ABSTRACT

Towards a Culture of Peace:

Teachers’ Use of and Students’ Reactions to a Curriculum for

UNESCO Associated Schools

A curriculum was developed for use in UNESCO Associated Schools in Trinidad and Tobago. Using a qualitative case study approach with quantitative inputs, an inquiry was conducted to determine the goodness, appropriateness and value of the curriculum and the modifications which should be made to the curriculum document. The data to determine what modifications should be made were based on the ways in which teachers used the curriculum document and students’ reactions and responses to it. In particular, the inquiry focused on the impact of the curriculum on students’ attitudes, values, beliefs and opinions. The findings of the inquiry established the goodness, appropriateness and value of the curriculum document. However, classroom activities did not always reflect the criteria for goodness and appropriateness. There was also significant adaptation of the curriculum document by teachers. The general school context influenced teachers’ use of the curriculum document as well as students’ reactions and responses to its implementation in the classroom situation.

Overall, the younger students exhibited more positive attitudes and values as revealed by their performance on the attitude post-test. Nonetheless, the findings indicated that the attitudes and values of older students could be shaped positively with effective use of the curriculum document. Recommendations are
presented for modifications to the curriculum document. The findings point to the importance of assessing empirically the effectiveness of curricula prior to their introduction within the education system.

Keywords: UNESCO Associated Schools; Curriculum; Use of Curriculum; Attitudes and Values; Teachers; Students; Peace; Environment; Culture; Human Rights; the United Nations.

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