TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNITY LEARNING CONCERNING
PERENNIAL AND CURRENT ISSUES OF PEACE AND WAR

Donnie A. Lawrence

KCH Peace & War Studies Projects - Wichita State University
U.S.A.

The United States is a rare experiment of, by, and for the people. When, in the past, the right to life has been threatened, the American people have risen to action. The issues of nuclearism call Americans to participate in today's decisionmaking as "We the People". Peace is a people's issue. The pursuit of happiness is based on peace—not war. A people's policy must be one of living—not steering down desolation row.

The French existentialist, Albert Camus, believed that every generation sees itself as charged with remaking the world, but that his, he felt, knew that it would not remake the world. Its task was greater: to keep the world from destroying itself. What role can the universities play in the process of restructuring human minds so that the threat of nuclear holocaust might disappear. The universities are not only logical places to implement a new society, but they are the practical foci—especially the colleges of teacher education. Yet there is strong evidence that suggests that the university has become a hindrance to this worthy goal. There is an apparent contradiction between two philosophers as to what should or could be, and what is. Whitehead believed that "The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest of life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning... Imagination is not to be divorced from the facts; it is a way of illuminating the facts" (1). The contemporary Canadian philosopher, Ian Hacking, has pointed out, on the other hand, that the universities play a vital role in weapons production in American society (2). Many university personnel produce vital weapons" research and new personnel. I believe, however, that the time is long overdue for university dialogue to initiate the university toward the key role of achieving peaceful aims in a world of rapid communications and transactions.

The Wichita State University Peace and War Projects were examples of pluralistic and pragmatic educational philosophy. All the
projects have been interdisciplinary and interactive, including major contributions from teacher education and its youth orientation. Though our foundations of education unit introduced peace and war issues, we have certainly not arrived at what Douglas Sloan believes—that peace and war issues must become the crux of all education.

Dick Ringler has suggested that in educational practice there must be two aims in order to deter nuclearism:

1. Individual educators must commit themselves to long-term efforts, retraining themselves as necessary and redefining their career and research goals in the interest of the general welfare; and

2. They must make a strenuous attempt to institutionalise these efforts.

But at the same time, educators must guard against what Richard Lyman has stated: "Almost the worst thing the universities could do would be to opt for a few easy and dramatic gestures, satisfying outlets for our frustrations that might make us all feel a nice warm glow of self-righteousness, but would do nothing to advance our basic understanding of the problem."

With this last idea in mind I will try to be cautiously optimistic in the description of the postsecondary technological innovations that Wichita State University has implemented and the consequential impacts on the community. In general, the peace and war projects concerned (a) technology's impact on society and education, and (b) the utilisation of electronic documentation to make an impact on society and education in this region and throughout the nation. The actual projects included:

1. Faculty lecture series, utilising an interdisciplinary approach to peace and war with three faculty members each time and an emeritus moderator;

2. Conference, "Central America Today", featuring Mariano Fiallos, the President of the Nicaraguan National Supreme Electoral Council and recent President of the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua;

3. Conference, "Wichita Conference on Peace and War Issues in a Nuclear Age", featuring Richard Garwin, Robert J. Lifton, Douglas Sloan, Earl Ravenal, members of the World Policy Institute and the Cambridge Forum, the First Lady of Kansas, members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, Joel Yudkin, Joseph Weizenbaum, and a wide variety of local scholars;

4. Media creation and utilisation for the purpose of reaching out to the community at large to informal educational settings (home, car, taverns, etc.) by use of campus radio and television;
5) national and international networking for wider impact and media distribution; and
6) innovating new, interdisciplinary curriculum for various perspectives on peace and war.

The humanities provided the basis and means for allowing scholars and the general public opportunities to critically discuss the perennial and current issues of peace and war. Humanities scholars and scientists teamed up to insure the interdisciplinary nature of the projects. Each session was then structured as a colloquium so that ideas, values, and purposes from a variety of human experiences could help imaginative minds to inquire about new possibilities. The humanities provided a non-manipulative search for the truth. They also recognize values as being central to human understanding.

Historical perspectives helped to put the current dilemmas in relationship to one another. Inquiries such as "Who are we that we might use technology to bring a destructive end to all of humanity?" and "What actions might really make a difference?" arose in critical view. The critical analyses searched for answers, but often led to more questions.

Technology provides the means to innovate many social comforts. It also may be understood in both material and non-material frameworks. It may be organisational as well as physical; it may even influence ideas and beliefs. Technology is tools to protect that which is valued from the past and to shape a future. "High" technology is considered sets of tools that may rapidly alter the past or accelerate humankind in communicative relationships in time and space. How, for example, is electronic information documentation and communication changing our lives from the past? Can all this "high" technology bring us to a more liberating educational experience? Or do they fall into the hands of vested interests and only serve to imprison the minds of many human beings?

The first innovations came from the minds of many participants: that is, ideas and values had already been rolling around in the grey. But in the minds of a few peace and war had already become the highest priority. Professor of Anthropology Dorothy (Dotty) K. Billings called the first formal group session to order early in the Fall 1984 semester. Therefore, the first key component of change was to form a committee of interested faculty and staff.

In addition to organisational innovation as we grew and develop-
ed, it soon became obvious that one of the most far-reaching public colloquia would even be better if electronic documentation was utilized for the purposes of further broadcast and classroom use at later times. Therefore, the interrelationships among nos. 1, 5, and 6 as means and broader aims of the themes presented in either 1, 2, or 3 became vital. Media creation of events 1, 2, or 3 could be used in formal or informal educational situations. The events could be played back during the new course in Peace and War Studies or could be broadcast locally or nationally for wider impact.

Before the first event a great deal of time and energy was expended upon promotion (faculty, students, newspaper, newsletters, radio and television). Student and university coverage was vital. The first event in the faculty lecture series was held Sunday night Feb 24, 1985, featuring:

War and Peace: An Overview
Moderator: Dr. John Breazeale, V-President of Academic Affairs
1st Speaker: Dr. Warren B. Armstrong, President and Professor of History, Wichita State University, "There shall be wars and rumors of wars..."
2nd Speaker: Louis Goldman, Asst. Prof. of foundations of education, "Peace Education: Issues and Perspectives"
3rd Speaker: Dr. Jacqueline J. Snyder, Assoc. V-President of Academic Affairs and Asst. Prof. of American Studies, "War: Whose Interest Does it Serve?"

The use of administrative personnel in planning and implementation was one of the reasons for success. Another aspect that seemed to have worked well was the use of emeritus professors as moderators. The faculty lectures series was also accompanied by university radio broadcasts of a national colloquium, the Cambridge Forum Series and interviews with our own faculty the week preceding any of our major events.

The next three sessions of the faculty lecture series (every Sunday night) had these respective themes: War & Peace: An Historical Perspective, Religious & Ethical Perspectives on War & Peace, and War, Peace & Global Resources. We had reached the halfway point and it was Central American Week. Therefore, on Saturday March 23, 1985 we held open and free to the public the conference, "Central America Today", featuring:

Moderator: Dr. James W. McKenney, Chair and Assoc. Prof. of Political Science
1st Speaker: Dr. Pedro Bravo-Elizondo, Asst Prof of Spanish Literature
2nd Speaker: Dr. Charles Stansifer, Director of the Center for
Latin American Studies & Assoc. Prof. of History, "The Kissinger Commission: One Year Later"

3rd Speaker: Mariano Fiallos, President of the Nicaraguan Supreme Electoral Council and President of the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, Visiting Prof. of Political Science, The University of Kansas, "Twentieth Century U.S-Nicaraguan Relations: A Nicaraguan Perspective"

4th Speaker: Jim Johnston, member of ACLU and on recent mission to Central America with a higher education group, "Human Rights in El Salvador"

5th Speaker: Donnie A. Lawrence, Director of Peace and War Studies and Asst. Prof. of Comparative & International Education, Wichita State University, "The Rise of Militarism in Central America"

This conference drew nearly one hundred sixty people in the audience and sparked a great deal of lively debate and interchange.

The final four events in the faculty lecture series had the following themes: Peace with Technology, Peace & War in Literature and Art, Cultural Values and Socialization for Peace & War, and Education, Culture, and Politics: Distinguishing Between Difference and Conflict. The final session was critical because it not only finished the faculty lecture series, but the Wichita Conference on Peace and War started five days later. Therefore, the final faculty lecture series event had to serve as a transition and linking pin. The final session featured:

Education, Culture, and Politics: Distinguishing Between Difference & Conflict

Moderator: Dr. Phyllis Burgess, Professor Emeritus of Education

1st Speaker: Dr. James W. McKenzie, Chair and Assoc. Prof. of Political Science, "Teaching About International Conflict"

2nd Speaker: Sally L. Kitch, Asst. Prof. of Women's Studies, "Does War Have A Gender?"

3rd Speaker: Dr. Donnie A. Lawrence, Project Director--KCH Peace & War Studies and Asst. Prof. of Comparative/International Education, "Multicultural Education for Global Peace"

In total, the faculty lecture series drew 1,152 people. The overall press coverage was above average, but due mainly to the efforts of the university's daily, The Sunflower. There were articles every week. We hoped that all the coverage of the faculty work would also serve to advertise the "Wichita Conference on Peace & War", initiated five days after the final faculty lecture series session. Monday the university media began what we hoped would be a media blitz. On Wednesday, the Wichita Eagle and Beacon previewed the conference, but the television and privately-owned...
radio stations failed to follow through despite my personal forty-two phone calls to the media alone, and even though our university press releases had been reaching them for weeks. But it is fair to say that besides serving as an end (or collective ends) in itself, the faculty lecture series served to advertise by word of mouth the "Wichita Conference on Peace and War Issues". This was evidenced by the evaluations filled out by the audience.

The knowledge presented in the faculty lecture series stimulated various members of the audience to be in attendance at the "Wichita Conference on Peace and War Issues in a Nuclear Age". Essentially, the first approximation had created "spin offs" while serving as a reference point. While this conference lived up to its academic or scholarly composition, the political leaders (Dole, Kassebaum, and Glickman) balked. One newly-elected City Commissioner, Gary Bell, did attend the session on economic conversion, however. The other group that was conspicuously lacking, policymakers from the Wichita aircraft industry, became overshadowed by the active participation of local and national officials of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (Lehman and Greenwood).

The conference broadened and enriched themes introduced at the faculty lecture series, and often went beyond in raising new ideas or questions. Robert J. Lifton spoke about the life adjustments of Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims, but also indicated the need for new ways of thinking and the necessity for reversing the trend toward nuclearism. Joseph Weizenbaum, M.I.T. specialist on artificial intelligence, concurred, but noted that it would take no less than a miracle to delay the Earth's destruction beyond even this century.

The second session of the conference considered the "Economics of the Arms Race and Problems of Conversion". Joel Yudkin, Director of the National Center for Economic Conversion, encouraged cities like Wichita to shift their economic production from wartime to peacetime. One example was that of Ovation Guitars which had been in the defense contract business.

The third session focused on "Foreign Policy and the Meaning of Defense". This featured Richard Garwin of IBM, noted physicist that helped invent the hydrogen bomb and Adjunct Professor of Cornell, Harvard, and Columbia universities. In addition to the ethical considerations of wiping out humanity on earth, he pointed out the wasted expenditures of overkill, the illogic of using plane geometry principles in "Star Wars", and the twisted figures of the Reagan administration in calculating the costs of such a project.
During the question and answer period, Garwin noted that, with so many illegal drugs being smuggled into the United States and the government’s inability to halt such actions, it would certainly be feasible for foreign agents to smuggle suitcase nuclear bombs into the capitals of either the Soviet Union or the United States.

The fourth session focused on "Prospects of Global Order", and featured Saul Mendlovits of the World Policy Institute. He reiterated his abolitionist principles and argued that nuclear weapons should be made illegal and that this law should be enforced stringently. He spoke of the need for people to think of themselves as world citizens as opposed to citizens of any one country.

The final session was entitled "Education for Peace and Disarmament". The featured speaker was Douglas Sloan of Columbia Teacher’s College. He talked about the need for education about nuclearism at all levels, but especially in teacher education. Sloan suggested that even though teacher education programs have acted slowly, and often only peripherally, peace and war issues must become the crux of all education. Education must begin to examine the qualitative concerns about human life, thus avoiding that line of reasoning that addresses only the quantitative.

One key aspect of the final session was the treatment of media as education. Therefore, Gilbert Cranberg, George S. Gallup Professor of Journalism, The University of Iowa and Martin Umanasky, Chairman of the Board of KAKE the Wichita ABC television affiliate also made presentations. This theme generated one of the more critical discussions produced in the conference. Of prime consideration is the anti-democratic potential of nuclear weapons as most citizens are excluded from nuclear policy processes and power becomes concentrated in the hands of a few groups and individuals.

The point is: can the media as education help restore democratic decisionmaking by more thoroughly educating the masses and thereby reduce the dangerous tendencies toward nuclearism? Others have argued that:

"...a widespread campaign to provide citizens of all ages with information about nuclear weapons issues will generate numerous benefits. Awareness of the threat will widen and deepen. Citizens will obtain information necessary to evaluate policies and proposals about nuclear weapons. They will also be able to judge political candidates on the basis of facts rather than campaign rhetoric. Education will help identify and dislodge the forces of nuclearism, which thrive when the citizenry is ignorant, apathetic, and content to leave national security to..."
the "experts." Furthermore, the healthy functioning of our
democratic political institutions, which depend upon a citizenry
well-informed about crucial issues, will be enhanced. Creative
analysis of possible solutions—the "new thinking" for which
Einstein pleads—will also be enhanced. Demand and support
will increase for alternative national security policies that are
less likely than present ones to lead to nuclear war. Finally,
the denial and psychic numbing that interfere with
confrontation and action will be counteracted by a sense of
shared concern and by an awareness of possibilities for
reform" (6).

Radio, television, newspapers and other journals may act as
informal channels of education, leading or supporting the formal
institutions. One question raised considered the possibilities of
self-imposed censorship by the media over such controversial
issues as the economic conversion of a city like Wichita. There-
fore, the role of media as educational agents must not be con-
sidered automatic or necessarily constructive, but its power
should not be overlooked in provoking the imaginations of human-
kind.

There has never been an educational aim as necessary as that of
living in the nuclear age. The need for universities and public
schools to act to make a difference has never been greater in
view of the unprecedented challenges of nuclear technologies.
Experience and knowledge are the bases of the idea that wisdom
is strength. Ethical responsibility requires human choice, and
education can provide alternative choices pertaining to the
prevention of nuclear war. All levels of education can make
interdisciplinary examinations of peace and war. Education with
cultural action in these projects was aimed at using the media for
two broad purposes: (a) reaching members of the community in
the here and now and (b) recording speeches and dialogues for
future utilization in the classroom or by broadcast in the local
community. National and international networking for wider impact
have become part of the process as the projects were developed.

Evaluating the impact upon the community requires a general
appraisal and some specific examples should be delineated. Based
upon attendance figures and comments from the evaluation forms,
more than 2,000 people were at the various events: 1,152 (Faculty
Lecture Series) +157 (Central America Today) +728 (Wichita
Conference on Peace and War)= 2,037 total. Members of the au-
dience had various opportunities to discuss issues and ask
questions of scholars. The national and international participants
also gained new knowledge. The evaluations also indicated that
the humanities were vital to the successes of the projects and
contributed to the elevation of public awareness of all in attendance.

One of the most effective components of both conferences was the utilization of local people. The interdisciplinary aspects contributed to the overall success by allowing a variety of perspectives to be examined. In addition to reaching members of the community directly, electronic documentation of the events will be useful in future classroom use and radio or television broadcast. Resources which resulted include:

1) reel-to-reel audio
2) audio cassette masters for the processing of high-speed copies
3) 3/4 inch video for archival storage
4) 3/4 inch video masters for duplication
5) 1/2 inch copies for educational use

The video are in color and the 3/4 inch tapes are broadcast quality (with slight re-formatting and minimal editing).

Here are some specific ways that the electronic documentation has had or may have impact in the immediate future:

1) Use in a computer science class
2) support for a foundations of education class
3) plans to air audio on campus radio beginning in August
4) extended national and international networking for wider impact and media distribution (Cambridge Forum, World Policy Institute, Films International Inc., etc.)
5) use in a variety of classes this academic year, including the possibility of airing the conferences on campus television.

These media could help younger generations to see that active participation and hard work may bring humanity closer to peace. These media are an indication that nuclear war would be the failure of human wisdom. Hopefully, these media will contribute to peace and world order education, inquiry that "is value-oriented, seeking to motivate students to work toward the implementation of world order values—peace, social justice, economic well-being and ecological balance" (9).

The impact thus far is admittedly limited, but gaining the attention of one inquiring mind is qualitative in addition to being quantitative. Ideas, values, and purposes from a wide variety of human experience did help some imaginative minds to inquire about new possibilities. Some inquired "Who are we that we can possibly develop technology to the destructive endpoint of all humanity?" Others asked "What actions might really make a difference?" Critical analysis searched for answers, but often only raised more questions.
On the other hand, the impact must not be sold short. Many ideas were shared in the interchange of free thinking. Locally, two dozen professors will provide interdisciplinary themes generated in these projects to their own disciplines and further their own research. Plans are underway for new course offerings within disciplines that may one day be arranged into a Peace Studies Program, and perhaps an Institute for Peace Research will be established as early as next year. Another significant impact at the local level is the linking nature with peace groups, churches, and other universities and institutes. One additional impact must not go without mention. The local school district provided an audience of secondary youth on one occasion which many professors and teachers cooperated in for the purpose of accelerating peace education into the schools. The local school district made video recordings and plans to air the session on their three television stations this autumn.

It would be easy to rest on our laurels, but if any further long-term impact is to take hold it will be up to the people to continue with active involvement in groups to which they already belong. Individuals may have to form newer groups and innovate old institutional organizations, but there is room for hope if we just give peace a chance. Involving politicians and members of the military could very likely help speed the processes along. One thing for certain is: peace is no easy task. Winning over the vested interests will be extremely slow until the people help the military-industrial complex to see that a peaceful world must be their first interest lest we destroy ourselves.

Notes

2. Ian Hacking, "Weapons Research and the University," a speech delivered at Wichita State University, Feb. 19, 1985.
6. See Appendix I, a list of the Wichita State University 1985 Faculty Lecture Series on War and Peace.
7. See Appendix II, the Program format for the Wichita Conference on Issues of Peace and War.

Other Possible Sources of Interest to the Reader

The University of Chicago, Ethics: An International Journal of Social, Political and Legal Philosophy (Special Issue on Ethics and Nuclear Deterrence), vol. 95, no. 3, April 1985.