

Youth
Peace-builder
Network

Digital Peace-building Mentor's Lesson Plan
@Yonge and Davisville
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by International Education for Peace Institute 2017

Envisioning Peace

Lesson 1:
Why peace? Why digital peace?

Welcome & Self-introduction

Introducing YPN:

- The Youth Peace-builder Network (YPN) is a network of youth that learn about how to build peace, and work towards it through different activities and service projects.

- Once we as a group learn more about ideas and skills about peacebuilding, we can help and encourage our friends to do the same.

- By being here today, all of you have already shown those qualities that we often associate with being a leader. Why? How many of your friends and buddies are spending their weekend to think and learn about peace building? Probably not that many. So that means you have to be courageous enough to be different and do things that not many people are doing.

Discussion:

Question 1: Let's go around and each person share one example of an experience where you have helped to make peace—whether it is at home, at school, online or in the bigger community?

- It seems that all of us have had the experience of being a peace maker

Question 2: Did you enjoy being a peace builder? Do you think it was important? Why?

Question 3: Has any of you had experience of being a peace-maker in your online interaction with others? If so, do you think being an online peacemaker is important? And why?

- In learning about peacemaking, we will be paying a lot of attention thinking about the task of being a peace-builder on the Internet, what does that mean, what does it look like.

- Digital peace is important because these days, we all spend a lot of time online—whether it is playing games, researching for information, shop and buy things, watch movies, or communicate with our friends and family, the list goes on.

- But being an online peace-builder, however, requires us to be peacemaker offline as well. This is because digital technologies allow all conflicts—regardless of where they happen—to be easily exposed, captured and documented in digital format.

Activity:

- Every meeting, we will spend part of our time working on projects together.

- Because digital peacebuilding involves integrating peace-building knowledge and practices with knowledge about technologies, a lot of our activities will involve working with technology.

- Some of the activities that we are planning for include:
    - Building a robot
    - Assembling a computer
    - Creating rules for multi-player games that are conducive to peace and play them
    - Making film and sharing it with our friends and family on social media
    - Be a Wikipedian by sharing what we know about Youth Peace-builder Network onto Wikipedia

- In a lot of these activities, we will quickly realize that progress in science and technology involves understanding scientific principles and facts. The same can be said about peace-making. For us to be peace-builder, we need to learn and understand the social, ethical and spiritual principles that govern social reality, and to practice them in our lives.

- For today, as well as for our next meeting, we will build a robot. The idea with this exercise is to show how the principle of unity in diversity—a principle that is key to building peace and that we will learn more of later—is all around us, including in the structuring of a robot.

Lesson 2:
Defining Peace

Welcome & Recap of last meeting

Discussion:

Exercise: Everyone take 5 minutes to write your answers to the following questions and we will share them together afterwards:

1. **Define peace**

2. **What are the causes of peace?**

3. **Define conflict**

4. **What are the causes of conflict?**

Do you find these questions easy or hard to answer? Which ones are hardest? Why?

- A likely theme that will emerge is that peace is hard to define and understand, and that most people have not thought about it deeply.

- Also, the answers will likely show that we often think of peace in “static” and boring terms, but violence in “active” and “exciting” terms.

- Peace is not an easy topic to understand or talk about. It is much easier to understand conflict or violence. We tend to know violence when we see it. We would likely all agree on whether a particular act was violent or not. Is hitting someone violent? Is shooting a gun at other people violent? Is screaming angrily and aggressively violent? Is hugging someone violent?

- We are somewhat less certain when we talk about peace. What does a state of peace like look? If there is no violence or war, does that mean there is peace?

Exercise: Defining peace is very difficult. Consider the following statements or definitions of peace:

- **Peace is the absence of war**
- **Peace is a state of non-violence**
- **Peace is state of calmness or harmony**
- **Peace means that collaboration and mutual respect are the norm**
- **Peace means conditions of justice prevail**
- **Peace means everyone is happy**
- **Peace means that we treat everyone as members of one human family**
- **Peace is a state where there is no outright tension between nations**

Which definitions do you most agree with?

- All of these definitions tell us something about peace. That means peace is something that is more complex than can be represented by anyone of these definitions. Next time when we meet, we will look at 2 ways of understanding peace.

Activity: Robot building

Lesson 3:
Understanding Hot, Cold, Positive & Negative Peace

Welcome & Recap of previous lesson

Discussion

- Last time, we found that peace is not an easy topic to understand or talk about. It is much easier to understand conflict or violence. We tend to know violence when we see it. We would likely all agree on whether a particular act was violent or not. But peace is complex. For most of us, we do not systematically learn about peace.

- There are two axes that help us understand peace:

Negative Peace[1]

- Control/Cessation of violence—absence of war
- Separation of conflicting parties
- Focus on manifestations of conflict, not roots



Positive Peace

- Patterns of cooperation and integration
- State of social harmony from which all benefit
- Unity and diversity

[1] O'kane writes that positive peace is "…a pattern of cooperation and integration between major human groups…[It] is about people interacting in cooperative ways; it is about social organizations of diverse peoples who willingly choose to cooperate for the benefit of all humankind; it calls for a system in which there are no winners and losers – all are winners. It is a state so highly valued that institutions are built around it to protect and promote it." See "The Nature of Peace and Its Implications for Peace Education" Sandy and Perkins Jr., Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution, www.trinstitute.org/ojpcr/4_2natp.htm

Cold Peace[2]



- Little outright hostility, but a lack of mutuality
- Tendency towards isolationism and nationalism

Hot Peace

- Collaborative efforts to build bridges
- Establishment of points of unity
- Promotion of interdependence, human rights, democratization, erosion of national sovereignty

[2] The terms "hot peace" and "cold peace" are parallel to the terms "hot war" and "cold war." Based on the ideas of Galtung, negative peace is "a state requiring a set of social structures that provide security and protection from acts of direct physical violence committed by individuals, groups, or nations. The emphasis is…on control of violence. The main strategy is dissociation, whereby conflicting parties are separated…."

Exercise
Understanding Hot, Cold, Positive and Negative Peace

As small groups, consider the following scenarios and questions:

Scenario 1: Civil War in Serenadia

Serenadia has been in a state of civil war for a number of years. The warring parties come from two different ethnic groups who have a history of violence. The warring parties and the international community have agreed to the following arrangements to try to create peace:

- To form two countries;
- Each country will be predominately made up of members of one ethnic group; and
- Members of each ethnic group will be strongly encouraged to live in the country which is predominately made up of people of their ethnicity, and will be helped to re-locate.

Scenario 2: A Violent High School

At a local high school there have been a number of incidents of violence. The main issue has been around two "gangs" of students whose members often fight with each other during and after school. In order to deal with the situation the school has decided to take the following action:

- To hold trainings and workshops on peace and unity for all students and staff;
- To work with the larger community to understand what social, economic, ethnic, or political factors might be contributing to the formation of the "gangs" within the school;
- To train students to be peer leaders and interveners in situations of conflict; and
- To discipline instigators of the violence, but as part of the discipline to engage the gang members in joint activities and events.

For each of the scenarios consider the following questions:

- What kind of peace is likely to result from the efforts being taken (hot, cold, negative, positive)?

- What other actions would you suggest in each scenario to create a hot/positive peace?

Lesson 4:
A Networked Perspective

Welcome & Recap of previous lesson

Discussion:

Exercise: What is a network? Have you ever been part of a network? Or use a network?

- A network is made up of entities and the connection between them.

Exercise: Explain why the following are examples of network:

- **Family**
- **School**
- **The Toronto Transit System**
- **The Internet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dxcc6ycZ73M**
- **The World**

- Digital technologies such as the Internet have given rise to a networked perspective about social reality that goes beyond thinking about society as either in terms of group or in individualistic term.

- Instead, it sees social reality as constituted by patterns of connection and interaction between diverse entities.

- The characteristic of a network is shaped by the qualities of people in the network and their connections.

- The network itself is a distinct entity, greater than the sum of its parts.

- In *The Chemistry of Social Networks*, Nicholas Christakis uses the examples of diamond and graphite to explain this point:

    - So you can take carbon atoms and you can assemble the carbon atoms into graphite and here we put together a particular hexagonal pattern of ties and you get sheets of graphite and this graphite is soft and dark. Or we can take the same carbon atoms and assemble the bonds between the carbon atoms differently and we get diamond, which is hard and clear. These properties of softness and darkness or hardness and clearness first of all differ dramatically, not because the carbon is different. The carbon is the same in both, but rather because

of the ties between the carbon atoms. And second these properties are not properties of the carbon atoms. They're properties of the group, properties of the collection of carbon atoms. Therefore, when we take constituent elements and assemble them to a larger whole, this larger whole can have properties that we could not have foreseen merely by studying the individual elements and properties which do not reside within the individual elements.

- Whether our networked social reality in the digital age is going to be "diamond" or "graphite", depends on the kind of person we are as individuals and how we relate to others around us.

- Likewise, whether the world is going to be peaceful or not depends on the character of people that inhabit the world, and how each of us relate to others.

Activity: TBA

Lesson 5:
Identifying The Different Types of Peace

Welcome & recap of previous lesson

Discussion:

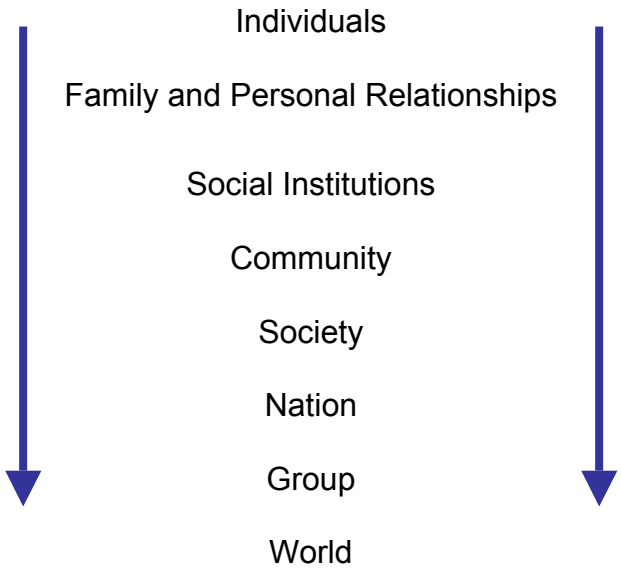
- From a networked perspective, what happens in one part of the network affects the whole.
- Like the human body, when one part of the body is not well, we feel lousy all around.
- This is important to keep in mind when we talk about peace.
- When we talk about peace we often think first about "world peace" or peace between nations or groups of peoples.
- But we can also talk about peace in a more comprehensive way.
- We can identify four general categories or forms of peace (These four categories appear as common sense. The challenge, however, is to illustrate convincingly how they are related to each other):

Category	Definition
Intrapersonal Peace	Peace with Oneself/Inner Peace
Interpersonal Peace	Peace with other Individuals/Relational Peace
Intergroup Peace	Peace between Groups of People/Societal or Community Peace
International Peace	Peace between Nations/World Peace

Exercise: Identify or describe an example from the real world of each of the following:

1. **Intrapersonal peace**
2. **Interpersonal peace**
3. **Intergroup peace**
4. **International peace**

- These forms of peace move from the smallest social units to the largest:



- How are the different forms of peace related to each other?

- When we talk about international peace we rarely talk about intrapersonal peace. Similarly, when we talk about peace within a family, we often don't connect it to peace between large groups or nations.

- But in important respects the various forms of peace are interrelated, and indeed indivisible. This is why we might call peace "holistic".

- Our individual choices are often shaped by the circumstances and beliefs of the groups of which we are a part. For example, we often feel pressure to act in ways encouraged by our groups of friends. Similarly, when an individual feels internal conflict, they sometimes express this through conflict with other people.

- One example that illustrates the interconnection between these different kinds of peace is this story about the transformation of a former white supremacist:

> I can look back on my youth and see that the level to which I dehumanized others. As a skinhead recruiter in the 1990s, I was deeply entrenched in hate. I realize now this was actually a reflection of how disconnected and dehumanized I was inside. I was so numb that I couldn't recognize the humanity in others and certainly couldn't conceive of the pain or suffering I was causing... Everything I did, I chose to do because I got a sense of power when I felt powerless, significance and attention when I felt invisible, brotherhood and acceptance when I felt unlovable.
>
> I am often asked how had I lost my humanity. How does one become a skinhead? My reply is this: I didn't lose my humanity. I traded it for acceptance and approval until there was nothing left. I am not a victim here; I was a perpetrator who victimized others…
>
> Compassion was at the heart of my transformation. Compassion from my children who created the safe space for me to love and feel loved. To open up and allow my frozen heart to begin to thaw. Compassion from my mother who despised what I was all about in those years, but never gave up on me. Compassion from a mentor (ironically born Jewish) who also saw the humanity in me helping heal the wounds that had influenced my dark choices. They all saw my humanity when I was incapable of seeing it myself.
>
> When we are compassionate, we hold a mirror up to that person and allow them to see their humanity reflected back. One of the hardest things in the world to do is to have compassion for someone who has no compassion, but those are the very people who need it most.
>
> There is nothing more powerful than receiving compassion from someone who we feel we don't deserve it from, especially if that person belongs to a group we had once dehumanized.
>
> As human beings, we can operate from one of two places, fear or love. As a society, we must choose to respond to this darkness with love…
>
> As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding a deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."
>
> https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/i-was-a-neo-nazi-i-know-the-cure-for-hate/article36037961/?ref=http://www.theglobeandmail.com&

Activity: TBA

Lesson 6:
Peace and the concept of unity

Welcome & Recap of previous lesson

Discussion

- Unity in diversity is the essential condition that creates and maintains life, and its absence is the main cause of conflicts, dissension, disorder, and lack of progress. In other words, unity in diversity is a requirement of peace.

- Life is the process that emerges when two or more unique entities come together in a condition of unity.

- So life is the outcome of unity and is sustained as long as condition of unity is maintained.

- E.g.: in the human body, atoms, cells, organs, and systems function together in a unified whole in order for the body to live, grow, and remain healthy.

- In the social realm, individuals and groups unite to form families, communities, and societies.

Exercise: What is unity? Does unity mean uniformity? Why or why not?

- Unity is the purposeful integration of two or more unique entities in a state of harmony and cooperation, resulting in the creation of a new evolving entity, usually of a higher order.

Exercise: Use the example of the human body to demonstrate the truth that unity only works if there is also diversity.

- Human body is made up of many different organs and systems. Among other things, we each have a heart, lungs, and a brain. The only way for these important organs to function is for them to work together: the brain signals the lungs to take in oxygen; the oxygen is circulated in the blood by the heart, which also receives its cue from the brain. The oxygenated blood feeds the brain, etc.

- It is a cooperative relationship, in which a variety of organs with diverse functions, work together in a fully integrated manner to sustain life. If, even for a brief moment, this relationship breaks down, the life of the whole organism is endangered.

- We would be very limited in what we could accomplish if we were just a heart, or a set of lungs.

- Indeed, it is only through the presence of many different types of cells, organs and systems that the body can exist and thrive. The more diverse the components, the more advanced the life of an organism can become.

- We can see this through the comparison between the human body and an amoeba:

    - **Questions for discussion:**
    - **How are the two different?**
    - **What effect does diversity have on the capabilities of the human body?**
    - **Are these same capabilities present in an amoeba?**

- The environmental sciences also show us how important diversity is to maintaining life. This is why it is important to maintain biodiversity in the ecosystem.

- As in the body or the ecosystem, we can see that human social systems—such as our families, communities and societies—also reflect the principles of "unity is life" and "unity in diversity".

- Human groups, institutions and systems are composed of many different people. Each person has unique thoughts, feelings, talents and capabilities, and yet, at the core of our humanity *we are all noble beings with the capacities to love, to understand, and to create*. However, the manner in which we each develop and express these capacities is *unique*.

- When our various characteristics are brought together in a unified and just framework, we can accomplish great things. It is through the implementation of unity in diversity that science develops; that new technologies are invented (recall the simple robot that we built—and how the different parts fit together in a unified way); that equal, just, free and prosperous societies are formed; and that a civilization of peace is created.

Activity: TBA

Lesson 7
Universal Laws Governing Human Life

Welcome & Recap of previous lesson

Discussion

Exercise: As a group, discuss: What is law? Can you give some examples of law? What happen when a person breaks the law?

- We call unity a *"law"* because the observance of unity and the disregard for unity each have objective, demonstrable and consistent effects. Wherever healthy life processes are observed, unity is present. Wherever illness, lack of progress, or conflict is observed, unity is missing.

- When in operation, laws are not subject to personal opinions. In other words, laws operate whether or not someone likes, believes in, or accepts the law. If we disregard laws, we must face the consequences that automatically follow.

- There are two types of universal laws that govern human life: scientific laws and spiritual laws.

- **Exercise: One of the *scientific laws* is the law of gravity. What happens when you try to defy gravity? What happens when you make use of gravity?**

    - Imagine yourself with someone on a seven-story building, and someone says, " I don't believe in the law of gravity. I am a big person and intelligent and free. I am not going to let a superstitious law that I have not seen dictate what I can do"

    - Yet, we all know that if this individual steps off the roof of that building out into the air, we might imagine the law of gravity immediately replying: "hello sir, please come down and let me introduce myself!"

    - It doesn't matter whether one believes in the law of gravity or not: if it is disregarded, one will suffer the consequences. The only way to be free in regard to the law of gravity is to understand it and to use it properly. As humanity improved its understanding of the law of gravity, we learnt to dive, to ski, and to fly! This was possible not because we tried to violate the law of gravity, but because we figured out its properties, obeyed it, and worked with it to our benefit.

- There is also the category of *spiritual laws*. One of the most important of these laws is the counterpart to the law of gravity: that is, the law of love.

- The law of love operates in human life. If we go against it, we suffer its consequences. It does not matter who we are or how powerful we are, we are subject to it. When a person violates the law of love, what arises instead is rejection, hatred, destruction, violence, and war.

- Just as with the law of gravity, the only way that we can be free in respect to the law of love is to learn *how* to love. *The more universal our love is, the more outstanding its outcome; whereas the more limited our observance of the law of love, the more dangerous its outcome.*

- An example of a limited love is when someone says, “I’m willing to kill others for the love of my family, group, religion, and country.” These are limited kinds of love. Therefore, the more limited that love is, the more destructive the outcome; and the more universal love is, the more creative the outcome will be.

Exercise: Can you recall the example of a former white supremacist and explain how his experiences demonstrate the law of love?

- True unity cannot occur through external force or control. Unity can only be achieved in conditions of fairness and justice, and through processes of decision-making that is democratic, integrative and unifying. Underlying this process is not coercion, but love.

- Love is that powerful force of attraction that brings people together and creates families, communities and civilizations.

- Many acts that cause suffering to others are performed in the name of “love.” Indeed, limited love is the cause of conflict.

- Peace requires that the greatest object of our love be love for all humanity.

- The force of love draws us into relationships and allegiances with other beings. The more universal and inclusive our love is, the greater is our capacity to create unity. If however, our love and allegiances are exclusive of others, various sorts of conflicts can arise.

Activity: TBA