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EDUCATION FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD OF NEW MEDIA

WYCHOWANIE DO POKOJU W ŚWIECIE NOWYCH MEDIÓW

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest ukazanie znaczenia nowych mediów dla edukacji do pokoju we wciąż zmieniającym się i niepewnym świecie. W tekście podkreślono znaczenie i potencjał edukacyjny związany z rozwojem technologicznym oraz zdefiniowano zagrożenia, które towarzyszą i są związane z rozwojem i wszechobecnością nowych mediów w życiu człowieka. Podkreślono, że wychowanie do pokoju w świecie nowych mediów stanowi istotny problem pedagogiczny. Nowe media coraz silniej określają poziom krytycznej refleksji związanej z wszelkimi przemianami kulturowymi, społecznymi i technologicznymi. Odkrywanie i propagowanie wartości pokoju w świecie nowoczesnych mediów odbywa się w zupełnie nowych przestrzeniach i perspektywach. Przy użyciu nowoczesnej technologii nowe media wygenerowały nową przestrzeń życia człowieka, umożliwiając między innymi głębszą i bardziej rzetelną refleksję nad wychowaniem do pokoju. Niestety oprócz możliwości, jakie wygenerowały nowe media dla wychowania do pokoju, pojawiły się również zagrożenia, z którymi społeczeństwo musi się zmierzyć. Wychowanie do pokoju w świecie nowych mediów jest procesem dynamicznym, który wymaga ciągłego rozwoju oraz zaangażowania. Jest to zadanie nie tylko dla szkół czy instytucji edukacyjnych. Wyzwanie to dotyczy całego społeczeństwa. Odpowiedzialność zatem spoczywa na wszystkich podmiotach biorących udział w szeroko rozumianym wychowaniu.

Słowa kluczowe: wychowanie do pokoju, nowe media, internet, cyberprzestrzeń, zagrożenia i możliwości

Abstract: The aim of the article is to highlight the significance of new media in educating for peace in an ever-changing and uncertain world. The text emphasises the importance and educational potential associated with technological development, while also defining the threats that accompany and are linked to the pervasive presence of new media in human life. It underscores that educating for peace in the world of new media constitutes a significant pedagogical challenge. New media increasingly define the level of critical reflection associated

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with all cultural, social, and technological transformations. Discovering and promoting the values of peace in the modern media landscape occurs in entirely new spaces and perspectives. Through the use of modern technology, new media have generated a new sphere of human life, enabling deeper and more thorough reflection on peace education, among other things. Unfortunately, alongside the opportunities that new media have created for peace education, there are also threats that society must address. Educating for peace in the world of new media is a dynamic process that requires continuous development and engagement. It's a task not only for schools or educational institutions but a challenge for the society as a whole. Therefore, the responsibility rests on all entities involved in broadly understood education.

Keywords: education for peace, new media, Internet, cyberspace, threats and possibilities

Introduction

Educating for peace in a world of new media is an extremely important pedagogical problem in today's ever-changing world. The concept of ‚upbringing' is, as is well known, a central category of pedagogy. Analysing different approaches to this concept, it can be assumed that upbringing implies a certain relationship between the person being educated (the educator) and the person being educated (the pupil). Thus, upbringing can be seen from the perspective of both parties, or it can be considered in terms of educational actions and situations, a process, or its final effect (Morbitzer 2014). It is worth emphasising that the aim of upbringing is always to prepare the pupil for the world in which the young person will have to function, according to the beliefs of the educator. These beliefs usually determine the directions of educational interventions. Today, we know that the current young generation will live and operate within one of the developmental phases of the information society. We are currently in a phase referred to as the network society (Castells 2011) sometimes the media society (Goban-Klass 2005) or the network generation (Tapscott 2010) characterised by the widespread presence of new media. Thus, new media have a significant impact on people's lives at many different levels. It is worth noting, however, that for young people, new media represent a natural world of life. In the introduction to the latest NASK report, Rafał Lange wrote: „To say today that the Internet has revolutionised social reality" and „many new phenomena are associated with the development of cyberspace" is a truism. For young people, the Internet is the real social world in which they socialise, internalise norms, values, build identities, and where they concentrate their communication channels. This „real digital world" is practically in sync with their social, psychological, somatic well-being and this is not a marginal or niche impact but has taken on the characteristics of a generational phenomenon. „It is impossible to understand the condition of the modern teenager without an exploration of their cyberactivity and the cyberspace in which they operate" (Lange et al. 2023, 5.) Therefore, if our aim is to educate young people in the spirit of humanistic values, we must be

present and active in this new space of their lives. The new media have significantly changed how we function, including the process of communication and dialogue.

There have been many transformations in communication. People can easily communicate over long distances using emails, instant messaging, social media platforms, and more. This allows for the rapid exchange of information and helps people stay in touch even across vast distances. It is also important to emphasise the increasingly important role of information in society, which has been shaped by new media. Thanks to new media, the flow of information in society is very fluid and fast, which has both positive and negative effects. On the one hand, this can lead to the rapid spread of news; on the other hand, it can also facilitate the easy dissemination of disinformation, false information and the manipulation of content on an unprecedented scale. Combating disinformation in new media is a challenge, but improving the situation is possible through public awareness, educational activities and a more responsible approach by both users and social media platforms. It is worth noting that social media platforms very often have tools at their disposal to efficiently verify media content posted by users. This verification may also include assessing the reliability of the information and its potential harm (e.g. social impact). Unfortunately, not all platforms utilise these tools effectively, and often those that do often apply them in a questionable manner. Sometimes the reach and popularity of content are of a greater value than truth and safety. Another aspect closely related to the role of information is its accessibility: the internet provides access to an immense amount of information in various fields. People can quickly find answers to their questions, gain knowledge about practically anything, and follow current events around the world. This is undoubtedly a positive aspect. However, we must also acknowledge the issue of information chaos and the need to introduce into school curricula the ability to sort and evaluate online information, so that young people are able to easily recognise which information is reliable and verified, and which is a source of disinformation and manipulation.

New media include social media, which have changed the way people build relationships and share their lives. Social media platforms allow users to easily keep in touch with friends, family and meet new people. However, some social media researchers (Z. Bauman, B. Szmigielska, K. Leksy, M. Kosiński) draw attention to the excessive exhibitionism and shallowness of relationships established and maintained using social networking sites. Zygmunt Bauman writes: „The more people can (and want to) see me, the more certain my stay in the world is […], in the online world, contacts can be multiplied indefinitely by limiting their duration, and thus by weakening such bonds that would demand permanence or even enforce it" (Bauman 2011, 27-35). These relationships can also affect mental health through comparison with others and social pressure. „The opportunities for conscious self-presentation offered by virtual spaces create new perspectives for self-promotion, especially for individuals with narcissistic tendencies" (Leeks 2014, 310).

New media have also transformed the way we work and educate. Teleworking has become more common, allowing people to work remotely from anywhere in the world. In addition, online learning platforms offer the possibility to learn remotely, providing access to education to many people. However, accessibility does not always equate to the quality of media-mediated education.

Culture and entertainment are also a key category affected by digital media. Digital media have changed the way we consume culture and entertainment. Streaming music, films and series has become commonplace, while platforms like YouTube and Twitch allow us to create and share our own content. With the use of artificial intelligence, we are able to generate almost anything. As Aleksandra Przegalińska notes „Artificial intelligence is classified as general-purpose technology (GPT). It is a term reserved for describing technologies that fundamentally transform our lives, i.e. technologies such as the steam engine and the internet that cause significant and widespread impact on society and the economy" (Przegalinska 2022, 13).

Tomasz Szkudlarek observes that if the media contribute to the creation of social reality by constructing collective and individual identities (on a national or global scale), this has extremely important consequences for education. These consequences can be seen in two dimensions. First, the creation of a common world presupposes a certain kind of informational interaction (shared reading, knowledge carrying legitimacy for a certain power practice, commonly shared views, etc.). Second, it necessitates the shaping of a certain kind of discipline, a mechanism for controlling individual behaviour so that it does not contradict the „logic of the collective". Today, profound changes are occurring in both these dimensions of the societal construction. First and foremost, the technology used to shape collective identity and build collective memory, is undergoing significant changes today, which in turn leads to profound shifts in the construction of the subject (Szkudlarek 2009), also at the level of peace education.

The aforementioned changes have an enormous impact on our daily lives, changing the way we work, learn, communicate, receive and process stimuli and spend our leisure time. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that new media are first and foremost tools in human hands, and thus it is up to individuals to decide the purpose, extent, and manner in which these tools are utilised. As a tool, new media can and indeed do find application in peace education in its broadest sense. By using modern tools and media in a critical and reflective way, we have a tangible influence on the shape of cyberspace (to a certain extent, of course). New media are increasingly defining the level of critical reflection associated with all cultural, social and technological developments. Exploring and promoting the values of peace in the world of modern media occurs within entirely new spaces and perspectives. Through the use of modern technology, new media have created a new space in human life enabling, among other things, a deeper and more reliable reflection on peace education. However, the key to achieving these goals remains the human element – our goals, intentions and digital competences.

These factors significantly determine how and to what extent the new media, as a tool generating a new human existential space, will become a vehicle for change in the field of peace education.

Peace education is the process of developing attitudes, values, and skills that foster peacebuilding in society. It encompasses a variety of activities aimed at promoting harmony, cooperation and conflict resolution in a peaceful manner. Peace education primarily focuses on educating children and young people in the spirit of empathy, respect for others and developing communication, negotiation and conflict resolution skills without resorting to aggression or violence. Key elements of peace education include learning to accept diversity, understanding conflict as a natural part of social life and knowing how to address it in a way that respects the dignity or rights of others. It also involves promoting social engagement, building a culture of dialogue and respect for other cultures, beliefs or worldviews.

The need to implement peace education on a large scale is highlighted by war-related sufferings of millions of people, particularly in the context of the brutal Russian invasion of Ukraine. This unjustified attack has contributed to a humanitarian crisis. On 24 February 2022 Europe faced a new challenge. Another example underscoring the need for intensive efforts in the broader field of peace and security education is Israel's recent war against Hamas. Following the 7 October 2023 attack, in which Hamas militants murdered 1,400 people, injured 3,500 and abducted at least 199, Israel is now retaliating against Gaza. Unfortunately, the situation for Palestinians in Gaza City remains dire. As in Ukraine, civilians are being killed and the conflict is escalating on a scale previously unimaginable.

The situation in the public space is not optimistic either. There are significant deficits on the part of those who should be setting the direction of society. There is no doubt that hate speech and, aggression in the media and public space directly contribute to social unrest, leading to the development and intensification of conflicts rather than their resolution. It is also concerning that the number of children in primary and secondary schools with deficits in the emotional-social sphere, and by extension in the sphere of communication, emotional and conflict resolution skills is increasing. Compounding this issue are numerous unreflective actions taken especially by children and adolescents in cyberspace, which are anchored in hateful behaviour towards other users of this new human social space. Every day, we hear reports in the media about acts of cyberbullying, hacking, sexting or grooming.

Today's world unequivocally demonstrates the critical need for peace and the challenge of educating for peace in an ever-changing world. The diverse efforts for peace, considered as a fundamental value, identified with security, justice, peace, material well-being, and more aim to foster the coexistence of all peoples and all generations. These efforts seek to eliminate all kinds of conflicts and establish just social structures and friendly relations between human and their natural

environment, including the one created by the new media. In this context, education for peace, understood as education for peace, mutual understanding and respect for the dignity of every human being, takes on particular importance (cf. Kawula 1988). Humanity must strive to recognise what unites us and brings us closer together, despite the many differences and diversity that are something natural in society, especially a society marked by such „ubiquitous change".

Educational environments and peace education and its essence

It seems legitimate to reflect on the analysis of the educational environments in which peace education should be implemented. Both children and young people are subject to different kinds of environmental influences. Until recently, the most important educational environments were the family, the school and the peer group. Nowadays, the significance and the influence of the virtual environment should also be considered (Szmigielska 2008). New media are understood here not only as a tool in human hands, but also as an educational and upbringing space. As highlighted earlier, „the Internet for young people is the real social world in which they socialise norms, values, build identities and in which they focus their communication channels" (Lange et al. 2023, 5.) Access to the Internet, telephone and new media is often treated by young people as a basic human right. Peace education can be implemented at various levels, starting with the family as the foundational social cell, followed by school, where children and young people learn to resolve conflicts without resorting to aggression, concluded with activities undertaken by local communities or NGOs that promote dialogue, cooperation and tolerance. The development of new technology and the emergence of the Internet has led to a situation where cyberspace has become the fourth important educational environment (Szmigielska 2008). Importantly, cyberspace permeates, enables or extends the educational influence of the other environments. Therefore, peace education must be consciously integrated into this space of life.

An in-depth reflection on education and self-education in cyberspace is crucial for understanding the essence of the implementation of peace education precisely in this space of life. Barbara Szmigielska points out that „alongside the space on the Internet, where conscious stimulation of development and planned education occurs (provided that the individual choses to engage with the content prepared by identifiable authors), there is also a vast space where chaos reigns and the individual present in that space has no awareness and ability to control the factors affecting them. And, as is well known, the unintended influence of the environment has a very significant impact on development" (Szmigielska 2008, 8). Sometimes this impact is greater than that of intentional actions. "The media are the most powerful educational institution, encompassing almost the entirety of human experience. And for this very reason – because of the power of their influence – they deserve pedagogical reflection" (Szkudlarek 2009, 73), including reflection on their educational impact aimed at fostering peace. Is the potential of new media in

the context of peace education indeed being adequately and sufficiently managed? This question cannot be answered unequivocally.

The issue of cyberspace's participation in the education of modern individuals (both formal and informal) is broad and occurs in many contexts (Szmigielska 2008). The pedagogical context of the Internet is considered both in terms of cyberspace as a tool used in education, as well as the place where the educational process takes place (cyberspace). The Internet considered as a tool to support the process of education and peace education is the possibility to use a variety of information sources, the ability to exchange information, access to different contexts of perception of reality, multidimensionality and diversity in its entirety. As a space, it is a place for encountering others, of course, an encounter mediated by the media – but still an encounter, mediated communication but still communication. Human's relationship with different environments makes the changing environment of the Internet, from a psychological perspective, an important challenge (Ledzinska & Czerniawska 2011). The effects of the changes brought about by technological development can be seen in people's everyday lives, including at the educational level. Education in a virtual environment „has similar features to the education process taking place in the real environment of the individual, but it also has specific features, hitherto unseen" (Szmigielska 2008, 7). Comparing education in the real world and in the virtual world, Szmigielska points out that „on the web, everyone is both a learner and an educator (which they most often do not realise); education is intentional, but more often unintentional; the Internet user searches for information and contacts with others in a planned way, but very often receives them involuntarily. In the virtual world, no one is responsible for the consequences of the educational process for the Internet user. In this world, as never before, a person can be in an environment where they have very quick access to information on any subject and can actively (or only passively) participate in a life going on at levels that are difficult to count. This means, for example, that a young Internet user may have access to information for which, because of their age, they are not prepared to receive; they may come into contact with people who can harm them, etc. In turn, the adult (guardian, parent) has access to the feelings, experiences and views of young people, enabling them to better understand and more effectively support their development" (Szmigielska 2008, 7). The Internet is a new, but at the same time diverse and multidimensional space of human life that we cannot fully control. Moreover, referring to the passage quoted above, the distinction between online and offline life has long ceased to exist. Through the Internet, not only can we consciously participate in the educational process (both as educator and learner), but we can also unconsciously educate and be educated. This fact entails certain consequences and the need to use the resources of the web consciously and responsibly.

The social changes taking place before our eyes and the various kinds of unrest we are experiencing as a society support the thesis that educating for peace is a priority

task for contemporary pedagogy. „Peace education of the younger generation must occupy an important place in school education, family education and other centres of parallel education. The basis of education for peace is the formation of humanistic and social values in the axiological system of children and adolescents, both within and outside school settings" (Cudak 2016, 124). Of course, this process should respond to emerging needs, barriers but also opportunities. There is therefore a need to reflect on the essence of peace education in today's ever-changing world. „Education for peace refers to a specific field of human activity, as does education for culture, science, work, artistic and social activities. If we reduce the main sense and mechanism of the basic fields of education to the process of forming human attitudes, then in the case of education for peace, the successive stages of this process should also apply. Its essential sense should be seen in what we call the mechanism of shaping attitudes conducive to the realisation of peace – in relation to society as a whole, human groups and individual people" (Kawula 1988, 105).

Dialogue plays a key role in both education and peace education. Through dialogue, people can understand each other, exchange views and resolve conflicts peacefully. In the context of education, dialogue allows students to actively participate in the learning process. Through the open exchange of ideas, questions and discussions, students can better understand the material and develop critical thinking skills. Dialogue also creates an atmosphere conducive to the acceptance of a diversity of views and cultures.

In peace education, dialogue is essential for resolving conflicts and building understanding. It fosters empathy, respect for other points of view, and the ability to listen and express oneself constructively. Through dialogue, people can overcome differences, build bonds and find common solutions to problems. It can be assumed that dialogue is the foundation for building harmonious relationships, understanding and cooperation between people, which is crucial in the process of education and peace education.

New media have transformed the world of human life and significantly impacted shaping our society, our culture, and the way we think and carry out many everyday tasks. The changes brought about by technological development have both positive and negative effects. There is enormous potential, but also challenges, particularly in promoting the values of peace in modern media. The potential lies in new spaces for dialogue. Social media and online platforms create entirely new venues for discussion and dialogue on the values of peace. People from different parts of the world can now easily communicate, exchange views and share experiences, which can contribute to building bonds based on shared values. Additionally, the global reach of new media allows for the rapid and widespread distribution of information about peace-related events around the world. This can increase public awareness of conflicts, humanitarian crises and peace initiatives and actions.

By providing opportunities to share the stories and experiences of different groups in society, the media can help foster greater empathy and understanding

of other cultures, challenges and needs. This can lead to greater commitment to peace and cooperation between people.

However, while new media offer a wealth of opportunities to promote the values of peace, they can also present challenges. Excessive information, false information or selective portrayal of events can lead to misinformation, social divisions and escalation of conflicts. Therefore, critical reflection, along with the ability to analyse and think critically, is extremely important. Media education becomes crucial for enabling people to consciously use new media, recognise information manipulation and choose content that promotes values of peace and intercultural understanding. By developing this awareness, we can harness the potential of new media to promote and support the values of peace in a global society.

Challenges and perspectives and peace education in a new media world

Summing up the reflections on peace education in the new media world, it is important to focus on the challenges and perspectives on the implementation of peace education precisely in the new media world, i.e. the real world in which we function. As has been emphasised many times, the world of new media and the new space of life created by the media are the natural environment of our lives. In the context of educating for peace in the new media world, several key points should be highlighted:

Critical thinking and media education: educating for peace in the new media age requires developing the ability to think critically and evaluate media messages. Media education should be implemented at all stages of education, as it is crucial for young people to acquire the skills to distinguish true information from false information, to analyse content for manipulation and to use the media consciously. „The fundamental aim of critical media education is to help students construct meanings that are different from those broadcast in the media. This requires both the courage to speak with ‚one's own voice', an affirmation of one's own cultural position, and a sophisticated competence to critically read the ideological messages carried by texts. Such competences are extremely important in a multicultural school environment" (Szkudlarek 2009, 119).

Value-based digital culture: Building an online culture based on respect, empathy and understanding is crucial for peace education. Promoting values such as tolerance, dialogue and respect for others in the virtual world is essential. Janusz Gajda, following Zbigniew Kwieciński, emphasises that „upbringing oriented towards moral and social values is blocked in times of social crisis. This is caused by a state of social anomie – the loss of a given social system's ability to meet the basic needs of its members and, at the same time, the loss of its acceptance which leads to a disintegration of the sense of identity" (Gajda 2014, 13). A value-based digital culture is only possible if we actively and consciously co-create this

space of life. Only such an attitude can guarantee us a real impact on cyberculture and the values within it.

Countering cyberbullying and other cyberthreats: Educating for peace in the world of new media also requires effective action against cyberbullying, hate speech, and other forms of online aggression. Education in this area and support for victims are crucial. Additionally, the development of informed and reflective users of new media with technical and media competence is essential. The conscious participation of educators, teachers and parents in this important and, as it turns out, natural space of life for children and young people is also vital.

Creative use of media: New media can also be a tool to promote peace, tolerance and understanding. Leveraging social media platforms or the internet to build bridges between cultures, educate about diversity, or initiate positive social initiatives holds immense potential.

Educating for peace in a world of new media is not just a task for schools or educational institutions; it is a challenge that concerns society as a whole. It requires cooperation between parents, teachers, media creators and policymakers. Striving for a peaceful and respectful online environment is a responsibility we all should take on. Peace education in the new media age is a dynamic process that requires continuous development and commitment. Together, we can create a better and more peaceful environment, both online and offline.

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