

Children, Education and Reconciliation

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Philosophical, conceptual issues

1. Is there a role for formal education?
2. What are the educational rationales for dealing with the past?
3. Epistemological dilemmas and concepts of truth
 - Objective, single reality
 - Subjective and relative
 - Inter-subjective
4. Difficulties with definitions of reconciliation and related concepts
(truth, apology, revenge, forgiveness, amnesty, justice, reparations)
5. What is the broad educational strategy?
 - Knowledge (resource driven)
 - Skills (process driven)
 - Values (concept driven)
6. Contextual challenges



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Technical and practical, 'entry points'

1. The political environment
2. Timing
3. Structural constraints and opportunities
4. Policy and administrative frameworks
5. Curriculum
6. Pedagogy
7. Resources
8. The role of teachers
9. Involving the community and intergenerational learning



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Ethical Issues

1. Consent to participate (children, parents)
2. Re-traumatisation
3. Gender sensitivity
4. Balance between past, present and future
5. Use of resources, images, partisan accounts
6. Confidentiality
7. Disclosures
8. Repercussions, fear of reprisals, bullying



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Recommendations

1. Establish political legitimacy
2. Test whether the timing is right (esp regarding education reform)
3. Be sensitive to concerns of victims and survivors
4. Secure parental support
5. Initiate debate about the nature of truth (epistemology)
6. Clarify the concepts and issues that are likely to arise
7. Consider what the approach will be (content, skills, values based)
8. Legitimize the task within schools
9. Make sure ethical and child protection issues have been considered
10. Provide teachers with intensive training and support
11. Involve multiple perspectives and draw on resources of civil society
12. Consider how to promote inter-generational learning



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What do we mean by truth?

Truth is objective. This view is that 'the facts' should be established, that there is an objective account and one version of reality. This approach tends to be favoured by fairly rigid education systems with syllabus, text-based and transmissional curricula.

Truth is relative. This approach places a high value on individual subjectivity. There are many versions of reality based on individual experience and all are equally valid. This approach may be favoured by education systems that place an emphasis on experiential learning as an end in itself.

Truth is inter-subjective. This approach accepts that there are many subjective views of the truth, but the emphasis is on problematizing concepts, interrogating each, weighing evidence, coming to conclusions through negotiation.

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