**Introducing Peace Psychology to the Masses: The Role of Single Lectures for Large Student Audiences**

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I. Large introductory psychology classes offer a unique opportunity for peace education.

II. The large lecture environment may discourage active learning and student engagement.

III. The attached lecture “The Social Psychology of War and Peace” [see attachment “lecture outline

2011”] illustrates some ideas for enhancing student engagement and making the most of this

opportunity to influence attitudes and competencies that would enable students to become

more peaceful. [The print in bold is the lecture outline given to students, and the print not in bold is

additional sampling of lecture content. Contact me ([llnelson@calpoly.edu](mailto:llnelson@calpoly.edu)) if you would like to receive an

e-mail attachment with the Word document for the lecture outline.]

A. Identify learning objectives (i.e., attitudes or competencies that enable peaceful behavior). Ideally, organize lecture to support 1 or 2 major objectives (e.g., to promote understanding of 1 or 2 basic peace psychology principles). The attached lecture is organized to promote understanding and acceptance of the principle that “responding to conflict involves a choice between cooperating and contending, and cooperation is generally more adaptive.”

Other examples of peace psychology principles that could be learning objectives for a lecture:

1. War and aggression are not inevitable in human relations. Peace is possible.

2. Empathy is fundamental for successful conflict resolution.

3. Successful negotiators focus on interests and seek integrative solutions.

4. To categorize is normal; to refrain from denigrating the Other requires effort.

5. Creating enemy images of the Other is cognitively easy, seductive, and counterproductive.

6. There’s a firewall between conflict and violence that can be used to prevent violent episodes.

7. Coercive approaches to behavior change are overrated and may be counterproductive.

[principles 4 – 7 are from Christie & Wagner, 2009]

B. Enhance student engagement

1. Invite students to imagine how they would respond to situations.

2. Use self-assessment tools (Nelson, 2007).

3. Use results of research with the class or with past classes.

4. Conduct survey with class (e.g., Raise your hand if you believe that….).

5. Use interesting videos and DVDs (e.g., 9/11/01 terrorist attacks, U.N. weapon inspectors in Iraq,

consequences of war, “Faces of the Enemy”).

6. Use current events and issues as examples (e.g., terrorism, nuclear weapon proliferation, war w/ Iraq).

7. Apply concepts from the course textbook to lecture topics

8. Apply principles to all levels (e.g., generalize from international to interpersonal).

9. Bring some students on stage for questioning or a demonstration.

10. Say “This is likely to be on the exam.”

C. Bolster your credibility

1. Use research including your own.

2. Use credible sources such as military experts (e.g., Colin Powell, Henry Kissinger,

Secretaries of Defense).

3. Acknowledge and respect differing opinions.

4. Avoid being too extreme from your audience’s beliefs.

**References**

Christie, D. J., & Wagner, R. V. (2009). What does peace psychology have to offer peace education? Five

psychologically informed propositions. In G. Salomon & E. Cairns (Eds.), *Handbook on peace education*

*(pp. 63+).* London: Psychology Press.

Nelson, L. L. (2007). Using self-assessment tools to improve instruction about conflict resolution. Unpublished

Document. To obtain a copy as an e-mail attachment, contact llnelson@calpoly.edu.