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Teaching in an Era of Terrorism

After the worst terrorist attack in American history, and the United States' commitments to warfare, in Afghanistan and Iraq, people everywhere, not just Americans, feel far less safe than at any other time in their lives. A terrorist in a crowded location anywhere in the world can place a bomb in a suitcase and kill many unsuspecting and innocent people. This backdrop of omnipresent terror and threats of horrendous warfare with biological or nuclear weapons, presents special challenges for teachers, for all educators. Educators need to remember that prejudice, discrimination, xenophobia and violence escalate the tensions of daily life. International relations experts stress that related causes of terrorism are poverty and exploitation that fall the heaviest on women and children. Even in the most secure and affluent communities, life has become so turbulent that children anxiously ask their parents: "Will there be war all over the world?" "Will the terrorists bomb us?" "Will there be germ warfare?" "What will happen to our family?"

This book, *Meeting the Challenges of Teaching in an Era of Terrorism*, emphasizes a worldview for educating children growing up in the climate of terrorism and uncertainty. Creative strategies that acknowledge our human diversity within an overall context of equality and peacefulness can be the basis for the educational enterprise to combat the stresses that global terrorism poses. Three years after the September 11, 2001 terrorists' strikes in June of 2004, the United States State Department acknowledged that it was wrong in reporting that terrorism had declined worldwide during 2003. Rather, both the number of incidents and the toll in victims increased sharply. In this atmosphere of daily worldwide stress it is all the more essential that the schools and teachers put forward the lessons of tolerance, social justice, conflict resolution and peace education. It is incumbent on those in teaching to find creative policies for working together with those in government and business, strategies that acknowledge our human diversity within an overall context of equality and peacefulness. This begins with raising social justice issues in the classroom in ways that encourage students to openly examine difficult and personally challenging materials, facilitating communication and understanding between members of diverse and unequal social groups. Now more than ever, teachers need to provide a framework for

analyzing forms of social oppression, including racism, sexism, classism, anti-Semitism, and heterosexism.

The World Now Comes to Us

In postmodern society we are beginning to recognize that the access to equal opportunities is rapidly diminishing for many children. An almost instantaneous worldwide communications network propels us into the global community. It informs people of the vast inequities that exist in the conditions for children and families. Further, because of the ability for worldwide communication people can actually view firsthand, the conflagrations, the natural disasters, the economic and social upheavals that are restructuring nations, communities, and families. This means we can no longer eschew a worldwide viewpoint, a perspective that calls for looking at events, issues, happenings, and experiences to see their inter-relationship to the world as a whole. A world perspective leads us to examine perceptions, ideas, concepts and information in new ways that our growing global interdependence now dictates. This knowledge gives teachers, all educators, new insights into the changing nature of inequality.

For over two decades I have advocated a posture of “worldmindedness” for teachers and educators particularly. All around us is evidence that we cannot escape this worldwide culture. As we begin the 21st century the United States appears to some in the global community as the sole superpower in the world. What we do in every aspect of our economy, in political and legal sectors, in recreation, in the media, in education, too, is watched and has implications all over the globe. It seems *the world truly does come to us*.

Moreover, there are very few items in daily use and few activities we engage in that do not have international and global dimensions. Our present degree of expertise in the travel industry, along with more affluent lifestyles, affords international travel and social interchange for whole families (experiences once reserved only for the very wealthy or for business people). This situation has made the possibility of international travel a reality even in the lives of young children. Not only the changes in tourism but also monetary values, currency exchanges, worldwide industries and trade have brought about the reality that products, goods and services are developed for worldwide markets. Even though terrorism and new biological diseases may dampen or deter our desires to travel the globe, we are still a society that revels in “going abroad.” (Although, yet today, many citizens of the United States do not own a passport and have never traveled beyond this country’s borders.)

Today, a continual awareness of this world milieu, not only for the practical implications of learning, but also for broader humanitarian purposes is essential for educators. Since my first publications over thirty years ago, I have urged that all teaching be infused with a sense of world awareness. This means that beyond developing within the child the general ability to perceive the world as a multi-national whole, parents and educators can also develop what might be called “worldmindedness” or a sense of global responsibility; a sensitivity to the needs of others. Young children are capable of understanding the human condition and appreciating the diversities and the similarities of peoples all over the globe. Being worldminded encompasses far more than merely recognizing cultural diversity or bettering intergroup relations. Worldmindedness, I believe, is based upon humanistic

philosophy, grounded in the arts and humanities and the major contributions the social sciences bring to furthering knowledge about the human condition. (King, 1999)

A United Nations report in 2004 documented a surge in migration at the end of the 20th century that shows no sign of letting up. This surge in migration is actually keeping populations from declining in Europe, and stimulating economic growth in the United States. The UN study examined the socio-economic impacts of migration worldwide and found that more people are living outside their country of origin than ever before, surpassing 175 million worldwide in 2000, representing 3 percent of the world's population. The economic and political implications of more people migrating outside their country of origin now than in any other time in history is changing the demographics of many nations--the United States foremost among them. (Lee, *Arizona Republic*, 2004, p. A17) This information all the more re-enforces my position of worldmindedness.

Even more support for this heightened awareness of the world milieu comes from the highly regarded political commentator, Thomas Friedman, in his book, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (2005). Here Friedman describes three levels of globalization; the latest beginning in 2000. In this most recent level of globalization the world has shrunk to the size of a playing field and hence, euphemistically, it is flat. Now in this "flat" world populated by non-white and widely diverse groups of individuals, Friedman predicts that we will see every color of the human rainbow take part in international business and commercial enterprise. He points out that as a result of this flattening of the world we are now in the process of connecting together all the knowledge pools of our globe. As evidence of this connecting of knowledge he cites how Osama bin Laden brought terrorist knowledge pools together through the Al Qaeda network; or how teenage hackers spinning off more and more lethal computer viruses have affected (and infected) users all over the world. And Friedman notes that personal computers have allowed a unique form of collaboration so that one can search for information through Google, Yahoo, and MSN Search to mine unlimited data all by oneself. Quoting the co-founder of Netscape, Marc Andressen, he tells readers that now teenagers in Romania or Bangalore or the Soviet Union or Vietnam have all the information, all the tools, all the software easily available to apply knowledge however they want. Friedman and other contemporary social and political commentators assert that the excess supply of connectivity means that the cost of phone calls, Internet connections, and data transmission has declined dramatically so that the costs of communication to Guangdong is about the same as to New Jersey. Worldmindedness is all the more confirmed with this evidence of the overwhelming abilities of people for almost instantaneous communication around the globe.

The Purpose and Focus of This Book

This book attempts to present ideas and insights for teachers and administrators in dealing with the stresses and humanistic concerns that worldwide terrorism brings. *Meeting the Challenges of Teaching in an Era of Terrorism* incorporates three over-arching positions that guide the contents of this volume: a worldwide view of children, families, and education; a sociological perspective and qualitative approaches to research designs and methods used to support the social scientific rationale; and an emphasis on the education of younger children. Educators, social workers and parents, all adults, now should be alerted to an

education that deals with the world of the 21st century. Each year at the anniversary of the World Trade Center calamity, terrorism seems only one of several sinister issues dogging us, not only Americans, but all the world's people. Other confounding and morally troubling issues include the spread of HIV/AIDS; the increase of criminal trafficking in human beings, especially children and women, for illicit labor; the possibility of new arms races in biological and nuclear weapons; and the irreversible damage to the global environment. In each of the chapters of the book, I hope to provide teachers in training, experienced teachers, administrators and parents with information, examples, research studies and encouragement to meet the challenge of teaching in this era of terrorism. Detailed descriptions of these three positions follow.

A Worldwide View: This book emphasizes a worldwide view in considering the educational policy issues affecting the lives of children. This is a stance that is essential for the education of all children. As families from societies and ethnic sub-cultures migrate on a worldwide basis and begin to create whole communities in our midst, schools are experiencing greatly differing student populations. In the face of this wide-ranging diversity and cultural pluralism found in almost every postmodern nation, we need to emphasize and employ culturally aware strategies and methods for dealing with such diversity in our midst. No one society can create or impose THE universal social order. Destructive actions that deny human rights and, particularly child rights, must be avoided; while means and methods that enhance the individual's access to a fuller life should be touted for use in schools and classrooms. Hopefully, the chapters in this volume will illuminate such practices.

A Sociological Perspective: Immersed in the fields of education and sociology for over three decades, I have been strongly influenced by sociological theory, sociological perspectives on educational issues, and of course, research and research methodologies in the sociology of education. Educational sociology, as well as world awareness, has been a constant inspiration and guiding theme in my teaching and writing. In this volume individual chapters often begin with sections describing concepts, theories, or issues drawn from the discipline of sociology. Additionally, research in the sociology of education (mainly qualitative research studies), is cited as evidence for bringing a sociological perspective to the concerns for equality and the education of younger children. The reader will find each chapter contains material that brings a sociological focus to the concerns about teaching and terrorism and other issues that bring on conflict and stress. However, it is to be emphasized that contemporary social science theories now view the interactions of ethnicity, social class, gender, and disability as intricately intertwined so that discussions of one topic cannot eschew referring to the others. The chapters of this volume are filled with personal accounts, anecdotes, and stories. I chose such material because it is the work of educational sociologists or educators using a sociological perspective.

A Focus on Younger Children: I have been acutely aware of the reluctance of those who teach, write and lecture on the education of younger children to bring up highly controversial topics; issues such as sexual orientation or interracial and biracial identity have even been avoided in the classroom. More recently educators and social scientists have included these topics in textbooks, anthologies, or edited collections of readings mainly focusing on older students in high schools and universities. However, it is not easy to find an education text or edited volume taking up topics such as sexual orientation in children at

elementary school age or bi-ethnicity or interracial families as a growing phenomenon in America. I want to underscore that now, as the new millennium has begun, the older definitions of diversity in our nation and in the world are giving way to broader and more inclusive conceptions of the human condition.

In this volume I provide examples, accounts and vignettes about children's lives in communities all over the world and not just in the United States to underscore the global and worldwide view of society as it exists today. Most education texts focus on older children. The purpose of this volume is to bring to teachers, administrators, counselors and social workers firsthand accounts of what is happening in the everyday school experience of children at the elementary school levels, so they can be more effective in their work with children and their families. A unique aspect of this book is the focus on and discussion of seldom mentioned and little discussed topics in relation to children all over the planet, such as bi-ethnicity and multiracial families; sexual orientation at early ages; or female genital mutilation of young girl children. Most textbooks for teachers of younger children do not discuss these situations in the lives of younger children in a global context.

Rising Pressures on Family Life

Now at the beginning of the 21st Century, this awareness of global forces has definitely brought sweeping changes into the lives of children. What are some of these changes? The response to this question comes forth in the recognition of the change in the structure and function of the family due to the press of financial obligations. Newspaper reports, magazine articles, books, and media programs continually remind us how the costs of raising children has gone up steeply. Everyone points to the monies needed for childcare and the shifting responsibility of who provides for this childcare if both parents or the single parent are at work trying to support the family. Further to this point, experts in the field of social work and family life reiterate that in America's postindustrial society we require an even greater investment in children's education because economic success today depends on longer schooling and the acquisition of more sophisticated technical and conceptual skills than ever before. This need for financial investment, as well as personal time and energy of parents in their children, only serves to widen the disparities created by the climate of life in contemporary families experienced by children as they grow to adulthood and move toward independence.

Teachers and educators need to realize that in just the past decade these differences in the quality of family life and parental expectations for their children have grown wider. At times the inequalities in children's lives are hidden from public view or dismissed as irrelevant in postmodern societies (labeled as those conditions that only exist in underdeveloped nations or countries undergoing internal civil and ethnic conflicts). Then what are the roles and obligations of the schools? Should schools and educators strive to make up the differences in access to equity and opportunity when wide disparities exist between families? It is hoped that the information, accounts, personal stories and anecdotes from cross-cultural perspectives presented in this book will provide some thoughtful responses to these questions. Teachers need to examine issues of inequality – racism, sexism, classism, poor health – that enter and influence the lives of humans in their childhood, and to understand how these issues have impinged educationally and socially on the individual.

Often teachers and administrators feel overwhelmed and discouraged by crises and shocking events occurring in their schools, in their communities, in the nation and in the world. When local happenings are overlaid with national and international crises, the results can be a demoralization that is both personal and professional. We cannot let this happen to us. If the commitment to the internationally proclaimed rights of the child, including adequate nutrition for fullest development, a healthy environment, loving care, a sympathetic community, intellectual and emotional stimulation is to be honored, we cannot remain passive and disinterested. If we are going to mitigate inequalities in children's lives on both a national and global scale we must be proactive and continually involved and committed both locally and globally. This involvement in equality of educational opportunity beginning with the youngest of students should be intrinsic to the position and role of all educators practicing today. The accounts and anecdotes that fill this volume are intended to bring both domestic and international examples that will inspire us to maintain the commitment to an equity agenda for children.

Organization of the Chapters

The section that follows gives the reader an overview of the content of the chapters in this book.

The initial chapter introduces the purpose and the themes of the volume, teaching in an era of terrorism. The author's stance using a worldwide view; a sociological perspective and an emphasis in writing about younger children in schools and families is brought forth. The significance of this book lies in the need for educators, those in teacher preparation, for experienced teachers, and administrators to recognize the urgency of educating children in this atmosphere of continual stress. The chapter also contains descriptions of the writings of two preeminent women peace advocates, Elise Boulding and Margaret Mead and the relevance of their work to the current era of terrorism. Then follows the author's account of her visit to Ground Zero and the impact this had on her teaching, research and writing since 9/11. The chapter continues with anecdotes of teachers who recall their experiences of 9/11 and how it has affected their teaching in the years following this national catastrophe. Information, resources, and strategies on teaching and talking about terrorism and war since the 9/11 terrorists' attacks are offered, as well.

The central issues of racial and ethnic discrimination and prejudice are brought forth in Chapter 2, titled "The Terrorist Era Collides with Ethnicity and Self-Identity." The chapter begins first with a section discussing current definitions of terrorism, and then with a presentation of terms and concepts used by sociologists to address issues of ethnic group and self-identity. The crucial nature of ethnic identity in a teacher's life is revealed in several accounts that follow, with the relevance for education in an era of terrorism elucidated. Ethnic labels are changing in the 21st century now that multiracial and multiethnic identity has achieved recognition in social, economic, and legal arenas. The significance of ethnic affiliation for living in an era of terrorism is discussed.

"Terrorism Intensifies Inequality for Children the World Over" is the theme of Chapter 3. The chapter begins by detailing how the potent forces of social class, social status, and classism impose threats in childhood. References are drawn from the popular Harry

Potter books, as well as examples from the research of educational sociologists. Moving on to the universal conditions of inequality, the role of human rights and child rights are taken up. This material is followed by vignettes describing some worldwide examples of social class inequalities born by young children and their families: exploitive child labor such as trafficking in young boys for camel jockeying; the plight of street children in Brazil and India; children in homeless conditions in the United States and abroad. Inequality in childhood is intensified by global terrorism that puts children in the midst of warfare and toxic environments such as landmines. However this chapter concludes with some encouraging projects that are attempting to ameliorate the growing social distance that could begin in the earliest years of life.

Chapter 4 focuses on the feminist movement in this era of terrorism and how this has impacted the teaching of younger children. Gender role models and expectations influence children's behavior not only in the United States but in countries and cultures everywhere. Examples of gender biases are drawn from our nation, as well as Singapore and other societies. Strategies to improve gender equity in the elementary school, including bias free use of language are offered. The chapter goes on to provide an in depth presentation of female genital "cutting" or mutilation, increasingly recognized as a worldwide "terror" for young girls. Reasons for female genital "cutting" or mutilation to concern educators, and all teachers are brought forth. The changing attitudes and efforts to end this form of terrorism for girls and women conclude the chapter.

The themes of Chapter 5 are bullying and homophobia and are interpreted as forms of terrorism. Erving Goffman's sociological approach is employed to investigate the dynamics of stigmatizing children and labeling and disparaging them. This chapter discusses strategies and materials for overcoming bullying and homophobia in the classrooms of younger children. Recognition that an atmosphere of prejudice, discrimination, and heightened national terror alerts promotes bullying and homophobia is important for teachers, educators and parents.

Sociological theory has useful insights and perspectives for teachers and educators. Examining schools and families in these times of terror with the lens of sociologists such as David Riesman and his conceptions of three types of societies enhances our understandings of the current societal scene. Chapter 6 begins with an explanation of Riesman's theory and its application to teaching and education in America. I then apply Riesman's three types of societies and their schools to education in contemporary China and Japan through the use of personal accounts and experiences. The implications from these accounts of schooling for teaching in an era of terrorism are discussed, including the dilemmas of high stakes testing now sweeping our nation and other nations around the world.

The popular phrase "unintended, unanticipated consequences" of actions, happenings and events has crept into the vocabulary of everyday life in recent years. In Chapter 7, I take this sociological concept originating in functionalist theory, including the terms manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions, and apply these ideas to schooling in the United States, in Saudi Arabia and in Kuwait. Education, the curriculum and schools for younger children in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are featured in this chapter. I highlight the importance of gaining knowledge and understanding of these Muslim societies where the Islamic religion holds

primacy. The growing concerns over “Islamophobia” and ways to counter this debilitating movement through education are presented. Then implications of the unintended consequences on education in this era of terrorism are expanded.

The final chapter, “Peace Education: Antidote for Terrorism” recapitulates the themes and topics of the book. Emphasis is placed on the contributions of Elise Boulding as I turn to an in depth discussion of the urgency of implementing strategies and techniques for education for a peaceful world, eschewing terrorism, and overcoming the fears and trepidations that are haunting the lives of our children, our families, our schools, yes, our very society.

Readers should also be aware of the Special Section of *Meeting the Challenges of Teaching in an Era of Terrorism* at the conclusion of this volume. Developed in conjunction with the chapters of the book, Doris Metz, doctoral candidate, College of Education, University of Denver, worked closely with me to search the WWW in preparation of this meticulously annotated section “Using the World Wide Web to Access Resources for Teaching in an Era of Terrorism.” This material begins with a detailed explanation of some of the challenges of using information and resources from the World Wide Web, including cautions and tips for more effective usage. Then there follows a chapter by chapter listing of web sites containing relevant resources for each of the chapters of the book.

World events at the beginning of the 21st century are creating unprecedented challenges for educators as they attempt to guide students through conditions of continual global turmoil and pending threats of terrorism. This has become a time of heightened world tensions and national and cultural conflicts. Children and adults alike suffer stress, alienation, and even anomie. Empathy for the other, cross-cultural experience, and an emphasis on peacebuilding combat the negative effects of stereotyping and discriminatory attitudes. In the spirit of peacebuilding the writings of two important and highly regarded social thinkers – Elise Boulding and Margaret Mead – can bring inspiration to teachers everywhere, anguishing under the pressures of a world in disarray. These social thinkers focus on the urgency for peacemaking, conflict resolution and the creation of a world that can exist in peace. In the following section their work is presented.

In Times of Terrorism the Writings of Two Preeminent Women Social Thinkers Envisioned the Culture of Worldwide Peace

When the atmosphere of social and political life grows agitated and uncertain we often turn to the counsel, guidance and advice of those we regard. Such social thinkers are Professor Elise Boulding and the late inimitable anthropologist, Margaret Mead. Their writings hold new meanings today in this era of terrorism.

Elise Boulding: Professor Elise Boulding, distinguished sociologist, preeminent international educator, celebrated women’s studies scholar and notable futurist, has helped shape and define the growing movement for world peace as an antidote to war. Peace activism, peace research and most recently, peace education has evolved and gained a growing recognition and importance during the latter part of the 20th century. Particularly after World War I, peace activism and peace research were viewed as a movement for the