Adyan).

c) Debates/class discussions and outdoor agoras (Secularism and Civil Marriage; Conflict Resolution Simulation; Religious Freedom).

d) Field Trips (Muslim-Christian Spiritual Encounter every March 25th – Notre Dame College, Jamhour, Lebanon; Mosques and Churches, Byblos, Lebanon).

e) Culinary projects (making traditional cultural/religious main dishes and desserts, individual and group cooking projects, eating together in class, debates).

f) Virtual dialogue platforms (publishing posts, articles, and personal stories using social media; analyzing digital and interactive storytelling projects, e.g., Shankaboot).

g) Art workshops: I ask my students to individually and collectively express their visions of Peace using visual art at least twice per semester.

Anti-war art and peace art can express testimonies of war's destruction, resistance to war, and/or transformation, inspiration and vision. Art has an incredibly important role to play in the pursuit of Peace because: i-1) it is an amazing way to channel a sense of collective urgency. In group workshops, students

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[39] Refer to Boraine, A., and J. Levy. *The Healing of a Nation?* Cape Town: Justice in Transition, 1995.
[40] Chrabieh, P. *Religious Pluralism and Dialogue (THE-213 Manual)*. Kaslik, Lebanon: Pontifical Faculty of Theology, Holy Spirit University (USEK), 2012.

from different backgrounds learn how to create 'shared spaces' that may help them better understand each other's beliefs and practices; i-2) its power to promote peace lies in its emotive nature. Art can help students feel the pathos and waste of war and help to instill a desire and commitment to end war and work for peace.[41]

    h)   Storytelling sessions including digital storytelling activities at least three times per semester.

Storytelling has been widely applied in many settings.[42] The story is one of the most fundamental building blocks of human culture. Storytelling encourages students to explore their unique expressiveness and heightens a student's ability to communicate thoughts and feelings in an articulate, lucid manner.[43] Students are also encouraged to resolve interpersonal conflicts nonviolently. Both telling a story of a war experience and listening to it encourage students to use their imaginations, thus empowering them and contributing to building their self-confidence and personal motivation.[44]

Storytelling activities in my classrooms included the sharing of oral stories and creative writing with an assignment using digital storytelling, which is the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories by combining a variety of media, including graphics, audio-video and Web publishing, on a blog and Facebook page. The topics used range from personal tales to the recounting of historical events, from exploring life in one's community to the search for life in other corners of the universe, and everything in between. Digital stories are "multimedia sonnets" and the stories told "assemble in the ether as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, a gaggle of invisible histories which, when viewed together, tell the bigger story of our time, the story that defines who we are".[45]

There are numerous ways that Storytelling and Digital Storytelling can be used in education. I usually tell my students my own war stories and show them my digital stories to serve as examples, capture their attention, increase their interest, facilitate discussion about the topics presented, and make abstract and conceptual content more understandable. After viewing examples of digital stories, students are given an assignment in which they are asked to tell theirs. The process capitalizes on the creative talents of students as they begin to research and tell stories of their own and learn to use the library and Internet tools to perform in-depth research to complement their narratives. In addition, students who participate in this process may develop enhanced communications skills by learning to organize their ideas, ask questions, express opinions, and construct narratives. It also can help students as they learn to create stories for an audience and present their ideas and knowledge in an individual and meaningful way. Furthermore, when digital stories are published online, students have the opportunity to share their work with their peers and gain valuable experience in critiquing their own and other students' work, which can promote increases in emotional intelligence and social learning. Digital storytelling appeals to students

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[41] Refer to Deaver, S., and G. McAuliffe, G. "Reflective Visual Journaling during Art Therapy and Counseling Internships: A Qualitative Study." *Reflective Practice* 10, no. 5, (2009): 615-632; Feen-Calligan, H. R. "Constructing Professional Identify in Art Therapy through Service-Learning and Practica." *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* 22, no. 3 (2005): 122-131; Fish, B. J. "Formative Evaluation Research of Art-Based Supervision in Art Therapy Training." *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* 25, no. 2 (2008): 70-77.

[42] Senehi, J. "Constructive Storytelling in Intercommunal Conflicts: Building Community, Building Peace." In *Reconcilable Differences. Turning Points in Ethnopolitical Conflict,* edited by Sean Byrne and Cynthia Irvin, 96-115. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 2000; Senehi, J. "Constructive Storytelling: A Peace Process." *Peace and Conflict Studies* 9, no. 2 (2002): 41-63; Boulding, E. *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000; Cohen, C. "Creative Approaches to Reconciliation." In *The Psychology of Resolving Global Conflicts: From War to Peace*, edited by M. Fitzduff and C. E. Stout, 69-102. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2005; Reardon, B. A., and A. Cabezudo. *Learning to Abolish War: Teaching toward a Culture of Peace*. New York: Hague Appeal for Peace, 2002.

[43] Chrabieh, *Voix-es de paix au Liban*; Chrabieh, *La gestion de la diversité religieuse au Liban.*

[44] Chrabieh, P., *La gestion de la diversité religieuse au Liban.*

[45] Meadows, D., BBC Capture Wales Team. "A Guide to Digital Storytelling."
http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/audiovideo/sites/yourvideo/pdf/aguidetodigitalstorytelling-bbc.pdf

with diverse learning styles and can also foster collaboration when students work in groups. It also provides value in enhancing the student experience through personal ownership and accomplishment.

Applications are not standardized. I emphasize that there is no single recipe that can be used in all cases, times and contexts. Each university and every class group are different and have their own specifics that are taken into account. However, most learning outcomes are common:

  – Understanding the multiple causes of wars and the psychological factors that promote violence.
  – Learning about the human dimension in war and peace issues.
  – Understanding the negative impact of the blank-page policy and becoming aware of its political and social implications.
  – Identifying and deconstructing stereotypes (religious-sectarian, political, gender, etc.).
  – Recognizing the positive value of diversity, including religious and cultural.
  – Understanding the social-emotional aspects of reconciliation and discovering alternatives to violence.
  – Discovering the contributions of peace activists and faith-based actors to the Peacebuilding process.
  – Recognizing the internal and external obstacles to good communication, understanding the different components of communication, and becoming aware of the importance of both verbal and non-verbal communication in resolving conflicts.
  – Understanding and applying the dissonance theory, whereby describing an opponent's perspective makes one disagree with it slightly less.[46]
  – Understanding and applying the basics of team work, solidarity, mutual respect, cooperation and dialogue.
  – Learning to have a visceral experience of foreignness brought into the body, which begins the process of familiarization, thus leading to a better understanding of different and shared tastes and values (refer here to the Culinary workshops) – Diplomacy of the Dish.
  – Creating offline and online shared spaces and narratives.
  – Instilling a desire and commitment to end war and work for sustainable peace beyond the classroom.

Positive changes and Obstacles

Assessment and Positive Changes

I usually evaluate my approach based on students' examinations results, my assessment of their participation in diverse activities, quantitative evaluations conducted by the administrations of the universities, and mid-semester and end-of semester qualitative evaluations. Below is a summary of the results of these evaluations:

Of the three thousand students, 60% stated that they acquired new and alternative knowledge in a dialogical environment that helped them to gain self-confidence and often inner peace, improve critical thinking, encourage cooperation, respect each other, be active learners, but still to remain independent in their dialogue.

Storytelling sessions were highly valued for their contributions to positive changes in perceptions and relationships on a micro level and to revealing emotional memories, whether conflictual or convivial, that are passed on from generation to generation. This allowed students to both relate better to and distance themselves from macro-historical narratives and memories. These sessions helped students to understand the pain endured by their families, groups, communities, and others, to recognize the diversity

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[46] Aronson, E., *Nobody left to hate: Teaching compassion after Columbine.* New York: Henry Holt, 2000 Aronson, E., and Patnoe, S., *Cooperation in the Classroom: The Jigsaw Method* (3rd ed.). New York: Pinter & Martin Ltd., 2011.

of individual and collective memories/narratives and to see that this diversity should be gathered to build a national memory/narrative.

According to one of my students: "Storytelling activities helped me learn about history as the co-presence of historical subjectivities rather than a linear juxtaposition of facts. Such a vision of history would help deconstruct the current top-down approach to teaching the history of Lebanon and is responsible for promoting political disempowerment. It will help to develop a shared vision of the past, present and future."

Positive war memories were shared in the classroom, especially stories of interreligious/inter-sectarian dialogue and conviviality. A Druze student recounted the story of her family, who was able to pass through various checkpoints with the help of their childhood Christian friends to access a hospital during the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982. During the family's stay in the hospital, the Druze militia committed a targeted assassination in the Christian area surrounding the hospital. Despite all of this, the family's Christian friends protected them and ensured they were able to return safely home.

Interreligious conviviality was mentioned by many students as their way of understanding peace and defining their identity as Lebanese. One student argued that peace comes with "the acceptance of the fact that I am a rock among many other rocks, here to stay, but nonetheless working in harmony with other rocks to allow the structure to stand." Another student associated the idea of being Lebanese with "living in a plural society and respecting the opinions of others."

In fact, a large number of students saw peace as harmonious relations between Lebanese people, whether interreligious, intersectarian or inter-human. It was clear in their artistic work, interventions in class and written assignments. The artistic work of students offered the most interesting, witty, and sometimes emotional expressions of the students' hope for the possibility of harmonious inter-human relations. One of the students drew a musical key with the caption "we are all part of the symphony!" Another student used a famous juice slogan. He drew a carton can of juice, and then added all of the different groups that form Lebanon as if they were the main ingredients, with the slogan "There is a little bit of all of the fruits in Lebanon!" Most of the students who were majoring in architecture linked their vision of peace in Lebanon with the construction of a monument. They drew blueprints and used different geometric forms to represent Lebanon; people of different groups formed the foundations of the edifice.

Changes in worldviews, behaviors and practices were reported by 15% of the students. They became peace activists in their respective contexts and maintained contact with me via online platforms. Many became authors or followers of the Red Lips High Heels online movement I founded or founded their own movements, organizations and cultural clubs, produced documentaries or organized youth camps. They often send me messages relating what they learned in the classroom with their social and political engagement. One student wrote: "We did not only learn about war and peace but we did peace in the classroom and beyond. We engaged in acts of civic responsibility."

Obstacles and Future Perspectives[47]

Peace Education in Lebanese universities faces many challenges, starting with the context itself, as previously described, that makes Peace Education hard to disseminate.

Additionally, there are prevailing misconceptions about the aims and nature of Peace Education –in my 'Theology of Dialogue' classrooms (Holy Spirit University/USEK), most students, who were future clergymen in the Christian Maronite community, perceived dialogue and peace to be "idealistic" concepts and attitudes, and believed that Christians should focus on surviving and defending their faith and existence using other means, including "just violence."

Peace Education in universities is usually applied on a small scale, such as in my classrooms; it is a socially isolated affair. It needs to be expanded to have a large-scale impact. There are many conditions for pursuing this expansion, such as support from private institutions and public authorities, sustained

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[47] This section reflects G. Salomon's (2011) 4 challenges of Peace Education mentioned before.

interaction between students and their teachers, interdependence in completing common tasks, etc. In the context of both formal and non-formal education, funding for projects and their sustainability are two major challenges. Only elite schools and universities can offer sufficiently long training and the much-needed follow-up support. Peace education should be considered a public good and, as such, should be offered as a free service to all.

Inequalities and discrimination are a major challenge. They do not disappear when the classroom doors close or when they open again. Students may continue pursuing opposing agendas, especially when they have unsupportive home environments. Even when they are equipped with a new way of perceiving themselves and the "others", they enter into a collision course with their social surroundings and their "unquestionable truths" through their homes, neighborhoods, sectarian communities, political parties and the media. Furthermore, in a context of continuous physical and psychological war and in a general atmosphere of hostility, especially when contradictory and mutually exclusive narratives exist that mirror each other and groups delegitimize each others' goals, histories, humanity and suffering, Peace Education is hard to disseminate. The chances for success may be very slim where the traditional media, politicians, and even the national educational system convey a mood of suspicion and animosity toward the "other."

Another obstacle facing Peace Education is the potential for the escalation of hostility among classmates. For this pedagogy to be effective, it needs to be disseminated on a large scale. This would require the use of the pedagogy in several schools and universities. Because of the bloated, inefficient, and corrupt public education system in Lebanon, not enough teachers and professors are currently equipped to use Peace Education in the classroom. Many professors still hold an outdated mentality that students have nothing to contribute and that interaction with students is useless. Their generation also suffers from the effects of the war, and, as a result, many might hold negative views of others. Furthermore, professors must ensure that the classroom is a safe space where students can express themselves freely without fear of reprisal but also where students respect others. When students share their narratives with others, there is a risk that other students who feel targeted might be offended, which would create a hostile environment. The educator must be skilled enough to prevent this and other explosive situations from occurring. Hence, training programs and recruitment must take place, and it is unlikely that there would be enough political will and public funds to make this happen in the near future.

Last but not least, many of the narratives I have collected during storytelling activities and then analyzed as part of my research were not experienced by the storytellers themselves. These stories belong to the students' parents, friends or colleagues. Despite this weakness, the process of re-encountering these memories as a mirror of the storyteller's own experiences of physical violence or as a trigger to critically reconsider his/her family's and political party's narratives is in itself extremely valuable. As such, these stories become an integral part of their own autobiographies, histories and identities. Trans-generational memory is indeed occurring; there are many students who hold strong emotions, especially resentment and anger, even in cases where it seems as if memories were not passed on and instead stayed in a hidden, silenced family past. I discovered that students born years after the initial traumatizing event can still become part of the traumatic process. New generations do inherit trauma from the previous generations. In that sense, personal stories and the inter-human interactions that result from Peace Education initiatives in the university context would have a far wider scope than the lifetimes of individuals. They belong to Lebanon's history, a history that "is not drawn linearly, but is a braid of stories."[48]

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[48] Zamon Davis, N. "Métissage culturel et médiation historique." In Conférences Marc Bloch. 1995. http://cmb.ehess.fr/document114.html