

Title: Peace education for Japanese and American bi-cultural students in Japanese weekend school in the United States

This case study explored ideal peace education approaches for bi-cultural students in Japanese weekend school in the United States. Teaching Japanese as a heritage language is not only teaching Japanese language but also includes helping students access the values of Japanese people and culture. By understanding both Japanese and American ways of thinking, the students will be able to enrich their heritage language learning experience and eventually play a role as a bridge between Japan and the United States in the future.

Peace education teaches skills like reflecting, cooperating and resolving conflicts (Harris & Morrison, 2012). Japanese weekend schools adopt the Japanese national standard curriculum, which includes peace education but does not stipulate how to teach it (Miyazaki, 2013). Peace education in Japan tends to direct students to be pacifist (Kisala, 1999). However, the Japanese strategy does not resonate with weekend school students who grew up in the United States because of different national perspectives toward historical events. Under such circumstances, do the bi-cultural students need to be exposed to multiple perspectives on history rather than a straightforwardly pacifist perspective? This study investigated the effects of exposing bi-cultural students to multiple perspectives of history as an alternative to a straightforwardly pacifist perspective.

The target class was in Japanese Saturday school in the United States with six Japanese and American bi-cultural 6th graders (11-12 years old). The students read the story “*Establishing a Peace Fort*” by Minoru Omuta, which is about the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima being a World Heritage site. After reading it, students made a presentation about World War II and atomic bombs, and wrote a final essay in Japanese about how to establish a peace fort. The study collected data of students’ words and learning outcomes and analyzed them qualitatively.

The results showed that the students understood the misery of the war and nuclear weapons and this learning experience allowed them to have a new perspective, but their overall thinking did not shift to a pacifist perspective. Learning multiple perspectives can be effective. However, it cannot be taught within a short period but must be taught continuously over time for students to be able to adopt a new perspective. Therefore, as an implication, the study suggests Japanese weekend schools implement continuous context-based peace education not only for specific grade students but also even for younger ages.

<References>

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