

## PEACE EDUCATION IN CATCH-UP FRIDAYS: TOWARDS CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND MEANINGFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

by:

**Lorelyn G. Galicia**

*Teacher II, Mariveles National High School- Poblacion*

The Department of Education (DepEd) recently introduced DepEd Memorandum No. 1, s. 2024, which launched "Catch-Up Fridays," an initiative aimed at strengthening foundational learning skills to align with the core objectives of the basic education curriculum. The program provides an opportunity for students to reinforce concepts they may not have fully grasped while also acquiring new knowledge and skills that contribute to holistic and lifelong learning. As part of the National Learning Recovery Program, Catch-Up Fridays integrates Peace Education, recognizing its vital role in fostering cultural understanding and promoting meaningful conflict resolution.

The Philippines, a nation characterized by ethnic diversity, faces various challenges stemming from multiculturalism, including social tensions, political unrest, and economic disparities. The conflicts can escalate into violence, disrupting communities and hindering national development if left unaddressed. However, instilling the values of peace in young learners can pave the way for a future where cultural differences are embraced rather than seen as sources of division. Educators can cultivate an environment that encourages respect, empathy, and non-violent conflict resolution among students through the integration of Peace Education into Catch-Up Fridays.

One key strategy in promoting peace education is emphasizing the concept of human dignity. Before learners can truly practice peace, they must first develop a profound understanding of human dignity that every individual deserves respect and

fair treatment regardless of background. The strategy can help students recognize that actions impact others and any form of prejudice can lead to deep-seated trauma. Educators can guide students in appreciating diversity and advocating for social harmony through the promotion of an inclusive learning environment.

Furthermore, condemning all forms of discrimination while integrating peace education is essential. Schools must serve as safe spaces where biases are challenged and prejudices are dismantled. Encouraging open discussions about respect, fairness and social justice allows students to reflect on their behaviors and attitudes which will equip them with the knowledge to prevent conflicts before they arise. When learners understand the importance of treating others with kindness and equality, they become active contributors to a culture of peace.

Incorporating non-violent conflict resolution techniques into Catch-Up Fridays is another crucial aspect of peace education. Conflict is a natural part of human interaction particularly in diverse societies where individuals come from various backgrounds. However, students must learn that disputes should not lead to hostility or aggression. Instead, they should be resolved through meaningful dialogue, active listening, and mutual understanding. Educators can instill the belief that violence is never the answer and that thoughtful communication is the key to resolving disagreements through modeling peaceful interactions within the classroom.

Moreover, adopting a pacifist approach in addressing local and global conflicts teaches students the value of diplomacy and cooperation. The repercussions of war and violence extend beyond those directly involved which can cause immense suffering for innocent individuals. Students gain awareness of historical and contemporary conflicts through peace education which will allow them to analyze the root causes of disputes and explore alternative solutions that prioritize human well-being.

Lastly, achieving peace on a broader scale begins with cultivating inner peace. When students develop self-awareness, emotional regulation and a sense of personal harmony, they are better equipped to navigate challenges without resorting to aggression. Encouraging mindfulness, self-reflection and empathy enables learners to become ambassadors of peace within their communities. If individuals prioritize inner peace, achieving global peace becomes a more tangible reality.

In general, integrating Peace Education into Catch-Up Fridays is a transformative step toward fostering cultural understanding and equipping students with the skills necessary for meaningful conflict resolution. The initiative empowers young learners to become advocates for harmony in a diverse and ever-changing world by emphasizing human dignity, promoting inclusivity, encouraging non-violent dialogue and nurturing inner peace. The seeds of peace are sown, ensuring a future built on respect, tolerance and unity through education.

## References:

PEACE EDUCATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION: A CRITICAL REVIEW

January 2010 Innovative Issues and Approaches in Social Sciences 3(1)

DOI: 10.12959/issn.1855-0541.IIASS-2010-no1-art01

Working toward the De-essentialization of Identity Categories in Conflict and Postconflict Societies: Israel, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland May 2009 Comparative Education Review 53(2):213-234 DOI: 10.1086/597482