

14

ACCOMPANIMENT AS A STRATEGY FOR PEACE EDUCATION

Anna Walulik

Introduction

The terms in the title – peace, accompaniment, and education in the spirit of peace – are defined in pedagogical reflection in various ways. The common element is found in the concept of happiness. In Greek philosophy and early Christian theological thought, the concept of peace was directly associated with happiness, akin to life, joy, rest, and blessing (Dola & Rusecki, 2007). Accompaniment is usually understood as an interpersonal relationship based on the mutual presence and shared existence (Dubas, 2016). Educational accompaniment aims to develop a sense of happiness among participants in this process, encapsulating variously formulated and understood goals of education (Kulczycki, 2016).

Education in the spirit of peace involves both education “to” peace and “towards” peace. The preposition “to” suggests an aspiration, up to a meeting (e.g., “go home”), while “towards” indicates more the direction of the goal rather than the intention to reach it (e.g., “head towards distant houses on the horizon”). Adopting this kind of interpretation of directional prepositions, it can be stated that education “to” peace aims at experiencing the knowledge and acquisition of the value, i.e., peace, while education “towards” peace emphasizes supporting the students in realizing it in individual and social aspects (Chalas, 2018). Education in the spirit of peace is not just about recognizing, experiencing, and educating “to” peace or “towards” peace but also about “grasping” the value, i.e., peace. Spirit in this context denotes the ability to reflect, constituting the basis of all discoveries, and the act of understanding. The expression of human spirit is creative thinking, life creation, and conscious and responsible decision-making. The goal of

spiritual activity is to move “from knowledge to wisdom”, which involves arranging numerous partial elements into a harmonious, logical, and meaningful whole (Mielec, 2009, 52).

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how educational accompaniment in the Ignatian tradition develops the understanding of the value of peace and how this process contributes to shaping a happy life. A happy life is immersed in a world of creative values.

Different scientific disciplines, and even pedagogical trends, emphasize different aspects of the accompaniment process, but the Jesuits have been sharing it with undiminished success for over four hundred years in various fields of activity. It finds broad application in education. Educational accompaniment in the Ignatian tradition has its roots in the spiritual exercises proposed by St. Ignatius of Loyola (Marek & Walulik, 2022). The prototype of accompaniment, in which participants refer to Transcendence, can be considered the story recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke about the journey of two disciples to Emmaus after the resurrection of Jesus.

The experience of the Emmaus disciples as a source of understanding educational accompaniment

The Evangelist recounts the disciples who experienced the “defeat” of Jesus on Good Friday and, on Sunday of the resurrection, go “to” and return “from” Emmaus. The Evangelist does not tell of another appearance of Jesus to his disciples but shows the “way” that must be travelled to discover the source of a happy life. For a better understanding of the meaning of the experience accumulated by the protagonists of this story, it is presented in the present tense.

Now that very day two of them are going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they are conversing about all the things that have occurred. And it happens that while they are conversing and debating, Jesus himself draws near and is walking with them, but their eyes are prevented from recognizing him. He is asking them: “What are you discussing as you walk along?” They stop, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, says to him in reply, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?” And he replies to them, “What sort of things?” They say to him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the

tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see". And he says to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have said! Is it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interprets to them what refers to him in all the scriptures. As they approach the village to which they are going, he gives the impression that he is going on farther. But they urge him: "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over". So he goes in to stay with them. And it happens that, while he is with them at table, he takes bread, says the blessing, breaks it, and gives it to them. With that their eyes are opened and they recognize him, but he vanishes from their sight. Then they say to each other: Did not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us? So they set out at once and return to Jerusalem where they find gathered together the eleven and others with them who announce to them: The Lord has indeed risen from the dead and appeared to Simon. They also tell what they encountered on the way, and how they met Him in the breaking of bread.

(Luke 24:13–33)

Presenting the text in the present tense emphasizes the relevance of this experience. In the analyzed fragment, the disciples' despondency, confusion, and discouragement stand out. The disciples heading to Emmaus seem to be convinced that the experience of failure has become the fate of all Jerusalem residents. The scale of failure suggests that it is a defeat. This further diminishes the ability to open up to a new reality. The attitude of the man who joins them is completely different. The companion on the road is interested in the situation of the people he meets: he asks about the reasons for their mood, encourages them to present their point of view, wants them to name their feelings and experiences, and allows them to express themselves fully, making them feel heard and accepted.

In contrast to the one-sided attitude of the disciples, the companion on the journey takes on the role of a guide. Starting from the shared experience, the companion shares their own experience with the disciples, leading them to discover the truth behind these events. Jesus' initiative takes the form of collaboration. He doesn't begin by confirming the news of His resurrection but by explaining the meaning of His suffering and death on the cross. In this way, Jesus encourages the companions on the journey to utilize their natural reasoning abilities. He respects their freedom by allowing them to continue evaluating everything that happened in light of the explanations provided.

Jesus' activity transforms the disciples' reactions. Even if the disciples don't understand the words of the companion on the journey, they bestow trust upon him. Trust becomes the causal factor for subsequent events that completely change their thinking and actions. Trust in the companion on the journey leads them to invite him to a shared meal. During the meal, Jesus takes the initiative as well. The gesture of blessing the bread (blessing being synonymous with peace) makes the disciples aware of their earlier experiences. This experience liberates the disciples from the fear that forced them to leave the place of tragic events. The meeting brings them inner peace (Marek & Walulik, 2020).

Peace is a gift that the resurrected Jesus bestows upon those He encounters. Jesus greets the disciples after the resurrection with the words, "Peace be with you", and explains its nature, saying, "My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you, not as the world gives" (John 14:27). The peace offered by Jesus is not a mere interval between wars (*pax romana*) nor the stoic peace (*pax pernicioza*) that maintains inner tranquillity even when everything around is falling apart. It is not peace that allows a person to live peacefully as a slave to their own or someone else's selfishness (Mędala, 2010). Jesus' peace is born in a love stronger than death. Love is characterized by a constant responsibility for values, primarily the value of the person and the values associated with human relationships (Chudy, 2009).

From the text, it is evident that a human being, understood as *homo viator* (Marcel, 2010), is on a journey. The metaphor of "the way" explains human life. It poses a challenge for humans: to build peace or to strive for war. The described process of companionship shows that the source of a happy life is peace. In understanding the value of peace, personalistic thinking plays a primary role (Kiereś, 2010). At the boundary between "being" and "having", external and internal realities intersect (Wojtyła, 2001, 154).

A person builds their identity around who they are and what they possess. Educational accompaniment, built on recognizing the subjectivity of all participants in this process, follows this principle. Jesus proposes an accompaniment strategy that enables the recovery and development of peace. Therefore, it can be applied in various fields of knowledge and life.

Building peace through educational accompaniment in the Ignatian tradition

The model of educational accompaniment in the Ignatian tradition stems from the experiences of Ignatius of Loyola (founder of the Jesuit Order – Society of Jesus). St. Ignatius was aware that a person undergoing spiritual exercises experiences various feelings and related internal states of consolation, desolation, or unrest. This led Ignatius to establish a formula for accompaniment, adapted to education. It assumes that accompaniment occurs in

specific everyday contexts, based on the life experiences of the student, which undergo reflection, leading to action and evaluation. The overarching goal of such accompaniment is to support the individual in their integral development (Marek & Walulik, 2022).

The relationship between the educator and the student plays a significant role in accompaniment based on the Ignatian tradition. The educator's task is to provide support to the student in discovering the truth about themselves and the surrounding world. Support does not involve instructing or imposing one's own opinions but rather listening to what the student wants to share. The educator must not constrain the internal freedom of the student but should assist in understanding the mechanisms the student experiences. In this way, the educator protects the student from various illusions, helps in discovering truth, and exposes falsehood. This is possible only when the educator personally engages in serving the students. The educator must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the students and act accordingly. The relationship built in this way creates a sense of security and sensitizes individuals to discover values (Ignatian Pedagogy, 1993).

The space where values are found is multidimensional, stretching between the triad of enduring values such as goodness, beauty, and truth (Denek, 1994); universal human values such as democracy, humanism, solidarity, dignity, human rights, work, freedom, justice, conscientiousness, honesty, peace, and personal values such as health, religion, and family (Ostrowska, 2006). Building a world of values is inseparably linked to scientific and technological progress. Progress can be not only a condition for prosperity and a higher quality of human life but also a source of threats and unrest. The ambivalence of progress creates the so-called *human gap* (Klim-Klimaszewska, 2011). This has significant implications for educational companionship in the spirit of peace.

Granting a significant role to the relationships between the student and the educator in mentoring based on the Ignatian tradition is associated with the necessity for the educator to define their own perspective on perceiving reality and the paradigm of the collective to which they belong. The educator's self-awareness in this regard not only protects the student from indoctrination but, above all, opens up a multi-aspect, multi-subject understanding of the reality that they explore and experience together with the student. This implies that at different stages of mentoring (experience, reflection, action, and evaluation), meta-features of this process can be identified, which is crucial for peacebuilding.

The relationship between the educator and the student imparts a specific character to mentoring in the Ignatian tradition by drawing on experience. Experience belongs to the fundamental categories that construct the mentoring process. The meaning of the concept of experience is not unambiguous. Researchers are interested in various types of experience, including cognitive,

aesthetic, religious, moral, existential, scientific, and everyday experiences. Some scholars argue that everyday experiences most fully express human experience. Differences in views on experience relate to its structure, types, its role in knowledge creation, and the varied role of the subject in the act of cognition (Tatarkiewicz, 1988). What is common in understanding experience is immediacy and perceptibility (Podsiad, 2000).

Due to the processes of globalization, the diversity and intensity of experiences associated with the development of information technology, mass media, and global tourism are expanding. The emergence of new types of experiences related to rapid changes, innovation, difficulty in predicting the consequences of actions, a variety of perceptions, and differences in points of view and interpretation can lead not only to terminological chaos but also to relativizing one's own feelings. However, this trend indicates cultural and historical conditioning of experiences (Bukusiński, 2001). Awareness of this new dimension of experiences is particularly important in the mentoring process in education "for and of" peace. Referring to experiences highlights the educational potential of various types of experiences, starting from primary experiences, through real experiences, secondary experiences, recalled experiences, to artificially generated experiences.

In the Ignatian tradition of mentoring, the necessity of determining the understanding of this concept by the educator and establishing how the student understands it is emphasized. The understanding of what lies behind the concept of experience shapes the cognitive activity of the individual and their everyday life. Therefore, for education in the spirit of peace through mentoring, a hermeneutic approach to experience, emphasizing the relationship between memory, perception, and interpretation of the individual, is valuable.

From the hermeneutic understanding of experience, it follows that the subject is active towards the world and accumulates their experience as a result of relationships with others. The current experience involves the memory of past experiences as well as personal and socio-cultural conditions. The relationship between the past, present, and expectations for the future allows a better understanding of the processes of education, development, teaching, and learning, as well as their conditions. Consequently, this leads to the conviction of the necessity of seeking internal harmony and order in the external world by the individual. Recognizing the source of internal and external harmony in experiences leads to an understanding of the value of peace in everyday life (Walulik, 2011).

Discovering the meaning of peace in the life of an individual and community takes precedence in the mentoring process because it relates to the fundamental human need for a sense of security. This is achieved through reflection on accumulated experience. Reflexivity is the ability to go beyond provided information, i.e., the ability to generate knowledge about oneself

and the surrounding world. The result of reflection is understanding, i.e., the ability to analyze one's own experience, which goes beyond its observable attributes. Understanding can be at an elementary level, i.e., it is related to the person's experience. Based on understanding oneself, understanding other people and their experiences becomes possible. Above the elementary level, a higher level of understanding can be built, i.e., hermeneutic understanding. It is critical understanding, focused on rationally penetrating meaningful relationships. Hermeneutic understanding arises from reflective consideration that extracts elements from surrounding contingencies and places them in a broader context (Ablewicz, 1994).

Education in the spirit of peace serves to unleash in students the ability to understand the accumulated experiences. Reflection in the accompanying process is intended to shape beliefs, thought processes, evaluative skills, and the ability to adopt specific attitudes. In Ignatian mentoring, reflection is characterized by three interrelated processes: internalization, selection, and absolutization of values (Ignatian Pedagogy, 1993). In peace-oriented education, these processes play a crucial role, as theoretical knowledge of values does not merely involve an intuitive connection with that value (Gorczyca, 1987).

In the stage of reflection, mentoring in the Ignatian tradition leads to understanding the explored truth and recognizing impressions and reactions that arise during the search for truth. Reflection aims to deepen the understanding of the significance of the learned truth for oneself and other people. The acquired understanding assists in forming one's judgement about events, ideas, truth distortion, and truth manipulation. A new understanding of reality arouses a readiness to reconsider one's needs, ways of satisfying them, as well as one's potential and ways of developing it. Reflection supports understanding of who I am, what drives me and why, and who I could be in the future. It also allows the recognition of one's reactions to other people (Marek, 2017).

Knowledge of the truth is fundamental to peaceful coexistence and collaboration. Lack of knowledge and readiness to understand oneself, other people, and the surrounding reality leads to the spread of idolatry (Halik, 2011). In a religious sense, idolatry involves worshipping objects representing divinity. It is evident that in postmodernity, there is an increasing number of personal and non-personal objects of worship. These become the subject of fundamental, ultimate concern for humans, i.e., faith (Tillich, 1958; Archer, 2019). Unwillingness to know the truth also leads to self-worship, i.e., self-adulation. In this sense, idolatry is the lack of any criticism regarding one's own flaws or the decisions and actions taken. Self-admiration leads to considering others as enemies, directly leading to war, not only on a micro scale.

In Ignatian mentoring, recognizing experiences and reflecting on them is insufficient for peacebuilding. Reflection on experience should inspire the

student to take actions that contribute to changing reality. Action is understood not only in a practical dimension as performing a specific external activity for others. The action also involves making mature and responsible decisions regarding one's own development. Understanding the significance of accumulated experiences leads to making choices that take the form of gradually clarifying one's priorities. At this stage of mentoring, the student makes the acquired truth their own but remains open to where this truth may lead them (Ignatian Pedagogy, 1993). Understanding oneself, other people, and the contexts in which experience is gathered equips individuals with tools to discover the value of peace, build peace within themselves, and act for peace in everyday life.

Adopted attitudes and recognized and internally accepted values incline individuals towards action, acting in accordance with "new" convictions. Action is subject to an assessment based on trust and respect shown to each other by educators and students. The assessment covers both the intellectual achievements of the student and integral development perceived as "living for others". For education in the spirit of peace, particular importance should be attributed to the assessment in the area of acquiring new knowledge, adopting attitudes, and prioritizing values. Such an assessment requires a creative approach to life experiences by both the educator and the student. Creative living is the ability to solve problems in atypical situations, which is particularly crucial for education in the spirit of peace. Creative evaluation of actions in the peacebuilding realm emphasizes that each person's life can be a work of art (John Paul II, 1999). This stage of mentoring in the Ignatian tradition indicates that education in the spirit of peace is possible only when the individual feels or develops the need for creative living. Creative living is associated with the value of peace. Human life is creative when it is based on values. Creative living is a conjunction of many activities undertaken for personal and social development. These activities create a new quality in the form of peaceful coexistence on a micro, meso, and macro scale.

Summary

The foundation of educational mentoring in the Ignatian tradition is a worldview characterized by theocentrism. This expresses the belief that God is the author of all reality, all truth, and all knowledge. Theocentrism, on the one hand, points to the religious nature of mentoring and, on the other hand, realizes that mentoring inspired by the Gospel is not limited to religious education. The goal of the strategy proposed by Jesus and practiced by mentoring in the Ignatian tradition is to assist humans in understanding the reality they explore and experience. This process extends beyond religious mentoring – quite the opposite – it broadens other forms of mentoring with a valuable perspective of contemplating reality, referring to Transcendence.

Education in the spirit of peace through mentoring in the Ignatian tradition leads to affirming the reality of the world; supporting and developing dialogue between faith and culture; participating in the full formation of each person within the human community; emphasizing care and effort for each individual; developing attitudes and desires for lifelong growth. By referring to Transcendence, freedom, trust, love, and service, the educator gives the student a sense of security and certainty that a life built on the foundation of the value of peace is a happy life.

References

- Ablewicz, K. (1994). *Hermeneutyczno-fenomenologiczna perspektywa badań w pedagogice*. Kraków: UJ.
- Archer, M. (2019). *Kultura i sprawczość. Miejsce kultury w teorii społecznej*. Warszawa: Narodowe Centrum Kultury.
- Buksiński, T. (2001). Doświadczenie w naukach społecznych. In: T. Buksiński (Ed.), *Doświadczenie* (pp. 7–14). Poznań: Instytut Filozofii UAM.
- Chałas, K. (2018). Edukacja aksjologiczna i wychowanie ku wartościom podstawą budowania szkoły jako wspólnoty życia, pracy i służby. *Prima Educatione*, 2, 11–22.
- Chudy, W. (2009). *Pedagogia godności. Elementy etyki pedagogicznej*. Lublin: TN KUL.
- Denek, K. (1994). *Wartości i cele w edukacji szkolnej*. Poznań–Toruń: Edytor.
- Dola, T. & Rusecki, M. (2007). Zbawienie. In: C. Rogowski (Ed.), *Leksykon pedagogiki religii* (pp. 895–902). Warszawa: Verbinum.
- Dubas, E. (2016). “Towarzystwo w drodze” jako przykład relacji geragogicznej. In: M. Halicka; J. Halicki & E. Kramkowska (Eds.) *Starość. Poznać, przeżyć, zrozumieć* (pp. 297–311). Białystok: UwB.
- Gorczyca, J. (1987). Dietricha von Hildebranda koncepcja poznania wartości moralnych. *Analecta Cracoviensis*, XIX, 427–439.
- Halik, T. (2011). *Cierpliwość wobec Boga*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM.
- Ignatian Pedagogy. (1993). Retrieved from https://www.sjweb.info/documents/education/pedagogy_en.pdf
- John Paul II. (1999). *Letter to Artists*. Retrieved from https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_23041999_artists.html
- Kiereś, B. (2010). Podstawy antropologiczne pedagogiki personalistycznej. In: M. Nowak, P. Magier & I. Szewczak (Eds.), *Antropologiczna pedagogika ogólna* (pp. 95–102). Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Klim-Klimaszewska, A. (2011). Podstawy edukacyjne na przełomie XX i XXI wieku w świetle raportów oświatowych. *Rozprawy Społeczne*, 1(V), 3–10.
- Kulczycki, B. (2016). *Jak żyć, aby osiągnąć prawdziwe szczęście*. Brzeg: Poligraf.
- Marcel, G. (2010). *Homo Viator: Introduction to the Metaphysic of Hope*. South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press.
- Marek Z. & Walulik A. (2022). Ignatian Spirituality as Inspiration for a Pedagogical Theory of Accompaniment. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 61, 4481–4498. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-022-01628-z>

- Marek, Z. & Walulik, A. (2020). *Pedagogika Dobrej Nowiny. Perspektywa antropologiczno-kerygmaticzna*. Kraków: Akademia Ignatianum.
- Marek, Z. (2017). *Pedagogika towarzyszenia. Perspektywa tradycji ignacjańskiej*. Kraków: Akademia Ignatianum.
- Mędała, S. (2010). *Ewangelia według świętego Jana*. Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła.
- Mielec, B. (2009). Duchowy wymiar zdrowia człowieka. Próba nakreślenia niektórych możliwości interpretacyjnych. In: H. Wrona-Polańska & J. Mastalski (Ed.), *Promocja zdrowia w teorii i praktyce psychologicznej* (pp. 51–60). Kraków: UJ.
- Ostrowska, U. (2006). Aksjologiczne podstawy wychowania. In: B. Śliwerski (Ed.), *Pedagogika. Podręcznik akademicki, t. 1* (pp. 393–426). Gdańsk: GWP.
- Podsiad, A. (2000). *Słownik terminów filozoficznych*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax.
- Tatarkiewicz, W. (1988). *Historia filozofii, t. 3*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Tillich, P. (1958). *Dynamics of faith*. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Walulik, A. (2011). *Moderacyjne i synergiczne kształtowanie dorosłości: Propozycja typologii modeli znaczeń wiedzy religijnej na przykładzie Korespondencyjnego Kursu Biblijnego*. Kraków: Wyd. Ignatianum.
- Wojtyła, K. (2001). *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*. Lublin: TN KUL.