What Strategies Can Be Used to Create a Culture of Peace and Justice in the Classroom?

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The poster I presented at the Graduate Student Colloquium was developed in a course called Peace Education class that I took with Dr. Quincy Spurlin. The assignment was to show how we would take what we learned in her class into our classrooms. After reading Peace Education by Ian M. Harris and Mary Lee Morrison, and Waging Peace in Our Schools by Linda Lantieri and Janet Patti, I realized that it wasn’t just what I taught, but how I taught it. As these thoughts percolated through my mind, I also pondered upon the fact that educators are required to teach certain content standards within their field. I came to the realization that wanting to teach for peace and social justice was perfectly possible within a standards based curricula.

In my poster presentation, I attempted to demonstrate that the concept of interweaving difficult topics such as peace and social justice is compatible with the content standards teachers are expected to meet in New Mexico. Cooperative learning and a variation of the Socratic seminar are discussed as tools that can be used in the classroom to help teach the skills necessary for a more peaceful and just society in which well-informed citizens take an active role in the democratic process.