

Multidisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Peace Education and Peace Studies: A Content Analysis

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Abstract : Demonstrating the ability to build social justice and peace is integral in undergraduate and graduate education. Many disciplines are involved in peace education and peace studies, and the collaboration of those disciplines are examined in this paper. To the author's best knowledge, no content analysis research previously existed regarding peace studies and peace education from a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity perspective. Peacebuilding is taught through these approaches, which adds to the depth, breadth, and richness of peace education and peace studies. This paper presents a content analysis of academic peace studies programs and course descriptions. Variables studied include contributions and foci of disciplines in peace studies programs and students' engagement in community peacebuilding. The social work discipline, for example, focuses on social and economic justice as one of the nine competencies that undergraduate and graduate students must attain before earning a Bachelor of Social Work degree or a Master of Social Work degree and becoming social work practitioners. Demonstrating the ability to build social justice and peace is integral in social work education. Peacebuilding is taught through such social work courses as conflict resolution, and social work practice with communities and organizations, and these courses are examined in this research through multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity approach. Peace and social justice are linked terms in various fields, including social work. Social justice is of paramount importance in social work programs, and social workers are trained to advocate for human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice. Social workers use knowledge of oppression, globally as well as nationally, in the practice of peace education and peace studies. Social work is at the forefront in advocating for social justice as a discipline and joins with other educators in strengthening the peacebuilding opportunities for students. The content analysis, conducted through a random sample of peace studies and peace education university and college programs in the United States, found that although courses teach the concepts of peace education and peace studies, courses often are not given these titles in the social work discipline. Therefore, this analysis also includes a discussion of the multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity approach to peace education, peace studies, and peacebuilding and the importance of these approaches in educating students about peace. The content analysis further found great variability in the number of disciplines involved in peace studies programs, the focus of those disciplines in peace education, the placement of peace studies and peace education within the university or college, and the number of courses and concentrations available in peace studies and peace education. In conclusion, the research points toward very robust and diverse approaches to peace education with opportunities for further research and discussion.

Keywords : content analysis, interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary, peace education programs

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