

Using anti-war art to create and build cultures of peace in the classroom and beyond

Eladia Castellani

Instituto Superior de Formación Docente N° 97, La Plata, Argentina

Claudia Dabove

Instituto Superior de Formación Docente N° 97, La Plata, Argentina

Patricia Fabiana Guzmán*

Instituto Superior de Formación Docente N° 97, La Plata, Argentina

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Abstract

The aim of this proposal is to work in an interdisciplinary project involving the subjects Language and Culture (or Social Studies) and EFL Teaching (or Didactics) in a teacher training college. The former subjects deal with the historical and cultural aspects of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries whereas the latter provides the methodological background for teaching English as a foreign language. These subjects provide an appropriate context in which to work with human rights in the analysis of significant works of art in the historical periods. Finally, the proposal suggests an extracurricular activity for the local community.

Keywords: culture; art; teacher education; human rights; community.

Resumen

El objetivo de esta propuesta es articular los contenidos de las asignaturas Lengua y Cultura II y III y el Inglés y su enseñanza II de la carrera de profesorado de inglés en el contexto de los Institutos Superiores de Formación Docente. Las dos primeras asignaturas abordan los contenidos históricos y culturales pertenecientes a los siglos 18, 19 y 20 mientras que la tercera asignatura aporta el encuadre metodológico de la enseñanza de inglés. Estos espacios brindan un contexto apropiado para la introducción de la temática de derechos humanos por medio del análisis de obras de arte significativas en esos períodos históricos. Para finalizar, la propuesta sugiere un proyecto de extensión en la comunidad.

Palabras clave: cultura; arte; formación docente; derechos humanos; comunidad.

Preview

Level: Higher Education–EFL Initial Teacher Education–2nd and/or 3rd year

Language competence: B2+/C1 (Common European Framework of Reference)

Age of students: Young adults/adults (over 18)

Type of project: Interdisciplinary

Theme: Peace education

Estimated time: Approximately 7 weeks (see chart with timeline under Instructional Plan)

Summary

This project is thought to be implemented in Teacher Education Programmes integrating areas of studies such as Language and Culture (or Social Studies) and EFL Teaching (or Didactics). Even if labels differ, these content areas are bound to be present in any teacher education programme. Its purpose is to develop student teachers' awareness of the importance of teaching about human rights (HR), citizenship and intercultural understanding in their future classrooms. Although the topics of human rights education (HRE) and education for peace can be dealt with indistinctively in most of the subjects present in the curriculum design of any ELT course, the themes addressed in these areas fit to the implementation of this project, especially those which consider historical, cultural and social axes through oral and written discussions around the topics, using the English language as a vehicle to understand events and also emphasise intercultural competence: "Mutual understanding and intercultural competence are more important than ever today because through them we can address some of the most virulent problems of contemporary societies" (Huber & Reynolds, 2014, p.2).

Working together with EFL Teaching (ET) will help student teachers to realise how to deal with topics related to HR and plan tasks connected to those subjects for their future students in both primary and secondary classrooms.

Within the syllabi of these courses, art is an important topic. Not only to contribute to students' general knowledge about important artists and their works but also to help students learn about the socio-historical context in which they were produced. To use art and intercultural learning in order to inspire a culture of peace and hope and educate for non-violent alternatives is crucial to create a sustainable, equitable, and harmonious society. The Council of Europe points out that "human rights [can be seen] as the value basis for a more just and cohesive society" (Huber & Reynolds, 2014, p.2). Art serves many purposes, being one of them to denounce the state of affairs in their context of production. While wars are headline news, the forces that create them or the means of preventing them are rarely aired, and this project represents a contribution in this direction.

As our societies become increasingly multicultural, alternative visions of what it means to coexist, interact, and learn in community with each other are needed (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Starkey, 2012). The arts provide an expressive vocabulary for the examination of social and political issues affecting our communities. Both subjects implied in the project involve the analysis of pieces of art within a HRE framework focusing on the respect, abuse or even abolition of HR in the periods analysed.

From Theory to Practice

As teachers of a teaching training college (TTC), we believe it is of paramount importance to prepare future professionals to teach within the frame of Human Rights Education (HRE). It is not enough only to mention HR to be entitled to them: citizens should have precise knowledge so as to ask for their enforcement. Our compelling objective (especially in the TTC) should be to help future educators to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills to teach HRE to their students.

Human Rights belong to us all, regardless of our formal citizenship status within a country. Democratic principles and practices are not innate, but must be learned. Education has a key role on realising a democratic society that is just and equitable and in enabling individuals and groups to work together to overcome the past and present inequalities and injustices which prevent some members of society from enjoying their rights and from contributing fully (Osler, 2005, p. 5).

Human rights education is, historically and philosophically, inseparably linked to the international movement to guarantee a child's right to education, and has been conceived as a pedagogical approach to introduce students to the human rights system and to the rights and duties they incur as citizens in an increasingly interdependent global world (Starkey, 2012). As the Chilean thinker Abraham Magendzo (2001) points out, there are two interwoven axes as regards HRE, an epistemological axe which provides technical knowledge about norms and a pedagogical one which provides the contexts and historical backgrounds within which HR appear. This knowledge can emancipate people and constructs the idea that they are subjected to their rights and can claim them, a concept which is of vital importance in teaching future educators. Education is the foundation and catalyst for changing the state of HR in the world, but educators need effective materials and tools they can use to incorporate HR in their curriculum.

Materials and Technology

- Links to art works and information on authors and art works:

1. Morland, George: [*Execrable human traffick*](#) (1791)
 2. Morland, George: [*African hospitality*](#) (1793)
 3. Hodgson, Orlando: [*The slave*](#) (1820)
 4. The use of [*The slave*](#) by Josiah Wedgwood
 5. Delacroix, Eugène: [*Liberty leading the people*](#) (1830)
 6. Delacroix, Eugène: [*The massacre at Chios*](#) (1824)
 7. Géricault, Théodore: [*The raft of the medusa*](#) (1819)
 8. Picasso, Pablo: [*Guernica*](#) (1937)
- Links to documents and websites:
 1. [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (1948)
 2. [Guernica's bombing](#) (1937)
 3. [Interview to Art historian Patricia Failing about Guernica](#)
 4. UNESCO's website [Culture of peace and non-violence](#)
 5. [The culture of peace](#)
 - Other materials: Basker (2002), Spielvogel (2004), Victoire (2007), Weaver & Biesecker-Mast (2003)
 - Class computer and data projector
 - Students' personal netbooks (or similar device)
 - Internet access
 - Printer (optional)

Preparation

All Lecturers

1. Gain access to and familiarise with the technology and materials needed for this project.

Language and Culture/Social Studies Lecturer

1. Address (or revise) the structure and functions of UNESCO's Culture of Peace and Non-violence and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; 18th, 19th and 20th centuries fights for independence and/or freedom of abusive regimes movements and their artistic manifestations.

Didactics/ EFL Teaching Lecturer

1. Address (or revise) CLIL and Task Based Learning approaches, teacher roles and pedagogic use of learning technologies.

Instructional Plan

Project Timeline

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
L&C II/ Social Studies	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6	Session 7
L&C III/ Social Studies	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6	Session 7
ET/ Didactics					Session 5	Session 6	Session 7

Table 1. Project timeline.

General Objectives

Students will:

- acquire general knowledge about important artists and their works and learn about the socio-historical context in which they were produced
- recognise art and intercultural learning as inspiration of a culture of peace and hope
- analyse artistic decisions and determine how those choices affected the communication of a powerful anti-war message
- become aware of education for non-violent alternatives to create a sustainable, equitable, and harmonious society
- identify art works that show messages of peace and/or fight against the violation of human rights
- develop skills for identifying and acting on human rights concerns
- become aware of their rights and responsibilities as regards a culture of peace, especially as future educators
- perceive themselves as citizens of a world community based on common human values
- recognise dialogue, debate and cooperation as valuable practices for the accomplishment of goals
- apply digital technologies to plan and create multimodal texts
- develop their intercultural communicative competence in English

Specific Objectives

Language and Culture/Social Studies (18th and 19th Centuries). Students will:

- study some iconic works of art of both the 18th and 19th centuries
- place these works of art within their context of production
- analyse them from an artistic point of view
- analyse them from a HRE point of view to see how they contributed to a respect-for-rights message (or not)
- become aware of art as one more medium to teach both EFL and HRE

Language and Culture/Social Studies (20th Century). Students will:

- analyse artistic decisions and determine how those choices affected the communication of a powerful anti-war message
- construct a position statement and plan to achieve goals related to a social issue or problem
- evaluate factors that influence a decision-making process
- compare, contrast, research and assess information from a variety of sources in different formats
- identify a specific social issue or problem and work with others to decide on an appropriate expression that incorporates their opinions both as individuals and as citizens within a community
- make decisions based on options and criteria presented and self-assess the group decision-making process

EFL Teaching/Didactics. Students will:

- analyse stages required in a Task Based Learning approach
- become aware of HRE as a pedagogical approach
- develop teaching materials mediated by learning technologies

Language & Culture III: The Fight for Independence in Art

Context. The 18th and 19th centuries experienced many processes of revolutions and fights for independence or freedom of abusive regimes and, whereas some artists supported these, some others denounced them by showing injustices through their paintings/works or just depicting the state of affairs. Artists from different areas of the Western world will be studied.

The aim is to complement the historical and sociocultural approach in the course studying some important artists and their works. The socio-political context, a short biography on the artists, the symbols or message present in their works will be first discussed. Then, an analysis of the product from the point of view of human rights will be done.

Guide for analysis of works of art. The basic questions to be considered with the

different artists and works of art will be:

1. Look for information on the artist's biography, his political views if any and sociocultural background.
2. What is the historical context in which the work of art was produced?
3. Describe what is shown in the work of art. Is it depicting any historical event?
4. What is the artist trying to show or express in your opinion?
5. Did the work suffer any censorship?
6. If we consider the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which rights are present or absent in the painting?
7. What is your reaction to the works of art? Do you think they are effective in their message? Can they be effective today?

Eighteenth Century

Session 1 (80 minutes). Great Britain. The Abolitionist movement.

1. Introduce topic revision. Have a group discussion about the main events of the French Revolution and its ideas.
2. Divide the class in groups. Each group will search for information about the abolitionist movement during the 1790s in Europe and the United States and share their findings with the class.
3. Show the painting *Execrable Human Traffick* (1791), by George Morland and information on the artist using a data projector. Have pairs of students analyse the painting with the set of questions provided in the context section before, and then share their views with the class.
4. Start a class discussion on the painting together with the Declaration of Human Rights. What human rights can be associated with the painting? How can art contribute to raising awareness of human rights? Could this painting still be effective today?
5. As homework, students look for the poem *The slave trade: A poem* (1788) by William Collins and some information about the author.

Session 2: (80 minutes). The slave. Context: Many works of art emphasised the horrors of the slave trade, some poems among them. *The slave trade: A poem*, composed in 1788 by the art dealer and poet William Collins is directly linked with Morland's painting.

1. Students share their findings on the poem and the connection it had with Morland's painting.
2. Ask students to read the poem aloud and analyse it considering the

following questions:

- Does the poem help you understand the painting? How do they complement each other?
 - What effect does the poem have on the reader?
 - What is the author's idea in the last line of the poem?
 - Once again, can the poem still be effective today? Why or why not?
3. Show the painting *African hospitality*, by George Morland. Students analyse it using the questions provided in the context section. How does this painting differ from the first one studied?
 4. As with the first painting, teacher and students consider this painting together with the Declaration of Human Rights. What human rights can be associated with it? How can art contribute to raising awareness of human rights? Could this painting be effective today?
 5. Present another example of art used for the abolitionist cause, *The slave*, by Orlando Hodgson (1820) and the use of this image by Josiah Wedgwood. Students look for information about the authors and their political and social views. Were they successful? What was the fate of this image of *The slave*?

Nineteenth Century

Context. The 19th century witnessed many social revolts in various areas of Europe in which people mainly asked for better social and political conditions and for their people to get free of dominant regimes and be recognised as a proper nation. In art, the 19th century saw the emergence of the Romantic Movement. One of its main exponents was Eugène Delacroix, the leader of the French Romantic School. One of his most famous paintings is *Liberty leading the people* (1830), painted to commemorate the July Revolution of 1830 which removed Charles X of France from power.

Session 3: (80 minutes). Liberty leading the people.

1. Introduce students to information about the revolt of July 1830 in France. Divide the class in small groups and students make a summary of its causes and consequences. They share their findings with the whole class.
2. Students search for information on Eugène Delacroix (his life, his works and his view on the uprisings studied before).
3. Analyse and comment together with students the painting *Liberty leading the people*, using the set of questions to guide their analysis of art works.
4. Divide the class in small groups so students look for another work by Delacroix, *The massacre at Chios* (1824) and relate it to the previous work. Was the aim of Delacroix the same in both paintings? What is the

context of this second painting? Does it have the same effect on you as *Liberty leading the people*? Why or why not?

5. As homework, assign research on another 19th century artist, Théodore Géricault. Students will focus on the themes of his art, especially in *The raft of the medusa* (1819). The following class, their findings and ideas will be discussed.

Session 4: (40 minutes). Art and human rights.

1. Students continue working in the same groups as at the end of the previous session on Gericault's work. All the aspects analysed in the previous works of art will be considered.
2. Start a class discussion considering the contribution of art to HRE.
3. Divide the class in groups, they will exchange ideas on the following questions:
 - What was the main message/s of the works of art we've considered?
 - What role have they played in society? Consider: testimony, resistance, witness. Which others can you think of?
 - How can art contribute to HRE?
 - Can you remember any other example of a work of art which can be used in HRE?

Students share their conclusions with their classmates and the teacher.

4. Set the writing of a reflexive piece on which students will express their ideas on using art to teach or raise awareness about human rights. This quotation will work as a trigger on which to reflect: "The arts can address historic/metaphoric truth, act in the important role as witness, reference injustice, help to raise the bar on awareness of human dignity and create images which are moving and spiritual in the deepest sense" (Zimmer, 2003, p.116). Students' writing will be assessed considering the guidelines given in Language & Culture III as well as in Language and Written Expression III.

Language & Culture II: Anti-War Movements Seen Through Art

Testimony of war: Picasso's Guernica (1937). Context: *Guernica* is one of modern art's most powerful anti-war statements created by the 20th century's well-known artist Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). He was commissioned by the Spanish Republican government to create a large mural for the Spanish display at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne* at the 1937 World's Fair in Paris.

Session 1: (80 minutes).

1. Students research about the historical context of the Spanish Civil War and the rise of Fascism. Divide the class in small groups, students discuss and prepare a bullet point summary to share with the class.
2. General discussion on Pablo Picasso and his importance as an artist. Show a Power Point presentation on the most relevant aspects of his life and his works.
3. Divide the class in small groups, students compare and contrast Picasso's life and artistic career with what they researched in point 1. As a round off, students will develop a chart with the results and will share this chart with the whole class.
4. For homework ask students to investigate about the bombing of the town of Guernica.

Session 2: (80 minutes).

1. Generate a general discussion on the bombing of Guernica and its consequences (historical and social) with the whole class.
2. Analyse *Guernica* in the light of the socio-historical-cultural context. Guide the class to see the symbolic elements of the picture with a video (Treasures of the world: Guernica - Discovery History Art).
3. Divide the class in four or five groups and give each group some quotes from an interview to Art Historian Patricia Failing to reflect upon, taking into account what the writer is pointing out about the painting and its meaning. Students will produce a summary of their ideas as regards the painting, including their own reflection and then they will share the results. Some quotes:
 - “The bull and the horse are important characters in Spanish culture. Picasso himself certainly used these characters to play many different roles over time. This has made the task of interpreting the specific meaning of the bull and the horse very tough. Their relationship is a kind of ballet that was conceived in a variety of ways throughout Picasso's career.”
 - “The central figure in Guernica is a horse run through with a javelin, wrenched in agony. Some interpreted the horse as Franco's Nationalism, with Picasso predicting its downfall. But other, opposite meanings make more sense in the overall context. The portrayal of the people as a helpless animal dying a senseless death, without the light of hope, is certainly a disturbing idea.”

- “Years after the completion of Guernica, Picasso was still questioned time and time again about the meaning of the bull and other images in the mural. In exasperation he stated emphatically: ‘These are animals, massacred animals. That’s all as far as I’m concerned...’ But he did reiterate the painting’s obvious anti-war sentiment: ‘My whole life as an artist has been nothing more than a continuous struggle against reaction and the death of art. In the picture I am painting—which I shall call Guernica—I am expressing my horror of the military caste which is now plundering Spain into an ocean of misery and death.’”
4. Ask students to bring material about other anti-war or peace-related art pieces for the following class.

Session 3: (80 minutes). Anti-war and peace art.

1. Divide the class in groups according to the material the students have brought. They will share the material and give their interpretation on what they mean and/or represent as anti-war or peace pieces of art. They will support their oral presentations with a Power Point presentation, Prezi, video, pictures, etc. (For instance, Dada’s work; Otto Dix’s, Marc’s, Kollwitz’s anti-war paintings; *the Hiroshima Panels*; war photography; 60’s and 70’s peace posters).
2. Engage the whole class on a debate on the subject , taking into account the following quote:
 - Art can contribute to social change through the imagery it gives us and the ways it can be used to communicate our deepest feelings and needs. To create a culture of peace, we must first imagine it, and the arts can help us do that, for ourselves and future generations (Rank, 2008, p.6).
3. Ask students to write a report on the contributions of art for promoting peace. The report will follow the layout and organisation taught and used in the subjects Language & Culture II and Language and Written Expression II.

Session 4 (80 minutes). Art for peace in Latin-America.

1. Ask students if they know of Latin-American artists who have made pieces of art connected to peace, social unrest or anti-war movements. Brainstorming.
2. Divide the class in small groups, students will work with websites to

research about two Latin American artists (Suggestion: Benito Quinquela Martín, Diego Rivera, León Ferrari, etc.).

3. Groups will report to the class. They will use the *fishbowl* strategy (students ask questions, present opinions, and share information when they sit in the *fishbowl* circle, while students on the outside of the circle listen carefully to the ideas presented and pay attention to process; then the roles reverse).

Sessions 5, 6 & 7 (80 minutes each). Building cultures of peace. In this part of the project, students will work with the teachers of Language & Culture II & III and ET II & III.

1. Divide the class in groups of no more than three students. They will work with UNESCO's website *Culture of peace and Non-violence* and the document *The culture of peace*. Students will work with the concepts of culture of peace and intercultural dialogue and their contribution to awareness of human rights. They will report their findings to the class, comparing conclusions among groups.
2. Students will focus on UNESCO's website and its main areas of action, especially those that imply culture, education, creativity, art and intercultural dialogue. They will select which area they would like to work with, taking into account that they will plan lessons fostering a culture of peace for their teaching practicum, either for secondary or primary school. This task will take the rest of the class and will continue throughout two more classes. To write the class plans they will follow the theory and practice dealt with in ET.
3. At the end of class 7, students will hand in their lesson plans for review.
4. The class plans will be reviewed and assessed by peers and teachers and then they will be observed in class as part of the students' teaching practicum.

Outside the Classroom

Propose an extra-curricular activity about culture of peace and art. As an example, students in this setting will work with children in an NGO from the city of La Plata called *La máquina de los sueños* [The Dreams Machine]. A group of students and teachers will visit the association which has a kindergarten and a workshop to help students with their schoolwork in a needy neighbourhood (San Carlos). Students will get in contact with the children in the association and elaborate a plan to promote peace education through art in view of the NGO's needs. One possible suggestion could be

to produce graffiti on the walls of the association with the children so as to encourage them to show what peace is for them creatively. Another event could be a guided visit to MACLA (*Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Latino Americano*) in La Plata, to explore the art pieces exhibited there and work with the material provided by the museum, in this way, bringing the children closer to local art, its meaning and promoting their understanding of the importance of art to preserve culture.

Language focus

- Subject-specific vocabulary and content
- Understanding a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognising implicit meaning
- Developing fluent and spontaneous speech
- Using language flexibly and effectively for social and academic purposes
- Producing clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices

Assessment

Assessment is an organic element of teaching and learning not apart from regular teaching. Throughout the sessions teachers will observe the process in which the students are immersed and will also take into account their opinions and feedback as part of such process. There will be formative and summative assessment of the tasks proposed by the teachers. Student teachers should provide their own assessment of planning (peer and self-assessment) before those plans are submitted to the teachers. We would like to foster the aims of Peace Education as part of the reflection on HRE and its implications in their future classrooms.

Related Websites

A large number of websites have been mentioned in the Instructional Plan.

Conclusion

With this proposal we aim to raise awareness of the relevance of dealing with HRE in different classrooms. In particular, the EFL classroom provides a rich context in which to address HR issues because of its flexibility to deal with a wide variety of topics and the different ages of the students. In this case, this proposal is designed for training teachers who will later be better prepared to work with HR with their own students. In addition, we have shown that HRE can be approached from an interdisciplinary

perspective, in this case art and history, and this shows its richness and wide scope in several areas of life.

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