

# Becoming Actively Altruistic for Love and Peace

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# Becoming Actively Altruistic for Love and Peace

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## **Abstract**

Humanistic and critical language teaching (Crookes, 2013) both propose that not only should we teach deeper life-enriching concepts but that we should activate them more in the real world of students and teachers. This paper looks at a series of endeavors made to critically engage students in some foundational constructs established within the fields of peace education and positive psychology. Preliminary foundations focused on these key terms: peace, activism, altruism and love (PAAL). PAAL was incorporated both within classroom activities implicitly and explicitly with the hopes that the students themselves would in turn construct the ideas needed for evaluation. As educators, we believe critical engagement with such concepts cannot be limited to a compartmentalized understanding of learning and thus, the pedagogically based actions constructed to test our research questions found within this paper span from the traditional classroom setting and extend beyond it to community and social gatherings. So in addition to a critical discourse analysis of student output from class generated lessons, this paper also analyses the collected feedback of a community inclusive school function. The results of our interactions exposed potential spaces and a need for pedagogical opportunities inclusive of PAAL. These do not need to be explicitly named or investigated, but opportunities that allow students such agentive and reflective expression can produce wonderful chances for personal growth and understanding in a language acquisition setting.

人間主義の言語教育、批判的言語教育 (Crookes, 2013) はともに、人生を豊かにする概念だけでなくその概念を現実社会で活動させることを提案している。この論文では、平和教育およびポジティブ心理学の分野における基礎的構成概念に批判的に取り組む一連の試みを考察する。最初に peace 平和、activism 行動主義、altruism 利他主義、love 愛 (PAAL) について述べる。PAAL は学生自身が評価に

必要な知識を構築できるよう、学習活動において間接的にも直接的にも取り入れられている。このような概念との批判的関わりは区切られた理解に限定されるものではないと考えるため、課題の検証は授業内だけでなくコミュニティ活動や社会活動にも及んでいる。そのため、授業活動における学生のアウトプットについて批判的談話分析を行うだけでなく、大学行事において収集されたコミュニティのフィードバックも分析している。検証の結果、我々のインタラクションがPAALを取り入れた教育機会の可能性と必要性を明確にしている。そのような機会において明白な指示の必要はなく、行動を起こすことや熟考することで言語習得における個人の成長や理解を促す素晴らしい機会を生み出すことができる。

## **Introduction**

“There is no path to peace. Peace is the path.” ~ Mahatma Gandhi

The basic concept for this project came to life while playing around with the axiom, “you are what you eat”. We then asked ourselves would this not apply to what you think as well? And thus, if you are what you think, then what is it that predominates our thinking? As educators interested in creating a positive holistic learning atmosphere for our students to flourish in, we set out to construct a process that might allow us to extract and observe such phenomena in our students. With research interests in the socio-scientific fields of positive psychology, peace education and critical thinking and how these can and should be intertwined with language acquisition, we then refocused our premise to ask ourselves, what concepts did we hope that students relied on to create their worldviews. From this, we settled on four basic terms that we thought encapsulated the foundations for peaceful existence: peace, activism, altruism and love (PAAL). If these English tokens themselves were not immediately known, surely their meanings are near universal traits and thus easily relatable and translatable. Yet, this only gets us to a static point. How peace, activism, altruism and love are understood and actuated in the daily thoughts and actions of our students is the direction we wanted to take our research. We premised that the concepts of PAAL were commonly tacitly applied to daily

life. Additionally, in the language classroom, we hypothesized that PAAL were seldom engaged directly as the focus of learning. Therefore, for this stage of our inquiry, and thus the confines of this paper, we have focused mainly on direct interaction with the terminologies of PAAL. We wanted to consciously engross students in a manner that would then help them engage in metacognitive explorations of PAAL. Incorporating Michael Scriven's definition, critical thinking requires "skilled and active interpretation and evaluation of observations and communications, information and argumentation" (Fisher and Scriven, 1997). Active interpretation here is in part construed to be the need to think about one's own thinking process, or metacognition. So in addition to stimulating the development of their critical thinking skills, we had hoped our approach would also actively captivate our students and others to enthusiastically contemplate and incorporate the foundations of PAAL in their undertakings. This aspiration might be clearer if we look back at the quotation accredited to Gandhi at the start of this section. Peace, in all its expressions, is an action for living and learning, not simply an end goal to be discovered. With that in mind, our project goals are to better understand what possibilities exist and how to better approach them as we walk the path together with our students.

### **Guiding Research Questions**

1. What are students' and teachers' initial conceptions of these key words: Peace, Altruism, Activism, and Love.
2. To what extent do students see themselves as participating in these concepts in their previous educational experiences and schools and their everyday lives?
3. What activities might be used to expand and open up students' understandings of these concepts and to produce more well-being? (e.g. drawing, peace-wall, horizontal learning, critical media literacy, direct actions – die-ins, taking the knee!)

4. What activities and suggestions might we develop and offer to other teachers interested in approaching these concepts?
5. How might approaching these in a foreign language help or impede their understanding and use?
6. What qualitative and linguistic investment results do we notice in our classes when we increase the conscientization of such concepts in our teaching/learning?

We like how points 3, 4, 5, and 6 built upon knowledge gathered in 1 and 2, and can construct opportunities for structural changes involving PAAL as well as identify possible impediments to positive change. Of course, point 5 is also quite significant for the field of language acquisition. The three researchers agree that a bit more conscientization of such concepts in our teaching/learning are needed.

**KUIS's motto** is “Languages are the foundation to link the world in peace.” However, we think that we also need to study and enact peace (and related concepts) in our many foreign language classes to create peacefully active classes and peacefully active students who can then contribute in peacefully active ways in a globalized world.

### **Literature Review**

What is education without critical reflection? We might also ask what are the purposes of formal education? The literature clearly shows a path and a need for educators to challenge the “better angels” of the learners and to expose them to tasks that feature inclusive problem solving techniques such as the values of critical thought, self-esteem and compassion. At the same time, learning materials should also support students with the abilities to navigate modern consumer society. This is important as heightened materialism correlates with lower

self esteem (Chapin and John, 2007). Noting that many people spend their time as passive consumers of information, bell hooks (2010) makes a strong case that conversation and dialogue provide for strong channels of knowledge acquisition. However, people generally need to be coached to engage with their learning in this way though. As a construct of what they term critical teaching, Dozier, Johnston and Rogers (2006) stated that instructors need to develop a fluency in conversational teaching. With this approach, an instructor spends less time explaining information or more time prompting learners to expand their responses. Yet, to delve into areas of social justice considerations, it requires an instructor of critical teaching to be aware of social, historical and linguistic factors that influence teaching and learning (2006). Wang (2014), teaching university ESL classes to multinational students in the U.S, provides an exemplar to express this argument. Through three progressive sharing activities: 5-minute “heart sharing”, “hand-in-hand” pair work, and journaling, she was able to create a learning environment that developed reciprocal trust and connectivity amongst the class and the instructor. Through the construction of a student teacher course on global understandings, Nakamura (2008) posited that future instructors need chances to expand their teaching skills to include critical thinking and horizontal learning possibilities. Horizontal learning implies that the students themselves have possibilities to construct the learning situations. Now, we are developing the foundations of Paulo Friere’s (1993) engaged pedagogy as opposed to traditional education practice of knowledge banking, i.e. memorizing what is given to you.

One position on peace education is that it should be comprised of three main methodologies: a whole school approach, spread across the curriculum, and spaced as a separate subject within the curriculum. Yet, does even one of those threads exist in most educational experiences of our students? The foundational concepts of peace and peace education (PE) are quite complex and not easily defined, thus it is not within the purview of this paper to

summarize the evolving attempts of the past three decades of research. Yet, this is why our project starts with the collection of active and passive preconceptions and connotations of “peace” held by our students and others. For our purposes, we can say that peace education was established in realization that violence and suffering need to be prevented. As it developed, it intersected with the notions of social justice, human rights, futures and developmental education. In a third development, PE advanced to include aspects of interpersonal and intrapersonal understandings (Page, 2008).

### **Engaged Pedagogy with PAAL in the Classroom**

#### **Participants**

The first group of participants in our classroom studies are mixed first to fourth year university students at KUIS. To simplify things we will look at a case study of one of Kirk Johnson’s classes while focusing on these concepts.

The second group of mixed participants all interacted with the PEACE WALL at two KUIS school festivals (in 2016 and 2017) and still others with a PEACE WALL at a JALT National Teachers Convention in November 18 and 19, 2017, in Tsukuba, Japan.

#### **Method**

Each of us shared with the others our ways of interacting with students and the research material, and we borrowed from each other many ideas. In this paper, we wish to focus on just a few class-results and the Peace Walls, which became quite popular. Before we describe these in more detail we wish to talk of the importance of “Being an example” and “Critical Participatory Looping.”

### **Being an example, and giving Near Peer Role Model Examples**

Making a stand for what we think is right creates meaningful energy for our lives. Teachers should allow themselves to show how they make stands in their own lives to students and be models of peace activism, altruism, and love (PAAL). They should also display how they themselves can model students being activists and performing acts of altruism, love, and peace.

When possible it may also be desirable to present near peer role models (NPRM), people who are similar to the students you teach. Research shows that students tend to think they can be like others who are already like them in many ways (Murphey & Arao, 2001). Thus, when we tell stories of a high school boy who started an NGO to help other children in the world finish their education, young students seem to be more motivated to imagine doing something similar. When we loop back information from the whole class, then their classroom friends (Murphey 1998) can become NPRMs, strengthening the natural ties and group dynamics with in the classroom (Dornyei & Murphey, 2003).

### **PAAL and Critical Participatory Looping (CPL)**

“Critical participatory looping” is simply giving back to the students what others in the group are saying on a survey or for any classroom activity. Students seem to appreciate knowing what their peers are thinking and saying and can imagine doing the same. Thus, their classmates become NPRMs. Without knowing what their thoughts and opinions are, they cannot model them. Thus, looping their ideas back through newsletters or comment files helps them all to develop and to usually have a positive impact on each other (Murphey & Falout, 2010).

### **Building a Culture of Peace: Content-Based Class - Spring 2017**

This particular class has been singled out for focus here because these students had been working with various constructs of peace education both explicitly and implicitly through a variety of activities for over a month when the first PAAL activity was introduced. These students had already attempted to define ideas of peace and were introduced to Johan Galtung's concepts of negative and positive peace. Students had spent several classes trying to deconstruct the parameters of identities and also to investigate how their own conscious and unconscious biases shaped their viewpoints of the surrounding world. So these students were exceptionally well primed to share and interact their thoughts with PAAL.

In totality, this class would critically interact directly with the PAAL terms on 3 stages over a 3-week period. Some students voluntarily participated in a fourth step that mainly was used to summarize the significance of their experience. What we were hoping to observe was how students would interact with the concepts, what would be their depth and range of expression? Then, understanding that they were looking at their own PAAL output, could the students themselves categorize and further develop their understandings? In a way, we were asking the students to perform a type of critical discourse analysis. In their first encounter with peace, activism, altruism and love, students were given approximately 30 minutes of free writing time to contemplate two questions: one provided them a chance to define the meanings of each term and the other an opportunity to expand on how they themselves engage with the term or see it in real world situations.

Then, incorporating the concept of critical participatory looping (CPL), students' initial interactions with PAAL were minimally organized by the instructor for reintroduction to the class. Redundancies were reduced and structural and grammatical issues were minimally

altered for clearer understandings. In this second stage, students working in small groups attempted to categorize, organize and even expand upon the first round of output. For this task, students were given a full class period, but this did get expanded into a second class and even that was not truly enough. Only two of the seven groups successfully analyzed all four terms. However, this being quite a complex task, the instructor felt the activity was successful and he hopes the following summary indicates that. Working at first as independent entities, each group categorized the class output generated from each term in the first stage.

### **Peace**

The following examples are raw student output after the 1<sup>st</sup> stage from the question, what is peace?

Peace is so necessary for us today. Peace is consisted of consideration, no violence and no fighting. If we greed something and steal someone's things, it will be broken. The ways to peace are various, so we must communicate (discuss).
---

To keep peace, we connect to keeping our mind calmly or happily. Many people say that Japan is peaceful enough. I can understand the opinion but I disagree with the idea about some point. Peace means every people who involved in society feel calmly or happily. Even now many crimes happen and many people feel anxiety. I think to make perfect peace is too difficult.
--

Smile a lot, to live safely, equal rights, no war, no fight
---

Stage 2 required the students to interact with each student comment and deconstruct it, if needed, into specific themes. Taking another next step, students pondered over these specific themes and organized them into broader generalized themes. Finally in this stage of CPL, groups briefly collaborated to compare how each group organized their decisions and made adjustments if desired. Concurrent to all this, students were also trying to apply real

exemplars to the various themes. From this stage of CPL the class, after negotiation and guidance from the teacher, organized their understandings of peace into seven overall themes:

- Contentment in daily life
- A sense of justice or fairness
- Having security or safety
- Having opportunities
- Positive relationships
- Healthy natural environment
- Absences of negatives

The following chart shows how one group in stage 2 generalized themes and summarized support for the term, peace.

Group 6 - (Student A, B, C)	Summarized supporting examples
Having a good relationship with others	Having family, friends Sharing own feelings or ideas with someone Being nice to each other. Talking with parents about daily life. Sharing feelings and giving advice.
Being comfortable with ordinary life (4)	Having own home to go back to. Having a hobby Relaxing with something you like.
Having safety and not hurting someone	Living without being threatened by dangers like war, violence or fights. Solving problems by negotiating with others, compromising
Having equal rights	Being able to get an equal education Getting proper nutrition No disparity
Nature	Good environment, a lot of trees
Connected to “love”	
Feeling happy	A situation where love is present and everybody feels happy.

This activity asked students to engage actively with a difficult concept. It asked students to both reflect and to expand their understandings. Individually, student output and participation ranged quite a bit, but collectively the students were well up to the task. The example below highlights how the looping of their own ideas can prompt deeper reflective thought. This was given as an example of safety as a construct of peace in the stage 2 group discussion. When it was later introduced to the class, just about every female student nodded with total comprehension. The student highlighted that peace and safety have highly gendered realities.

Peace as Safety – “I often go back to home late at night. I know my hometown isn’t scary, but I often feel scared.”

## Love

The following examples are raw student output after the 1<sup>st</sup> stage from the questions, what is love and how do you see love ...?

Love is the best thing in life. Without this we cannot live.
Happiness, family, friends, boy/girlfriend, like from bottom of heart
Love is important thing to live. It's that two people need and support each other to see their smile. It often become to the feeling that they can die to protect them. In common, a man and woman are together but it doesn't matter. Recently many couples of same sex are accepted in the world. A number of shapes of love exist and the ways of love are also various.
Love sounds good and beautiful to me, but I realized it's sometimes sad. To love something or something is not always easy. I see this concept when I think about my family, friends. Also when I watch movies, I can kind of understand it.

The process followed the same format as peace. In stage 2, student comments from the 1<sup>st</sup> stage were looped (CPL) back into classroom for further analysis. From this process, we as a class settled on 6 themes of love. One interesting point was the strong present of negatives to love. Love was something that could bring pain as well as pleasure.

- Romantic
- Loved ones (family, friends, pets)
- Social/Society
- Happiness
- Feeling/emotion (beyond happiness)
- Negative (obsession, jealousy, loss)

The chart below shows how one group in stage 2 generalized themes and summarized support for the term, love.

Group 5 – (Student A, B, and C)	Summarized supporting examples
<p>Lover =partner (romance) (8*)</p>	<p>Boyfriend, girlfriend wife and husband            Take care of each other, support each other,            Protect each other            People always want to make their lover happy            Falling in love with someone            Marriage</p>
<p>Family (9)</p>	<p>Unconditional love            Family’s love is kind of trust.            People trust their family more than anything.            Father plays with children            Mother cooks for family</p>
<p>Society (1)</p>	<p>Donation (arrow) the love to help someone.            Volunteer activity            Community (PTA, club)            People who love the same artist and gather in            a community (concert)            I am a member of a yosakoi team. I really            respect my teammates. I think that is love.</p>
<p>Happiness (1)</p>	<p>Happiness comes from love I think. When I            feel love from family or friends, I will be            happy.</p>
<p>Hobbies (3)</p>	<p>Something that you love to do.            Example – go on a gaming binge            Fun club            Crazy to do something</p>
<p>Pets (2)</p>	<p>Animals always understand the feelings of            people. When we are sad, they will stay with            us.            Part of the family            Play together</p>
<p>Children (1)</p>	<p>All parents love their children and think about            them first.            Always protect their children from society.            Taking care of children in kindergarten is also            a part of this love for children.</p>

\* These numbers represent the number of examples or specific themes this group of students categorized within that more general theme.

### Activism and Altruism

Below is the raw data from activism and altruism. We haven't conducted deeper analysis of these ideas because too few students and groups activity engaged with these concepts in the stage 2 CPL activity. It seems time restraints and possibly personal preference steered students away from critically engaging during that stage. That said, some students did seem to see the concepts of activism and altruism as strongly connected to peace and love. Overall though, many students seemed to have a weak conceptualization of activism. Many students just expressed activism as not being passive in daily life and gave it no special place as a unique concept for promoting peace and justice.

#### Activism – raw output

“activism” is action like work, study to improve present situation
Active – Do many things having interest.
Taking an action for anything
Activism is the feeling (belief) that people should behave/do something actively. It's the belief that it's not good to think much and don't move.
To move with activism mind connect to change the people's thinking in the future. People who have activism mind is very active or people who have hospitality mind.
Hang out with someone a lot outgoing, has many hobbies interested in something
Do the action. About polite
Clustering – need power, doing, moving, challenging, image (symbol greater) practice, theory (symbol greater) action, doing anything to get goal Art – flexing arm
Challenge, try something, change something
An idea to start with even something tiny to accomplish a big goal. Put yourself to make an effort for something before you say you can't (?) Aggressive people tend to be for this idea ?
Active (ART flexing arm). It is important for “job-hunting”. Do something without thinking well. The lack of “activism” (arrow) cannot do anything by own decision (?)

Study at university. Be a specialist of _____. find what I want to do now (arrow) do it. Club activity.
Clustering – outdoor, just do it, passion, Opposite – me – indoor, passive

Altruism – raw output

“Altruism” is move for people without thinking about benefits. Even though there is disadvantages for oneself, that person still work for others.
If the people are really good, the concept is good but in many cases it’s not.
People who have altruism mind they can think others benefit and success. They
Taking an action for others’ happiness
To think about others at all time listening a lot, good listener can understand others feeling
Kind mind. To friends, elderly people we use this action. If people have this perspective, world will be peaceful. On the train
Generous – it’s similar to generous wanting someone feel happy, people act altruistic behavior.
Sympathy – people who can sympathy easily, they tend to do something altruistic.
Clustering – others take priority over oneself, think others so much, sacrifice oneself for others, opposite- egoist
UNICEF – Add Japanese, volunteer
An idea to help others by sacrificing yourself not out of the desire to satisfy your feeling, but eventually what you’ve done would be appreciated by others.
Situation = helping people give a seat for pregnant woman (link) policeman, fireman – they are altruism?; altruism (not equal sign) self-sacrifice?
I heard this word for first time.
Opposite – egoism. For other person, not for me. “Altruism” ( the person who is altruism) don’t shave own thinking
Opposite – egoism.
People think about other on more than themselves. It can’t be without love.
Clustering – (family) parents, Christ, Kindness
Clustering – volunteer, kindness, domination. I don’t really have it.
I believe everyone has altruism in their mind more or less. If everyone is like that, this world will be better. If you love people, you’re more like altruism. It connects to love and peace.

### **Stage 3 – Forum Feedback**

Stage 3 was a reflective journaling forum in which students were expected to share their thoughts and experiences about the data in stage 2. This was done via the KUIS Moodle server, which we used for the class. The Moodle forums allow for open readings and reply comments to be made directly. Below are three representative comments.

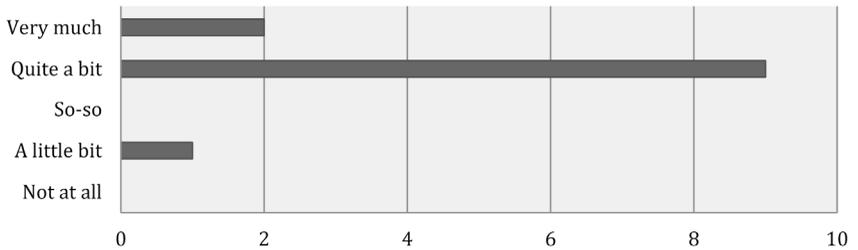
- 1) “We talked about "Love" deeply so it's too long but I was able to listen to the story and their experiences I've never got so I was surprised. It was great for me to rethink about "Love". In addition, in that sheet there are many genre of "Love". For example shape of Love, same sex love, jealous and connection to peace. I was surprised by these views because I've never expected. The discussion was interesting.”
- 2) “When I talked about "Peace" with my group members, I picked up that "no argument" is the one of "peace" things from the papers. But, a member of my group said she thought "no argument is not peace, it is just quiet world and argument needs to make more peaceful world." I thought it was right and good idea. I did not have ideas like her, so I agreed her opinion and I could find a new view of "peace".”
- 3) “By doing this activity, I realized they all are connected each other. Peace needs love. Altruism needs activism in order to make country peaceful.”

### **Stage 4 – Voluntary thoughts**

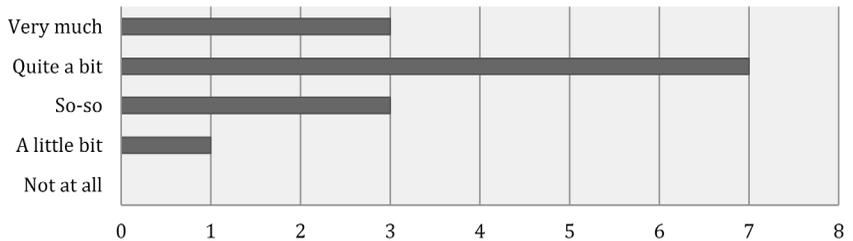
Students were asked to fill in a short survey on the activity to critically engage with the terms of PAAL. In total, 14 students took this fourth step. Our primary targets were three fold: to check if students believed that the activity had importance, to observe if students felt they

gained personal insight and understanding from it and finally to see how they felt about partaking in English versus their native tongue. The responses were overwhelmingly positive and encouraging and somewhat surprisingly, 11 respondents either believed that they did just fine expressing themselves in English or that using Japanese might not have actually been better.

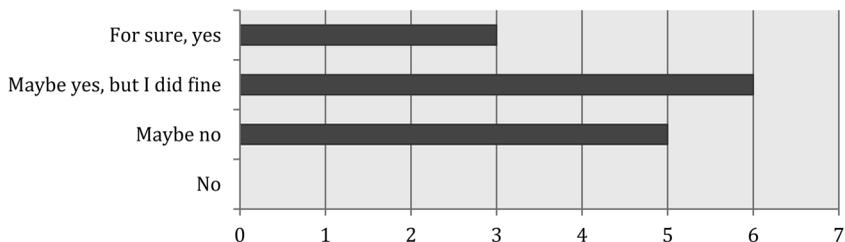
Do you think challenging this activity is important?  
(14 responses)



Do you think it has helped you better understand how these terms are used or are present in your life? (14 responses)



If you could have done this activity in Japanese, would it have been better? (14 responses)



### **Creative Artistic Expression and PAAL**

When we explicitly introduced PAAL to our students, the option to creatively draw one's understanding was always given as an option. In fact, many students chose this route and a large percentage of students included at least one simple drawing as part of their expression.

In the Building a Culture for Peace class for Autumn 2017, a different approach to PAAL was crafted. Students were specifically first introduced to PAAL via their own creative artistic understanding. Each student later had an opportunity to expand on their drawings by supporting them with captions or a summarizing paragraph. So with a focus on images, the number of words produced to express meaning was greatly reduced; however, the initial observations of drawings shows an interesting range of understandings, especially with the term activism which seemingly caused many students trouble when using only words. The next stage with this aspect of the project is to use CPL by reintroducing these drawings back to the students. It will be quite interesting to note how students interact with many images as opposed to ideas expressed via words.

## **Community Building with PAAL**

### **The Peace Wall Project 2016**

“Happiness does not come about in isolation, but is dependent on the kindness of others. Our own success and happiness are closely related to that of others.” ~ Dalai Lama quoted in Fellman, 1998)

During the KUIS school festival of 2016, we took the four terms, peace, love, activism and altruism (PLAA) to the attendees of the two-day festival. The goals of the project were multiple. Firstly, we just wanted to share these concepts and have people interact with them. Could people express what these terms mean in their lives? And if people could not or would not, what does this reveal about us as a society? So the peace wall project in its simplest form was just a chance to get people actively thinking about fundamental constructs of a harmonious and peaceful society. Given all the negative, aggressive, violent imagery that permeates our news feeds and entertainment, we believed, and still do, that the notions of peace, love and understanding need to be “actively waged”. Given the systemic nature of conflict and violence woven into our social hierarchies, workplaces, entertainment avenues as well as the general stresses of modern lifestyles, it would seem a structural counterweight might be necessary to offer better alternatives and viewpoints. However, this is a notion that we will return to and highlight in the overall discussion section of the paper.

Beyond the motive for active critical engagement with people in our community, we also hoped our peace wall would add to the understanding of what these terms meant to people for scholarly analysis. For our research, the nature of the peace wall would induce responses that were short but dynamic. In just a small space, a respondent needed to summarize her/his feelings of peace, love et al., which would then be embodied on the wall for all passing by to

engage with. Our project took inspiration from a peace project by Parrish and Oxford (2013) in which they asked attendees at a university school festival in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States to finish the statement, “Peace is ...”, on a notecard. This notecard was then placed on a map of the world for others at the festival to contemplate. Similarly at the KUIS school festival, we had participants place their own message on our wall, which over the two days created a dynamic visual display of messages and images for observers to engage with.

Additional to these messages, our peace wall also included the images of around 30 people who could be described as activists for social justice or champions for creating a more peaceful world through their direct action. A conscious effort was made to display a wide range of peoples from the historical to the contemporary and from the well known to the obscure but should be well known. Furthermore, they spanned a wide spectrum of ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, ages, occupations, class status, global locations, etc. The main purpose of these images was similar to the project in general, to get people to critically engage and contemplate actions for creating a more peaceful world built on equality, justice, love and compassion and to extend that to all forms of life on our planet.

In the form of a quiz, participants would thus attempt to match the names on a handout, the images from the wall and the famous deeds of those represented. If asked for, a Peace Wall Project volunteer provided assistance and participants were encouraged to use their smart phones to connect with Internet resources when they needed to supplement their direct knowledge. In this manner, we had hoped to turn this activity into less of what Paulo Friere (1993) might refer to as a “banking” activity and more into an exploration for new realizations.

While there is no further analysis on this segment of the Peace Wall Project, we would like to underscore a few positive occurrences and missed opportunities here. Let's start with the negative. Unfortunately, less than a fifth of those who wrote a message actually took the time to engage with a quiz. There were actually three quiz versions. While a great number of participants did point out people from the wall that they knew, or asked about a particular image or two, most didn't seem keen on spending the time needed to complete a full quiz covering seven or eight people.

Now to the positives, on more than a few occasions some wonderful interactions did take place between two participants sharing ideas about a person on the wall or between participants and our peace wall staff members. These conversations took place in Japanese, English and often switched back and forth depending on the participants.

Another area with some potential was the selection of the persons for the wall. While the authors of this paper did select most of them, a few of them were recommended by our student volunteers. That level of shared creation is in itself important, but one recommendation in particular is worth emphasizing. Emma Watson, of Harry Potter movie fame, created quite a stir with a number of junior high school to university-aged participants. Her inclusion seemingly created a close level of proximity to their world, providing an excellent example of a near peer role model (Murphey & Arao, 2001). On numerous instances we witnessed young participants sharing their theories and researching to uncover why Emma Watson was on the peace wall. They interacted with friends, when present, as well as our staff and showed great enthusiasm to learn of the actor's amazing work in the realms of gender equality and girl's education. Underscoring the concept of participatory critical engagement, this anecdote is a prime example of why we genuinely need more

opportunities to contemplate and interact with positive experiences that show a better world is possible. Enthusiasm is contagious! It also highlights that these experiences should not be compartmentalized to a classroom-learning setting.

## **Methodology and analysis of the Peace Wall messages**

### **Participants**

Participants wrote their messages on differently shaped and color-highlighted paper for each term: peace was a circle with a faint purple peace emblem as the background; love was a red-bordered heart shape; activism a green arrow; and altruism was an outlined yellow waving flag shape. Some participants did write a message into more than one shape and on a few rare occasions participants would return later in the day to fill in a different message and to check for the addition of new messages placed on the wall. Our youngest participant was four years old and the oldest an octogenarian. While the overwhelming majority of participants were of Japanese nationality, at least eight other nationalities were represented. Unfortunately, biographical data was not collected on a number of messages.

### **Data collection and interpretation steps**

During the two days, over 130 messages were created and placed on the peace wall. The messages spanned five languages with English and Japanese being almost evenly split. All of the messages in Japanese were translated into English by three English majors from KUIS in their third year of study at the university and then checked, and adjusted when necessary, by the native Japanese-speaking author of this paper. One message each was also written in Vietnamese, Chinese and Hungarian but only included in the data if the author self translated the message into English on the card. Artwork, while quite expressive at times, was not interpreted for the analysis. Another reality that should be addressed is that many participants

wrote their messages in English and not their mother tongue. Such messages were recorded as written. There were, of course, a few grammatical errors and non-native like collocations used. The authors' knowledge of teaching English as a second language in Japan was used when needed to interpret meaning. In the rare cases where this was not possible, that message was just dropped from the analysis.

Of the 130 plus messages, 58 for love and 50 for peace were collected for analysis. With only 14 messages for activism and 5 for altruism, these are only briefly reviewed in our discussion and final thoughts section.

### **Peace is ...**

For the term, peace we borrowed the framework created by Parrish and Oxford (2013) for the data analysis of their "people's peace" project. Their project collected 237 responses on index cards, which they analyzed and disaggregated into 431 definitions of peace (most cards had multiple definitions). These definitions were then organized into 44 specific themes that could be further collapsed into 12 generalized themes. Our definitions of peace collected on 50 papers yielded 77 definitions. The table below is the complete version of Parrish and Oxford's generalized and specific themes. If we had messages that overlapped, the themes are printed in bold lettering. Somewhat shocking, one generalized theme, Peace with Nature, was not present on any messages from our two-day project.

TABLE: Parrish and Oxford’s 12 generalized themes that emerged from the 44 specific themes (Themes also found on our peace wall are in **bold**, while themes not represented have a ~~strike through~~ line)

Specific themes	Generalized themes
<del>Absence of – war, hunger, sorrow, violence, hate, fear, discrimination</del>	<b>Absence of something undesirable</b>
<b>Acceptance and appreciation of – others, differences, ideas, ideologies, beliefs, cultures, opinions; difference and diversity</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>
<b>Communication and compromise (negotiation); <del>conflict resolution</del>, in need of effort, knowledge and understanding</b>	<b>Wisdom (negotiated; achieved in communication)</b>
<b>Love and care</b>	<b>Love and care</b>
<b>Virtue (patience, kindness, respect, <del>moral</del> behavior, compassion, Golden Rule); hope; forgiveness; <del>altruism</del> and goodwill</b>	<b>Goodwill and virtue</b>
<b>Fairness; justice</b>	<b>Justice</b>
<b>Personal; internal; happiness/delight/contentment; fulfillment; religion/spirituality in the personal dimension; personal safety and security; <u>basic needs; earned via actions</u></b>	<b>Personal peace</b>
<b>Community; brother/sisterhood; friendship, Unity; regards others; relationships; living together/getting along; equality; deserved unconditionally; freedom; inclusive (should include all people; <del>can include all life forms</del></b>	<b>Interpersonal/intergroup peace</b>
<b>Nationally or culturally defined; related to religion on a broad social basis; National; <del>government policy</del>; geographically situated; global-politics, global community, <del>global</del> issues</b>	<b>International/intercultural peace:</b> influenced by culture, religion, nation and location

Nature (including environmental concerns)	Peace with nature
Harmony; tranquility (quiet, calm); calmness	Tranquility
Desirable; how the world should be; humanity and life; beauty and art; future (needed for, future generations; eternal concept); restoration	An ideal

Of course, there is quite a bit of ambiguity in some messages. For example, smile, what does it mean actually? Is this a way to express oneself with an individual sense of pride? Is it more a nuanced cultural trait where one is expected to express happiness even when it does not truly exist? Who the smile is for and why it is important for peace is somewhat ambiguous without further discussion with the author, which is something we did not partake in. This also brings up the issue of translation. For sure, meanings can be lost or misconstrued, but we felt that the efforts and checks in place were sufficient for our needs here. Ultimately, the interactions at the peace wall itself were of importance and the data it provided for a discourse analysis is just a pleasant byproduct.

### Love is ...

Similar to the conceptualization of peace, we organized specific themes of love into more general themes. We were initially surprised at the ranges of themes that participants produced. Clearly, love is both important and multifaceted.

Intrapersonal feeling – love yourself
Tolerance – acceptance of others; acceptance of other customs and cultures
Behavior – internal; trust; compassionate; politeness; consideration; tolerance; protection of others; openness; agentive
Interpersonal – feeling toward/with others, shared, reciprocal
Relationship – family; friends; the person one always thinks about, apply to all people

Altruistic act – expecting nothing in return; giving
An action or agentive
Goodwill and virtue - An attitude – happiness; kindness; compassionate; put others first
Facial expression – smile; express happiness
Transformative – reduces stress; increases happiness; creates energy;
Physical – beyond youth and beauty
An ideal – desirable; all encompassing; needed to build an ideal future; something indefinable, it just is; more than just feelings
Romantic - passionate
Possession – money; food
Tranquility – peace;
Security – feeling of security
Rare – one in a lifetime opportunity

**Activism is ... and Altruism is ...**

Unfortunately, not enough people chose to interact with either of these terms to engage in an inquiry. Given there were more glamorous choices and also the transient nature of our participants, moving from one festival event to another, we are not surprised. However, we felt this was a bit of a missed opportunity seeing that our wall was adorned with the pictures of activists who had thoughtlessly given so much of themselves for various social justice causes.

**Peace Wall 2016 discussion and final thoughts**

Consistent with our hypothesis, we hold that the conceptualizing of the constructs of peace should not be relegated to the formalized classroom, but instead they need to be constantly incorporated into the fabric of our life. The school festival offered a fantastic opportunity to explore the boundaries of our terms, PAAL.

One quick observation is the appreciation and even awe that was expressed to our Peace Wall Project members. Many people seemed to truly welcome a chance to think about our peace constructs, express their own thoughts and engage with the ideas of others. On more than one occasion guests told us that contemplating and collectively interacting with such ideas is exactly what we need more in society. The writers of this paper could not agree more.

Numerous times throughout the two days, participants would return for another look to see how the wall was developing with keen interest and even those just passing by would look at the wall with inquisitive looks. The student volunteers were quite central to the success of the project by engaging in deepening conversations. This connectivity between our volunteers and the participants interacting at the peace wall was an added highlight to the event.

### **The Peace Wall Project 2017**

For the 2017 school festival at Kanda University of International Studies, we once again created a space for attendees to interact and share their ideas of peace. While the data collected from the event could not be organized and analyzed in time for this publication, we do have some preliminary numbers and important observations to share at this time. The two themes we worked with were, *One Step to Peace* and *Express your Happiness*. With our primary focus, *One Step to Peace*, we asked participants to share one thing we need, or need to change to create a more peaceful society, world or future. From this we hope to better understand what people feel are pressing issues that mitigate peace or what is needed to wage peace for a better tomorrow. One aspect we are curious to learn is if the participants responded in terms of creating positive peace or more so just to remove threats of direct violence thus indirectly focusing on aspects of negative peace. We are also interested in identifying if some messages might contain what Harris and Morrison (2003) refer to as

Peace through Strength. This strategy proposes that peace can be achieved via deterrence or even the elimination of an opposition. While the authors of this paper do not adhere to a theory of peace that is a consequence of the violent destruction of the other, it is something accepted by many political, economic and religious institutions in our time. It is also quite timely given the current heightened tensions between the represented governments of the United States of America and Japan on one side and North Korea on the other. For this activity, 162 messages were collected and placed on the large green bulletin board for all to observe and interact with. Additionally, 54 messages expressing happiness were also displayed. In addition to Japanese and English, the wall displayed a few messages in Vietnamese and Thai as well as a large number of creative and expressive artistic drawings, which were usually included with a message. Unfortunately, due to an incoming typhoon, the festival was effectively shut down just after 12 p.m. on the second day. This sadly put a halt to a day that surprisingly started off productively given the inclement weather.

In addition to the two themes above, the 2017 Peace Wall Project also collaborated with a group of seminar students selling certified Fair Trade beverages. The partnership gave the students an opportunity and space to share what they had learned about certified Fair Trade with attendees at the festival. Given that Fair Trade at its best is about trade justice and social advancement, the students expressed that just selling a product without the possibility of sharing a deeper explanation of the standards and values underpinning Fair Trade was not satisfying. To remedy this, those students created an interactive quiz on the *Peace Wall* for participants to challenge during the festival while our *Peace Wall* staff acted as assisting docents. This collaboration really accentuates the meaning of our project in general. Over the course of the two Peace Wall Projects, it became evident that so much of the constructs of peace were being forged in the interconnected actions between our student volunteers, those

attending the festivals and even the authors themselves. The temporary bonds that people make discussing the concepts of peace, happiness, love, etc. were a significant spinoff of our activities.

### **The Peace Wall at the 2017 National JALT Conference (November 18 & 19, 2017)**

For two days at the national conference of the Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) in Tsukuba, Ibaraki, the Peace Wall Project will intermingle with attendees of the conference. However, as this conference happens after the deadline for this paper, no follow up observations or analysis will be reported here. The arrangement of the peace wall will be set in a lobby space amongst book distributors and other vendors. Returning back to the original PAAL (peace, activism, altruism, Love) formation, we are curious to observe how language educators and also mostly proficient English speakers, if not native English speakers, interact with the concepts. We hypothesize not just a wider range of vocabulary and ideas, but also more inquisitive interactions regarding the underlying principles of the activity along with potential roadblocks and how such principles can be successfully incorporated into different learning environments, including classrooms. This activity will also provide two of our previous project student volunteers and at least two more individuals from other universities an opportunity to bond with each other and interact with professionals over these fundamental ideas for a peaceful society.

### **Project Conclusions**

For this paper, we focused on activities that explicitly engaged students and participants with the concepts of peace, activism, altruism and love. We had hoped to uncover how students view and interact with these ideas and to show that they can be and need to be actively envisioned by our learners. We believe these efforts have exposed a potentially rich area for

second language learning spaces under the right circumstances. Additional to these explicit efforts, it should also be noted that the specific themes found within those concepts were also implicitly integrated into the full range of our class materials and methods.

Once again, if we accept the premise that ‘peace is the path’, then we can better comprehend the need for a pedagogical framework that incorporates peace, altruism, compassion and activism, and similar constructs, within formal educational institutions. These concepts are dynamic and active, and therefore they need space to be developed, experimented with and nurtured. Through our project, we hope that we have added to the growing body of evidence that shows the value of peace education for overcoming problems and achieving solutions in a peaceful manner. We also believe that the second language-learning environment provides adequate space, and possibly a liberating opportunity, to support such ideas.

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