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INTE2012**Dialog and Mediation Education in Intercultural  
Communication**

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**Abstract**

Recent developments in international relations, new perception types in public, international politics and social motion and emphasis on peace culture have made intercultural communication and dialogue concepts key role players. Giving a meaning to intercultural differences within the frame of tolerance and creating a dialogue atmosphere, at the same time requires a social education. The education about this topic to be given both in primary and secondary education institutes or media and universities and social responsibility campaigns will provide new perspectives particularly in the resolution of the problems arising due to intercultural differences. Mediation education is based on focusing the communication skills on resolving problems and involves negotiation and conflict resolution education as well. Educating the students as potential future negotiators starting in primary school will both contribute to the concept of social communication significantly and help build the culture of consensus and living together peacefully concept in social, personal and cultural communications. In this notice titled “Dialogue and Mediation Education in Intercultural Communication” , new education modellings and communication strategies about this topic will be constructed and an intercultural education perspective will be presented.

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**Introduction**

Mediation and dialogue education is one of the building blocks of the social education. In this regard, campaigns that are run through communication and public relations are essential and play a determining and facilitating role. An intercultural dialogue project and education model should be set up in

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universities, non-governmental organizations and elementary schools. One of the most strategical steps of a dialogue mechanism based on intercultural education; is training and raising international mediators, and building an international mediation mechanism within the intercultural education system. Raising professional mediators for the future is also one of the most important contributions to communal peace. There is a great need for communication pioneers who will conduct the intercultural dialogue and peace project, and help the peace culture to dominate social platforms from elementary school level up until university level. It is a very important mechanism en route to intercultural dialogue, to finding the dialogue and mediation pioneers who are called mediators in literature, at early ages, and involve them in a forward-looking education process

### *1. Intercultural consensus strategies in the mediation education*

One of the starting points of the mediation training is to form a consensus from differences and create an “Intercultural Consensus Model”. It is necessary to create common communicational codes to form a consensus among different cultures and improve the dialogue mechanism, and to develop creative strategies upon these codes in mediation training. “Rather than supply clear responses to the question of how mediators should balance sovereignty with the demands of justice, the codes merely gesture toward permissive or disapproving attitudes without actually authorizing or restricting. Like traffic signs in a foreign language, the fine print can be indecipherable, but the red or green background gives hints of whether to speed or slow”(Love, Haley,2011,p.114). First task of the intercultural consensus model is to focus on the common griefs of each society. During the mediation training communications code that will be a symbol of respect to each culture’s griefs must be created. The 15 most deterministic features of these communication codes can be summarized as follows;

1. Universal values of humanity should be used to express these griefs. It should be emphasized that the grief that culture bears, is the mutual grief of humanity.
2. To express the grief of a culture, most powerful symbols should be picked to emphasize on the sensibility of the situation.
3. In order to stop these social griefs from happening again, common steps and values that world citizens should possess should be emphasized.
4. Mutual griefs should be accepted as mental symbols for a shared future.
5. Cultures should run mutual communication campaigns in order to express their respects to mutual griefs.
6. Griefs shouldn’t be compared and casualties of these griefs should be embraced by different cultures and should be symbolized as mutual losses.
7. To express these griefs, suitable communication channels should be created and emotions should be expressed in appropriate communication platforms.
8. Victims of these griefs should be contacted and an intercultural solidarity should be provided.

9. Instead of using accusatory symbols for these griefs, a teaching communication language should be used to stop the same mistakes from happening.
10. Grief of a culture, should be accepted as a shame of humanity by other cultures too.
11. Instead of looking for someone to blame, the process that caused the pain should be analyzed and by learning from that process, a future oriented frame should be created.
12. In order to reminisce the grief of a culture and to meet at a mutual emotion, momorial days should be organized and respects should be paid.
13. Names identified with that grief, deceased or alive, should be reminisced and other cultures should pay their respects to these names through different communication methods.
14. In order to pay respect to common griefs, civil platforms should be structured and these platforms should overtake mission of confrontation, rather than accusations.
15. With other nations' and people's sincere support and reactions , an intercultural consensus should be maintained.

For mediation training programs run by universities, including the griefs of world nations in the training process will make the mediation process more effective. Emphaty is essential for nations to solve their political disagreements and conflicts.”When stories change, the perception of reality changes. Understanding life, relationships, and the human experience is a process, a continuum. In mediation, the parties redefine their stories about the conflict and create a new story that is mutually satisfying”(Weinstein,2001,p.26).Themes such as “Sharing each other’s griefs” and “Owning other’s grief for a while” are essential for solving disagreements, therefore they should be included in the mediation trainings in universities.

In the scope of this education model, adding a class called “Cultural Griefs and Sharings in the World” to the curriculums of elementary schools, high-schools and universities is a very important step for raising qualified mediators. It is also very important to create a curriculum for this class. Griefs and pains of different cultures should be taught starting from the elementary level until the university. The scope of this class should include; the disasters that these countries have experienced through their histories and effects of these disasters to the history of the mankind. The struggles that countries went through in the process of democracy and their losses during this period should also be one of the main themes of this class. The struggles that countries went through in the process of democracy and this process’ characteristics as a democratic movement is a required information for mediation mechanism.

Because the mediation mechanism and training involves democracy training as well. Therefore, the struggles on the way to the democracy and pains that countries beared should be one of the main topics of “Cultural Griefs and Sharings in the World” class. Turkey, Greece and Portugal’s struggles for democracy is a very good example of this in the recent history. These main objectives can be summarized as “The enhancement of conflict resolution skills, prosocial skills orientation, political efficacy, value-oriented attitudes, tolerance toward diversity- multiculturalism, coexistence; cooperation, respect for the other; sense of equality, reconciliation-forgiveness-empathy, enrichment of information about the other, democratic beliefs, good interpersonal relations: The reduction of: aggression, violence, delinquency, prejudice, stereotype, ethnocentrism” (Nevo,Brem,2002,p.272). One of the most important missions of the mediators is to build a consensus for resolving disagreements and conflicts. The struggles and losses

of different cultures on the way to democracy is one of the most critical points of mediation training because in our day, democracy is one of the most important common values. Therefore, the process of democracy and the griefs and losses of all the countries from around the world had to experience in this process should be one of the most important topics of “Cultural Griefs and Sharings in the World” class.

Epidemics, disasters, war casualties, terrorist attacks and etc. should be analyzed in the scope of this class. Teaching the mainlines and a broad summary of the terrorism, natural disasters, dictatorships, wars and hunger in the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and Europe, should be one of the main objectives of the class. Most important of all, in the scope of the class, students should feel the sensibility and the grief of others. Empathizing with another person’s grief, acknowledging it, raising your voice, giving a hand, and taking initiatives about these subjects should be important topics in the class. Within this scope, each university student writing a letter to emphasize and express their regrets for another culture’s grief and sending it to a university student from another culture is an intercultural sign of sensibility and awareness. “The mediator works to create a mutual story that emerges from the different stories”(Haynes,Fong,2004,p.109).

Determining the tools and techniques that can clearly express these awareness with various public relations and communication campaigns is an important part of the mediation training. For instance, the act of terrorism that resulted with the death of 82 people on July 23, 2011 in Norway, is one of the biggest terrorist attacks in the history of Norway. A public relations campaign that all the university students around the world would participate with a letter to Norway with the motto of “ We Share Your Pain”, would show the support of universities on creating a social awareness. Indian leader Mohandas Ghandi’s approach on peace and philosophy has been a guide in the training process of mediation leaders .(Page,2008,pp.44-45).

### *1.1.Mediation training and the art of negotiation in elementary schools*

One of the most important phases of the mediation training is the “ negotiation training”. Mediation is the art of conducting a negotiation and planning the parley. Therefore, starting with the elementary school second grade curriculums, the art of negotiation in mediation training should be examined. In this regard, at 1st and 2nd grade in elementary schools, the art of negotiation should be emphasized for educating future mediators and negotiators. According to Brunswik’s “Lens Model of Perception” ; objects are never perceived directly. Brunswik emphasizes the importance of the mediator for perception. (Brunswik,1955,p.237). The first stage of the negotiation training is the interpersonal communication and listening skills classes. One of the most important qualities of mediators is being a good listener. Henceforth, some applications and activities should be added to the elementary level curriculum. Children having the ability to express themselves against different cultural ideas and learning the basics of intercultural communication is a very critical point for mediation training. .”This clarification of the underlying issues can be described as something like finding the golden nuggets within the complex and emotionally laden stories for each party recounts”(Doherty,Guyler,2008,p.34)

At the point of conveying the elementary students with different point of views; support of the consulates, non-governmental organizations, Ministry of Culture and international institutions should be regarded. Within this frame, an” Intercultural Communication and Sharing” protocol should be signed between the Ministry of Education and embassies-consulates and education projects should be prepared within this frame. One of the most important topics of this protocol is making “sister school” deals with other countries. It would be an effective step for educating the future of mediators if every elementary school in Turkey could find a sister school in other countries and conduct projects of intercultural communication. To take an initiative for solving an important problem of the sister school is a strategical effort in the mediation mechanism. For instance, when two elementary schools from Turkey and Greece

sign a sister school protocol, one of the first steps of the mediation training is each student writing a letter about an important problem of his/her own and trying to find a solution for the problem in the letter he/she received. Such a practice would lead to discovering talented mediators at young ages. For instance, it is a very solid contribution to the mediation training if a Greek student shared a personal family problem with a Turkish student and Turkish student expressing his suggestions through his/her letter, or an elementary school in Greece solving their need of computers through a campaign initiated in Turkey, are very important steps to construct an international consensus idea at early ages.

In this context, another recommended practice at elementary school level is a 40 minutes briefing every week, about global news and teaching them about different cultures and countries. It is important to keep the children aware of the global news and get their attention on global issues at early ages, with a conveying style that they can adapt to. For instance, telling the children about the presidential election in France with visual support and an intriguing approach would attract the children to global issues at early ages. One of the most famous cartoon characters in France is called Titeuf. Titeuf can also be found with Turkish voiceover, thus by showing the children a Titeuf cartoon and then expressing them in an associating manner such as “Titeuf’s country elected their president this week. As a result of the election on May 6, a new president of the France is Francois Hollande” will attract the children. Therefore, it is suggested to gather an “intercultural training commission” which consists of volunteer teachers, in order to raise awareness of the kids. The main objectives of this commission should be as such ;

- Developing intercultural training projects for elementary school level children,
- Presenting the global news to the kids in a way that they can understand and relate to,
- Gathering visual documents that introduce different cultures to students and share them,
- Contacting with colleagues in other countries and developing mutual projects,
- Teaching cultural differences with a communication language and symbols that students can understand and get interested in,
- contacting with the experts that can introduce new cultures,
- Explaining the universal humanity values and emphasizing on the human rights,
- Determining the international institutions that can be contacted to enforce the intercultural communication and cooperating with them,
- receiving support from non-governmental organizations,
- Determining the games that elementary school students can play to learn about intercultural communication and making the kids to participate in them,
- receiving support from the experts on this subject,
- Following international journals and sharing the latest developments, inventions and models with children,
- Pioneering various artistic and cultural activities that will empower the intercultural training and dialogue.

### *1.1.1 Creative strategies for mediation training in elementary schools*

In order to train the elementary school students as future mediators, particularly in 2nd level elementary schools, it is important create various communication scenarios and determine talented students. Therefore, it’s suggested to establish a “consensus commission” in every class to help the students resolve the issues among them. This commission is recommended to consist of 5 students and it should pick a mediator for the issues among the students to solve these issues. Main function of the mediator should focus on conduct the negotiations aimed to solve the issue and gathering both parties together. The operating mechanism of this commission is based on developing dialogue channels for resolving the issues and substitutions can be made based on the performance of the students in the commission. In order to run this mechanism properly, job definition of the commission should be explained at the beginning of the school year. By asking the students the 3 major problems that they encounter during the classes, 3 common major problems of the class should be determined. Then the commission should be given 3 weeks to reach a consensus and at the end of these 3 weeks, the commission should announce their solution to the class. Such an activity will result with important attainments on evaluating the mediation skills of the students. Another stage in the application is to give

the distinguished students an interpersonal communication training and improving their interpersonal communication skills. Another application similar to this one is to form groups in the classroom and giving them a pre-determined social issue and ask for their creative solutions. This is an important activity for improving the students' problem solving skills.

Children should be made to attend related seminars by the experts of this subject. For instance, one of the most important communication seminars is about listening skills. Practical knowledge about how to be a good listener should be presented. Debates of two opposite minded good listeners, should be presented. Supporters of 2 rival teams would be a good choice for this.

Intercultural communication skills should be supported and improved with various communication applications. It is important to structure these applications in the frame of developing intercultural sensibility. In order to develop intercultural sensibility, an intercultural sensibility model for elementary school students should be developed and this model should be structured with various communication strategies. In order to improve the intercultural sensibility, first thing to do is to share common threats and problems of the world. Global warming is an example of this. Global issues should be thought upon and taken seriously by each citizen of the world. Experts of these subjects should be invited to elementary schools and inform the students about the important issues of the world. This would be the first step to improve the sensibility of the students. It is an important attainment for the students to alter their habits towards the solution of these problems. An example of altering these habits for global warming, is to use clockwork table clocks instead of electronical clocks. Organizing a communication campaign on this subject would empower the training project with communication strategies. With the motto of "If you don't want to put your clock back, win your future with table clocks." starting a campaign on "A table clock for every house" in all the elementary schools in Turkey, would provide a common sensibility area.

When raising the intercultural sensibilities, sample activities should be the starting point. Within this frame, when a disaster or an upsetting event happens in a random country, elementary students' awareness should be raised. For instance, showing starvation or an earthquake videos to students without causing any damage to their psychologies should be the first step of the application for intercultural awareness. Following this step, students should be asked to develop an expression style that expresses their emotions towards the children in the country that the natural disaster happened. In this activity in which the children victims' situation is shared, a communication step should be requested to help and aid those children. For instance, students starting an aid campaign or an art exhibition would be examples of sensible communication activities.

Combining the educational projects with with public relations and communication campaigns will make a serious contribution to the intercultural communication perspective. Especially the rapid kinesis in the communication technologies supports the intercultural communication in this aspect. It would be a contributing application, to organize a week in elementary schools, called " Understanding and Learning About Different Cultures" and organizing intercultural activities within this week. One of the most important worldwide applications on this subject is CISV(Children's International Summer Villages). CISV emphasizes on the 8 basic education topics (Global Awareness Education, Intercultural Education, Human Relations Education, Personel Devolopment Education, Environmental Education, Development Education, Human Rights Education, International Education) and organizes activities such as summer camps to emphasize on the intercultural dialogue and interaction among elementary students from different cultures (Baraldi, Cortesi, Lervese, 2009, pp.29-44).

### *1.1.2 Diplomacy education*

Another sub topic of the mediation training in intercultural training is the diplomacy education. Diplomacy is one of the fields that equires mediation the most. Diplomacy is the most powerful communication force in international relations and diplomacy constitutes the communication aspect of international relations. Therefore, a mediation mechanism should be created to educate the future mediators in diplomacy. Ministry of Foreign Affair and Ministry of Education in all countries should sign a protocol. This protocol will lead to new expansions in mediation training. This diplomacy education should be divided into 3 titles; elementary schools, high-schools and universities, and the persuasive aspect of communication in negotiation process should be strengthened.

For the diplomacy training for elementary school 1st and 2nd level, “Super Talent” training program is recommended. The project that aims to discover the students that have the interest and talent towards foreign policies and international relations, and training and education these children about mediation for years; support from the foreign representatives of Turkey should be received. Through a protocol organized between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education, a mutual education project should be created. First step of this training should determine a pilot school and organize lectures and seminars by experts, in order to determine the children with mediation skills and future diplomats. It is a very important step to form a commission of 9 which consists of ; a foreign policies expert chosen by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an academic on international relations, 2 teachers that follow international journals and interested in foreign policies and diplomacy, a representative of the embassies that were involved in the program, an interpersonal communication expert, a retired diplomat and a foreign academic who is an expert on the subject, and to find future mediators through the training program.

The first stage of this training should be discovering the future super talents and mediators. This commission should visit pilot schools and evaluate students potentials. One of the recommended communication models on this subject is the “call conference model”. According to this model, first 2 teachers and the international relations academics should evaluate the students’ interest in foreign policies. This team should form teams of 5 students. Number of these groups may vary according to the interest of the students. Criterias on how to evaluate the children, should be pre-determined. These criteria is a scale that tests the children’s awareness and interest levels. Students who are interested and aware on global news should be determined. When determining these children, it is suggested to show them visuals about global developments and ask them to comment on those visuals. After dividing the children into groups of 5, each group should be given a topic and asked to brainstorm about it. The highest scoring students should be invited to mediation training within Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Via representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in various cities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should find a diplomacy school in these cities, give these children special training, organizing international trips and arrange one-to-one lectures with Consuls, arranging internships at Consulates, providing opportunities on foreign languages would be key steps to educate future mediators. After a certain stage of the training, chosen students should be involved in activities that they can take initiatives and evaluated. For instance, children pioneering an aid campaign between schools, interviewing with a top level politician and evaluating this interview, participating in the organization committee of a political summit, are the examples of activities that students can participate during the training process.

### *1.2. Civil society and mediation training*

Another important stage of creating a mediation training and a dialogue mechanism is to get support from the civil society. It is important for non-governmental organizations to take initiatives on educating future mediators. For instance, nongovernmental organizations mediating for more shelters in order to

protect the women victims of domestic violence and conduct negotiations to help them is a very important social mission. Non-governmental organizations negotiating with various people and institutions for a domestic violence victim woman who asks for help, is a very good example of social mediation mechanism. In social mediation training that will be run by non-governmental organizations, each non-governmental organization should pre-inform about their field of activity. For instance, in a mediation training that aims to prevent violence against women, all types of information should be expressed, thus, the information aspect is one of the most important aspects of mediation training. All the technical details should be known in the field that mediation process is involved in. “They convincingly argue that mediation is, in effect, a form of psychological counselling and that mediators should avail themselves of the wealth of theoretical knowledge and pragmatic wisdom that this field has to offer” (Strasser, Randolph, 2004, p. 208). To have strong links with significant people and institutions is one of the most important communicational traits of the mediator. During the mediating education it is important to communicate with as much people as possible based on mutual trust. The communication chain that the mediators have is the most important communication power to tackle the problems at particular points and manage the process. “The mediation process contains within it unique potential for transforming conflict interaction and, as a result, changing the mindset of people who are involved in the process” (Robert, Baruch, Folger, 2005, p. 22).

The management of the meeting traffic needs to be made according to a meeting agenda. Therefore, time management in mediating education is a crucial topic. Meeting results need to be worked out coherently in a coordinated way. Each meeting carried out should be meaningful and support a reasonable step in the solution of the problem. A meaningful and qualified meeting is the planning of the meeting as addressed to a tangible contribution to the solution of the problem or a strong expression of the will. As the NGOs are based on voluntary work, the members should cooperate in the planning and elaboration of the meetings. Each member has a personal meeting radius. In the mediation mechanism, the personal meeting radius is an area that is made up of the contributions which institutions the mediator communicate made; and a meaningful and visible dimension of the capacity to solve the problems.

Another important phase during the mediating educations by the NGOs is the performances of the mediators in the persuasive communication issue. Therefore the mediator needs to present a convincing model during the dialog. The first stage of setting a convincing model is to take the opinions of the sides and convince them that they have expressed themselves correctly. For that reason each opinion about the solution must be listened and the right communication channel be found for the people to express themselves correctly. “The mediator faces the question of whether people need to tell their story directly to each other or whether it is better to discuss it with the mediator alone, at least as a preliminary step. As much as facilitative mediators want to help parties communicate directly with each other, they also must recognize sometimes people are afraid (often, with good reason) to tell their story in front of the other parties” (Mayer, 2004, p. 43).

One of the most crucial characteristics of a mediator is to determine the right communication channel that the sides can express themselves. “Some mediators may make suggestions for settlement, others consciously refrain from doing so. Some mediators are interested in achieving and acceptable the outcome, others may wish to improve interactions between the parties. Some mediators may possess skills to defuse tensions, others may have the resources to “nudge” the parties one way or another” (Bercovitch, 2002, p. 7). For instance, in the prevention of the violence towards women, it is an important gain a solution to establish a counseling center and in these 24 hours working centers, to provide every kind of support for women victims of violence immediately through the help of NGOs. Also, it is an important step by the NGOs to sign a protocol with the Family and Social Affairs Ministry and make a cooperation to assign a particular number of people from this platform as “Victim Counselor”. The Victim counselors, whose duty is to meet the victims face to face, to determine a map of

struggle with them and accompany them till the end of the process, should also determine the communication channels to express themselves. Another duty of the Victim Counselor is, for every victim they met, to provide a law counselor and psychological counselor through the links they have with the NGOs they are member of. As in the example of victim counselor, it is an important step for peace and dialog to bring mediators in the solution of the problems through NGOS.

The social education studies of the NGOs about this subject should be supported with promotions and PR campaigns. The most important factor in social mediation is conducting social meetings with the right people through right communication tools. Mediators should be impartial during this process. "The mediator doesn't take sides. Mediators are not advocates for either party, nor are they counselors or judges. A good mediator will promote and encourage self-advocacy in productive ways"(Butler,2004,p.3). The mediator should have the skill to create the symbols and plan the activities to activate the public. That is why, each NGO should create the strongest symbol for their stance about the subject to be mediated. In order to strengthen the dialog mechanisms, the mediator should have the training about the power to create public opinion and the techniques for to create public opinion. "Violence Clock" campaign is one of the suggestions as a PR campaign that can be applied towards the public education as well as easy to apply on this subject. In order to provide the sensitivity towards violence, the campaign that everyone who looks at the clock will become a volunteer; for example in İzmir every Friday at 16:00 the volunteers will gather under the clock tower and announce the number of the women exposed to violence and a symbolic bell sound will be played once for every 10 person who is exposed to violence, is being planned. In the campaign, as long as a decrease in the violence is obtained, by taking the clocks one hour forward, a one hour late meeting at the following week, or vice-versa when the opposite occurred, every volunteer should aim to have a result in the attempt to fight the violence and this attempt should be expressed by taking the clock one hour forward. Every attendant should be trained as a mediator towards the fight against violence and activate the international public opinion to spread the movement into an international ground.

### *Conclusion*

Mediation training, is a peace project founded upon teaching interpersonal communication skills. In our day and in the future, one of the greatest powers that a society can have is the leadership power gained through resolving conflicts. Especially for the conflicts caused by intercultural miscommunication; mediation training and developing a dialogue mechanism are the most effective peace and communication tools. Mediation training should be planned within universities, elementary schools and non-governmental organizations and should be presented as a model of peace.

Mediation also includes a negotiation process. The negotiations process in intercultural communication, is conducting meetings to resolve an issue and strengthening these meetings with the power of persuasion between parties. All the cultures should train mediators for intercultural peace who possess listening skills, taking initiative, crisis management ability, empathy, sharing griefs and sensibilities and also can be a leader in communication. Mediators also possess the role of effective communication pioneer and should build an intercultural coalition and include important actors in this coalition.

One of the basic goals of mediation training in intercultural communication is to create a peace communication model in order to maintain cultural coalition. Therefore, starting peace education in elementary school and continuing it through university, educating future diplomats as international mediators within a professional training program and improving their skills through training programs in universities are important strategical steps. The support that cultural coalition will receive from nongovernmental organizations will provide a settlement for educating dialogue leaders and mediator

training. This social education will provide the mediator who will pioneer the public to an intercultural dialogue coalition, build a dialogue climate for different cultures to live in mutual understanding, tolerance and peace, both today and in the future.

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