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M U R R O F A I D



Children
Niñas y Niños
Les enfants



&
the media
los medios
les médias

Integrating Peace and Media Education

By Delia Hernandez

Learning from the country's history, in the Philippines, peace education has been developing as a way of working towards a more just and sustainable future. Especially studies on violence in the media and the ways in which children use television have resulted in a growing awareness on the impact of media on values and attitudes of children and young people. The author describes initiatives at the Ateneo de Manila Grade School to integrate peace and media education as part of their curriculum.

One day I asked my forty 12 to 13 year old students what they thought was the greatest problem facing the Philippines today. Young as they are, the responses that topped the list were problems of war, poverty, breakdown of families, selfishness and power, drugs, violence and crime.

I followed up the question with what issues in the media they considered worth discussing in our class in relation to the problems mentioned. The answers included that the young were given so much importance by the media; that there was too much sex and violence in the media; that women and the elderly were being

ignored, and that the third sex was the subject of mockery in many media programmes today. Reflecting on what these students said. I feel that there are just too many of these issues in their young lives and in our country today. As an educator and a mother, I am concerned about how all this will affect and colour their hopes for the future and possibly result in serious disillusion.

The children's media landscape

Today's children are growing up in a totally different environment than their parents' generation. The formation and development of good and positive attitudes and values is the role of all basic institutions – the home, the school, the Church and society. Sad to say, today a stronger force, namely the media, is shaping the attitudes and values of our children.

The issues and problems are present in the everyday media they are exposed to. A survey shows that Filipino children watch 21 to 28 hours of television a week, that is 1,000 to 1,400 hours per year. They also listen to the radio for 30 hours a week. These findings should not pose too big a problem if what the children read, view and listen to contributes positively to the formation

of their attitudes and values.

In 2002, the *Philippine Children's Television Foundation* carried out a study on "The Children's Media Landscape". The study revealed that there were about 888 hours of broadcasting time in a week. Of these, only 80 hours or 9% were allocated to children's programmes. Furthermore, the study showed that only 17% of TV programmes were devoted to children.

The *Philippine Children's Television Foundation*, with support from the *Goethe Institut Manila*, carried out another study on "Violence on Philippine Television: An Initial Study on the Frequency and Nature of TV Violence in the Philippines". A summary of the findings showed for example that:

- 50% of TV programmes contain violence.
- For every hour of TV viewing, there are 6.2 incidents of violence. On average, for every 10 minutes, there is one violent incident.
- 50% of violent programmes are shown between 5 to 9 pm. This is the time when the highest number of children is watching TV.
- Violence occurs most often in action/adventure programmes. 40% of programmes containing violence are targeted at 7 to 17 year old children.

A national concern

After the martial law regime (1972-1986) in the Philippines, a lot of initiatives in support of the peace

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process were undertaken. Several institutions started various forms of Peace Education but it was in the last ten years that there has been an unparalleled growing interest in Peace Education. Additionally, reports on violence in the media fuelled educators' and public interest in teaching about peace and conflict in our school curriculum. Thus, Peace Education has become a serious national concern. It has raised awareness regarding peace surveys and research, seminars and workshops and has focused courses and programmes of different institutions on the theme of peace. Peace

Education has become an innovative response to exploring ways and means towards a more just and sustainable future.

Peace is envisioned as the alternative way of being and behaving. Peace Education, therefore, aims to develop knowledge, attitudes, and skills, needed to explore concepts of peace, to look into obstacles to peace, to resolve conflicts justly and less violently, and to adopt alternative ways to build a sustainable society. Values such as concern for oneself and others, respect for life, kindness and compassion, unselfish-

ness, cooperation, understanding, patience, love and even concern for the environment are being honed in Peace Education. Ultimately, Peace Education aims at creating peace in our own hearts.

The interdisciplinary approach

At the Jesuit-run *Ateneo de Manila*, the Grade School Department that I have been a faculty member of for the last 24 years, Media Education and Peace Education are not subjects in themselves. Both are new in the school's curriculum. Some concepts use the interdisciplinary

Here and on the following page: Impressions from the National Book Week at Ateneo (November 2005) during which children are encouraged to read books instead of using other media photo: Delia Hernandez

thematic approach. It goes with our premise that peace can be taught and learned. The openness to adapt to innovations like Media and Peace Education in teaching is encouraged.

Media Education is Values Education and is integrated whenever possible into Christian Life Education, into the Language Arts programme which is taught both in English and the national language Filipino, into Social Studies, and even into the Music and Arts programme.

PROFILE
PAME *One of the NGOs working for an integration of Peace and Media Education, is the Philippine Association for Media Education (PAME), bringing together teachers and concerned media practitioners. PAME conducts and facilitates programmes towards media literacy education in the country. The 2004 PAME general assembly held at Don Bosco College last August 28 was on "Media Education: Promoting a Culture of Peace". Almost 200 teachers attended the assembly. The highlight of the assembly was the panel discussion on real stories of violence and peace. A street child, a victim of child labour and a victim of war in Mindanao were invited to tell their stories. The audience were touched by the real experiences of these three children aged 10 to 14. This presentation was followed by a teacher invited to explore the possibilities of peace education in the classroom.*

In grade 7, Peace Education is the subject matter of the Social Studies curriculum and an integration into Media Education is explored whenever possible. Media issues such as consumerism, globalisation, sex and violence, enrichment and disintegration of culture, media control and many more can be discussed. These are peace issues as well. The school's semi-flexible way of handling topics to be taught by subject and by level allows the faculty team to teach more creatively.

This approach calls for collaborative planning and teamwork of and with all teachers involved. The school's general objectives must be acceptable to all while specific objectives can be set by the teachers of the subjects where integration takes place. Since we utilise the team-teaching approach, a coordinating teacher helps plan the lessons and the schedules with the group. Resources to be employed are also discussed to maximise their use.

Let me illustrate this through the sample lesson below. It was collaboratively planned by the Social Studies and Media Education teachers using the material "Beyond Blame: Challenging Violence in the Media" (Center for Media Literacy, 1995) as a reference.

I. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To be aware of the number of times violence is shown in the media.

To analyse the consequences of media violence.

To reflect on the need to stop the cycle of violence.

To write and /or illustrate new heroes in this new age.

II. LEARNING CONTENT

- A. Topic: Challenging violence in the media
- B. Skill: Analysis
- C. Value: Promoting peace
- D. Materials: Movie and television clips, songs, newspaper articles, media handouts

III. LEARNING EXPERIENCE

A. Motivation

Write words, phrases and sentences related to the two words on the board. Every member of the class will be given a chance to contribute. The words are:

VIOLENCE – PEACE

What are your observations and findings about the things written on the board? How come there are more words and phrases related to VIOLENCE?

B. Presentation

Validate your findings by identifying and analysing the consequences of media violence, by reflecting on the need to stop violence and by looking into how we can help stop violence and promote peace.

1. Let us look at the latest reports on TV violence in the Philippines. Show

some clips of print and non-print media as the reports are shown. The guide questions are:

- a. What is missing in the reports?
- b. What do you think are the consequences of the instances of violence shown?

2. Divide the class into small groups. Each group will be given a situation to analyse.

The following are the guide questions:

- a. What's missing in the situation given?
- b. What are possible consequences of the violent act? Examples: Who will be sad? Who will cry? Who will pay the damage?
- c. Could this situation happen in real life? Why? How? What could prevent or allow the situation to take place?

3. Group discussion and presentation to the class

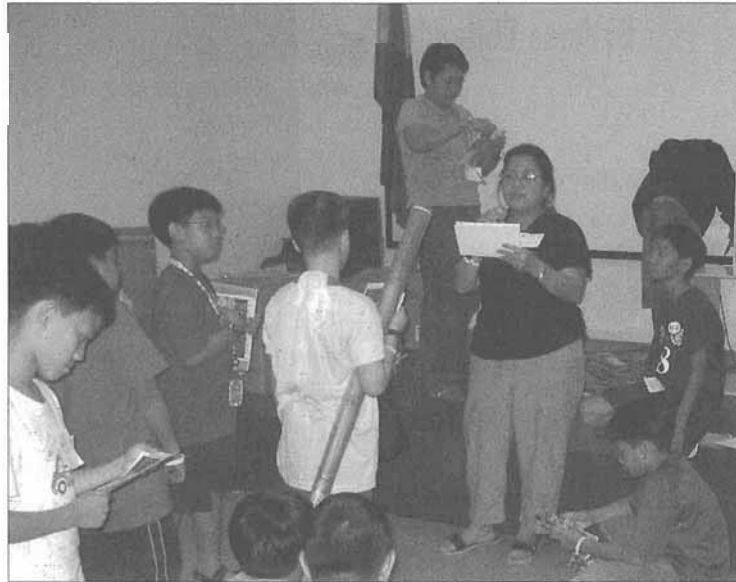
4. Show and explain the cycle of violence

The cycle of violence starts with name calling – putdowns – threatening – pushing – hitting – chasing – beating up – stabbing or shooting – killing. Killing leads to anger and a desire for revenge and thus the cycle continues. Explore how and when the cycle can be stopped. Use examples and situations familiar to the students like bullying in class and others. Conclude the cycle by discussing COURAGE, HUMANITY, INITIATIVE, AND LOVE as elements needed in a non-violent action.

IV. LEARNING OUTCOME

We concluded the lesson with the idea that we need a new breed of heroes today. We encourage each one not only to turn off violence in the media but to turn on their stories of non-violence as well. We ended with each student making and stating their commitment to peace in his/her home, in school, in his/her community, our country as well as the world.

This particular lesson was tackled in two days. There was active par-



ticipation from the students in class. Particularly interesting was the discussion on the cycle of violence and the idea of "Being New Heroes for a New Age". Students appreciate lessons such as this. When asked what they liked most about them, quick responses included "They are lessons that can be applied to real life situations", "I didn't know media play a big part in promoting violence and /or peace", "Media education is necessary in schools today", "I find

lessons like this interesting and motivating for me to always do good", "I can see vividly the role I must play in society", "Everyone has a great responsibility to promote a culture of peace", "I am challenged to promote good media and peace as well."

Ideally, teaching peace like teaching Media Education must begin as early as pre-school and must continue until they reach college. But this will call for re-evaluation of the curriculum developed in our Grade School and possibly a para-

digm shift. In the light of what my students see as problems facing our country today, it would be good to see schools promoting themselves with an excellent peace programme integrated in different subjects of the curriculum. In our aim to build a culture of peace we also must consider working with other advocates of education for peace, organisations such as the *United Nations* and *UNICEF* as well as non-governmental organisations.