

Title

- *Building Bridges of Peace and Friendship: The Role of College English Teachers*

Summary (300 words)

The challenge of language educators to teach for a world of peace has been articulated by UNESCO ("since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed") and by educators such as Maria Montessori ("establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war").

Teaching for peace and friendship is an urgent task in our modern world. Yet this has always been a prominent language teaching objective. Wilga Rivers (1968: 261), for example, mentions a 1933 report which proclaims the value of studying foreign languages as "breaking down barriers of provincialism while building up a spirit of international understanding and friendliness, leading toward world peace."

If language educators are to help overcome the stereotypes, prejudice, war and violence that haunt our world, we need to rethink our approaches to curriculum design, teaching methods, classroom materials and teacher training. The fields of *global education*, *peace education* and *education for international understanding* can help us to build peaceful classrooms and schools while promoting tolerance, friendship and mutual understanding in Asia and the wider world.

What Japan – and every country - needs is young people with language skills, cross-cultural awareness and international experience who can join with others in our global village to work for a peaceful future. College English teachers have a key role to play in this important task.

The year 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, a massive tragedy that devastated Europe, traumatized a generation and led to the deaths of 16 million people. This anniversary presents a perfect chance for us at JACET in Hiroshima to share ideas and renew our commitment to building bridges of peace and friendship through English.

References and Resources

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Rivers, W. (1968). *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
UNESCO. (1974). *Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace*. Paris.