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**Book review**

Book review: *Educating for Peace and Human Rights: An introduction*, by Maria Hantzopoulos and Monisha Bajaj

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**Peer review**

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**Book review: *Educating for Peace and Human Rights: An introduction*, by Maria Hantzopoulos and Monisha Bajaj**

London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021, 188 pp., ISBNs: 978-1350-12972-6 (hbk); 978-1350-12971-9 (pbk); 978-13501-2973-3 (ePdf); 978-1350-12974-0 (ebk)

The purpose of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is to codify those common standards that, if observed, will enable freedom, justice and peace in the world. Observing these standards requires people to know about them, and so education and, by implication, human rights education, is a right that is given a detailed exposition in UDHR Article 26. Further definition and encouragement are provided in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2011 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. Education is an enabling right in that it opens access to other rights. For example, education about health and hygiene leads to more likelihood of being able to claim the right to life (Article 3) and to healthy living (Article 25).

Whereas knowledge of human rights standards acquired through human rights education can theoretically lead to peace, the reciprocal is not the case. In other words, an understanding of peace and conflict resolution can support a culture of human rights but is not essential to achieve it. In fact, during the Cold War, peace was used to support communist ideology, while capitalist countries favoured an ideology that included human rights, particularly political freedoms. This can be seen in the long title of

the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

This is to preface my remarks on this short and accessible introductory text. It is original in bringing together in a single volume some basic theoretical insights and practical examples from two educational fields that are often developed separately. It intends to provide a synthesis that demonstrates ways in which proponents of peace education and human rights education can find common cause. The authors are well qualified to undertake this task. Maria Hantzopoulos, of Vassar College, New York, has a background in urban education and international educational development. She has previously published on human rights and edited a collection on peace education. Her co-author, Monisha Bajaj, Professor of International and Multicultural Education at San Francisco University is founding editor of the *International Journal of Human Rights Education*. As well as her much cited work on human rights education based on extensive fieldwork in India, she is editor of the extensive *Encyclopedia of Peace Education*. This new volume draws substantially on their previous publications.

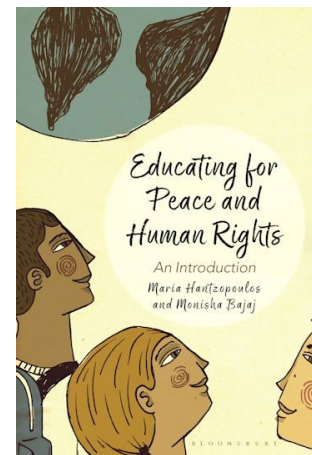
Intended to launch a new book series on peace and human rights education, this volume is described as an introductory primer that explores both the separate histories of the two movements and the extent to which they converge. It aims to provide a review of scholarship on the implementation of peace and human rights education in a variety of global settings. The target readership is undergraduate and master's educational studies students and community-based scholars. Their teachers, who will recommend and use the text, are challenged to view this introductory text as an inspiration to engage in further robustly critical studies.

The book is organised around four core chapters, two on peace education and two on human rights education. In each case, the first chapter introduces key theories and concepts, and the second illustrates ways in which these have been put into practice in a wide variety of contexts. One of the strengths of the book is its clear commitment to decolonising debates and the inclusion of examples from, among others, Bangladesh, India, Tanzania, Mozambique and the USA. There is a clear commitment to Paulo Freire's work originating in Brazil, and to South African perspectives through the concept of Ubuntu.

The four core chapters essentially reproduce some of the authors' previously published and well-regarded work. They are bookended by an introduction and a conclusion setting out the theoretical approach that enables a bridging of the fields of human rights education and peace education. The key overarching concepts are dignity and transformative agency. There is then a further conclusion in which the authors invite members of their distinguished international steering committee for the book series to distil the essence of their current thinking and provide helpful observations and challenges about future directions. Another strength of the book is that it is grounded in the authors' extensive experience of teaching courses to a variety of groups, both university and community-based activist.

The book is completed by an extensive and useful annotated bibliography of suggested further reading that was compiled by a small team of students. This is followed by the reference list and an index. Given that the full text of the UDHR does not require copyright, perhaps a second edition of the book could include it for reference.

A striking and recurring image is that of the 'possibility tree' exercise credited to Eve Tuck from New York. This is a more positive version of Freire's problem tree. It is presented in a graphic as a banyan tree, showing its roots, branches and leaves. The exercise starts with identifying an issue and then its manifestations. These are written on the leaves. Students then think of what sustains the leaves, namely branches, and how these are supported by the educational trunk, and finally they are helped to name concepts that are the roots of responding to the issue. These include human rights and positive peace. This is clearly a useful starting point for conceptualising and discussing the field with a group of learners. The banyan tree model is revised and re-presented as a synthesis in Chapter 5. I was not, however, convinced that it helps to provide any significant theoretical insights, as I felt that the discussion of the images stretches the metaphor too far. Insofar as it is a heuristic or starting point for reflection, it has considerable potential.



The lettering and images on the cover are highly suggestive of an accessible introduction, as well as an original scholarly contribution. The volume represents a work in progress, with a challenge to others to take up some of the unresolved issues of both theory and practice in human rights education and peace education. In this I am sure it will be highly successful. I warmly welcome this accessible text that is eminently suitable for courses on both human rights education and peace education. This book leads the way in inspiring new courses that combine and synthesise the two fields in the spirit of the UDHR.