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## Book Review

**Building a peaceful society: creative integration of peace education**, by Laura L. Finley. A volume in the series: Peace Education, editors Laura Finley & Robin Cooper, Information Age Publishing, 2011, 138 pp., US \$45.99 (paperback), US \$85.99 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-61735-456-4.

Reviewed by Christie Billups

*Lewis University*

*billupch@lewisu.edu*

**Editors note:** This review is one in a series co-published by the Global Campaign for Peace Education and In Factis Pax: Journal of Peace Education and Social Justice toward promoting peace education scholarship. These reviews are of Information Age Publishing's Peace Education series. Established in 2006 by Founding Editors Ian Harris and Edward Brantmeier, IAP's peace education series offers diverse perspectives on peace education theory, research, curriculum development and practice. It is the only series focused on peace education offered by any major publisher. Click here to learn more about this important series.

*Building a peaceful society* attempts a daunting task in a relatively few pages, that of collecting and integrating a vast variety of resources related to peacebuilding and peace education across a spectrum of realities and institutions. The author demonstrates the wide-reaching need for and application of peace education in systems ranging from policing and courts to sports, schools, and NGOs. Her scope is global with some emphasis on issues and resources within the U.S. Her introduction to the book establishes the problems underlying violence vis-à-vis the dominator model so prevalent in Western society, particularly the U.S.

In chapter one, she ensures that she and her reader are operating from a common vocabulary regarding Peacemaking and Positive Peace, and introduces the Partnership

Model as preferred to the Dominator Model for growing relationship, understanding and peace. The heart of the book is six chapters exploring the possibilities for peacemaking and the use of Peace Education in various institutional settings, namely: law and policing, courts and corrections, prevention programs, non-profits and social services, sports, and brief attention to a few other institutions such as the military, economics and family, among others. She concludes by offering insights for the path forward.

Dr. Finley critiques the militarization of police academies and districts as well as other dominator-model approaches to communal conflicts, needs and services. She advocates partnership-model leadership, peace education and peacebuilding as ways to enhance communal voice and collaboration toward a more equitable and just society.

Finley references a wide range of scholars of peace education and offers insight and inspiration toward its greater use and efficacy. She offers an important thread throughout regarding the need to shift from dominator-model systems to partnership-model structures and strategies. Her work is concise and readable, passionate yet academic. She has formed an extensive network among advocates of peace education, and she utilizes this web to inform her readers.

Despite the author's scholarship in the field, the book has numerous deficits which are difficult to overlook. The larger issues with *Building a peaceful society* are the following: the book's audience is unclear, the author's voice is in scant evidence, the reach of the book too grand for its length, peacebuilding practitioners who frame the scholarship from the field are too few, and the engaging art of storytelling is almost completely absent. There are a few other minor critiques that will follow, but these five require primary attention.

First, Dr. Finley presumably partnered with this publisher to provide a resource for higher education classrooms, and yet, she appears more interested in affecting change among dominant systems and therefore may be trying to catch the attention of non-profits or peace organizations. Since organizations tend to have a specific injustice or problem to which they are attempting to respond, her cursory consideration of each type of institution is unlikely to be helpful. That students in peace education would eventually be responsible for peace work and education is obvious, but it's improbable that her writing style would stimulate undergraduate interest or connect with the way they tend to learn. Therefore, the potential audiences of the book remain unclear or possibly dissatisfied.

Second, due to very extensive use of quotes and references to various peace educators, organizers and scholars, there were numerous times when the author's voice got lost. Jumping from one scholar or resource to another created a frequently choppy text that did not attract the reader nor provide a clear thread amidst copious expert opinions. When she did comment or offer insight, there were presumptions and biases that raised concerns. For instance, not everyone agrees that the police are militarized. Various narratives and academic texts demonstrate that there may be some level of consensus among peace advocates that policing tends toward militarization in the U.S.,

and she does attempt to explore this reality to some degree (20ff), but again, depending on her audience, she may need to better support her claim that police and other institutions are militarized in order to build her case more convincingly and set the stage to propose alternatives.

Third, Dr. Finley attempts to do it all in this short text, as suggested in the book outline above. Ironically, the attention to the role that higher education plays in dominator and partnership-model structures and initiatives, or should play in building bridges between the academy and the wider community, is given scant attention. Since these are frequent places in which peace educators are formed, it seems that greater attention, beyond a brief mention of service learning (136-7), is needed.

Fourth, the author's strength clearly lies in specific social and broad institutional aspects of 'peace education,' mentioned in the book's subtitle, and thus her frequent reference to Paulo Freire is appropriate. Numerous other authors, scholars and researchers are credited by Finley with contributions to the field of peace education. Conversely, there seemed to be a dearth of important contributors and scholars from the study of actual peacebuilding praxis. When she speaks of 'conflict resolution' on the global stage (e.g. 114), John Paul Lederach and Robert Schreiter, both pace setters in the discipline, were not mentioned. Kay Pranis has been pivotal in reframing approaches to juvenile delinquency and court processes, particularly in the U.S. No doubt, there are others who may have deepened the erudition in the text.

Finally, in order to engage one's readers, whoever the audience may be, stories are essential. Storytelling and relationship building are cornerstones of peacebuilding and peace education, so the lack of narratives and examples from the field created a text that was often dry and somewhat devoid of the humanity whom educators and peacemakers are striving to heal and reconcile. One would hope that Finley's focus on creativity in the final portion of the book would evoke story and greater imagination. That said, each chapter opened with a stanza or more of a relevant song, and this was welcome.

A few minor, more detailed observations: a) There were numerous minor editing errors which were distracting. b) Many chapters included lists of organizations or programs that might have been better suited to her appendices in which she offers readers a list of books, films, and websites. And c) an index would have been extremely helpful.

While there's no question that this review errs on the side of critique over commendation, Dr. Finley has clear wisdom to offer the field of peace education. Perhaps a more targeted focus in a future publication would allow for her voice to be heard, her audience to be clarified and the scholars and practitioners on whom she relies to be winnowed and enriched.