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ABSTRACT

Advocates of the new social studies have long urged the use of concepts as the basic building blocks in social studies. The question of what concepts and definitions of them should be taught is a matter of agreement among qualified judges. As qualified judges in the international relations-war/peace international education field, we can determine the concepts to which students should be exposed. Such a determination will undoubtedly be picked up by curriculum writers and teachers. We have attempted to take up the task of defining and choosing concepts, generalizations, and a rationale for them in the Diablo Valley Education Project. We have asked: What are the crucial concepts which must be taught if students are to be better prepared to participate in the democratic process, to the end of helping build the institutions of peace? Our initial answer to this is that they should include conflict, change, obligation and authority, power, interdependence, institutions, identity and role, with a discussion of values related approximately to each. We have attempted a definition, rationale, and attitude and knowledge objectives for the concept of conflict. We have also developed an outline of propositions for conflict which begins to provide the content around which we would encourage teachers to build specific units. Attached are excerpts from our work on the concept of conflict. (SO 002 078 is related.) (Author/JLB)

DIABLO VALLEY EDUCATION PROJECT

... teaching about war, peace, conflict and social change

An Occasional Paper

DEFINING CONCEPTS IN THE WAR/PEACE FIELD: A TASK FOR ACADEMICS AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS ALIKE

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Including excerpts from work being done by the Diablo Valley Education Project on the concept of "Conflict"

DEFINING CONCEPTS IN THE WAR/PEACE FIELD:
A TASK FOR ACADEMICS AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS ALIKE*

Advocates of the "new social studies," urging a concept-process-inquiry approach to teaching all of the social studies, have been actively promoting this idea for several years. Some examples of this include:

> "Learning to use concepts...should be a key objective of the social studies because structure influences the hypotheses one can develop and hence controls inquiry."[1]
>
> "Concepts are commonly used in constructing curricula. When the objectives of a curriculum or a unit are stated, the understanding of certain ideas, or concepts, is usually included. The listing is selective: 'Key' ideas are chosen."[2]
>
> "...children's minds are shaped by the nature of the structure and concepts which they handle. Therefore, the way you put them together and the way you handle them are very important - not just whether they are substantively correct but what the concepts do to the minds of the people as they go through the process."[3]
>
> "One of the most productive ways to develop the substantive content of social studies is to organize it around concepts and generalizations."[4]

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*Presented by Robert E. Freeman, Director, Diablo Valley Education Project, to a conference of the International Studies Association - West, March 26, 1971, San Francisco, California.

[1]Edwin Fenton, The New Social Studies, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1967), pages 14-15.

[2]Irving Morrissett, Editor, Concepts and Structure in the New Social Science Curricula, (Social Science Education Consortium, Indiana, 1966), page 3.

[3]Hilda Taba, quoted in Morrissett, Ibid., page 47.

[4]Byron G. Massialas and C. Benjamin Cox, Inquiry in Social Studies, (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1966), page 46.

These quotes are representative of the advice of social studies curriculum developers to use concepts as the basic building blocks in social studies. What is less frequently encountered is an answer to the question of what concepts we are talking about as essential and what definitions of ideas about those concepts are primary to the curriculum. One of the only projects addressing this question - the Social Studies Curriculum Center at Syracuse University - suggested, in 1965, why few others have attempted this task: "A conceptual structure for the social studies may be premature, because the disciplines themselves have no reasonably agreed-upon structure to offer. We are not suggesting that efforts to establish a comprehensive structure be abandoned, but our judgment is to begin with some concepts we have reason to believe are important, if not the most important, and to develop classroom materials around them for tryout at three or more grade levels."[5] On the subject of choosing the concepts, they then said, "The difficult choice of concepts to be developed and the concepts to be deferred was based on (1) scope and (2) uniqueness. If a concept could be developed to include the concepts or sub-concepts recommended by several disciplines it was given priority over some important concepts limited to a single discipline. No concept was chosen merely because it was different, but if there was good reason to believe the student would probably never in any other way be exposed to a particular important concept or a single discipline, uniqueness determined which of the several such concepts should be chosen."[6]

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[5]Roy A. Price, Warren Hickman and Gerald Smith, Major Concepts for the Social Studies, (The Social Studies Curriculum Center, Syracuse, 1965), page 7.

[6]Ibid.

It is clear from this quotation that the question of what concepts and definitions of them should be taught is merely a matter of agreement among qualified judges. In this case the judges were representative scholars from the social science disciplines. I shall come back to this point of who should decide what concepts should go into the curriclum. But first I should like to point out that the advice of these scholars is being taken. In California, the unadopted but proposed new "Social Sciences Education Framework for the California Public Schools" calls for: "An understanding of key concepts, generalizations and themes in a form that gives a sense of structure to the social sciences" as well as an understanding of the "...Basic skills needed to use conceptual systems..."[7]

In the Mount Diablo Unified School District, in which most of my work takes place, a new concept-oriented framework for social studies is being developed. It draws heavily on the suggestions coming from the Syracuse Project. In the Vallejo school district and in districts in Marin County the same thing is happening, and the same guideline for concepts - namely, the Syracuse Project - is the principle guiding document.

I should point out, however, that the list of concepts suggested by the Syracuse Project has not been changed or improved since its initial publication in 1965. Most of the concepts contain only a paragraph definition of what is to be included under a particular idea (although one concept, conflict, is outlined in more detail). And there

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[7]Proposed "Social Sciences Education Framework for the California Public Schools," (State Board of Education, Sacramento, Revised Draft 1970), page 2.

is no listing of specific generalizations as is called for in most of the social studies frameworks being developed around these concepts.

What does all this have to do with teaching international relations in the high school - or with teaching about war and peace or international education or whatever particular twist one would like to give this area of education? It has a great deal to do, because, as is pointed out above, it is simply a matter of agreement among qualified judges as to which of these concepts gets special attention and development in the social studies curriculum. As "qualified judges" in the international relations-war/peace-international education field, we can determine the concepts and ideas to which students should be exposed in order to be able to handle the problems in this field. Such a determination will undoubtedly be picked up by curriculum writers and teachers. My evidence for that statement is the wide effect which the Syracuse Project has already had on new social studies curricula.

It seems to me, then, that it would behoove us to ask what are the most powerful concepts in our field which we hope students would be exposed to in primary and secondary school? What conceptual knowledge should students bring to the university or, for that matter, to community life, which would improve their understanding of war/peace problems and international relations? Further, we might ask, what attitudes toward those concepts and ideas should students have? What specific knowledge objectives are important to us? What generalizations are suggested by the concepts we identify? What specific content samples from history or current events provide powerful examples of the concepts we wish to teach? Most important of all, what is our rationale

for why we have chosen the concepts we have? Is it because these concepts will help students solve particular problems (e.g., personal or community conflicts, ending war, attaining political power)? Or have we chosen the concepts because we want to turn out political scientists, economists, sociologists? Or is it to make students better citizens? It is incumbent upon us to answer these questions if we expect curriculum developers and teachers to take our suggestions seriously.

We have attempted to take this advice in the Diablo Valley Education Project. In so doing we have been under the pressure of trying to advise teachers as to what to teach about war, peace, conflict and social change. It is difficult work, and when all is said and done I'm sure we are being quite arbitrary in what we are including and what we are leaving out. It is this very arbitrariness which makes it so crucially important that more international studies people become involved in answering these questions. Wider involvement can ensure that the propaganda effect of the work be reduced to a minimum. And clarity about why we are choosing certain ideas and what attitudes we want people to take toward them at least provides an honest base for others to evaluate what is being suggested.

Even given the selection of some basic concepts, it has been difficult to get consultants from the various disciplines to speak to these questions in an organized and concrete manner. Academics seem reluctant to narrow their views to absolute essentials. They seem to prefer to err on the side of providing many examples, elaborate abstractions and the identification of need for further research, leaving the curriculum developer or teacher (for whom they rarely write

in the first place) to make the final selection as to what should go into his program. The result, I'm afraid, is that the average social studies teacher is still reiterating the products, geographies, capitals and wars of each of the countries of Eurasia, instead of introducing students throughout the grades to fundamental understandings of conflict, interdependence, power and authority.

We could change all that if we would take seriously the advice of advocates of the new social studies: namely, to develop concepts in a way that demonstrates the structure of knowledge. But the essence of structuring knowledge is sorting out the most important elements, relating them to each other and providing handles on which more detailed knowledge can be hung. So far, because of our own failure to come to grips with the problems of priorities, this job is being left pretty much to the teacher. Being resourceful, many teachers are not shying from the task; they are taking their cues from the Fentons, the Morrissetts and others and are setting about to develop a concept-oriented curriculum. But most curriculum men lack that "structure of knowledge" which all advocate in their examples but fail to detail with regard to the particular concepts that make up the content of social studies. The results are such things as these:

> The Mount Diablo Unified School District's social studies curriculum guide, listing some one hundred thirteen concepts from nine disciplines, plus several skills to be presented over grades seven through twelve. The help such a guide gives the teacher regarding any one concept - such as conflict, interdependence, sovereignty, revolution, violence, authority, social change, etc. - is meager.
>
> Repeated use of the Syracuse concept list as the sole source of what concepts should be taught.
>
> Grossly over-simplified models of concepts such as power or conflict.

> Segregation of concepts into special disciplines. For example, "scarcity" is seen only as an economic concept rather than including its political science component - "demand" - as it might appear in a political system. Or the idea of "needs" as understood in anthropology.
>
> A lack of any inter-relationship of concepts. For example, it is not pointed out that compromise, civil disobedience, administration of rules, settlement of disputes, resource conflict, demand, desires, revolution (all concepts listed as part of the social studies curriculum guide for Mount Diablo) might all be related to the larger concept conflict, which is also part of that guide.

What is the Diablo Valley Education Project doing to meet some of these concerns? Probably not enough - but we've made a beginning.

We have asked: What are the crucial concepts which must be taught if students are to be better prepared to participate in the democratic process, to the end of helping build the institutions of peace? Note that we start right at the very top of our concern with a reason for including some concepts in the curriculum (and perhaps ignoring others). Now people may disagree with our reason for choosing one concept to emphasize in the curriculum over another, but at least we are being honest in presenting our rationale for the choice.

Our initial answer to this question so far as the concepts are concerned is that they should include conflict, change, obligation/authority, power, interdependence, institutions, identity/role - with a discussion of values and the valuing process related appropriately to each of these concepts as it is presented.

We then asked what definition, rationale, affective, knowledge and skills objectives do we have for these concepts? What propositions, topics and content samples should we emphasize regarding each concept? So far we have mainly asked the questions - we

have not answered them for very much of our outline. However, let me give you some idea of where we are on the concept of conflict.

We have made a stab at a definition:

> Conflict is any situation or process which involves human choice among alternative values or among alternative actions. Or it is any situation in which two or more persons seek to possess the same object, occupy the same (physical or status) space, play the same role, maintain incompatible goals or undertake mutually incompatible means for achieving their purposes.

We have stated a rationale for why conflict belongs among the concepts that would help students build the institutions of peace:

> Conflict is seen as the most powerful concept for integrating the knowledge of human interaction at the personal and classroom level with the more abstract problems of change and conflict resolution among large groups or nations. War, in its many forms, is the most destructive form of conflict. Since it is our goal to help end such destruction, it is important for students to develop an understanding of conflict and conflict resolution at every level of life experience so that they can apply these understandings at the international level.
>
> Conflict must be seen very broadly to give recognition to the fact that there is still much argument among scholars as to what the concept of conflict includes and whether or not one general theory of conflict is feasible. At the K-12 level it is important that several definitions and facets of conflict be studied so that new generations may participate constructively in developing more adequate theories of conflict and conflict resolution and ultimately develop the understandings, policies and institutions which can prevent war, reduce violence and provide for the constructive resolution of conflict at all levels of society, from inter-personal to international.

Further, we have devised attitude and knowledge objectives specific to the concept of conflict. And we have developed an outline of propositions for conflict which begins to provide the content around which we would encourage teachers to build specific units. (General affective and skills objectives which we see as fundamental to the whole

range of war/peace concepts have also been defined.) Excerpts from our work on these objectives are attached.

We have some seven teams of teachers at work now to become familiar enough with some of these ideas to then select good content samples and plan the learning experiences which can bring these ideas to life in the classroom.

What is needed from those concerned with the theory of international studies is work on these preliminary tasks - that is, what are the important concepts for international studies and why are they important? What definition should we give to these concepts? What are the sub-concepts and the propositions or generalizations which give them meaning? How should these sub-concepts and propositions be organized to provide easily understood models that can be introduced in the early grades? What specific attitude and knowledge objectives relate directly to each concept?

If some portion of our intellectual energy could be mobilized to provide preliminary answers to these questions and to review those answers periodically, I believe we could vastly increase the level of understanding of international relations for the entire population in a relatively short period of time. And we could certainly deliver far better qualified high school graduates to the university, eager to go on with advanced studies in some of the more traditional disciplines - all toward the end of building the institutions of peace which this world so desperately needs.

EXCERPTS FROM WORK BEING DONE BY THE

DIABLO VALLEY EDUCATION PROJECT, ON:

THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT

Compiled April 1971

I. Definition and Rationale: Conflict

II. Developmental Idea Outline: Conflict (excerpts)

III. Knowledge, Affective and Skills Objectives (excerpts)

The curriculum development activities of the Diablo Valley Education Project seek to develop the attitudes, knowledge and problem-solving abilities in students which will enable them to participate fully in the democratic process and to make a significant contribution to building the institutions of peace.

The content focus for curriculum units to be developed in the 1970-71 program year is on Conflict and Conflict Resolution. Concepts to be developed in future work include: change, power, interdependence, institutions, authority/obligation and personal identity/role.

Following are excerpts from a document prepared in January 1971 by the Diablo Valley Education Project. (The full draft document is available from the DVEP, for experimental use only.) Definition, rationale, knowledge and affective objectives specific to the concept of Conflict are given first, followed by affective and skills objectives for any curricula dealing with war, peace, conflict and change.

I. DEFINITION AND RATIONALE: CONFLICT

Definition

Conflict is any situation or process which involves human choice among alternative values or among alternative actions. Or it is any situation in which two or more persons seek to possess the same object, occupy the same (physical or status) space, play the same role, maintain incompatible goals or undertake mutually incompatible means for achieving their purposes.

Rationale

Conflict is seen as the most powerful concept for integrating the knowledge of human interaction at the personal and classroom level with the more abstract problems of change and conflict resolution among large groups or nations. War, in its many forms, is the most destructive form of conflict. Since it is our goal to help end such destruction, it is important for students to develop an understanding of conflict and conflict resolution at every level of life experience so that they can apply these understandings at the international level.

Conflict must be seen very broadly to give recognition to the fact that there is still much argument among scholars as to what the concept of conflict includes and whether or not one general theory of conflict is feasible. At the K-12 level it is important that several definitions and facets of conflict be studied so that new generations may participate constructively in developing more adequate theories of conflict and conflict resolution and ultimately develop the understandings, policies and institutions which can prevent war, reduce violence and provide for the constructive resolution of conflict at all levels of society, from inter-personal to international.

II. DEVELOPMENTAL IDEA OUTLINE: CONFLICT (excerpts)

Universality	All human relations consist of two closely interrelated processes: the conflictive and the integrative.
Origins	Conflict occurs when two or more parties pursue mutually incompatible objectives or use mutually incompatible methods.
Dynamics	All conflict situations tend to follow patterns of escalation and de-escalation based on reciprocal perceptions of threat or injury.
Development	The manner in which a conflict develops is significantly affected by a number of variables.
Effects	Conflicts can be either functional (constructive) or dysfunctional (destructive) to the parties involved.
Methods of Resolution	Most conflicts can be resolved through techniques other than violence or avoidance.
Resolution Techniques	Unilateral actions of the conflicting parties determine the opportunities for resolution of the conflict.

The above organizing propositions basic to the concept "conflict" are further developed by sub-propositions which explore the application of the ideas to conflict in international affairs.

Expanded draft materials of this Developmental Idea Outline are experimental and not available for publication or public use other than under the auspices of the Diablo Valley Education Project.

III. KNOWLEDGE, AFFECTIVE AND SKILLS OBJECTIVES (excerpts)

Knowledge Objectives	(specific to the concept of Conflict)
Affective Objectives	(specific to the concept of Conflict)
Affective Objectives	(applicable to all curricula on war/peace concepts)
Skills Objectives	(applicable to all curricula on war/peace concepts)

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES (specific to the concept of Conflict): dictate the academic content of the curriculum unit; they are the foundation for an idea outline of the unit and for subsequent development of the topics and content samples which form the unit.

To provide students with an understanding of what conflict is.

1. The nature of conflict (types, levels, conditions for).
2. The origins of conflict (reasons for, value differences).
3. The development of conflict (escalation, de-escalation).
4. The effects of conflict (constructive, destructive).

To provide students with an understanding of value conflicts when the parties to a conflict are operating from different value systems (as in international and much inter-group conflict).

To provide students with an understanding of alternative means for resolving conflict.

1. "Avoidance" and "Conquest," which frequently result in violence.
2. "Process," which can more easily avoid violence.

To provide students with an understanding of the effects of unilateral strategies on conflict resolution processes.

1. Threats and acts of violence.
2. Acts which improve the chances for agreement and resolution.

AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES (specific to the concept of Conflict): the experiencing of conflict and conflict simulation, gained from the learning activities in curriculum units on conflict, creates an understanding and empathy which allows affective development to be gained.

Students should:

1. Accept conflict as a natural part of life experience which can be either good or bad, depending on how well it is handled.

2. Become committed to non-violent rather than violent processes for the resolution of conflict, exemplified by:

   a. Belief in responsibility for helping manage conflicts without violence and without psychological destruction to self or others.

   b. Commitment to seeking all possible alternatives to war or violence as means for defending values and society or for causing social change before considering violence for these purposes.

3. Believe that war is a failure in human communications which man is capable of solving, not an inevitable consequence of man's conflictive nature or aggressive tendencies.

4. Become committed to democratic processes and institutions for resolution of conflict rather than to authoritarian solutions or institutions.

5. Develop a reasonable tolerance for anxiety and ambiguity caused by conflict in one's life while still attempting to resolve these ambiguities.

6. Resist temptations to place blame in conflict situations and, instead, focus on the problem of finding non-violent resolutions to conflicts that satisfy as many goals as possible for all parties.

7. Become aware of one's own aggressive feelings and thoughts, channeling them into constructive outlets (e.g., accept physical mastery of one's own body as a substitute for violent behavior toward others).

AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES (general): Instructional objectives for student attitudes, feelings and values; affective objectives are generally considered long-term and results are often difficult to evaluate formally. The objectives given below are general ones applicable to all curricula which treat war/peace concepts.*

Students should demonstrate:

Articulation of and commitment to own values

Concern for the well-being of other people
Empathy

Tolerance of diversity
Respect for individual worth and dignity
Open-mindedness

Tolerance of international diversities

Belief in the need for social structure and order

Belief that war is not inevitable
Belief in human potential for doing both good and bad

Willingness to exhaust all legal and non-violent avenues for change before considering illegal or violent ones

Toleration of some degree of ambiguity resulting from complexity
Awareness of the need for a level of institutional complexity while working to humanize institutions

Belief in the need for intellectual honesty
Belief in both rationality and irrationality
Perseverance in the face of ambiguity and complexity

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*Examples of representative student behavior for each set of objectives are given in the full draft document, "Knowledge, Affective and Skills Objectives" (January 1971, DVEP).

SKILLS OBJECTIVES (general): Cognitive, academic and social skills are necessary for the integration of knowledge with the student's behavior and are developed through the learning activities of the curriculum unit.*

Cognitive Skills (operational tasks for thinking)

Observing
Describing
Classifying
Reclassifying
Differentiating
Defining
Comparing and Contrasting
Relating
Generalizing
Predicting (applying generalizations previously learned)
Questioning
Using a Systems Analysis of political behavior
Explaining
Offering Alternatives
Hypothesizing
Formulating Original Ideas

Academic Skills (operational tasks for doing, in an academic context)

Reading
Note-taking
Viewing
Listening
Outlining
Caption-writing
Making Charts
Reading and Interpreting Maps
Diagramming
Tabulating
Constructing Timelines
Asking Relevant Questions

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*Examples of representative student behavior for cognitive, academic, social and political skills are included in the full draft document, "Knowledge, Affective and Skills Objectives" (January 1971, DVEP).

Social Skills (operational tasks for doing, in a social context)

Planning with Others
Participating in Research Projects
Participating Productively in Group Discussions
Responding to Questions of Others
Leading Group Discussions
Acting Responsibly
Helping Others

Political Skills (developed as part of one's social skills, depending on the degree of involvement in political activity; given here in two sets, the first is essential for every citizen)

1. Voting procedures
   Knowledge of individual rights
   Capacity to distinguish between personalities and issues
   Capacity for effective use of complex institutions and bureaucratic procedures

2. Letter-writing
   Petitioning
   Door-to-Door 'campaigning'
   Demonstrating (non-violent)
   Compromising or Bargaining
   Writing political statements or platforms
   Summarizing complicated political issues, in written or verbal form, for discussion purposes
   Debating and public speaking (prepared and extemporaneous)
   Defusing emotional issues for purposes of communicating with political opponents
   Political organizing