

MONITORING THE EFFECTS OF AN EDUCATION FOR PEACE PROGRAM: AN ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE

MICHAL ARNON & YAIR GALILY

Abstract: The aim of the current study was to monitor the changes that individual participants experienced as a result of taking part in a peace education program. The findings of prior analyses led to the understanding that participating in a peace program does not always ensure positive changes and may even cause a regression in attitudes. The present study was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the researchers learned about the processes that participants underwent during a peace education program and accordingly, a reinforcement program to restore/rehabilitate any negative attitudes was formed. In the second stage, the effectiveness over time of this reinforcement program was evaluated. The study's findings show that engaging in reflection about the workshop content, especially when it is oriented towards positive thinking, is effective in *reinforcing* attitudes among participants who underwent a positive change in attitudes, and at the same time helps to *rehabilitate* attitudes among those participants who underwent a negative change. It is recommended that future peace education programs include at least three parts: preliminary preparation, the program itself, and follow-up/reinforcement activity after completion of the program.

Key words: peace education; reflection; attitudes; reinforcement.

Introduction

Many communities and states around the world are home to different ethnic and cultural groups with diverse social backgrounds, norms, values and community interests. As asserted by Schulenkorf and Edwards (2012), while multiculturalism has been praised as largely valuable and beneficial to people, in many instances ethnic groups do not get along with each other and violent conflicts occur. Examples of negative impact arising from cultural diversity can be found in Israel and Palestine, Cyprus, Yemen, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland and the Catalan and Basque areas in Spain. The State of Israel is home to a widely diverse population from many different ethnic, religious, cultural and social backgrounds - a new society with ancient roots, it is still coalescing and developing today (Galily, 2007). Life in Israel entails constant awareness of and confrontation with the intractable conflict between Jewish and Arab residents of the area. Currently, Israel has 7,695,000 residents of which 75.4% are Jewish Israelis and 20.4% Palestinians-Arabs (primarily Muslim) (Central Bureau of Statistics Israel, 2011). The Jewish-Palestinian conflict is long-ranging and dates from the early 20th century. Its painful reality causes

many residents to develop negative attitudes towards one another. A growing number of studies from around the world (e.g. Bar-Tal, 2004; Salomon & Cairns, 2010; Smith, 2011) have demonstrated the use of peace education programs as a vehicle for promoting mutual understanding, reconciliation and co-existence in deeply divided societies. Thus, various agencies, including the education system, have actively tried to counter these negative attitudes by deepening familiarity and encouraging empathy with the other side.

Contact theory (Allport, 1958; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) affirms that under certain contact conditions negative stereotypes and mutual prejudices can be reduced, with the resentment and intolerance that affect the relationship between the two sides being replaced with empathic acceptance and mutual respect. This involves turning the “other” from a threat into a partner; contact theory views education as a means of achieving such social change. Contacts characterized by equality in status, common goals, cooperation and support from institutions shown to be especially effective. However, as Yahya et al. (2012), among others, have noted, while several studies emphasize the positive benefits of integrated schooling, particularly in promoting cross-community friendships, others are more ambiguous, suggesting that it has little or no impact in terms of promoting shared cultural outlooks (Hayes, et al., 2007).

One of the important dimensions in examining the efficacy of peace education programs is the durability of new attitudes in the face of the environment and that bitter daily reality. Findings of studies conducted in Israel over the previous decade (e.g. Biton & Salomon, 2006; Jayusi, 2009; Husisi, 2007; Kupermintz et al., 2007; Rosen, 2006) have indicated that even in the hard reality that characterizes this region, education for peace programs can succeed in improving attitudes towards the other side, but these influences are only temporary and do not survive the exigencies of daily life over time (Jayusi, 2009; Rosen, 2006). The questions that arise are how to help those who complete peace education programs cope with the continuing hostile environment, and whether the new narrative acquired in the program can withstand the collective narrative and pervasive public environment (Bar-Tal, 2002). Two aspects of these questions need to be considered: the psychological and the educational aspects. From the psychological aspect, the question is what changes do participants undergo as a result of a peace education program, and also what psychological mechanisms can help to restore or rehabilitate the attitudes they acquired? From the educational aspect, the question is what components can be introduced in a reinforcement program to help graduates cope with the hostile environment? Thus, the educational program must be based on relevant psychological aspects. The main aim of this paper was to build a program that would meet these needs, and to then evaluate the program. The present study was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the researchers learned about the processes that participants underwent during a peace education program, and accordingly, a reinforcement program to restore/rehabilitate their attitudes was developed. In the second stage, the effectiveness over time of this reinforcement program was evaluated.

Method

Data collection in the first stage of the study included observations, meetings with focus groups and in-depth interviews with participants in peace education programs. The findings

indicated that the effects of peace education programs were not uniform for all participants, and although most participants reported an improvement in attitudes, some experienced a regression in attitudes. Quantitative support for this trend was obtained when analyzing a change of attitude questionnaire completed by 256 teenagers (150 Jews and 115 Arabs, aged 16-17) who participated in a two-day peace education workshop at Givat Haviva (Israel). The findings showed that about 50% of the participants reported an improvement in attitudes, but 20-30% reported a regression. These findings served as the basis for formulating the reinforcement program used in this study: writing feedback letters in small groups (2-3 students) to the organizers of the workshop and an accompanying class discussion. The rationale for this choice was that this activity could serve a dual purpose: to restore the positive effects of the workshop among those participants whose attitudes had improved and to rehabilitate the attitudes among those participants who had experienced a negative change.

The intention of the first mechanism that this activity employed was to raise the salience and accessibility of the positive events experienced at Givat Haviva. According to Miron-Shatz et al. (2009), directed guidance that seeks to find events with specific (positive) qualities causes these events to be prominent and accessible to the memory, while irrelevant (negative) events become less accessible. The second mechanism entailed in writing meaningful feedback letters was the reflective processing of those memories. Reflection is defined as directed thinking about an act in the past in order to improve that act in the future (Hatton & Smith, 1995). Mezirow (1991, 1997) contended that reflection causes people to critically examine their attitudes and beliefs, to examine the past experiences on which they based these attitudes and to try to analyze them from additional viewpoints, and, on the basis of all these processes, to formulate new attitudes. The act of writing feedback letters is assumed to encourage participants to engage in thinking of this type, as it requires them to choose material relevant to the task at hand, to evaluate this material in terms of its meaning, importance and consequences for the future, and to reflect on possible means of improvement.

These two mechanisms (raising the accessibility of experiences and processing them reflectively) underlie the process of both restoring and rehabilitating attitudes, even though the mechanisms work differently in each case. For participants whose attitudes had changed for the positive, retrieving and reprocessing the positive experiences from memory and formulating them in a letter helped to recreate the effects of the workshop and thus reinforce these attitudes, with the assistance of social support provided by working in pairs and discussing issues in class.

The process of rehabilitating the attitudes of participants who became more negative entailed the integration of two different psychological mechanisms. The first is formulating the task in a positive manner, in this case by requesting the participants to note positive experiences and ways to improve. According to Bar-Tal (1988), people tend to ignore information that might cause a lack of correspondence between their beliefs and attitudes and information contradicting them. Therefore, it is to be expected that without proper guidance, participants who underwent a negative change will tend to focus on the negative experiences they had in the workshop and to ignore the positive ones. The positive guidance provided in the reinforcement program may cause participants to focus on the positive experiences (in an artificial manner) and thus expose them to points they might avoid if left to their own devices (Bar-Tal, 1988).

The second mechanism that may explain the rehabilitation of attitudes is the cognitive dissonance created when a person is required to advocate a position that is opposed to his or her own attitude. Such a situation causes a feeling of discomfort, which a person may attempt to dispel by changing his or her opinion about the position he or she advocated previously (Festinger, 1957). Participants who undergo a negative change of attitudes and are asked to write positive letters of feedback are, in essence, being asked to “artificially cooperate.” This situation creates a lack of correspondence between personal attitudes and the content of the letter they are writing and/or opinions they hear from other members of the class, and to resolve this dissonance, they may be “persuaded” by their own—and others’—arguments and to make their attitudes more positive.

In addition to the mechanisms mentioned, a reinforcement program includes additional features that may explain its efficacy. One feature is working in small groups, which represents a type of communal learning with all its advantages, and causes each participant to take an active part in the activity. Similarly, the class discussion constitutes an important setting for evaluating personal attitudes in comparison to the attitudes of others. This theoretical basis together with pilot experiments of the reinforcement program including potential participants, led to the final design of the reinforcement program and to the conclusion of the first part of the study.

The second stage of the research included 484 participants (233 Jews and 251 Arabs, high school students aged 16-17) who participated in a workshop of peace education at Givat Haviva. The research design was semi-experimental, with three examination dates for repeated measurements. They were: the pre test (about one week before the workshop at Givat Haviva), the post test (immediately upon conclusion of the workshop), and the delayed post-test (about two months after completion of the workshop). On each of the dates, various aspects of attitudes towards the other side were measured by means of appropriate attitude questionnaires.

According to the research procedure, both groups (experimental and control) completed the questionnaires similarly on the preliminary date, attended the workshop at Givat Haviva together, and completed the post-questionnaires immediately upon completing the workshop. Following the workshop at Givat Haviva, the participants were divided randomly into two groups: 225 in the experimental group and 259 in the control group.

About two months after the workshop, members of the experimental group underwent the reinforcement program at their schools. The program included writing a feedback letter in small groups (2-3 students) to the directors of Givat Haviva, pointing out the positive events they recalled from the workshop in which they participated, and suggesting ways to improve the workshop. Upon completion of the letter, a class discussion was held, where participants could share their feelings and ideas. Immediately after the class discussion, members of the experimental group responded to the attitude questionnaires of the delayed post-test. In contrast, members of the control groups completed the questionnaire at the same time without having undergone any intervention.

Statistical Analysis

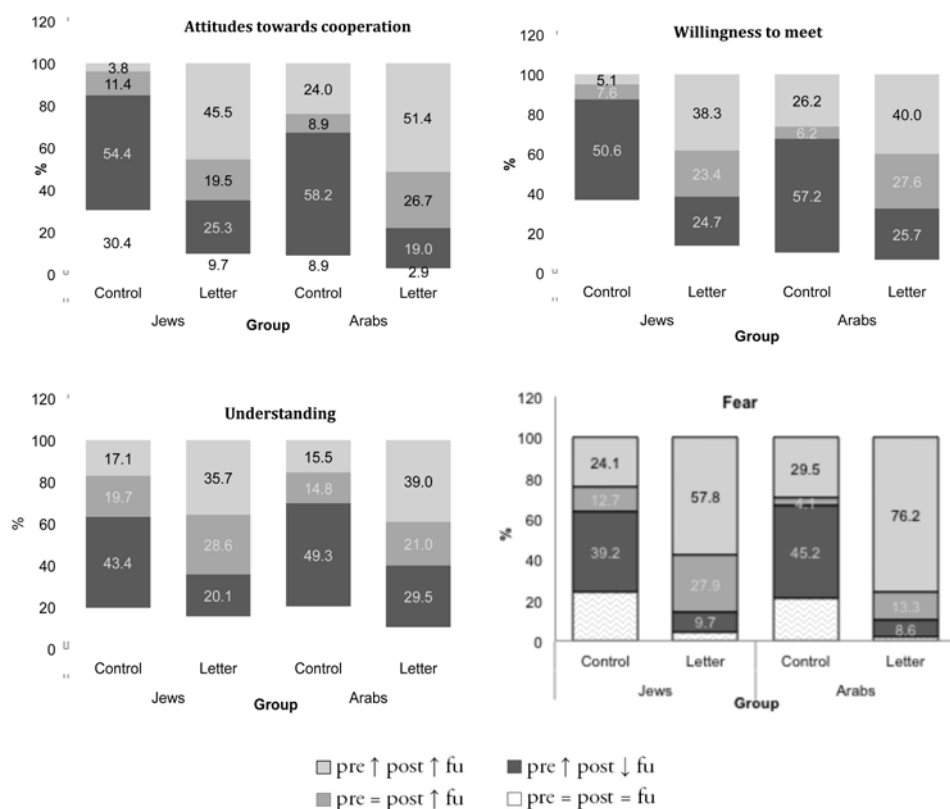
A three/two way analysis of variance with repeated measures was conducted to examine the effectiveness of this reinforcement program (see Table 1).

Table 1. Three way analysis of variance with repeated measures (time x group x nation)

Nationhood		JEWS						ARABS						Source of Variance													
Group		CONTROL			Letter			CONTROL			Letter			nationhood		group		nationhood X group		Time		timeXgroup		timeXnation		groupXtimeXnation	
variable		pre	post	follow up	pre	post	follow up	pre	post	follow up	pre	post	follow up	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Attitudes	mean	3.0	3.2	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.4	4.2	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.4	432.8	0.00	6.33	0.01	8.55	0.00	31.50	0.00	51.13	0.00	0.98	0.38	1.13	0.32
	SD	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5														
Willingness to meet	mean	2.7	3.0	2.6	2.7	3.0	3.1	3.8	4.2	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	210.9	0.00	0.99	0.32	3.84	0.05	31.47	0.00	34.61	0.00	2.57	0.08	2.06	0.13
	SD	1.1	1.3	1.1	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.6														
Stereotypes	mean	2.8	3.1	2.7	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.7	106.1	0.00	23.15	0.00	0.29	0.59	30.91	0.00	14.71	0.00	3.57	0.03	2.48	0.08
	SD	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.5														
Hatred	mean	3.2	3.6	3.1	3.2	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.7	2.1	0.15	3.97	0.05	0.10	0.75	18.23	0.00	15.49	0.00	1.22	0.30	0.73	0.48
	SD	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.0														
Affection	mean	2.3	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.9	2.9	3.7	3.0	2.8	3.2	3.3	68.3	0.00	0.04	0.85	0.47	0.49	52.14	0.00	19.33	0.00	4.00	0.02	0.78	0.46
	SD	1.0	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.7	1.1	1.0	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.9														
Fear	mean	3.4	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	4.2	4.2	3.6	3.9	4.0	4.2	57.4	0.00	0.47	0.49	0.00	0.95	6.71	0.00	14.74	0.00	0.89	0.41	3.10	0.05
	SD	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.2	1.1	1.3	0.9	0.9	1.0														
Understanding	mean	2.7	3.4	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.9	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.6	42.0	0.00	0.38	0.54	2.80	0.09	24.06	0.00	36.29	0.00	11.68	0.00	2.23	0.11
	SD	1.2	1.3	1.2	0.8	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.8	1.1														
Anger	mean	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.7	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.5	2.9	3.1	3.4	3.3	20.5	0.00	3.25	0.07	0.25	0.62	11.89	0.00	10.63	0.00	2.17	0.11	1.41	0.24
	SD	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1														
feelings:																											

In addition, individual changes were monitored among participants throughout the study, and for each participant a change profile was calculated according to the change he or she underwent. At the same time, content analyses were performed on the feedback letters written by the participants of the experimental groups during the reinforcement program. The combination of statements written by each participant in the feedback letter with the type of change he or she underwent made it possible to link the types of change with the reasons/factors for this change (see Figures 1-4). By summarizing these links for all the participants, factors were identified that might explain both improvement in attitudes and regression in attitudes (see Table II).

It is also important to note that throughout the study, qualitative and quantitative methods were combined. Such a combination made it possible to obtain a general picture of a phenomenon, as quantitative analyses indicated the trends and changes that occurred during the peace education program in quantitative terms, and qualitative analyses helped to explain the reasons for these changes.



Figures 1-4. Attitudes towards one another

Table 2. Changes between pre and post

		Changes between pre and post						Changes between post and follow up					
		jewish N=233			arab-muslim N=251			jewish N=233			arab-muslim N=251		
		letter		control		letter		control		letter		control	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Attitudes	↓ regression	26	0.3	37	24.0	24	16.4	20	19.0	61	77.2	44	28.6
	= no change	11	13.9	13	8.4	26	17.8	18	17.1	8	10.1	33	21.4
Willingness to meet	↑ positive	42	53.2	104	67.5	96	65.8	67	63.8	10	12.7	77	50.0
	↓ regression	25	31.6	48	31.2	22	15.1	31	29.5	57	72.2	53	34.4
Stereotypes	= no change	16	20.3	11	7.1	31	21.2	14	13.3	15	19.0	38	26.0
	↑ positive	38	48.1	95	61.7	93	63.7	60	57.1	7	8.9	77	50.0
Hatred	↓ regression	19	30.6	42	27.3	35	24.5	36	34.3	54	68.4	33	21.4
	= no change	9	14.5	36	23.4	10	7.0	13	12.4	7	8.9	40	26.0
Affection	↑ positive	34	54.8	76	49.4	98	68.5	56	53.3	4	5.1	79	51.3
	↓ regression	17	21.5	14	9.1	26	17.8	32	30.5	34	43.0	49	31.8
Understanding	= no change	28	35.4	83	53.9	64	43.8	32	30.5	38	48.1	53	34.4
	↑ positive	32	40.5	57	37.0	56	38.4	41	39.0	5	6.3	52	33.8
Anger	↓ regression	12	15.2	23	14.9	14	9.6	19	18.1	17	21.5	29	18.8
	= no change	33	41.8	94	61.0	51	34.9	34	32.4	57	72.2	62	40.3
Fear	↑ positive	32	40.5	37	24.0	80	54.8	52	49.5	3	3.8	63	40.9
	↓ regression	19	24.1	3	1.9	21	14.4	26	24.8	30	38.0	46	29.9
Anger	= no change	31	39.2	135	87.7	94	64.4	46	43.8	38	48.1	64	41.6
	↑ positive	27	34.2	16	10.4	31	21.2	33	31.4	9	11.4	44	28.6
Anger	↓ regression	10	12.7	34	22.1	18	12.3	33	31.4	26	32.9	27	17.5
	= no change	32	40.5	63	40.9	68	46.6	31	29.5	47	59.5	55	35.7
Anger	↑ positive	34	43.0	57	37.0	58	39.7	41	39.0	4	5.1	72	46.8
	↓ regression	21	26.6	3	1.9	22	15.1	23	21.9	24	30.4	40	26.0
Anger	= no change	31	39.2	122	79.2	69	47.3	37	35.2	44	55.7	63	40.9
	↑ positive	25	31.6	29	18.8	55	37.7	45	42.9	9	11.4	51	33.1
												15	10.3
												42	40.0

The following hypotheses were tested in Part 2 of the study:

1. Participating in a peace education program will lead to positive changes in attitudes towards the other side.
2. The positive effects of the peace education program will not be reflected in all participants, and the attitudes of some participants towards 'the other side' will regress after the workshop.
3. In the absence of a reinforcement program, the positive effects of the peace education program will erode over time.
4. A reinforcement program based on reflection through writing feedback letters will help to restore/rehabilitate attitude changes over time, but this will not occur in participants who do not take part in this reinforcement program.

Additional research questions

1. What types of change did participants undergo as a result of taking part in the peace education program?
2. Which factors are likely to explain the types of change participants underwent following participation in a peace education program?
3. Which features should a reinforcement program include to make it effective in restoring/rehabilitating attitudes?

Research findings

1. The first hypothesis, that participating in a peace education program leads to a positive change in attitudes, was confirmed. Two-way analyses of variance (group*time) indicated a significant improvement in pre-test versus post test attitudes for both groups (experimental and control) as shown in Figures 1-4. From qualitative analyses of the interviews, as well as from the observations and feedback letters gathered during this study, it is possible to make conjecture about the possible causes for the improvement of attitudes. Jewish and Arab teenagers noted that they came to the workshop with certain fears and lack of knowledge about the other side. During the workshop they were surprised to reveal how "regular" the teenagers from the other side were, and how similar they were to themselves in many ways. Furthermore, they reported that during the workshop they learned about the culture, lifestyle and narrative of the other side. This exposure caused them to feel empathy for their suffering and recognition of the historic wrong that was done to them.

The Arab youth noted that they were surprised to see how open the Jewish teenagers were to meet them and to hear their historical story. They said that during the workshop, and for the first time in their lives, they were given a platform from which to make their national narrative known, and they felt that they had succeeded in transmitting it in a convincing way to the other side.

A comparison of Jewish and Arab participants revealed that the workshop improved attitudes of both sides (Arabs and Jews), and that the strongest effect was among the Jewish group. One possible explanation for this is that the Arab teenagers came to the workshop with more positive attitudes to begin with, and therefore the extent of their

improvement was limited. This can be explained by the fact that Arabs constitute a minority group in Israel and they view closeness to the majority group as an instrumental lever with which to promote themselves in terms of education, employment and the like.

2. The second hypothesis, that the positive effects of the peace education program were not reflected in all participants, was confirmed. The analysis of individual changes conducted in this study found that despite the average improvement of attitudes, this improvement did not apply to all study participants. The findings indicate that about 50% of the participants experienced a positive change in attitude, but concomitantly about 20%–30% of them underwent a negative change in attitude. Explanations for the regression emerged from an analysis of the participants' feedback letters and from personal interviews with them. The teenagers whose attitudes regressed referred mainly to their lack of preparation for the workshop, a lack of neutrality among group moderators, and inappropriate behavior by participants from the other side. The Jewish youth noted that they were not prepared for the political nature of the workshop (both mentally and in terms of factual knowledge). They complained about the lack of cooperation by the Arabs (silence or refusing to budge from their attitudes), and the aggressive behavior of the Arab moderator. The Arab youth whose attitudes regressed mentioned the contempt and feelings of superiority manifested by the Jews, the Jews' lack of openness to hear their side, and the problem of language.
3. The third hypothesis, that in the absence of a reinforcement program the positive effects of the peace education program would erode over time, was only partially confirmed. To examine this hypothesis, two collective measurements were calculated for each participant: the interpersonal measure and the national measure. Research findings confirmed the hypothesis regarding the interpersonal measure but not the national measure. The findings for the interpersonal measure showed that the attitudes of the control group (which did not receive the reinforcement program) were eroded over time, and returned to their initial level. In contrast, the national measure of attitudes among the Arab youths was eroded (as expected), but the Jewish youth maintained their high attitudes even two months after the workshop. Qualitative analyses (observations and in-depth interviews) showed that lack of knowledge and lack of awareness among the Jews about the Arab national narrative, combined with the determination of the Arabs to present this narrative, may explain this phenomenon.
4. The fourth hypothesis, that a reinforcement program based on reflection through writing feedback letters might restore/rehabilitate the attitudes over time, was confirmed. The findings of the study verified the efficacy of the reinforcement program and showed that while the attitudes of the participants in the control group were eroded, the attitudes of those in the reinforcement group remained constant and even improved two months after the workshop was held. Furthermore, it was found that the reinforcement program was effective in rehabilitating attitudes. The findings showed that participants in the experimental group for whom the workshop at Givat Haviva caused a regression in their attitudes, succeeded in restoring their attitudes as a result of the reinforcement program.

The study examined three additional research questions. The first and second questions dealt with the individual changes participants experienced as a result of taking part in a peace education program and possible factors that might explain these changes. The

findings reinforce recognition of the fact that not every workshop will necessarily lead to a positive change in attitudes in all participants. Rather, the change depends on certain factors/conditions that the program organizers would do well to take into account. Content analyses of the interviews, observations and feedback letters indicate that the main factors explaining the change in attitudes are: the preparation that participants received before the workshop, the type of issues raised for discussion, the behavior of participants from the other side, and the manner in which the moderators conducted the workshop. A positive change in attitudes occurred mainly as a result of introductory activities that created a feeling of closeness and camaraderie between the sides, familiarity with the narrative of the other side and perception of its justice (mainly among the Jewish participants), a feeling of empathy with the suffering of the other side, and recognition of the complexity of the conflict (there is no right side or wrong side). In contrast, a negative change in attitudes occurred mainly when participants did not receive appropriate preparation (they did not know what they were “getting into”), and/or when the behavior of the participants from the other side was inappropriate (lack of cooperation as expressed by silence, contempt and feelings of superiority, lack of openness to hear the attitudes of the other side, etc.), as well as due to problematic behavior of the workshop moderators.

The third question dealt with the features that a reinforcement program should include, so that it will be effective in reinforcing/ rehabilitating attitudes. Findings of the first stage of this study emphasize that a reinforcement program will be effective only if it can operate simultaneously, both in reinforcing attitudes among participants who experienced a positive change in attitudes and in rehabilitating attitudes among participants who experienced a negative change in attitudes. The reinforcement program implemented in this study was designed with this rationale in mind and included reflection in the form of writing feedback letters.

The study findings show that engaging in reflection about the workshop content, especially when it was oriented towards positive thinking, was effective in reinforcing attitudes among participants who underwent a positive change in attitudes and at the same time helped to rehabilitate attitudes among those participants who underwent a negative change. The mechanisms that might explain these effects differ for the two processes. For those who underwent a negative change, the positive effect is explained by the cognitive dissonance they felt as the negative change they experienced (at the workshop) came in conflict with the positive content they were asked to write about as part of the reinforcement program. For those who experienced a positive change, the explanation may be found in the emphasis that was placed on the accessibility and salience of the positive activities they experienced at the workshop and the reflective processing of these activities for understanding their significance. Few other studies have employed two different methods (obligatory cooperation and peer tutoring) in this context for example Rosen (2006; 2007), Rosen and Salomon, (2011) and Jayusi (2009), findings also indicated the efficacy of reinforcement programs in reinforcing/ rehabilitating attitudes over time. The consistent findings of these studies may imply that reinforcement programs of any type that cause participants to re-engage in the issues of the base program may be effective in reinforcing attitudes over time. Thus, this study recommends that an integral part of any peace education program should include a follow-up/reinforcement program.

Summary of the study findings and main recommendations:

1. A peace education program can have positive effects even in a reality of persistent and violent struggle.
2. Participation in a peace education program does not generate a positive change in attitude, and therefore it is important to plan such programs carefully so they will succeed in engendering this type of change.
3. The positive effects of peace education programs are temporary, and in order to reinforce these effects over time, it is recommended that follow-up reinforcement workshops should be conducted to allow participants to re-process the content of the program. The importance of the reinforcement program is not only in the reinforcement of attitudes; it can also help to rehabilitate the attitudes of participants who underwent negative changes in attitude in the base program.

Future studies suggested by the findings of this study:

- In light of the findings indicating the importance of a reinforcement program, a number of questions arise as to how to design and implement such a program in the field. The main questions are: What are the important components that should be included in such a program so that it will be effective? When should it be implemented (how long after the base program)? Should it be implemented more than once? Who should operate the program? Should it be separated by nationality or should it be bi-national?
- One of the problematic issues that emerged from the feedback letters was the short duration of the workshop (only two days), and that it was a one-time event. In light of this criticism, the question arises as to the effectiveness of making such programs longer and/or over a continuous period of time. Would such changes lead to more positive and long-lasting changes, and if so, how should they be developed (frequency of meetings, types of activities in such workshops, etc.)?
- The findings of the current study show that Arabs and Jews participants do not always react in the same way to peace education programs. The question arises whether both sides should have the same program or should the program be adapted differently for each side.

Discussion and concluding remarks

The basic assumption of many studies has been that an education for peace program causes positive changes in the attitudes of its participants. Therefore, the aim of the current study was to develop a reinforcement program for reinforcing these positive effects¹. One of the innovations of this study is that it monitored the changes that individual participants experienced as a result of taking part in a peace education program. The findings of this analysis led to the understanding that participating in a peace program does not always ensure positive changes, and may even cause a regression in attitudes. The insight gained from this

¹ It might worth mentioning that the media can also help. Warshel (2007), for example, reported that Disney's television program for Israeli-Palestinian children—Rehov SumSum/Shara'a SimSim has had a significant effect in fostering cross-cultural understanding between Israeli and Palestinian children.

finding is that a reinforcement program will be effective only if it can act simultaneously as a *preserver* of attitudes for those whose attitudes improved and as a *rehabilitator* for those whose attitudes regressed. Adhering to this rationale, this study developed and examined a reinforcement program based on reflection by means of writing feedback letters, and it was found to be effective for these purposes. From data analyses it became clear that an additional, secondary benefit of the reinforcement program emerged from content analyses of the feedback letters. The ability of the study to simultaneously monitor the types of changes that participants underwent and the feedback that they themselves wrote, clarified some of the factors that explained the types of changes participants experienced during this program. From a summary of these findings, it is possible to determine the important factors/conditions that organizers of peace education programs should consider when planning or conducting such a base program.

In light of the findings indicating the efficacy of this reinforcement program for reinforcing/rehabilitating attitudes, together with the findings of other studies showing a similar trend, it can be recommended that a reinforcement program can constitute an integral and indispensable part of a peace education program. Thus, a peace education program should include at least three parts: preliminary preparation, the program itself, and follow-up/reinforcement activity after completion of the program.

As asserted by Solomon and Cairns (2010), the common core of the effect-restoring interventions is their *reflective nature*. Reflection allows for more metacognitive self-regulation and monitoring. Thus, one comes to sidestep the resistance and reactions that listening to the other side's provocative arguments automatically arouses (e.g., Siegel, 2007). One may not like the adversary's arguments but reflection makes one aware that totally ignoring, evading or resisting them counters one's self image as an intelligent and open minded individual (Rodgers, 2002). Thus, according to Salomon, the lesson to be learned is that changes brought about by peace education, whereby the perspectives of the other side are heard and one's own views expressed and challenged, and where one comes to know the "others" and empathize with them, are not totally erased. They may become suppressed by the prevailing collective narrative, but they can still be restored and revived.

The contribution of this study is both theoretical and practical. The findings expand the basis for a better understanding of the types of changes that occur when participating in a peace education program and the reasons for these changes. In addition, they indicate the importance of reinforcement programs for reinforcing and rehabilitating attitudes. We hope that researchers who read this paper apply the practical recommendations it offers for more effective implementation of such workshops in the future.

References

- Allport, G.W. (1958). *The effect of contact. The nature of prejudice*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Bar-Tal, D. (1988). Delegitimizing relations between Israeli and Palestinians: A social-psychological analysis. In J. E. Hoffman et al. (Eds.), *Arab-Jewish relations in Israel: A quest in human understanding* (pp. 217-248). Bristol, IN: Wyndam Hall.
- Bar-Tal, D. (2002). The elusive nature of peace education. In G. Salomon & B. Nevo (Eds.), *Peace education: The concept, principles, and practices around the world* (pp. 27-36). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Bar-Tal, D. (2004). Nature, rationale and effectiveness of education for coexistence. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60, 253-271.
- Biton, Y., & Salomon, G. (2006). Peace in the eyes of Israeli and Palestinian youths as a function of collective narratives and participation in a peace education program. *Journal of Peace Research*, 43, 167-180.
- Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) website. (2011). 1 Accessed Sep. 7, 2012) http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/cw_usr_view_Folder?ID=14
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Evanston, IL: Row Peterson Press.
- Galily, Y. (2007). Sport, politics & society in Israel: The first fifty-five years. *Israel Affairs*, 13, 515-528.
- Jayusi, W. (2009). *Restoring the attitudes of peace education participants through peer-tutoring*. PhD Dissertation. University of Haifa (Hebrew).
- Hatton, N., & Smith, D. (1995). Reflection in teacher education: Towards definition and implementation. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 11, 33-39.
- Hayes, B.C., McAllister, I., & Dowds, L. (2007). Integrated education, intergroup relations, and political identities in Northern Ireland. *Social Problems*, 54, 454-482.
- Hewstone, M., & Brown, R. (1986). Contact is not enough: An intergroup perspective on the contact hypothesis. In M. Hewstone & R. Brown (Eds.), *Contact and conflict in intergroup encounters* (pp. 3-44). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Husisi, R. (2007). *The relationships between legitimizing the adversary's collective narrative and adherence to one's own narrative as a function of participation in a peace education program*. PhD Dissertation. University of Haifa (Hebrew).
- Kupermintz, H., Rosen, Y., Salomon, G., & Husisi, R. (2007). *Perception of the other among Jewish and Arab youth in Israel: 2004-2005*. Center for Research on Peace Education, University of Haifa.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miron-Shatz, T., Stone, A., Kahneman, D. (2009). Memories of yesterday's emotions: Does the valence of experience affect the memory-experience gap? *Emotion*, 9 (6), 885-891.
- Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). Intergroup contact theory. In J. T. Spence, J. M. Darley, & D.J. Foss, (Eds.), *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49 (1) 65-85.
- Pettigrew, T.F., & Tropp, L.R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 751-783.
- Rosen, Y. (2006). Does peace education in the regions of intractable conflict change core beliefs of youth? Paper presented at the Israeli-Palestinian International Conference on Peace and Democracy Education, Antalya, Turkey.
- Rosen, Y. (2007). Short-term versus long-term effects of peace education programs in the context of intractable conflict. Paper presented at the 12th Biennial European Conference for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI), Budapest, Hungary.
- Rosen, Y., & Salomon, G. (2011). Durability of peace education effects in the shadow of conflict. *Social Psychology of Education*, 14, 135-147.
- Salomon, G., & Cairns, E. (Eds.) (2010). *Handbook on peace education*. New York, N.Y.: Taylor and Francis.
- Schulenkorf, N., & Edwards, D.C. (2012). Maximizing positive social impacts: Strategies for sustaining and leveraging the benefits of inter-community sport events in divided societies. *Journal of Sport Management*, 26, 379-390.
- Siegel, D. (2007). *The mindful brain: Reflection and attunement in the cultivation of well-being*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Smith, A. (2011). Education and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. In J. Paulson (Ed.), *Education and reconciliation: Exploring conflict and post-conflict situations* (pp. 127-144). London: Continuum.

- Warshel, Y. (2007). As though there is peace: Opinions of Jewish-Israeli children about watching Rechov Sumsum/Shara'a Simsim Amidst Armed Political Conflict. *The Communication Initiative Network* June 22, 2007. Retrieved December, 30, 2012. <http://www.comminit.com/en/print/72338>
- Yahya, S., Bekerman, Z., Sagy, S., & Boag, S. (2012). When education meets conflict: Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli parental attitudes towards peace promoting education. *Journal of Peace Education*, 9, 297-320.

Zinman College,
Wingate Institute,
Israel 42902
E-mail: michalar@wincol.ac.il

Interdisciplinary Center (IDC)
Herzliya, Israel
E-mail: galiliy@gmail.com