

## *Teaching About Conflict Through Citizenship Education*

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**ABSTRACT** Beginning from the findings of a research project on the needs of teachers and learners in global citizenship education, this article develops a typology of ten modes of teaching about war and conflict. These range from those processes which are more likely to increase conflict, through neutral or passive stances, to those acting to challenge negative conflict through positive and active learning approaches. Ways to move peace education much higher up the agenda for schools and teacher education are explored. The question of what constitutes ‘useful knowledge’ for global survival is posed, and examples of stimulus material given. An active role for teachers is implied, to tackle both difference among people and indifference about war.

### **Introduction**

One of the starting points for this paper is a research project that a team at the Centre for International Education and Research at Birmingham have just completed on the needs of teachers and learners in global citizenship (Davies, Harber and Yamashita 2004). The project was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) under their Development Awareness Fund, in the context of the growth of citizenship education in schools and yet some uncertainty about the meanings of ‘global citizenship’ and how it could be taught. Through interviews and observations in case study primary and secondary schools in the West Midlands, we therefore explored what was understood by this notion of global citizenship, and, under this umbrella, what it was that students and teachers thought should be learned. We found that the most outstanding concern for students was war and conflict – and in the current context, not just historically. After giving some detail of these concerns, this paper attempts to develop a typology of different ways that schools teach about conflict before making more general arguments about the importance of peace education within a citizenship education framework, and the role of teachers in tackling both difference and indifference.

### **Student concerns about war**

In our study, student desires for learning content admittedly must be seen against the backdrop of the Iraq war, where debates were raging in the media, and where for some students with relatives either in Iraq or as soldiers there, there was an immediate concern. In some schools the anti-Muslim backlash after 9/11 was also still felt for students and teachers. Students of all ages wanted to know the causes of

war, how war was possible, the reasons for hate, and the reasons for UK involvement in Iraq.

*The past behind Iraq, and why it hates like America and stuff so much. The conflict in the Middle East I suppose, what's it all due to... I think North Korea and why it hates America, the past behind the wars and stuff*

*In Afghanistan and other places where there was war, what happened to them? That's what.*

Common phrases were 'we don't really know what's happening' 'how it starts', 'more of the facts, really'. 'what's going to be decided'. A few students wanted to learn about wars 'in the olden days', but for the vast majority the need was for a much more immediate focus:

*But it's us learning what's going on now, that's what we want to learn about.*

Together with the basic understanding of why it happened and is happening now, comes the need for specific knowledges about war, violence and weapons:

*'what the country's actually doing to the people'; 'what other people are doing about it to save it'; 'Why they're torturing them'; 'People who get to make decisions about the war' 'why some countries fight and not others'; 'why do they want the oil in Iraq?' 'Why did they ever invent guns?'*

There was genuine puzzlement about how war is possible, why we can't live in peace:

*Why can't we just, like, accept other people, like, religion and things like that, and just...they start war about that and things like that...Why do we have to make weapons at all...when we can blow up the world three times, I mean, what's the point of making that...*

It was instructive how critical young people were of Blair and Bush. Hypocrisy was not missed, even by primary age children:

*Yeah how come we're accusing the Iraqis when America has 'weapons of mass destruction'?*

*..with the war, is that, if two kids are fighting or something, a grown-up will always come down, 'stop fighting, talk it over', they all say it to us, but they don't do it themselves, so they're real hypocrites really. Because it's true, because they could talk it over, I know it's hard and difficult, but if they wanted too, they could talk it over with Saddam Hussein, I know he's not being really reasonable, but if they wanted to they could push for it so there wasn't a war.*

*They don't care if they bomb some other country, but if something happens to them, it'd be like the end of the world, no offence like, but that's what they think.*

*I think it's the Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld from America, it showed a picture of him shaking Saddam Hussein's hand, because when he helped him killing... maybe it was the Kurds I'm not too sure. You just feel you know, this man now, you're saying we've got to destroy this man and ten years ago these two were over here... and it just feels like you're part of a little game really.*

Some students would have a sophisticated awareness that there were different sides to the story, and that that the information or spin they got was 'one-sided' or pro-government; they thought they should read other national newspapers to get away from the bias in the UK press..

*I think we should have different, other thoughts on other countries, like views on it, because it's a bit one sided and we don't really know what's actually happening. My dad's got like channels in Iraq and it's totally different what they're saying to what we're saying really.*

*And in the newspaper I saw that they were saying that Muslim religious building, it has biological weapons in it, and that's making assumptions which are untrue.*

*I think sometimes they want to be more politically correct... I don't know whether that's the right term, but they often want to make sure that they're not going to be seen as going against our government and what we ought to be all thinking..... we're all meant to be thinking that we should definitely going to war and the news is often a lot more biased in that opinion, because the government are pumping it out...*

Yet in spite of this thirst for knowledge, understanding and a range of viewpoints, and in spite of a clear potential for critical understanding and social and political critique, students felt they were being short changed. Little about contemporary conflict was ever tackled in depth. Young people of all ages felt they were being sold short in terms of information and understanding:

*sometimes it's harder to understand what's really going on because people don't explain in proper detail to us.*

Children in one primary school explained how they had done a 'little bit' about World War Two, but next to nothing on the current war.

*They only thing we've got to do that is, like, newspapers, kids' newspapers, and there's only, like, half a page, not much.*

Some teachers did seize opportunities to tackle current events, but many teachers and headteachers lacked confidence to do this, or were uneasy in dealing with the issues of Iraq or of terrorism. We see in the following quotations almost an empty space where educators' own understandings are not formulated:

*Well we haven't really talked to any great extent to be honest, about it, because I don't know much about it myself, we just talked very kind of, almost kind of... just generally about Iraq, like they say 'what do you think Mrs H...?', 'Well I don't know, it's a very difficult question'*

*The children did mention the horrific images some of them had seen of September 11th, and I think as staff, we didn't know quite how to deal with it. I mean, because of none of us are old enough to remember the war, we hadn't had anything like that happen in our lives, so how were we supposed to cope with it.... So we would just keep to the routine, rather push it to the side I am afraid, in order to help the children settle, because that is what this school needs.*

*I mean obviously if you're talking about weapons you've got to understand the reason why people have weapons and so we're not just talking about war, we're talking about protection as well. Taking the fact that people are trying to avoid war by having the weapons, I mean that's what the Americans claim, isn't it? And the fact that if one country feels it's stronger than another country then may feel that they won't be picked, I mean Korea is in a similar position at the moment, isn't it, where it's developing weapons. I don't know really, I've not really ever thought about it that deeply to be honest, but the children certainly need to understand the reasons behind what's going on.*

While teachers of young children had concerns that children would become anxious learning about current wars, the children themselves were clear they wanted information. Only one mentioned safety issues. Teachers agreed in the main that students wanted and needed to know about war, and that the school had a responsibility given the 'barrage of news'. There was consensus that a complex approach was needed, that war 'isn't about winners and losers', that both sides should be presented, and that alternatives to war should be discussed. For one teacher it was about emotions:

*I think the thing that a lot of them missed is they didn't appreciate the passion and the emotion that is involved in the whole issue of conflict in Ireland, I think they were missing that, they couldn't understand why people felt so strongly about it, to them the IRA were just terrorists, they were just completely wrong people who should just be locked up and then throw away the key.*

Where there was considerable debate among teachers was how far a teacher should express his or her own views on a conflict, as on political issues generally. The students wanted to know what teachers thought, and, again, felt frustrated when teachers refused to tell them. The majority of teachers interviewed said that they always tried to 'be neutral' and not give their own opinions on issues. A significant conversation with one focus group went as follows:

*A: We don't get opinions from other people around the world, it's just like we get it straight from Tony Blair on TV or some of the teachers they just tell you plain facts without any opinions and how they feel about it.*

*Interviewer: Do teachers say how they feel about it, do you say?*

*A: Only if you ask them, but they don't really put anything in it.*

*Interviewer: Do you think it would be good for you to know the teacher's opinion?*

*B: Yeah I think it's really good, I've got a teacher, I won't mention her name and she's like really good, she has an opinion that there shouldn't be any war and she's really anti-war like myself and I get along with her and it's nice to know that there's somebody.*

I will return later to the need for teachers to 'model' commitment. It is not just in UK that children want to know about war, and where teachers are more reluctant. In interviews in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), students were adamant that war should be studied and discussed if lessons are to be learned for future generations and if there is to be an end to the 'fifty year cycle of wars in the Balkans'. Yet for teachers of History, there was a relatively consistent view that a study of the history of the last decade in BiH should not be included in the curriculum; and if it were, only a 'basic outline', and not with 'multi-perspectivity' (Stabbak 2004). In a 2002 study by Harland in Northern Ireland, pupils reported that they would like more help understanding the problems of Northern Ireland, and that this might have a direct benefit to wider society (reported in Arlow 2004).

Our own report concluded that there was a pressing need to include teaching about conflict in teacher education, both in pre and in-service training. Teachers needed confidence in dealing with controversial issues; and they needed preparation in how to tackle current events *as they occurred*. While there are manuals and textbooks on teaching about war and conflict, these normally give examples from past conflicts, or those that are far away. The disposition (and time) to keep up with the news, to work out a viewpoint on it and to tackle contemporary sensitive issues in a multicultural classroom is not something that comes naturally to all teachers. Headteachers, too, were aware of the dilemmas around 'active citizenship' – should pupils be allowed (or encouraged?) to go on a demonstration against war? The reality was very mixed in our project. As well as insufficient preparation, teachers in many countries lack freedom – whether because of traditions of centralised control in countries such as BiH or increasing demands for accountability and standards in a neo-liberal market system in UK or USA. With both teachers and students assessed on narrow 'competences', critical thinking does not enter this scenario.

### **Approaches to teaching about war**

Together with previous work around war, violence and conflict which had resulted in a book entitled *Conflict and Education: complexity and chaos* (Davies 2004), the findings of this project generated thinking around the teaching of conflict in a variety of contexts. It is difficult enough teaching about conflict in so-called stable societies, but how do teachers in conflict zones or societies teach about war? In my book I argued that schools in general may contribute more to conflict and violence than they do to peace, in myriad and complex ways: their competitive selective mechanisms, punishment regimes and cultures of fear, nationalism, support for macho gender cultures, their teaching about 'others' in history, religion and even civics, the teaching of obedience to authority even if (or especially when) this authority is unjust or harmful, and in their neglect to provide secure identities through their curriculum and assessment. Any attempt at analysing the impact of

peace education initiatives has to be seen against this backdrop of what 'normal' schools do. There are a host of different ways in which war and conflict are 'taught', and these will often reflect the overall culture of the school (in spite of 'outlier' teachers who subvert such a culture in different directions).

In the book (Davies 2004) I looked mostly at indirect ways in which schools contribute to conflict, and used complexity theory to show the way various hidden pedagogies and structures combine in this amplification. In this paper, I want to look at the direct and deliberate ways teachers and schools teach about conflict (or deliberately do not), and which of these are likely to be negative and which positive in terms of the likelihood of contribution to peace. I would like to hazard a typology of teaching about conflict, which has ten possibilities forming a sort of continuum from negative conflict to positive conflict. However, it bends more into a circle, as, at both poles, there is more likely to be action as a result of the teaching and learning. See Fig 1. In this discussion I start with the 'negative' end and move to the 'positive' pole. Some approaches would be through history curriculum, some through citizenship, and I will look finally at the potential of citizenship education for using positive conflict and what I term 'interruptive democracy'.

### **The denigration or 'hate' curriculum**

This heading refers to the situation where, usually in history but sometimes in civics or social science textbooks, the enemy is described in graphic and denigrating terms and one's own nation is portrayed in heroic ones. Textbooks in Bosnia in each of the three 'nations' had portrayals of aggressors and victims which were 'not helpful for peace building and reconciliation' (Stabback 2004:60). In Rwanda, the history books portrayed the Tutsi as rich, foreign and oppressive; children were indoctrinated to believe in artificial differences. Textbooks in Sri Lanka in 1970s and 1980s declared the Tamils were the historical enemy of the Sinhalese and stylised the Buddhist Sinhalese, in denial of the historical facts, as the only legitimate heirs of the history of Sri Lanka (GTZ 2004). Mitter (2001) points out for central and Eastern Europe:

*Teachers have had to tackle emergency situations in their everyday practice; in some countries this has not come yet to an end at all. In all the countries it started with cancelling certain syllabi and with withdrawing, or at least selecting, application of hitherto valid textbooks....in many schools old textbooks are still used, with "offensive" papers or passages eliminated (p155).*

I have certainly seen this in BiH, with names and maps taken out in black felt pen. During the civil war in Lebanon, it was said by a prominent Druze leader that 'the continuing civil war in Lebanon was, in a fundamental way, a war to determine the correct history of the country' (Frayha 2004). The (re) writing of textbooks was a necessary precondition for any lasting settlement.

### **The 'defence' curriculum**

Here conflict is seen as a constant threat, and children are taught how to defend themselves physically against the enemy. Textbooks in both Serbo-Croat and Albanian were discovered after the conflict, teaching both sides how to use mines and booby traps (Davies 1999). The 'Youth Preparedness Programme' in schools in

South Africa during the apartheid era was a classic case of ‘preventive’ military training; but the defence curriculum still continues in BiH and in Korea. Various sorts of military training – whether cadet forces in UK or the preparation for the army courses in Israel - will of necessity contain images of war and of the ‘opposing forces’.

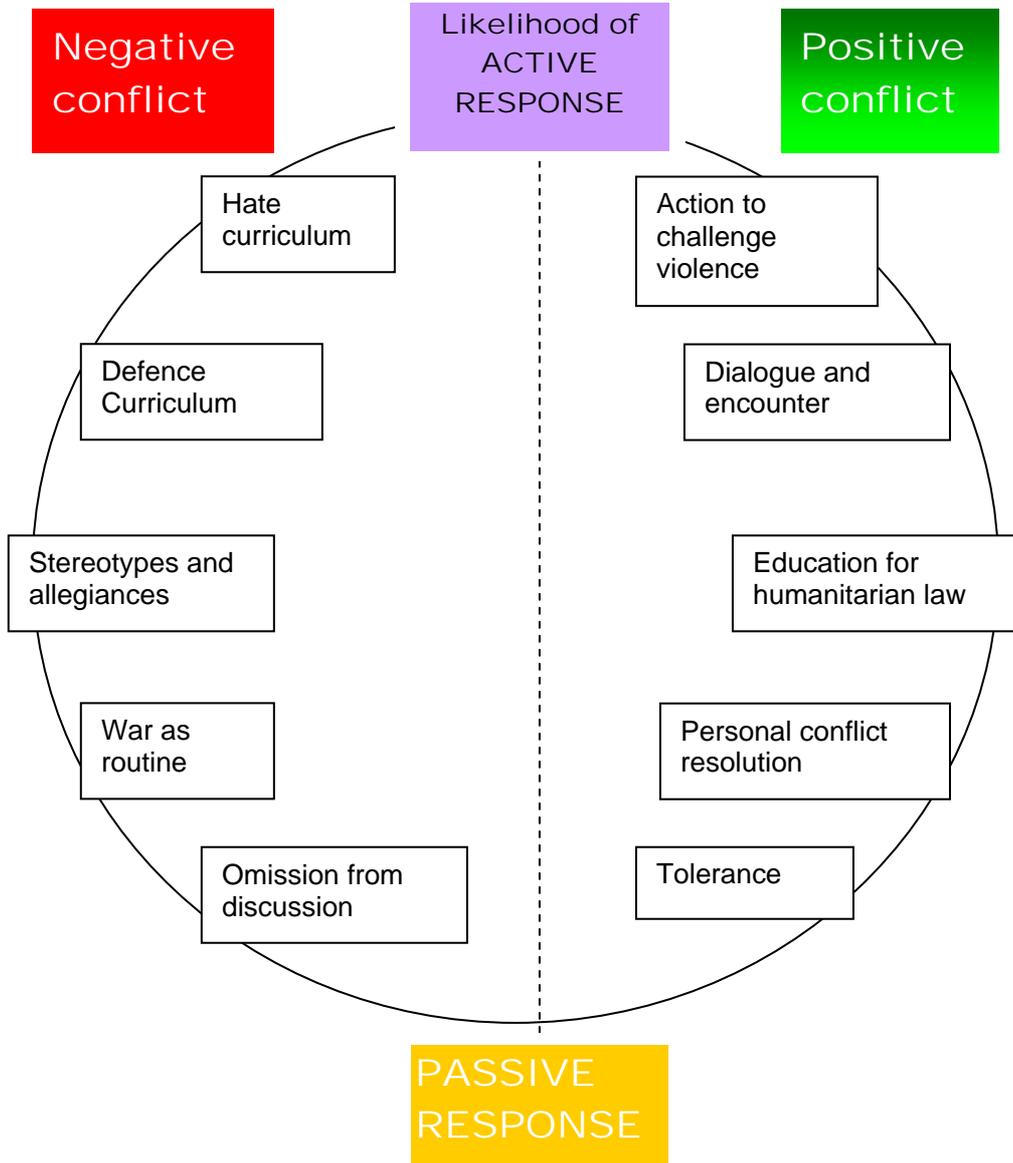


Fig 1 Approaches To Teaching About Conflict

**National and transnational stereotypes**

War and conflict are taught not specifically as hating or fearing an enemy, but as the result of a stereotypical culture which permeates everyone in that country. The Japanese ‘people’ were waging war on the American ‘people’ or vice versa,

implying solidarity instead of direction by the powerful military or decision-makers. This generalisation now has become transnational, with huge stereotypes about Muslims and the link to terrorists across the globe. Equally disturbing can be the emphasis on allegiance with cross-border 'brothers'. From our UNESCO project (Davies, Harber and Schweisfurth 2002), which reviewed the 7,400 schools in 192 countries committed to the UNESCO ideals of peace, democracy and environment, we found the vast majority of schools were indeed promoting these aims; but we also have photographs of young children in one school in Qatar demonstrating about Jerusalem for the Arabs and burning the Israeli flag, presumably to show general solidarity even though they themselves were not directly at war. Similarly, a report entitled *Jews, Christians, War and Peace in Egyptian School Textbooks* (CMIP 2004) finds the texts arguing that all Arabs and Muslims should support the Palestinians in their struggle, and portraying a very negative image of Jews historically and currently as a treacherous people. In a parallel report about Israeli textbooks, in contrast in no book was there a specific call for war and violence against the Arabs, and Arabs and Islam were presented in a positive light. Nonetheless, while two books had a critique of Israeli policy, the majority of textbooks placed the responsibility for the outbreak of Arab-Israeli wars on the Arabs, and in the ultra-orthodox streams, the language of the books conveyed an air of superiority and negative expressions (CIMP 2002).

### **The history-as-war-and-chaps curriculum; or war as routine, part of a continuous past**

Here there is emphasis on understanding the causes of war, and there may be 'objective' coverage of 'both sides'. Yet war may be presented as a series of 'inevitable' events, with little distinction between them. Krishna Kumar (1996) writes that the freedom movement was portrayed in Indian textbooks just as a quick succession of events, 'hardly capable of making the impression on children's minds that this movement symbolizes a break in India's past' (p39). Perera et al (2004) similarly talk of the history curriculum in Sri Lanka being 'event centred rather than problem centred' (p406). Kumar in a later book (2001) delineates three features in analysing the 'master narratives' of history: the politics of mention (what or who is mentioned or not); pacing; and the conception of the end. The exam system of education means students are socialised and trained to pay more attention to individual facts than to the connections between them, with rapid movement from event to event, constructing an 'episodic memory chain' (p72). India and Pakistan conceptualise 'the endpoint of history' (1947) very differently, and collective memory then takes on a structure of its own. The narratives provide 'memory posters' – scenes of the past hanging free of a time frame – for example, the self-image as a 'fighting people'. Linked to my previous category, Muslim life is portrayed in stereotypical, negative, violent terms: 'Even highly educated, liberal minded Indians regard Pakistani society as basically an army looking for a country' (2001:46).

### **Omission**

Here conflict is played down or not mentioned in curriculum, particularly in conflict or post-conflict states, in order not to 'inflamm' or cement attitudes. A Northern Ireland study of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) found only a minority of teachers comfortable about dealing with issues related to conflict; the

Youthquest 2000 survey showed only one-third of young people surveyed had specific classes in school which addressed such issues as sectarianism (reported in Arlow 2004). Kumar gives the example in India of the day schools reopened in Delhi after the anti-Sikh riots that followed the assassination of Indira Gandhi, and where tens of thousands of children would have witnessed scenes of brutal killing. Orders had been issued to principals to make sure that children did not discuss the riots in their classes – apparently to convey the idea that normalcy had been restored and so the teachers should follow the normal curriculum. The English teacher was asking the class to use the word ‘arrive’ in a sentence. One child stood up and read out the sentence ‘When a Sikh arrived in Delhi, he was killed by Hindus’. This completely immobilized the teacher – the sentence was grammatically correct and should have received approval; yet she was not permitted to discuss the issues surrounding the sentence. Kumar does not agree with such reluctance embedded in the Indian system of education to acknowledge social conflict and permit children to study them. For Salmi (2000), this would be ‘alienating violence’ or ‘violence by omission’, a form of repression. A recent report of the new and controversial Japanese history and civics books describes them as ‘denial history’, in their deletion of mention of atrocities by Japanese troops in Asia (Times 14.7.2005).

There is admittedly a dilemma here in immediately post-conflict states, particularly in conflict which has arisen between groups who are actually very similar and where difference has been exaggerated or invented, as in BiH or Rwanda. In Rwanda people now do not like to use an ethnic classification for themselves; yet Rutayisire et al are of the view that

*....it is not the existence or non-existence of ethnic groups that is important. The problem is that people believe in them and then behave accordingly. Therefore, if Rwandans want to find solutions to social divisions, it is important to talk about ethnic categorisations, ethnicity and ethnic groups, in order to express a consensus as to the truth about them as they are experienced and defined (2004:358).*

In Sri Lanka too, it has been argued that the teaching of ‘life competencies’ which was part of the education reform since 1997 aimed at social cohesion was too generalised and abstract. Process factors were ignored in favour of a teacher-centred and even patronising approach (Perera et al 2004).

## **Tolerance**

Here the emphasis is on tolerating the ‘other’, often within a multicultural framework, in order to promote harmony. This takes many shapes, such as tolerance and respect for linguistic diversity, but I have difficulty with unquestioning tolerance – should one tolerate aggression in the name of culture, female genital mutilation, honour killings, that is, any form of violence simply because it is not your culture? If not, then on what basis does one not tolerate or respect ‘others’? It is important to have some sort of framework such as human rights in order to assess competing claims for respect. Human rights and conventions are social constructs and not absolutes, but, like democracy, they are perhaps the ‘least worst’ of the frameworks for analysis of what to tolerate. It is not clear that a framework of religious values can provide this. If a person or group uses their own set of religious norms to analyse and critique another religion or culture, on what basis can they then analyse and critique their own religion, and critique these very values? There needs to be a

cross-cutting international set which can stand outside supernatural belief systems. Tolerance can also have patronising elements, which can even irritate or antagonise. Yet the rationale for tolerance is understandable, and it is a relatively non-threatening way to surface difference and prejudice.

### **Conflict resolution techniques**

Here there is acknowledgement of conflict, and that young people will need skills and strategies to deal with these in their own lives. Under this heading come a number of techniques – conflict prevention, negotiation and bargaining, mediation, arbitration, anger management, consensus seeking and restorative justice. Some of these techniques are used in post-conflict humanitarian education; others in schools in a range of so-called stable countries but where there is recognition of actual or potential violence and tension in the schools or community (Davies 2004). There have been critiques of certain sorts of conflict resolution, for example, that they lay too much emphasis on misperception and subjectivity, rather than reflecting very real genuine clashes of interest and injustice (Mitchell and Banks, 1996); yet schools have found transferring the techniques and ideologies of ‘alternative dispute resolution’ highly useful in providing alternatives to violence and punishment.

### **Education for Humanitarian Law (EHL)**

This is a very specific project which explores ethical issues related to human behaviour in times of armed conflict and war, with modules focusing on the role of citizenship and the need to demilitarise youth and reverse a culture of violence (see for example Tawil 2001). It has been used in Djibouti, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, South Africa and Morocco, and is spreading. The modules bring together international humanitarian law and the ‘hard core’ of human rights law, aiming at the disposition to become involved in protecting and promoting humanitarian attitudes. EHL is distinctive in two ways: first there is an open approach to violence or its legitimacy, focussing only on the conduct of hostilities once armed conflict has broken out; linked to this is the second distinctive focus, on consequences rather than causes – not endless disputes over the histories, but focussing on suffering and destruction. This is less contentious and helps learners come to terms with common experiences (although even here I have found young people both in Kosovo and BiH arguing about who suffered most, a sort of hierarchy of suffering). EHL stresses the need for mobilisation – the values must be translated into community action and the protection of life, health and human dignity.

### **Dialogue and encounter**

Here there is the recognition of ‘difference’, but also the attempt to bring people together of traditionally opposing sides to share perceptions, experiences and emotions. This involves a critical literacy and a higher degree of risk. There are a number of examples of this in Israel/Palestine: Iram (2001) for example describes workshops at Bar-Ilan University to bring together a big range of different ‘identity’ groups in Israeli society for dialogue and to tackle stereotypes. An interesting experiment reported in UK in May 2005 took two rival youth gangs from London to Belfast to live together in a house for a week and talk to local youth: as the organiser said, they would either kill each other or learn to get on. An interesting aspect was that the London gangs could not understand the tension in Northern

Ireland when they were all the same colour; the Belfast youth could not understand why the Londoners were fighting when they were the same religion (Independent 24.4.2005). Encounters are also about having others view your conflict, not just seeing the opposition's views. However, one should not be too romantic about the 'encounter': Smith and Robinson (1996) found for Northern Ireland that there had been an assumption that prejudice and hatred were based on ignorance and misunderstanding; yet increased contact and improved understanding did not necessarily improve relations. One reason was perhaps because teachers rarely progressed towards the more controversial aspects of Education for Mutual Understanding. As with the teachers in our study of global citizenship education, they felt ill equipped to deal with controversial issues and were afraid of doing more harm than good (Arlow 2004). Smith and Robinson point out that initiatives had to move on beyond the polite exchange, and any of the work on encounters (Cockburn's book *The Space Between Us: Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict* is excellent on this) shows the heated and often unresolved arguments and slights that arise between people from long entrenched divided communities with histories of hurt. Feuerverger's descriptions of the Jewish-Arab school for peace is inspiring; yet Tomlinson and Benefield argue that this school has unique features for Israel/Palestine and its output can only be a small number of students. And as Ruta (2004) points out, prejudice can exist while allowing exceptions for specific people (those one meets at encounters). The question for encounters is how far new learning can be spread to others. Yet while no-one says such experiences are easy or a panacea, I would hazard that there is agreement that they are at least a starting point.

### **Active challenge and experiential learning about conflict**

This involves not just conflict resolution but political learning about issues such as the arms trade (returned to below), and encouragement to take an active part in campaigns. Teachers here model resistance to violence and demonstrate how to use their 'agency' – if only to vote or sign petitions. Within this category, or as a point of departure, I like the concept of 'imagining' – engaging young people both rationally and emotionally, so that idealism about a future community is tapped into.

*'Playfulness and even a degree of naïveté are integral parts of imagining...but imagining is not the end of the process...students are encouraged to find practical and realistic ways in which they can narrow the gap between the world as it is and their future community, by developing the skills necessary to engage in democratic processes. In doing so they are also exposed to alternatives to violence....'* (Arlow 2004, p285)

Holland, too, stresses the importance of imagination in human rights education programmes in Angola, the belief that the present status quo can be changed. It is not just 'critical thinking' but 'critico-creative thinking, in Passmore's concept' (quoted in Holland 2003). Whitehead, in his book *Escaping the Circle of Hate* also talks of the three processes of enabling learners to critique self and society (reflection), how they would like society to be (the vision) and being given the tools to go from A to B (creativity).

Empathy is part of this imagination, as people whose own human rights are not being abused may feel no burning desire to fight for the rights of others. We know

from the research that those people who are more likely to participate in civil society as adults are those who have participated in school democracy, such as student councils or volunteer groups. Schools need to introduce a variety of forums for positive conflict (such as active school councils and committees), and, like EHL, the disposition to act. My argument (which I develop further in *Conflict and Education*) is for the encouragement of positive conflict and ‘interruptive democracy’, a democracy which is not just about representation or even participation, but a democracy which challenges injustice and provides skills, experiences and dispositions in school to take this further.

### **The limitations of the typology**

The reason for ‘bending’ this continuum is that at the poles there is some convergence, in that both to teach hate and to teach co-existence, there needs to be an acknowledgement of difference. On the left is the risk to the nation; on the right is the risk to the immediate situation, individual or school. The least risky are at the bottom of the curve. The problem with classifications is the where to put some problem areas – naturally, not all can be fitted into these ten types, nor do they really neatly form a continuous line or curve. A key issue is of the (unknown) learner response to the teaching. For example, it would not be clear where to put Amnesty International’s Twelve Point Guide for Good Practice in the Training of Government Officials, for as Holland points out in the context of Angola,

*AI provides very specific instructions with regard to teaching students about torture. This is a subject that AI encourages the teaching of in the hope that thereby torture can gradually be eliminated as an interrogation practice. The point here is that AI staff members have learned from experience that students don’t always get the message AI is seeking to instil. Rather, some students have been found to be in danger of becoming more skilled torturers as a result of their having participated in these learning sessions (2003:128)*

As Whitehead (2003) also indicates, reflection and creativity do not automatically lead to a vision of peace and democracy in an era of cultural relativity. Secondly, there is the important question of where one’s own nation is placed in teaching about conflict. The usual continuum in defining conflict societies is the one Tawil and Harley (2004) portray: Non-conflict ⇒ pre-conflict ⇒ armed conflict ⇒ transition out of violence ⇒ post-conflict. Types of education initiative can be attached to these stages (education for prevention, education in emergencies, education for social and civic reconstruction). But where is a country positioned on this which has caused conflict elsewhere? While education for prevention in an internally fragile society might focus on prejudice reduction, how does one ‘prevent’ external aggression, when the majority of people do not have particular stereotypes of the ‘enemy’? On my circle or continuum, it would also be unclear where to place the Four Lessons on the Current Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the Educators for Social Responsibility organisation in USA. It has superb coverage of the conflict in terms of all the different points of view, rationales for action, asking children to think about who was right, to debate and to share ideas. Yet the lessons stop short of inviting any response from children in terms of what they then do with this new thinking, these new understandings. The lessons are implicitly critical of Bush, or at

least present the critiques; yet it would be interesting to observe the lessons and see whether children express frustration at their own lack of empowerment.

In stable societies, there is sometimes no tackling of government violence at all. The curriculum materials or the teaching leaps from the personal (how to break up fights, to deal with sibling rivalry) to the international (the Holocaust) with nothing in between. There is the understandable aim to begin with the personal and then think global, but there is a curious omission of the national. This is what was being picked up by the young people in our study – what was UK's responsibility in the Iraq war? If the national is not tackled, the learning jumps from immediate Personal/Social curriculum to civil war elsewhere, from Janet and John to genocide, in one great leap. The reluctance of course to criticise one's own government would not be confined to UK, but presumably is there in many countries. There is an issue in England and Wales that the introduction of the citizenship curriculum has meant decisions on where that should be positioned in schools, and there is the possibility (danger?) that it gets taken over by PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education). The necessary political element gets sidelined in favour of the individual, the family and possibly the workplace, but not the government or religious authorities.

### **The centrality of peace**

This leads to the central reason for examining how conflict (and peace) are taught, which is, to move this up the agenda. We are living in a bizarre or surreal educational age. Arguably, the most important threats to our survival are war, disease and environmental degradation. Yet peace education, health education and ecology are not the top curriculum areas in any school or country that I know of. The international comparative studies of 'achievement' are all based on maths, science or literacy (although citizenship is now part of international comparisons). Yet while the justifications are that these subjects are the basis of understanding of the big issues, unless they are put into a political framework, there is no way of knowing – or comparing – to what use they are put. Hitler was highly educated, literate, and possibly very good at maths. As Rutayisire et al reveal for Rwanda:

*... a closer look at the education system before the 1994 genocide reveals that the education system – and specifically the school curriculum – failed the nation. How else would one explain the criminal activities of teachers, doctors, lawyers, priests, nuns, bishops, and any other profession one could think of? What had gone wrong with the education system? (2004:345)*

Sommers points out that Education For All targets cannot even get off the ground in some countries until the major donors 'aggressively support education in advance of, during and immediately after wars' (quoted in Tomlinson and Benefield 2005); yet my (and others') question is always, what sort of education, and how will this education tackle the peace and stability which is essential for equity?

What is needed is the alternative PISA (the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment) – if one is going to have comparative studies of achievement, then let us name and shame by looking at different countries' student achievement in peace education, citizenship education, education for social justice, human rights education, environmental education and so on. In Rwanda, Rutayisire et al point out that in spite of the emphasis on increasing access and improving 'quality', very little attention has been paid to these key areas of learning. If there were, I argue

that this would force the consideration of how we measure 'achievement' and 'impact' in these fields, and the role of the school in preparing future citizens who will be active in trying to achieve social 'goods'. One could at the very least have a league table of how much time was spent on these areas, and correlate with indices of social cohesion or national development. Interestingly, there is very little to substantiate the idea that masses of time spent on maths helps national growth or productivity; the work of Aaron Benavot which correlates instructional time to changes in GDP in different countries finds no effect of maths and language on economic growth, but a positive impact of music and arts (see Benavot 1992). This may not be surprising: one of our students has just completed a very interesting piece of research which looked at music and empathy (Laurence 2005), and the power of 'musicking' (that is making music, collectively) in fostering empathy and engagement. International music events to bring people together, as they have done in Israel/Palestine, and in South Africa, may be preferable to an internationalisation strategy which focusses on competitive sport. In another research project at Birmingham, we are looking at the impact of school councils on achievement and behaviour: it was interesting that when asked what they thought about the training for school councillors, the students said that they liked it because 'everyone was cooperating'. This seemed such at odds with their normal classroom or playground experience, that it was worth their commenting on.

The links of peace education and gender equality might be another interesting correlation. UNDP (2002) talk of the issue of bringing women to the negotiating table – in most cases women are almost completely excluded from post-war decision-making. Women bring to the peace table a practical understanding of real life security concerns, and a commitment to peace. There has been some progress – 25 seats have been allocated to women in Somalia, 2 in Afghanistan. UNDP provide the correlations between economic growth and gender equity: it would be instructive to do the same for peace.

Various research projects would be indicated from the above discussion. As well as the correlational studies of time spent on peace education against economic growth, one study would be based around the hypothesis that teaching about and through positive conflict, using interruptive democracy, will help academic achievement. The third explores how regular schools in countries in active conflict or civil war actually teach day-to-day about that – in Sri Lanka, in Colombia, in Israel/Palestine, in Sudan. In Lebanon, for example, the 1997 civics curriculum added new topics such as the issue of Palestine, the Lebanese resistance to Israeli occupation, the value of liberation, the importance of social coexistence and unity, patriotism 'and so on' (Frayha 2004:196). The history curriculum too now includes 'sensitive events'. Yet we do not know exactly how these are taught, and the relative balance between patriotism and coexistence externally. Interestingly, it has been found in recent studies in Lebanon that public school students show greater tolerance toward sectarian differences, presumably more than private school students, so impact studies are beginning there. We need many more of them.

### **What is useful knowledge?**

Given this aim to move education for peace (and hence education about conflict) up the agenda, we need to establish what is useful knowledge for global survival. What knowledge might lead to positive action? We live in a quiz age: with their permission, I reproduce a multiple choice quiz from the latest Oxfam manual *Making Sense of World Conflicts* (2005), which is a wonderful resource.

### Armed Conflict Quiz

1. Out of approximately 193 countries in the world, how many are currently experiencing armed conflict? 21; 42; 67
2. What proportion of the world's countries spends more on the military than on health-care services? One-fifth; one-third; half
3. Which country spends the most on arms and weapons per head of population? Israel; Kuwait; Saudi Arabia
4. Between 1997 and 2001 what percentage of developing countries experienced a civil war? 26% 41% 56%
5. In the first world war, what percentage of casualties were civilians? 14% 67% 90%
6. What percentage of casualties were civilians in the second world war 14% 67% 90%
7. What proportion of those killed in conflict since 1989 have been civilians? 14% 67% 90%
8. In 2003, which country in the world had the most refugees? Iran; the UK; Pakistan
9. How many children are estimated to be involved in conflicts worldwide? 3,000 30,000 300,000
10. How many small arms (guns and other hand-held weapons) are manufactured each year? 3 million 8 million 12 million

Answers: 42; one-third (an average of \$22 billion a year is spent on arms in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America; from 1998 to 2001 the USA, UK and France earned more income from arms sales to developing countries than they gave in aid); Kuwait; 56%; 14%; 67%; 90%; Iran; 300,000 (the UK was the last country in Europe to use child soldiers in wars, although can still deploy under 18s if necessary); 8 million (there are approx 639 million small arms in the world today, produced by more than 1,135 companies in at least 98 countries; 8 million new weapons are produced each year).

As well as giving ideas on how to use today's headlines, one of the beauties of the Oxfam book is indicating to learners how to challenge the arms trade and send in their protest. This would also apply to landmines: from UNDP we learn that, reflecting pressure from some 1,400 civil society groups in 90 countries, the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty has been ratified by 123 states. Yet major countries such as China, the Russian Federation and the United States have not signed the Mine Ban treaty (UNDP 2002); 90 countries are still heavily affected by landmines and unexploded ordinance, with 15,000-20,000 mine victims each year. Albania is a good example of the effort to collect and curb the flow of small arms – nearly a third have been retrieved, and more than 100,000 weapons destroyed. 'The programme's success can largely be attributed to extensive public awareness and advocacy highlighting the socio-economic impact of small arms...direct community participation has been invaluable in the exchange of looted weapons for public works support such as road construction, school rehabilitation and installation of street lights and public telephones' (Oxfam 2005:97). Action does not have to be purely altruistic, but can rest on people's pragmatism too.

Yet security institutions can be part of the problem. Soldiers need a broadly based education that teaches them to respect human rights and abide by the principles of democratic governance. There is interesting consensus building among the Bosnian armies, with joint training exercises, stringent selection criteria and the first multiethnic Bosnian contingent to serve as UN military observers abroad

(UNDP 2000). We are seeing however in UK and US the problem of poorly trained and bored soldiers treating prisoners with brutality and inhumanity: this needs discussing in schools as well as tackled directly in army education. What is being done in the name of bringing democracy? Another quiz which is a useful stimulus for teaching or teacher education is the one compiled by the historian William Blum:

<b>Here is a list of countries that the US has bombed since the end of the World War II.</b>			
China 1945-46 Korea 1950-53 China 1950-53 Guatemala 1954 Indonesia 1958	Cuba 1959-60 Guatemala 1960 Congo 1964 Peru 1965 Laos 1964-73 Vietnam 1961-73	Cambodia 1967-69 Grenada 1983 Libya 1986 El Salvador 1980s Nicaragua 1980s Panama 1989	Iraq 1991-1999 Sudan 1998 Afghanistan 1998 Yugoslavia 1999 (And now Iraq 2004)
<p>In how many of these instances did a democratic government, respectful of human rights, occur as a direct result? Choose one of the following:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0 zero none not a one zip a whole number between -1 and +1 zilch</p>			

Together with learning about democracy, surrounding all positive conflict teaching is the emphasis on human rights, and there are an increasing number of good manuals on these. As argued earlier when discussing 'tolerance', rights would form a bedrock of useful knowledge. In terms of conflict at national levels, there is the problem that anti-terrorist measures often risk violating human rights – prohibition of torture, freedom from arbitrary arrest, presumption of innocence, right to a fair trial and rights to freedom of opinion, expression and assembly. Children in schools are subject to many of these deprivations of rights, and one does not need a lot of empathy teaching to make connections. Given that teachers may be part of these deprivations of rights, teacher education has a clear duty to cover such areas.

### **Action or indifference?**

Citizenship education can make a valuable contribution to positive conflict and interruptive democracy, but it needs to deal with two things: difference/identity and action for state accountability. It has the task of challenging exclusionary nationalist subjectivities and identities, and replacing these with some sort of citizen or global citizen identity, and this is difficult and messy. Democratic citizenship is in some ways unpredictable. It has to surface difference and yet determine how, where and when difference can be legitimately be 'represented' and who counts as different in the political arena (Werner and Yuval-Davis 1999:2). Secondly, citizenship has to talk of rights, responsibilities and duties, and civic service should indeed be recognized as an 'act of citizenship'; yet also recognized, according to D'Amico (2000), should be 'public dissent and civil disobedience, which clearly take seriously the responsibility of the citizen to hold the state accountable for its actions' (p119). This again is much harder for teachers than encouraging voluntary work, but in the

end holding the state accountable has to be a crucial aspect of citizenship education. Teachers have to model commitment to action, and teacher education has a role in preparing dispositions to act. This does not have to be all about marches and demonstrations, but can be participation in 'citizen research', which examines problems and conflicts in the community and adds to national data bases to assist or demand policy. National and international groupings on the internet are becoming key sites for citizen action.

I give two examples to end with. Kumar analysed sixty essays he asked children to write on the topic of the 'Division of India and Pakistan'. He found expressive writing going far beyond the textbook, which is encouraging; but in both countries a 'sense of tiredness as an overarching theme, forming a kind of bridge'. The sources were remarkably similar: one source was the wastefulness of war; and the other was Kashmir. Children wanted to forget differences and move forward.

*'True, these sentiments sound treacly except for the anguish that recurs, sometimes taking the form of anger, and other times of grief. And none of them gives evidence of more than a nominal awareness of the nature of the problem. As a topic of study, Pakistan is taboo in Indian schools, and the same applies to India in Pakistan. The syllabus and textbooks of history stop at 1947. Yet this past 'becomes a resource for keeping misgivings and enmity alive'.*

Equally, as Gallagher (2004) points out, the Holocaust was achievable because of the politics of hate, but also because of 'indifference'.

*[The Holocaust] was possible both because those who wanted to impose death actively pursued their goal and those who might ordinarily be expected to oppose such a measure, often did little or nothing. If the Holocaust could be explained in terms of a particular national group or cultural history then it would be easy to avoid in the future. If it is explained by indifference, or something akin to indifference, it could all too easily happen again' (p6)*

We cannot afford to either to keep enmity alive nor to keep indifference alive. Schools and teacher education can be deeply complicit in both, but if positive conflict can be given a key priority, then this might make a small contribution to creating a generation which did not take war and violence for granted.

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