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A Culture of Peace Inside and Out: The Case for Combined Peace Education in the United States

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Oral Presentation O11.3

**A CULTURE OF PEACE INSIDE AND OUT:
THE CASE FOR COMBINED PEACE EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

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The claim that by nuking a town Americans are defending their values, by sending troops to war they are protecting their freedoms, or by restricting “outsiders” they are preserving their nation all stem from a lack of international awareness or knowledge of events and cultures outside of their backyard. This distance to the international community causes Americans to fail to see every facet of an issue or dilemma and fall short of discussing all possible solutions. War, in the international area, and interpersonal violence, in the domestic arena, have become the norm and now drastic measures are needed to be considered in order to change this violence and intolerance. This should begin in the form of Peace Education. To the average American, Peace Education seems somewhat foreign. Many recognize the term when it comes to countries that have recently been torn apart by ethnic, political, and religious divisions as examples of where peace education is not only possible but necessary for the future. This type of peace education is “intractable region” education; however, there are two other types of peace education that are not for only those countries with internal civil war. “Tranquil region” education focuses on education *about* peace rather than *for* peace and “interethnic tension region” education addresses tension between majority and minorities where overt aggression is not seen on a wide scale yet injustice prevails.

This paper argues that in order to begin to address the issue of peace stability domestically and internationally, the United States needs to combine tranquil education and interethnic tension education starting with preschool and continuing through secondary school in order to foster a culture of international awareness, acceptance and therefore peace as well as address the societal problems of racial, ethnic, religious, and economic divisions created by American misunderstandings of one another. This combined program will educate Americans on the importance of learning and understanding issues in the international community to foster a better understanding of the consequences of American foreign policy, which in turn will create a better understanding of one another’s differences and demand peaceful resolutions to internal conflict.