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EDUCATING FOR PEACE THROUGH COUNTERING VIOLENCE

STRATEGIES IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Edited by
Candice C. Carter and Raj Kumar Dhungana



Educating for Peace through Countering Violence

This book advances knowledge about the implementation of peace and non-violence strategies in education that counter violence. Addressing both hidden and direct violence, it examines the harm to well-being and learning through a unique exploration of the role of teachers and confronts the roots of violence in educational settings. Presenting and critiquing a range of pedagogical tools, case examples, and research, it examines how various methods can be used for identifying and proactively responding to conflicts such as injustice, discrimination, and prejudice, among others. Contributors present case studies from a range of global contexts and offer cutting-edge research on the applications of these resources and how they contextualize peace education. An essential read for educators, teacher educators, and peace scholars, it crucially offers pathways for confronting and healing from violence in both formal and informal sites of education.

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**Edited by Candice C. Carter and
Raj Kumar Dhungana**

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Part I

**Violence Responses through
Relational and Mindful
Education**



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1 Introduction

Candice C. Carter and Raj Kumar Dhungana

Introduction

How can we effectively counter violence and build peace? This question is essential to address because humans' wars, armed violence, random shootings, and other harmful responses to conflict continue to be a part of life. The human potential to live a relatively peaceful life is not yet fully materialized; rather relevance to countering violence is higher as life on earth is becoming more prone to the risk of violence and its peacefulness has been decreasing (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2022). Further, such peacefulness has been negatively affected by the pandemic of COVID-19 and armed aggression that ranges from wars to violence in public places, along with schools. Dreadfully, schools are increasing as sites of direct, structural, cultural, and relational violence. The continuation and escalation of violence in schools seems to reduce the possibilities for successfully learning, teaching, and designing curriculum. Hence, it is crucial that educators worldwide, together with other actors, address how education systems can promote peace through avoidance and ending of violence, which has wide effects in schools.

While education has been identified as one of the major means to promote a culture of peace and non-violence (United Nations Development Program, 2022), it is important to note that teachers are also victims of violence (Steffgen & Ewen, 2007). Hence, they as well as their students need pedagogies that enable healing in addition to learning. Educators can lead in promoting peace in schools and their communities (Bradley-Levine & Zainulabdin, 2020) and they can also be part of the problem in reproducing and maintaining violence (Sezer, 2021). Their use of discriminatory norms for the oppressed and othered students in school (Harber & Sakade, 2009; Kumashiro, 2000) and the undermining of a teacher's potential to be a transformative-edu-learner (Jenkins, 2019) are just two examples of how education has catalysed and sustained violence. Several types of violence characterize "normal" schooling. Regular use of curriculum that promotes single

narratives of the past, for example, encourages separatism and intolerance (Skårås, 2021), which is a polarization conflict that fuels violence. Such a phenomenon is often reflected in a form of hidden curriculum that treats learners as mere recipients, versus creators, of accepted knowledge and values (Apple, 2018). Where othering of school members and obstruction to learning are part of these processes, violent conflicts recur in post-conflict societies and begin in superficially peaceful contexts (Dhungana, 2022).

With few contextual tools, many recent education publications focus on “how to teach peace” and conceptual descriptions about aspects of violence. Similarly, they explore one of the many roots of violence, but result with very limited effects on the teacher’s multifaceted “baggage”: For example, the teacher’s bias, stereotype, and prejudice enacted as a “normal” part of school life negatively affect the academic outcomes of students (Cherng, 2017). Their use of reflective pedagogy (Reardon & Snauwaert, 2015) revealed that peace-promoting educators strive for critical awareness of the self’s role in violence prevention (Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011). While teachers analyse their baggage and proactively work to overcome it, they need resources that enable their analysis and conversion of other violence sources in the formal as well as hidden curriculum (Apple, 2018).

Much has been written on the specific roots and causes in education of violence and wars such as neo-colonialism, injustice, and oppression. Responsively, publications in the field of education have more recently included methods of countering violence, such as anti-oppressive pedagogies (Gaard & Ergüner-Tekinalp, 2022), meditative inquiry in teaching and learning (Kumar, 2022), as well as analysis of violence-evident pedagogy. The work of Christensen (2021) presents how education contributes to sustaining slow violence which is an attritional violence that occurs gradually (Nixon, 2011). Alternatively, with the use of Gandhian principles of ahimsa and trusteeship, Joshee and Shirvell (2021) illustrate instruction that prevents harm by developing “slow peace” in school. Boovy and Osei-Kofi (2021) describe how social justice education can be fostered by teaching about race. Dismantling educational sexism promotes anti-sexism and focuses on teacher preparation (Pfeifer, 2021). Further, Wulf (2022) presents his view on how education in the West can incorporate spirituality to reduce violence and promote peace. Needed in the body of literature are research-based monographs that provide for educators, along with theoretical knowledge and relevant cases on how education is countering violence in various contexts, with practical resources that can be useful for adapting the described instruction. The contributors to this book strived to address that need. Introduction here to the terminology of violence that peace scholars use will aid comprehension of presentations on this thwart to wellbeing and learning.

Classifications of violence differentiate its types and effects. Johan Galtung (1969) classified violence as direct and indirect. Direct violence entails verbal

or physical aggression whereas indirect violence occurs through interactions that may appear as less harmful. Structural violence is a systemic and ongoing form of harm. Cultural violence involves ways of thinking and being that cause structural violence. The following is an example of cultural violence: lack of knowledge and extreme bias, along with rigidity of social practices, such as exclusion, influence the use of communications that sustain harm. Transformation of conflict is typically a longer process, that aims for ending violence, than the quicker process of resolving a conflict as an immediate response to the experienced problem. The transformation process involves relationship building or repair with a commitment to pursuing the fulfilment of mutual needs. John Paul Lederach (2003) classified conflict transformation into four categories for greater recognition of violence sources and effects that range from individual to societal acts. The first category is personal experience. *Intrapersonal conflict* transformation is the term for the inner life of an individual that can include cognitive, perceptual, emotional, and spiritual changes of the individual for avoidance or reduction of harm. The second category is relational transformation, described by the term *interpersonal conflict*. Transformation of interpersonal conflict entails direct interactions such as communication patterns that affect mutual understanding and relations. Structural transformation is the third category and cultural transformation is the fourth one. Examination of structural conflicts forefronts systems to change, such as discrimination against dominated groups that institutions evidence.

Transformation of cultural conflicts involves identification of cultural patterns that are associated with violence. The avoidance of femicide, for example, has involved educating about harms that stem from normalization of gender inequities and violence (McKeon & Arizmendi, 2022). Types of violence are interdependent. Intrapersonal and interpersonal violence, for example, are outcomes of, in addition to catalysts for, cultural and structural conflicts that have resulted in harm. Although Table 1.1 lists the categories of violence, the relationships of the terms in the rows and the columns can be discerned. By way of illustration, low self-concept causes less effort to make connections that, in turn, sustains the inequalities that influence self-concept.

Table 1.1 Types of violence

Violence Type	Intrapersonal Conflict	Interpersonal Conflict	Structural & Cultural
Harm Effects	Lower: Self-concept Self-esteem Motivation Wellness	Less Social: Connections Understanding Cooperation Safety	Oppression through: Inequalities Injustice Targeting Annihilation

Lower self-esteem can cause understanding of discriminatory interactions, such as racism and sexism, as unavoidable, that sustain injustice, which lowers self-esteem. Wellness can be undermined when less cooperation, in the workplace, for instance, can cause targeting by its managers for non-promotion or reduction of the workforce. Lack of workplace success and unemployment undermines mental wellness, which can reduce physical well-being. As mentioned above, conflicts in schools can result in violence.

Figure 1.1 illustrates elements of teaching that can be roots of conflict and violence. A pedagogical approach to teaching is a source of conflict when supportive relationships are not cultivated in the learning context. Some learners have experienced each type of violence as an outcome of under- or undeveloped positive relations with the learning facilitator/co-learners. This has been tragically evident in sites of indirect violence where learners have fatally harmed themselves and even people nearby. Facilitating a culture of peace in school involves the advancement of positive relations across campus and in the classroom (Cremin & Bevington, 2017). The curricula that fail to include the cultures and corresponding knowledge of the learners have constituted the roots of each type of violence. In addition to a culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum, education for peace enables students to pursue their interests, especially those that relate to prevention and reduction of violence (Galtung & Udayakumar, 2013). Students who lack the opportunity for self-evaluation of learning discern that their own goals for development are unsupported, if not hindered, by conflicts such as irrelevant curriculum and unresponsive instruction. That situation is another source of intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict. Awareness of violence

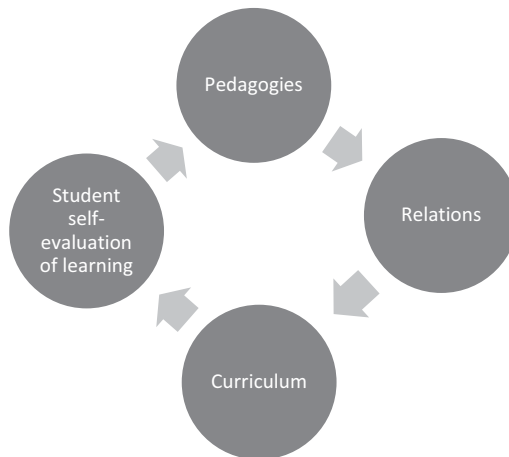


Figure 1.1 Influences on conflict in learning opportunities.

sources has born pedagogies for countering harm caused by education processes that impede personal learning and the advancement of peace.

Bringing lived experiences of peace and non-violence researchers from across the world, this book advances knowledge about the implementation of strategies in education for countering violence. The contents address hidden and direct violence that harms wellbeing and impedes learning. It features the role of educators and curriculum in violence prevention by addressing the roots of violence that pervades schools, universities, and other learning sites. The pedagogical tools it presents are for identifying and proactively responding to several types of conflict. It clarifies that modelling and teaching non-violence as well as countering extant violence are possible with educators' efforts, along with their use of contextual knowledge and skills.

Overview of Chapters

In cases from Argentina, Canada, Catalonia, Colombia, Indonesia, South Africa, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the USA, the contributors to this book explain theoretical understanding, curricular tools, and pedagogical techniques of, as well as research on, actions in education to counter violence and promote peace. The appendices for chapters are available at this website: <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>. Four parts of the main book present the chapters.

Part I provides an overview of violence and the pursuit of peace through relational and mindful education. Silas C. Krabbe presents in Chapter 2 a conceptual outline of how education conceived of as an occurrence—in a liminal space between one's world and one's imagination—is inhibited by violence broadly understood. He proposes a practice of imagining relational ontologies as a means of “seeing” violence differently. In turn, this author posits that such a differently imagined (non)violence, informed by a relational-ontological imagination, might also reciprocate and shape the pedagogical task towards that of cultivating a hospitable and generative space for education. Subsequently, moving on from the conceptual work, a spatiotemporal auto-ethnographic reflection applies and illustrates both practices: processing events by imagining (non)violence differently through a relational ontology and thereby pedagogically cultivating a more hospitable space for education. The conceptual and spatiotemporal reflections are briefly brought together to mutually inform one another. His chapter appendix offers suggested resources for developing relational imagination. Jin Jr Shi explores in Chapter 3 Buddhist embodied peace education that recognizes individuals as bearers of peace. In Buddhist *currere*—an existential experience of educational structures—the author engages in intersubjective compassionate contemplative inquiry. Transformation, resonance, and self-control characterize

the pedagogical process through wisdom-in-practice. This contemplative approach during instruction and curriculum design is available to all members of an educational institution. In her appendix, the author suggests steps and resources for developing clarity of mind and a peaceful core.

Part II of this book features instruction with inclusive curriculum for non-violence and peace through intercultural understanding and honouring of students' cultures. In Chapter 4, Kristen Seward and Bekir Olcay Akce examine their use of devised theatre to construct a culture of peace where students learn about others' ideas, ethics, and ways of being; lived experiences and needs for validation; cultural values and beliefs; and then reflect about their learning experiences. The authors lay out their study of learners with high ability through online learning, while adapting theatre-based instruction, as peace education during the COVID pandemic. During dialogical learning, the students collectively transformed themselves. The authors provide a sample lesson in their appendix that incorporates creative dramatics in peace education. In Chapter 5, Linda Gordon describes her action research on perspective and empathy development during multicultural read-aloud literacy instruction with 103 children. The research demonstrated that perspective-taking and empathy during the read-aloud have the potential to create contact between the students and characters who, in real life, exist in marginalized groups. The discussion during the instruction facilitated the development of children's mindsets that can reduce prejudice and promote peaceful interactions through awareness and empathy. This chapter includes appendices that list sources for multicultural literature as well as strategies for developing empathy while teaching literacy. In Chapter 6, Simon Masiga explains how education about religion, which includes indigenous religious practices, can be a resource for countering violence. The indigenous thoughts and practices that this chapter describes characterize the historical and cultural contexts of Uganda. The discussion interchangeably uses the terms interreligious and interfaith dialogue to mean the interaction of different religious leaders and institutions for a common goal of establishing a culture of peace. The terms faith and religion are categorically treated the same. An integrative theory of peace in this discussion features the use of religion and religious non-violent texts to enhance interreligious dialogue as education. Additionally incorporated into the interfaith peace education is the Gandhian perspective of religious equality that strengthens the foundation of religion as a means of educating against violence. The author offers in the appendix a lesson plan for facilitation of learning about peace-related ethics across religions through interfaith dialogue and a project. Ilfiandra and Mohamad Saripudin present in Chapter 7 their findings from a meta-ethnographic study of indigenous instruction with local wisdom. Specifically, they identified how peace-oriented values that counter violence are gently taught. An in-depth analysis of the *Sudanese* culture in

Indonesia revealed the importance of their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transcendental dimensions of peace. The authors provide recommendations for a pedagogy that enables a peaceable classroom where students' diverse lives, cultures, and local wisdom can be incorporated into the curriculum. Their appendices include a list of values that have supported peaceful lives along with a comparison of conventional learning and peace pedagogy.

Part III of this book describes conflict-responsive education. In Chapter 8, Lucy E. Bailey and Amanda M. Kingston elaborate how memorials are used as sites for peace education. The authors describe their engagement with the peace pedagogies of one public site, the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which highlights centuries of African American history and commemorates the Tulsa Race Massacre. They conceptualize this park as an ongoing site of peace education that invites powerful local engagements which foster peace practices that others can consider in memorials elsewhere. They frame these practices as peace pedagogies. The chapter appendices feature activities that engaging with such sites can offer for healing grief and teaching how violence can be countered with the living sites of the memorials of violence. In Chapter 9, Maria-Carme Boqué Torremorell, Montserrat Alguacil de Nicolás, Laura García-Raga, Maria-Dolors Ribalta Alcalde, and Ingrid Sala-Bars of Catalonia describe their research on family communication about violence. Their study responded to increasing social and political polarization and the objectives were to find out how parents talk to their children about different forms of violence that affect them. The researchers identify deficiencies in the communication skills of families. In the chapter appendices, the researchers suggest communication strategies for families and provide a glossary with terminology related to violence, polarization, and a culture of peace. Donna-Marie Fry, Jenny Owen, and Josiah Lenton lay out in Chapter 10 how the development of agency, empowerment, and empathy, along with a transformative understanding of self and others, counters violence in schools and their communities. They describe the development, history, and a model of conflict coaching as an approach derived from mediation with non-violent communication skills. The authors explain the core principles and skills that are taught throughout the conflict-coaching process that has supported peace education for violence elimination in schools. Reflectively, the authors identify the challenges of facilitating conflict coaching in schools. They provide recommendations for its success and training plans in their appendices for its implementation. In Chapter 11, Carolina Castaño Rodríguez and Esther Bettney Heidt examine how a K-11 school in a remote region of Colombia with a large indigenous population strove to decolonize the English as an Additional Language (EAL) curriculum that represented cultural and structural violence. The researchers describe critical theories from the global South that challenge perspectives of EAL instruction and contribute to the design of decolonial education in

which local knowledge and cultures are prioritized. Popular education is a pedagogical tool that was enacted to transform the curriculum for its relevancy in the lives of students. Through the use of *vivencias* the researchers listened to members of the community for collection and analysis of its range of viewpoints, including the challenges they faced. Their appendix provides an example of curriculum planning for improved instruction. Yesid Paez Cubides describes in Chapter 12 how Colombia has experienced an intractable conflict for more than five decades and how educational initiatives have been designed and facilitated to counter violence and illegal activities. This chapter explains how the library, schools, and women's organizations in Putumayo, Colombia, promoted understandings of peace that were mobilized, rehearsed, and facilitated by the members of the community. Their work exemplifies practices that consolidate forms of emancipatory and non-violent action to empower communities and counteract the logic of war. The author suggests in the appendix instructional strategies for peace education. In Chapter 13, María Teresa Barrios, Melina Coll, Luciana Rodini, Ornella Uberti, and Eliana Irene Martinez illuminate experiences carried out by the CoPAZ Foundation for Peace Education and Nonviolence in a marginal neighbourhood of Rosario, Argentina. The authors describe how the CoPAZ Foundation has creatively carried out education for peace, especially for children and young people, through face-to-face art workshops, ludo pedagogy, philosophy, and sports activities. They also explain how distribution of booklets during the COVID pandemic constituted curriculum for countering violence. The goal of providing a curriculum that potentiates, liberates, inspires, and denaturalizes violence as a form of conflict resolution was met through design of booklets that had careful attention to content, gender perspective, disability, human rights, and multicultural identity. Their appendix provides images of the curriculum that they used.

Part IV of this book features the role of hope in countering violence. In Chapter 14, Lliane Loots presents a case study of one programme run by Flatfoot Dance Company in 2021 for refugees in South Africa. The organization in Durban teaches self-study, life skills, and dance as Freire's "liberation education". It fostered a living democracy as well as a sense of community and hope in the lives of students who coped with several forms of violence. The dance company demonstrates hook's "engaged pedagogy" as peace education with disenfranchised youth from urban and rural places. Its work exemplifies the increased provision of performing arts in peace education (McKeon & Arizmendi, 2022). In Chapter 15, Sheryl Evans Davis emphasizes the role of stimulating hope in practices of violence prevention and peace education. Viewpoints included in her data collection were derived from youth, law enforcement, service providers, and community stakeholders. The chapter identifies curriculum and best practices that combine components of youth development, arts, and culture as tools to advance peace.

The selected examples the author provides are from a review of activities used to support youth leadership and growth as a violence-prevention strategy. Many of the identified strategies address violence-risk factors of youth and align with best practices in youth development. The chapter appendices include instructional resources and activities. In Chapter 16, we identify ideologies and list educational strategies for countering violence that the contributors to this book examined and describe in their chapters.

This book equips educators with countering violence by providing a conceptual and theoretical understanding of contexts and types of violence while it provides curricular and pedagogical resources for countering violence and promoting peace. It intends to support its readers who wish to advance these educational goals as well as conduct research on education for peace. We hope that these resources will enable and inspire the advancement of peace in several contexts of learning across world regions.

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2 **Imagining Relational Ontologies for Education amidst Ricocheting (non)Violence**

Notes from Vancouver, Canada

Silas C. Krabbe

Education, I contend, occurs in a liminal space at the horizon between one's world and one's imagination. This statement might seem needlessly abstract to some, but for those willing to entertain this way of thinking about education, I intend to show how such a conception of education is usefully informed by differently imagining, perceiving, and conceptualizing violence and non-violence through imagining relational ontologies. In turn, I also aim to demonstrate how such a differently imagined (non)violence might also reciprocate and shape the pedagogical task towards that of cultivating a hospitable and generative space for education. This chapter then concludes with an autoethnographic reflection and commentary that practices and illustrates both processes.

Conceptualizing Education and Pedagogy alongside a Relational Ontological Imagination

Education, as I approach it here, resonates with Gayatri Spivak's articulation that "education in the humanities attempts to be an *uncoercive* rearrangement of desires" (2004, p. 526). Here, however, I would like to say that an uncoercive rearrangement need not be limited to the humanities; instead, it might function even more broadly as a condition of education. Education conceived in this way is thereby distinguished from schooling, instruction, and training, all of which may approach, yield, or enable education to occur, but are not synonymous with education.

Bringing together the two aspects of education put forward so far, I would like to suggest that the occurrence of education is that of an uncoercive rearrangement of one's world (inclusive of desires, which are specifically educated through the humanities) and this takes place, conceptually, in a liminal space between one's already existing world and one's imagination.

The liminal space of education is an interspace, a space between, and is, therefore, an amorphous space of transition, being neither here nor there, nor fully real, nor fully unreal; as such, it can be the space of becoming,

formation, and education (Morris, 2022; Turner, 1982). By positing that education is tied to an uncoercive rearrangement of one's world, it follows that the opposite can also be the case: a coercive rearrangement of one's world can also occur. For example, entertain the simplistic example of a child writing down $2 + 2 = 4$ for the first time. Such an occasion could take place with $2 + 2 = \underline{\quad}$ being written down on a piece of paper and an adult wrapping their hand gently around the child's hand, which is grasping the pencil and moving the hands together to make the marking 4 on the piece of paper. This example, even if we assume it is drenched in care and well-intentioned instruction, is not a moment of education, as I am meaning it here. It may instead be understood as a moment of instruction that may yield education in the future, but it, as a moment, is not education. The child's world, specifically their hand, is coerced (even if done gently) and thus their existing world is altered, but education—as I am using it in this chapter—has not occurred. Alternatively, entertain a similar scene wherein a moment of education occurs: a child sits in front of a piece of paper with $2 + 2 = \underline{\quad}$ written on it. This child works on the problem, perhaps is influenced by previous instruction, and over time their mind and imagination are utilized to solve the problem, and they write down the number 4, and do so with some understanding, not mere repetition. By writing down the number, they have changed their existing world through the liminality between their imagination and the world they previously inhabited in which they did not know and understand that the answer was 4. In such a moment, education, as I am using it, has occurred. While this example above is simple, it is hopefully a sufficiently clear articulation of education to illustrate the inherent incompatibility of education and violence (understood here as a coercive act). For if well-intentioned coercion of a child's hand is sufficient to preclude education, then surely violence, which includes coercion and certainly goes beyond coercion towards destruction, renders education all but impossible.

If, as I propose, education occurs in a liminal space at the horizon between one's world and one's imagination—such that an educational moment rearranges one's world, inclusive of but not limited to one's desires, by bringing into one's reality that which is created in one's imaginative space—then a number of questions arise: How might one foster access to this liminal horizon? What might prevent access to this liminal and conceptual educational space? Is this understanding of education exclusive of other understandings, or can it be harmonized? Once one has experienced a moment of education, can it be lost or truly forgotten? Is the imagination limited to a merely conceptual or ideational realm, or can imagination also be understood through material physicality in the sense of doing an action or activity one has not previously done? In such a case, can the imagination be physically present, and/or embodied, and assist in changing one's world prior to a cognitive register? There are sure to be numerous answers to each one of these

questions, and there are copious questions I have not mentioned. Yet here I would merely like to (re)approach one aspect of our worlds which has an inhibiting relation to the liminal horizon of education: that being violence. But violence is challenging to discuss ethically without voyeurism, reification, or compounding acts of violence (Žižek, 2008). So, acknowledging such challenges, I proceed with trepidation.

The dilemma of violences is that which plagues the context in which I attempt to be an educator, and, perhaps, therefore, is the reason for the centrality of violence in delimiting a definition of education. When gazed upon by outsiders, the context in which I am employed as a religious educator is sometimes referred to as the poorest postal code in Canada. It is a neighbourhood known for people living without adequate housing, people self-medicating with what are deemed illicit substances, people living through the aftermath of trauma, people navigating complex mental and physical health challenges, and people living well below the national poverty line, to name but a few descriptors. It is a neighbourhood where historical and systemic violence are witnessed explicitly, and lateral forms of violence are, unfortunately, fairly common. My role in this context is to offer religious education, by which I mean fostering community, offering care and welcome, and holding forth a vision of societal, social, and personal change; in brief, offering imaginative alternatives to the “as is” structure of our worlds. The “formal” curriculum itself entails a collective reading and interpretation of Christian scriptures each week, which I lead by engaging the community fairly informally through conversation, dialogue, and questions shared about the text. This content enables what is perhaps more important—be it the hidden-in-plain-sight curriculum—which is presence, routine, sharing music, eating, drinking coffee, casual conversation, and being known by name, all of which facilitate becoming known to the other and knowing the other. Thus, the community’s weekly praxis can be roughly hewn into the theory-practice dialectic of teaching-living or the elements of the formal-informal curriculum, though, of course, each side of this rough dialectic contains its own nested theory-practice dialectic. All the entailed aspects, however, can, and I have witnessed them, be disrupted and prevented by violences.

Beyond subtle coercion from which I began, violence, narrowly and commonly conceived, can, as Judith Butler names it, be understood through the “blow” (Butler, 2020, p. 2). The harmful or damaging interaction between two agents: the punch, the assault, the hurtful words, the threats, etc. Even here, however, the plethora of events that are covered over in the name of violence begins to unfold: physical violence, emotional violence, sexual violence, and psychological violence. In querying such events of violence others have shown that violence travels beyond an initial pair or those directly engaged in the “blow,” as violence also travels horizontally in lateral violence

(Moane, 2011), or becomes reified into social institutions as structural violence (Galtung, 1969), or functions non-personally through repetitions of symbolic capital that perpetrate symbolic violence (Hart, 2019). In no time at all, the reflexive inquirer of violence is led to the conclusion that the singular “blow” is an insufficient theoretical apparatus for considering violence broadly conceived.

As the number of violences that are named and nameable continues to proliferate, it soon becomes apparent that violence also occurs as more than intention and action—which are often entailed in the “blow”—of an individual actor or even a collective of actors, nor is it even limited to agential actions. Even in many western legal frameworks, intention and action are disentangled, from premeditation to intentional, to unintentional killing, for example. Leaving behind a constrained understanding of agential violence, one can perceive violence as it ricochets around groups and affectively flows through, or even blows through, bodies, as Resmaa Menakem has aptly articulated (2017). This altered understanding pushes beyond the “blow” and into flows of violence (Deleuze et al., 2009), into forces of violence (Butler, 2020), into reverberations of violence (Menakem, 2017), and into an imaginative space that is in search of a concept that can be agile and adaptable enough to translate experiences of violence into language and again translate and relate one particular occasion of violence to another.

Here again, I run into ethical trouble: the trouble of translating particular acts of coercion, violence, and the world breaking down into some form of concept that makes these incommensurable occasions commensurable (Espeland & Stevens, 1998). I have no brilliant answer for this quandary, no ethical platform to resolve my unease, and no conclusive concept to offer. I am merely reminded of the ineffability of violence, of how we might often consider it only through “sideways glances” (Žižek, 2008, p. 3), and how its simultaneous phenomenological excess and absence will always disturb language and concepts that attempt to contain. Instead of the direction of containment, I turn in the opposite direction, witnessing the diffuse, rupturing, unwieldy array of violence, only to realize that any inter-personal concept is again too narrow. For violence is again not limited to the bodies we inhabit, nor the relational space between us, but as Franz Fanon theorized over half a century ago, violence can constitute an atmosphere within which we reside (Fanon, 2004). Such descriptive endeavours of violence beg for a continual reimagining of the ontological structuring of violence in order to understand—even if partially—more fully the situation within which one finds oneself and in which education may occur.

One way of (re)imagining violence beyond the “blow” is to consider violence through a relational ontology. Imaginatively theorizing a relational ontology can take many forms. For those attempting to broaden their understanding of violence beyond that of an interaction between atomized agents,

this imagining may require drawing upon an array of discrete theorizations that focus on bodies, structural arrangements, related constructability, and entanglement. When woven together through the imagination, these discrete theorizations may offer a conceptualization of an entangled relational ontology that is beneficial for comprehending the flows and interruptions of violence in and through bodies, groups, structures, and our worlds. As a relational ontological imagination is stretched, beyond what makes up so much of our “common sense” life-world, bodies may become less “bounded,” instead becoming conceived of as “thresholds” through which and over which relations pass and the human entity remains open, porous, and infused (Butler, 2020, p. 16; Fanon, 2004; Keller, 2017a, 2017b; Menakem, 2017).

One way of beginning such an imaginative practice is to imagine a web of connections between each person, then extend the web to each structure, to each entity, and even to the ethos of the situation (in which the people, structures, and entities are situated). This imagined web soon becomes a multidimensional entanglement in which one finds oneself, such that as one moves within space-time the entanglement is always adjusting and taking in new connections and adapting to its rearrangements. This imagined web that connects all to all, and each to each (Keller, 2014), might assist one’s imagination in perceiving Fanon’s atmosphere of violence (Fanon, 2004). Such an imagined relational ontology can then aid in understanding—through imagination—an interconnected and entangled web of relations that imaginatively depicts how actions of physical, emotional, social, and spiritual violence can lodge not only in the psycho-somatic bodies of others, but also can rupture or get stuck in the inbetweenesses of the ontological entanglement, or pulse through one’s entire world. Imagining violence interacting with the imagined web can take many forms; perhaps an act of violence snaps one of the strands of the web, causing all the other strands of the web to vibrate. Or one might imagine violence creating a blockade in one section of the web, such that aspects of the web near the “jam” no longer smoothly adapt to other changes in the web, causing constrictions or entrapments. Or one can think of the atmosphere of violence that pervades the web as preventing neat and strong connections at the ends of the strands, such that the web is delicate and fragile, causing the strands to be easily torn from those to which they are connected. These disjunctions, interruptions, breakages, and flows of violence thus impact the feasibility of practising a “smooth,” peaceful, or increasingly connected pedagogy and educational experience and thus require addressing by those attempting to educate towards a more peaceful future.

While this chapter is developing an imagination of a relational ontology that is web-like and entangling, by drawing on a series of authors I am familiar with, this is by no means the only way to imagine a relational ontology, nor the only set of authors or resources that might facilitate such a relational

ontological imagination. Other approaches, theoreticians, cultural resources, or entities could also be used as imaginative inputs to achieve a similar imaginary. To add a few more options, one might consider ecologically informed imaginaries such as mycelium fungal networks that enable tree communication (Simard, 2021). Or for those with a propensity for theoretical physics, imaginative resources are available in new materialist interactions with quantum physics and astrophysics (Barad, 2007; Prescod-Weinstein, 2021). Alternatively, one might draw on Ubuntu philosophies and Freirean conceptions of the human, which understand humans as mutually constituted through relation (Abdi, 2021). Additionally, Deleuze–Guattari’s theorization of the rhizome as a non-directional conceptual apparatus may provide impetus for non-linear and entangled ontological musings (2004). Or North American Indigenous ontologies communicated succinctly in phrases such as “all my relations,” and storied cosmologies also provide distinct, yet broadly categorizable, relational ontologies (Archibald, 2008; Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2008; Kimmerer, 2013). Or for those interested in developing a relational ontological imagination through speculative metaphysics, process metaphysics as developed by Alfred North Whitehead might be of use (Whitehead, 1978). In contrast to such speculation, one might draw on

the earth-based experience of life, [wherein] the self is never separate from things, objects, or the materiality of the real, as claimed by Māori philosopher Carl Te Hira Mika: ‘For Māori, the thing in its most basic sense is like the self: it is immediately connected to everything else, so discussion about ‘things’ itself constitutes some sort of materiality that links to the thing and the self’.

(Clement, 2019, p. 286)

This list of examples is by no means exhaustive nor representative of the bounds of assets for a relational ontological imagination. Each of the resources one brings to the imaginative practice would bring its own valences, unique insights, and inflections to the newly created imaginary. However, what many of these imaginaries of relational ontologies offer is an understanding of the profusion of the individual, who can no longer be fully conceived of as being autonomous and territorially bounded in a non-infused/perforated construction. Yet the perfuse-individual is also not without agency, which then has implications for the conceptualization of violence, education, and pedagogy as one aspect of a wider relational ontological world.

In the same way that relational ontologies are not limited to a single imaginary, nor a single culture, nor a single theorization, so too violence as it is imagined interacting within the relational ontology will also differ, as alluded to above, depending on the imaginative inputs. For example, violence can be “seen” as breaking social bonds or forces that exist, just as non-violence can

be “seen” or imagined as an active force not merely a negation of violence (Butler, 2020), or flows of affect that resonate bodily (Menakem, 2017), or disjunctures that propagate and dislocate (Appadurai, 1990), or, as described above, interruptions or stucknesses in entangled webs.

Again, here I am not stating that all these theorizations are the same, nor do they necessarily align in a harmonious way. Instead, I offer these various theorists of (non)violence as pragmatic pedagogical resources for one’s imagination. As one can practise an imagination of social bonds, or relations, without needing to make strong metaphysical (process philosophy) or psychoanalytical claims (as demonstrated by Butler’s usage of Freud). Such non-committal paths of inquiry and imagination may yield interesting, even beneficial, insights. So long as the pedagogue in question—who is entertaining utilizing an imagined relational ontology for pedagogical purposes—already desires to work towards peace (for whatever reason), a practice of relational ontological imagination can be utilized to inform one’s pedagogy without necessarily grounding it in a specific understanding, conceptualization, or formulation of what is constitutive for the relation, or in a foundationalist mode of thought.

The pedagogical imagination that is informed by a relational ontology is one in which one “sees” the flows and disruption of relations. Utilizing ocular imagery that is resonant in heightened visual cultures of the twenty-first century, one can imagine these flows as passing from one to another through the “relation” that connects each and every thing. An imaginative web connecting oneself to all others and all others connected to one another and all situated in infinite relations with the context in which one is present fills the mind’s eye and can thereby be attended to in the imaginative space. For example, a relational ontology informed by Menakem’s talk of settled and unsettled bodies would lead the pedagogue to “see” the relations that are unsettling (nonstationary) the bodies present and thereby connect other “unsettledness” as being related to the unsettled body present. In the mind’s eye, such occurrences may be imagined as vibrations in the web. The pedagogue then takes on as part of their task the “settling” of the web such that those affected by the vibrations have less disturbance and thereby a convivial space for accessing the imaginative horizon within which the potential of education occurs.

However, the pedagogue also wants to foster a generative imaginative space, which requires some amount of disturbance to one’s world to provoke imaginative engagement such that education becomes possible, as an all-too-stable world requires little rearrangement and therefore offers little educational potential. Such “stable worlds” I would contend are constructed and function through the exclusion of a relational ontological imagination. For those who embark on imagining relations and push those relations out to the horizon of one’s world, it is my belief that the expanding world of relations

will inevitably encounter disruption, violence, and agitation as oneself is found to be connected with dissimilar worlds and the conflicts that are prevalent throughout social worlds. Therefore, “stable worlds” seem to me to be myopic constructions that are actively maintained through continued severance of expanding relations, through which one achieves stability of one’s world through a form of violence to oneself and thereby also self-sabotages one’s possibility of education through the systematic exclusion of stretching outwards across a liminal space to an imaginative horizon.

Building upon this non-myopic, non-stable, instead generative and expanding rearrangement of worlds on behalf of education, by means of education, inevitably results in education taking on other aspects, roles, and functions. Education—as a non-coercive rearrangement of one’s world—is never then limited to one’s independent world; rather, when imagined through a relational ontology, it is a rearrangement of all related worlds and relations as well. In this way, education becomes one element of holding the world together socially, conceptually, and materially. Education as an imaginative endeavour of world creation, learning, understanding, and (re)making, in turn, gives more specificity to the violence and non-violence that spurred on the need for reconceptualization. Violence, as discussed above, is destructive of relations, it is world-destroying or world-undoing, or more minimally world-inhibiting. Non-violence, or perhaps peace, then is not merely the absence of this undoing but is the making, and remaking, of relations that string together relations for the formation of one’s world and the collective world. In this vein, Butler’s articulation of non-violence as a force that is positively constitutive of a social world makes sense (Butler, 2020). Moreover, with a relational ontological imagination as an asset, Hannah Arendt’s charge that education is the love of the world, and is a world-conserving and world-constructing endeavour, takes on new entangling potency (Arendt, 2006).

Autoethnographic Reflection for Imaginative Practice

Having posited an articulation of an entangled relational ontology attuned to flows of (non)violence, this chapter turns to an autoethnographic account of an occasion of religious instruction in a context of societal precarity. Autoethnography is practised here in the vein of Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner’s developments of the method (Ellis et al., 2011). As such, I take it up as a method to describe and analyse personal experience to understand cultural experience. As a method, it takes seriously the relation between a particular experience and a more general understanding. This is not done to merely generalize an anecdote but to reflect critically on a particular experience to gain insight and understanding. Hilary Cremin has also noted the synthesizing potential of autoethnography for peace studies in that it brings

together time, space, and emotion through the drawing together of research, philosophy, and personal experience (Cremin, 2018). In addition to these reasons, it is a method well suited for the study of violence in that the researcher is not interviewing people and asking them to relive experiences of violence through the remembering, and potentially retraumatizing, of such occasions. Instead, the researcher places themselves and their memory of the experience into the position of the “object” of study and is in a position of continual choice as to whether to continue the process of engaging in a reflexive praxis of writing. While this method does not make the research of violence completely safe, as violence can still be re-occasioned by the researcher against the researcher, it does curtail some of the ethical challenges of studying violence by bounding the research to oneself. Furthermore, the reflexive practice of autoethnography also leaves the educational situation and pedagogical relation intact and does not require reducing the student or the teacher to a test subject, as it relies on actual occasions for its content.

In the following autoethnographic reflection, specific attention is given to the experiential awareness of the flows of violence, and how these flows of violence inform the moment-by-moment pedagogical decisions of religious education in a context of heightened precarity. Within such a context, there exists an important yet unknown variable: the willingness of those present to engage in somatic settling. As such, the pedagogical approach taken differs from a therapeutic settling of the relational ontology, as was gestured towards above. Instead of attempting to settle the ontological entanglement therapeutically, the story reflects upon a pedagogical practice of communal disturbance. A disturbance is permitted to be enacted to both settle the unsettled and unsettle the settled in their ontological positions within the relational ontology. It is a practice that attends to the ontological entanglement while not diminishing the importance and presence of the person and ontological space that is unsettled due to an encounter with violence. Such a practice disseminates that violence through the ontological web of relatedness by the very characteristics of violence that preclude its containment, thereby distributing the violence throughout the ontological entanglement. Distribution in this manner does not merely offer a partial therapeutic experience to the singular person or locale of violence, but also offers educational opportunities made possible by the ontological unsettling and thereby works towards an everchanging ontological formation. This unsettling of the settled and settling of the unsettled enacted through a disturbed ontological entanglement also opens up the educational and ontological possibility of dislodging entrenched forms of structural and superiority-based violences.

Joe walks in.¹ He does not respond when I say hello. I feel my stomach drop, I turn toward him. He is heading straight toward the coffee, which is not yet ready. I attempt to pre-empt an eruption, but Bob yells from across the room, “The coffee is not ready yet. We have to wait for the light to come on.”

Bob is always one of the first to show up. Having been without housing for over five years recently, he knows the schedule of many of the service providers in the neighbourhood and orients his day around attending his favourites. Even though he is now housed, he continues to show up punctually to help set up chairs and take them down. Routine, it seems, keeps him buoyant.

Bob is not my focus. Joe seems ready to explode. I can feel it.

With a growing sense of an imminent explosion, I try to find my wife; my eyes are flitting all around. Finally, I see her, she is in the kitchen portion of the cafeteria. She is safe.

I’m not ready for a day like this. I feel the exhaustion swamp me.

Now I know I am hardly paying attention to Steve, who has not missed a beat this whole time and is still talking to me as if I am fully engaged in our conversation. But I’m not sure if it is me and my heightened awareness or if Steve is slowly raising his voice to retain my attention.

Steve is a talker. He likes to come and have my full attention. He thinks of himself as peripheral to our small community but is really quite a regular. He loves a disagreement and some banter, in which I am usually willing to engage. But in this moment, I am suddenly elsewhere.

I am wondering what happened to bring Joe to this point; what did he carry in with him from the week? What happened to Joe since I last talked with him just days earlier? He is usually punctual and willing to help out. But I know his mood also swings depending on what is going on in his world. He lives in a building he hates, his neighbours are often stealing things from him, and with many of the organizations he used to attend closed due to the continued Covid restrictions, he has far too much time, and by his own admission is often bored.

Joe still has not said anything to anyone. Explosion simmering beneath the surface.

Over the other voices, I can hear Dale also elevating his voice as he talks to Karl who is setting up the music equipment. Hopefully those two can continue their conversation, while I try and figure out how to interact well with Joe. Dale and Karl have known each other for well over a decade so I am not worried about their interactions, but Dale has ADHD and can often engage in fairly destructive behaviour when set off. I’m hoping I can keep today’s gathering to a dull roar not a full-blown meltdown.

I do a quick calculation in my head; we are about fifty-fifty in the space: settled and unsettled bodies. I count myself among the unsettled.

I exit from the conversation I am in with Steve. I am not ready for a day like this. It is too soon. I check my watch; my heart rate is elevated. Not even six months post-open-heart surgery, I'm not supposed to let my heart rate get up this high. I'm sure my cortisol levels are starting to increase.

I know I really cannot control the situation. In fact, I've been told many times that I take on too much responsibility for what happens in terms of disruptions and blowouts during our gatherings. Everyone here knows I cannot control it. But my old patterns of trying to manage the situation are a bit like a reflex that I have to actively resist.

I take a moment to try and pause, but I see Bob coming toward me as I am now not engaged with Steve. I guess today there will not be much time for a self-check, I actively move toward Joe instead, maybe a conversation will help. I hope Bob does not realize I just avoided him. I'll have to remember to make a point of talking to him later.

Joe looks wet as he grabs a muffin. As I get closer, I see he is soaked right through. I wonder if he has walked all the way here. What could have happened to his bus pass? It would not be the first time he has lost it, maybe I'm overreacting. Perhaps today's agitation will have a simple solution like offering him a ride home.

"HI Joe, how's it going?" I say.

"Shit!" And he moves by me toward a seat. He sways a bit, and I wonder to myself if he is using his substance of choice again, then I immediately feel guilty for having that thought.

I'll just let him be. Maybe the muffin will help. There does not seem to be an obvious next step since Joe does not seem to want to engage in a conversation now.

The church cafeteria we are in is in the basement of a building that is over a hundred years old. It is cold, sterile, and lacking amenities. To make matters worse the radiators ruptured a month ago in a cold snap, so we are making do with some space heaters. It is far from ideal, and far from warm. I'm concerned about how wet Joe is, but I have no solution for the situation. Would acknowledgement of how wet he is make it worse? I decide not to start a conversation on that note.

The light on the coffee percolator switches on.

I call it out to the group, letting people know they can come get some coffee. I am hopeful that the warmth of the beverage will help with the chill in the air. There is a general rearranging of bodies in the space as people come and get some coffee and return to their seats. There are about fifteen people now present, so it takes some time and offers me a moment of respite as the coffee provides a much-needed distraction.

I take the opportunity to sit down on one of the chairs that have been placed in a circle.

I watch Joe as he gets some coffee and walks slowly back to the chair he has chosen.

A few quiet moments pass.

“I did not go home last night,” Joe states to no one in particular. He does not lift his eyes off his coffee.

It has been years since I spent an entire night outside in a city. I briefly recall a time during my undergraduate education when I had to catch a bus at 3:00 am while I was travelling. At that time in my life, I decided that spending money on a hostel for that short of a stay was not worth it. I would have had to leave at 2:00 am anyway to get to the bus station. I figured that I might as well just stay awake instead. Never again. I remember just how miserable I was for those hours in the middle of a cold night. Two in the morning is very different when trying to kill time rather than leaving a friend’s house from a party. As this memory flickers through my mind, I know that waiting for a bus was probably a far cry from the night Joe just had in this torrential weather.

I notice that Dale has made a b-line to the door. He is getting out of the way. I’m glad he is managing himself at this moment. I see he did not take his bag, so he’ll be back. I assume he feels something coming as well.

I try to ask Joe why he did not go home last night. But I don’t get much of an answer.

A few minutes later, he states, again to no one in particular, “I’ve been drinking all night.”

It is already 2:30 in the afternoon, so last night is already many hours ago, but Joe states it in the present tense.

Joe gets up, and heads back for another cup of coffee.

With his back to me and the majority of the group, he yells, “I’ve fucking had it. It’s too much.”

Now there is a noticeable silence in the room. Bodies previously on edge now go rigid. No one seems to be moving.

Someone other than me this time asks Joe what is up? What is going on? Again, there is no response. Slowly a murmur of other conversation begins to commence. I am relieved, no one decided to escalate with Joe. I’m pretty sure he knows he was heard and not removed from the space or the community.

As Joe returns to the circle, I notice that he is shaking a bit. Coffee is sloshing out of his cup and leaving a trail of drips between the kitchen counter and the circle of chairs. He sits back down.

Catharsis. Tears well up in Joe’s eyes. “I miss my dad,” he says.

Of course, it is everything. His father passed away a few years ago, but due to Covid, among other reasons, there has not been adequate closure or ceremonies of remembrance. Pain, compounding on pain.

I’m pretty sure half of the coffee from the cup is now on the ground.

Karl, who up to this point had been setting up sound equipment, is between myself and Joe. Karl steps up and offers some words of consolation while tears run down Joe's face.

I survey the rest of the group. Some look visibly uncomfortable, others are not phased, and still others are open in their posture attending to Joe with their attention.

I still have no idea what happened to Joe this week that triggered him.

After a few moments of silence, sprinkled with words from others that acknowledge the pain they see in Joe. Joe stands up. "I don't want to be here."

It makes sense to me. He has just been radically vulnerable.

There is a chorus of goodbyes, and see you next week, as he leaves, back out in the wet and cold.

As he leaves, I think he is walking slightly smoother. Perhaps is it more my hope that he is, than his reality.

We turn back to each other in the circle. No one says anything. We just let the silence exist for perhaps longer than is comfortable for some.

One of the tasks of religious education is to expand one's empathy and compassion. I feel unsettled. Or am I expanded? The day could have gone worse and been more explosive, but it did not.

I notice that Tim, who up until this point had been quiet and mostly stood back and observed, was now walking to the kitchen. He too had noticed the coffee spilling. Grabbing some paper towel, he proceeded to dab up the trail of drips and the puddle near Joe's chair.

*

Joe returned the next week. The first words he said when he entered the door were directed at me, "I'm doing better this week." He turns into the kitchen and pulls out the percolator and starts making coffee for this week's gathering.

Resultant Considerations

By framing the spatiotemporal autoethnography in an imaginary informed by relational ontologies, wherein violence is reframed from the "blow" to that of flows, insights into this autoethnographic story may be gleaned and may differ from those gathered had the priming of the imagination not taken place. The priming of the imagination perhaps enabled the reader to perceive the disruptions of violence that linger and are transmitted throughout a situation, non-verbally and non-physically. Through a relational ontological imagination, events that seem unrelated can perhaps be understood as relating, even if minimally, to one another. For example, considering the volume of Dale and Karl's conversation increasing as being related to Joe's non-answer to my welcome, or Dale's departure from the space being

interpreted as a moment of self-management in a situation of a disturbed ontological web. While such imaginings may not be easily defensible or fully explanatory of the situation, they can participate in describing and also in-the-moment-experiencing the situation as being connected. Such connections, perhaps, are useful for making more corporate and connected decisions for subsequent actions, when compared to what may be a more limited set of options and choices if the situation became reduced to my agential actions and Joe's agential actions.

The pedagogical approach taken in the autoethnographic story does not take up education for peace as that of reaching, attaining, or even maintaining stability, but as a pedagogy of generating as hospitable a place as possible such that the rearrangement of one's world and the worlds of all those present becomes possible without coercion. As argued above, the possibility of stability and of achieving a world-stability precludes the moment of education, understood as the moment of alteration of one's world in relation to one's imagination. Therefore, related to a relational ontological imagination that extends outwards will inevitably encounter violence in one's world and all other related worlds. A pedagogical moment of refusing to conceive of peace as stability occurs in the first moments of the autoethnographic reflection when I became attuned to Joe's unsettledness, through his non-response to my welcoming call. At that moment there is a pedagogical decision to refuse stability which would require excising Joe from the group and the building, which may maintain a façade of peace as stability through the violence of relational severing. Realistically, the disturbance and reverberations of violence were already present in Joe (though never fully disclosed in the story), and any attempt to remove him forcefully or through even mild coercion most likely would have resulted in amplifying the violence rather than achieving the aims of soothing the reverberations of violence in the relational ontology that had already become distressed through Joe's appearance.

The distinction above between a coercive rearrangement of one's world and education as a non-coercive rearrangement of one's world can be seen functioning in the autoethnographic reflection. The perception of violence as blowing through and around the space non-agentially is apprehended by me, the author of the reflection. Thus, my aim and, in turn, perhaps my over-anxiousness about settling the space through small non-coercive but inviting opportunities for conversation help (though perhaps minimally) draw out a release of some of the violence harboured within Joe. The release of that violence into the space is not directly confronted but soothed by a number of small responses, including finally a chorus of "goodbyes." These small actions, I contend, create a somewhat more hospitable space. These acts of increased hospitality are hopefully not only merely limited to some decrease in agitation in Joe (though I think they were, evidenced in his more settled return the subsequent week), but also in continually creating a somewhat

hospitable space for the group. The construction of hospitality is also beneficial to the group whose vocal and then silent processing of the violence spread by Joe can be “seen” being metabolized rather than being allowed to blow through them, occasioning violence to another in turn. It is also this co-construction of hospitality by the group that perhaps enables it to become a moment of education, specifically through a growth in empathy that was both permitted and provoked. The moment of education, however, was not forced through explicit didactic instruction or verbal interpretive gloss of the events. Such an overwriting of the events through explicit commentary would, I contend, force the liminal educational horizon into closure, reducing it to a moment of instruction. Instead, the violence, the non-violence, and their reverberations are allowed to linger, to prolong the open space of a non-coercive educational moment.

One can see here, in these reflections upon the autoethnographic story, that a relational ontological imagination is not inherently a pacifist episteme, nor an epistemology of peace. An imagination shaped to “see” a relational ontology is more akin to a tool that can be deployed either towards peace or towards violence, or even towards a blended (non)violence, as in the case of the autoethnographic reflection of both settling and unsettling. This limited claim—that relational ontologies when taken up in imaginative formation can function as a tool for “seeing” (non)violence differently—aids in constraining one’s hope for the tool to that of pragmatic deployment, as in the case of pedagogical decisions made when encountering Joe. This tool may enable a reframing of one’s world for a time, which may result in a different view, and therefore an altered conception of education and pedagogy (like the decision to not didactically implore the cultivation of empathy), and those alterations may result in better and worse outcomes depending on the values used to assess.

What the tool does offer back to the epistemic register that deploys the tool is, perhaps, an increase in epistemic malleability. Again here, I am not arguing that the malleability of one’s epistemic faculties will inherently result in less violence, but I would suggest that an increase in epistemic malleability enables additional possibilities for one to act in ways that are not determined by violence as the “blow” between atomistic entities. Such non-determination also offers further possibilities for epistemic justice when encountering and interpreting others and their testimonies (Dieleman, 2015). The relational ontology spreads backwards across time in the story as I query myself about what has happened to Joe, and search mentally for connections to a previous experience of violence so that I might better be able to hear Joe once he is ready to speak.

Moreover, an imagination informed by a relational ontology also offers the possibility of imagining non-dualities of violence in the mind-body dichotomy. An imagination of violence as a flow or disturbance can potentially be

more easily traced between the mind and the body as an imaginative practice. For example, a spoken word can be imagined traveling across a room, as in the case of Joe's outbursts, entering through the ear and becoming lodged not only in the brain but also in the mind. While such imagining is imprecise, it perhaps can be useful in envisioning violences crossing over the border between mind and body. Yet again, I am not claiming that a relational ontological imagination is inherently this way, but it is perhaps more adaptable as an imaginative space to think of violence as it is related to the mind-body more holistically and more integratedly. This may especially be helpful for those whose "common sense" imaginaries of the world prevent or preclude such porosity.

Conclusion

Through theorization and autoethnography, this chapter has disclosed an articulation of violence as permeating, flowing through, fracturing, disturbing, and becoming lodged in a relational ontology. The relational ontological imagination proposed in this chapter offers itself both as an asset in theorizing violence and opening possibilities for developing non-coercive rearrangement of worlds as the means of realizing education. In turn, the pedagogical task has been shown as that of attending to the many facets of the relational ontological entanglement by means of the imagination so as to cultivate a space that enables generative imaginative possibilities, which can then rearrange both one's world and the collective social world.²

Notes

- 1 All names in this autoethnographic account are changed.
- 2 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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3 Embodied Universal Peace

Curriculum Theory and Buddhist Intersubjective Contemplative Inquiry

Jin Jr Shi

I am breathing: In and out; in and out; and in and out.
I am in the peace arena, honoring and entrusting my awakening seeds, distant it may be from its flowering and fruition:

Without walls of the mind and thus without fears, they see through delusions and finally reach nirvana (awakening).

(Pine, 2009, p. x)

I am noticing the “walls” of my mind; watching my “fears”; and witnessing my “delusions.” It is both uncomfortable and relieving. As uncertainty sustains, breathing mindfulness is conducive to peace explorations. The vitality of peace education relies on the symphony of voices, sectarian and non-sectarian. Peace education without walls and with a diverse mindscape is necessary.

Scholars have connected Buddhist principles and practices to peace-scholarship. Yeh (2006) presents Buddhist ideals of interdependence, non-violence, insight-reflection, moral precepts, and others to reveal the Buddhist connection to peacebuilding. Tanabe (2014) developed a Buddhist peace theory through Buddhist principles of interdependence, compassion, and mindfulness; he emphasizes that inner peace is socially transformative through dialogue and calls for “interdisciplinary approaches” (p. 642). Tanabe (2017) further builds on his theory to expound on peace studies concerning the Buddhist concepts of conditioned and unconditioned minds. In another exposition, Tanabe (2021) explores Buddhist inner peace practices related to peacebuilding and developed a working Post-liberal Hybrid Holistic Peace model that engages four components: democracy, economy, human rights, and inner peace. He emphasized that “peace research is a practice-oriented intellectual enterprise” (p. 71). Likewise, Sharma (2020) theorizes Buddhist vipassana meditation and its capacity to “[eliminate] craving, aversion and ignorance” (p. 142) as the source of peace.

The Buddhist potential for peace imbued in all needs further attention. Torremorell et al. (2020), in exploring “Children’s Views on Citizenship

Education and Peace in Catalan”, found that only 10% of children conceived peace as “inner peace and harmony” (p. 73). Mainstream education has focused on knowledge and skills building solipsistically at the expense of inner and communal peace. The reignition of the core to break boundaries and bondages for peace is necessary. Lin et al. (2019), as proponents of “Contemplative Pedagogies for Transformative Teaching, Learning, and Being,” advise:

We are living in an era with a great urgency to shift education toward building a loving and compassionate world. Contemplative practices can lead to the reduction of the ego, and to the rise of a new ethic of care and sense of bonding as a global family.

It is indeed that a world of guns, wars, and disasters are commonplace to a point of stupefying resilience, callousness, and denial. Scholarship on peace education could not be without discourse on peace contemplations. How do we embrace this core inherent in all to understand peace and to foster peace education?

Buddhism has had a complex history of peace-making, peace-keeping, and peace-developing. Though, by principle, Buddhists value peace, the exhibition of peace in history has been inclusive of violence and war. Textual and philosophical deliberation on the notions of Buddhist peace is necessary to shed light on the Buddhist peace proposition(s), adding to the dialogue on positive and/or negative peace (Kester & Cremin, 2017). As a polytheistic religion, there are diverse Buddhist schools of thought. This chapter will focus on Mahayana Buddhism, the sage who contemplates (listens to) the world’s sound (Kuan Yin or Avalokiteshvara) (Yü, 2001), and the *Heart Sutra* (Sanskrit: Buddhist teachings) as the sacred text to explore Buddhist principles and its implications to peace education. This illustrative text of 268 Chinese characters depicts the Buddhist sage’s process of contemplation. It is renowned in the Buddhist canon as a wisdom text. Genealogically, it is also an extracted gem from a compendium of wisdom texts.

Buddhist monk, Hanshan’s (1941) commentary on the *Heart Sutra*, asserted that, “[Prajna] wisdom [is] fundamentally self-possessed” (p. 213) ... “For this reason it is said that in the middle of the ocean of sufferings, Prajna is the ferry and in the darkness of ignorance Prajna is the light” (p. 220). This is in line with the *wisdom-in-practice* welling from the core of peace. In its comprehensiveness, this text is conceived as a wisdom compass for contemplative inquiry. Correspondingly, there is advocacy for peace studies that emphasize internal factors (Salomon, 2002). This exposition is a survey of the *Heart Sutra*, revealing the principles and intricacies of Buddhist peace from an introspective perspective.

This chapter aims to explore and expand the conceptions of peace education that are embodied in living and manifested practice. This paradigm

points to the essentiality that each individual is the source of peace-making, peace-keeping, and peace-developing, and individuals and localities are essential for peace education to be effective (Ardizzone, 2001). This is empowerment, testament, and agency to the individuals as bearers of peace. The notion of *wisdom-in-practice* in the *Heart Sutra* dissolves the passive implications of Buddhist wisdom and counteracts the conception of mainstream peace education as impractical (Salomon, 2002). The Buddhist scholar peace practitioner will reflect and connect these principles to the work of education. This in turn will connect to curriculum and pedagogy, extending to a Buddhist-inspired peace-scholarship, peace-teaching, and peace-learning.

Methodology: Curriculum Theory and Buddhist Intersubjective Contemplative Inquiry

This chapter will explore peace by engaging curriculum theory and intersubjective contemplative inquiry from a Buddhist perspective. *Currere* is the Latin infinitive of “curriculum,” meaning:

To run the course: Thus *currere* refers to an existential experience of educational structures. The method of *currere* is a strategy decided to disclose experience, so that we may see more of it and see more clearly. With such seeing can come deepened understanding of the running, and with this, can come deepened agency.

(Pinar & Grumet, 1976, p. vii)

Essentially, *currere* is a “study” of educational experiences. Its format is autobiographical or biographical for “deepened understanding” and “deepened agency.” For this chapter, it is understanding of peace curricular scholarship, from *development to understanding*; the latter transforms curriculum from spiritless peace *textbooks* to spirited, peaceful *understanding* as a “‘reading’ of reality that reinterprets that reality, and in the reinterpretation, changes both interpreter and the interpreted” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2004). We reclaim *understanding* and agency by joining Avalokitesharva’s relay as ascribed in the *Heart Sutra*, a trail that interweaves inner-social-scape. William Pinar (2020), the father of curriculum theory, honors Mary Aswell Doll’s wisdom with “inscape”:

... the concept denotes the expression of subjectivity in aesthetics, conceptual, and/or materials form, establishing a through-line from the inner life you affirm (dreams, emotion, thought) to the outer life in which you participate, teaching myth, fiction, and (inadvertently) curriculum theory.

(p. 1)

Curriculum theory as an autobiographical text has its theoretical roots in gender (Grumet, 1990; Miller, 2005; Pagano, 1990); psychoanalysis (Xu, 1998; Grumet, 1981; Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991); phenomenology (Ayers, 1992; van Manen, 2001, 2007); theology (Slattery, 2006); post-structural (Daignault, 1992; Pinar, 1985); narratology (Connelly & Clandinin, 1991); praxeology (Butt et al., 1987); and many other paradigm convergences. Its porous foundations enable worthy intersections of unique fields of study for optimal scholarly transformations, from curriculum as theory to curriculum as practice and encapsulating in curriculum as lived. In Buddhist *prajna*, the middle path eschews merely identifying with a particular paradigm, but to let the interplay of these lines of inquiry rest on invigorating contemplations. I connect “inscape” to Avalokiteshvara’s compassionate practice as I curriculum theorize: Let chaos and peace resonate in its “dream,” “emotion,” and “thought,” and forms and emptiness, within and without. Pinar calls for “inscape,” which is the “unique inner nature of a person” (p. 1). To Avalokiteshvara, it is “*prajna paramita*,” wisdom in its perfection and perfecting implications.

Tapping into wisdom and compassion, I engage in contemplative inquiry echoing the transdisciplinary work of scholars from science, social science, and humanities (Gunnlaugson et al., 2019) and their efforts in “transforming disengaged forms of academic analysis and disenchanting and instrumental habits of mind and life, the project of cultivating contemplative capacities of presence, discernment, and equanimity with our time” (p. 5). In drawing from the second-person intersubjective contemplative inquiry that bridges inner-social, peace-chaos: “between us, in contrast to inside us (subjective position) or outside us (objective position)” (Gunnlaugson et al., 2017, p. viii), I develop heightened sensibilities of subjectivities, its potentials and blind spots, “to cultivate collaborative discernment, inspire deeper shared and coemergent contemplative states of knowing” (p. xii). The peace scholar-practitioner is in between self and text; between self and others; and between peace and chaos, heightening “discernment” and “states of knowing” intersubjectively.

Likewise, Keator (2019) describes a “Three-Tiered Monastic Approach” through the ancient monastic practice of *Lectio Divina* incorporating intersubjective dialogue which aims to: “engage in dialogue with logos, where within sacred texts, within themselves, or with each other for the purpose of awakening to a deeper way of knowing, being, and living in the world” (p. 199). Rossini (2021), in dialogue with Merton’s words, relates to text as “friends” (p. 176) and bridges the cartesian, contemplative, and aesthetical forms of inquiry to allow the “promise of *Sophia*” (p. 176). In this intersubjective contemplative inquiry, the sacred text, the *Heart Sutra*, is a fellow constituent, forming a peaceful square—the scholar contemplator, Kuan Yin, the *Heart Sutra*, and the team of reader contemplators—of interlacing peace voices.

In this relay, we direct and are directed by the “Heart” compass; we witness peace in its continuum. Curriculum theorist Hendry (2008), engaging Buddhist thought, proposes compassion as a way of being and knowing in the world:

It is through acts of compassion that we know and become ... Compassionate knowing is one that rejects binaries like male/female, king/peasant, self/other, black/white. Compassion necessitates that we must see beyond these worldly categories ... The third space provides a place in which to envision social justice from an epistemology of compassion where being present to others is a mode of acknowledging injustices in the world.
(p. 224)

As a companion of wisdom, compassion is a powerful virtue or embodiment that is often difficult to stimulate and fathom; it can manifest in our daily experiences and yet be taken for granted. Compassion revolves around and resolves “binaries” and “worldly categories.” Similarly, Janesick (2016) connects Buddhist Zen and qualitative inquiry with three key elements—“the concepts of observations being impermanent, interviewing as non-self, and writing as nirvana” (p. 150). Intersubjectively, expanding time, self, and peace, we-I likewise systematically parse the *Heart Sutra* and observe the mental structures, converse from the mind-heart (same character in Chinese) with the mind-heart text, and let the compassionate dialogue ripple forth to oneself, others, and peace education universally. Encapsulating in Buddhist *currere*, we engage in intersubjective compassionate contemplative inquiry. This is *wisdom-in-practice*.

Intrascapes

When Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva was practicing the profound prajna paramita, he [she] illuminated the five skandhas and saw that they were all empty (seeing they were empty of self-existence), and he crossed beyond all suffering and difficulty.

(Hua, 1980, p. 1)

I honor Avalokiteshvara in this writing; facing frustrations, practicing patience, and purporting peace along the way. Avalokiteshvara is Sanskrit for Kuan Yin and translates as listening to the sounds of the world with compassion and kindness as its essence. Bodhisattvas are Buddhist sages who avow to awaken others and oneself. I listen to the voice that wants to give up, write, find peace, and promote peace. I keep listening, breathing: In and out; in and out; and in and out. I engage and expand compassionate listening

(Leong, 2017) through listening to the words of the *Heart Sutra*, one-by-one, section-by-section, and as a whole. I listen, observe, and write. I am acquainted with the “five skandhas.” I listen to the five skandhas: to the form, to the sensation, to the perception, to the memory, and to the consciousness. Where is peace to be awakened?

The reacquaintance is weak, fleeting, and nonsensically empty. The characteristics of emptiness is conceived in its dynamic shifts and changes of the skandhas. Its existence is posited in impermanence and its relational aspects and as such, “empty of self-existence.” The scholar-practitioner in curriculum theorizing peace recognizes this proposition and heightens the inner sensibilities in contemplating “suffering and difficulty”—the first of the Four Noble Truths experienced by the historical Buddha and illustrated by our experiences. How does one develop peace in face of suffering? One of the pathways is by empowering oneself and contemplating the Noble Truths: first, recognize suffering; second, acknowledge suffering as rooted in greed, anger, and ignorance; third, exercise human agency to counteract the suffering; and fourth, engage in counteracting practices such as the Eightfold Paths (right understanding, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, meditation, and concentration). Suffering cannot be taken for granted, but it is not coincidental. It is humanly charged; humanely observed; and capable of being humanly and humanely absolved. As curriculum theorist Maxine Greene (1975), in heightening consciousness, awakens us:

Disorder, in other words, is continually breaking in; meaninglessness is recurrently overcoming landscapes that once were demarcated, meaningful. It is at moments like these that the individual reaches out to reconstitute meaning, to close the gap, to make sense once again.

(p. 307)

Greene impresses upon human volition and human action to “reconstitute” both suffering and peace. To heal the “disorder,” and the “suffering,” wisdom and compassion are necessary.

Likewise, Orr (2017) in “Nature, Human Nature, Human-as-Nature” explores intersubjective contemplation through Anapanasati (Breathing) mindfulness. Through this breathing process, the breather breathes into existence:

[They are] part of the totality of the world, and since the inner/outer, self/other, human/nature dichotomies have collapsed, there is no “thing” external to the student[s] for [them] to need in order to be real ... They will have a deeper understanding of themselves as part of the natural order and a greater ability to learn from that order.

(p. 183)

Orr notes the possibilities in her students as they engage in contemplation; honoring the core in its totality. It is as the illumination of the five skandhas to its fullest-whole-totality—the becoming and blossoming of “emptiness.” The scholar-practitioner and all others engage in compassionate contemplations to its fullest potential and regain sustaining peace. This is *wisdom-in-practice*, the transformation of the “five skandhas” in peace, of peace, for peace.

Intrascapes to Interscapes

Shariputra, form does not differ from emptiness; emptiness does not differ from form. Form itself is emptiness; emptiness itself is form. So, too, are feeling, cognition, formation, and consciousness [sensation and perception, memory and consciousness].

(Hua, 1980, p. 1)

From the text, Shariputra, the Buddha’s disciple foremost in wisdom, is called upon. In resonance, the distinction between emptiness and form is blurred, yet distinct. In compassionately listening, self and others sing; peace and chaos dialogue; intersections heighten. Sensation, perception, memory, and consciousness are strung along. In Buddhist contemplation, this is the practice of the middle path (Xu, 1998). The fourth Noble Truth, “the way” is akin to the “middle path,” with its emphasis in balancing excesses and extremes. According to this section of the *Heart Sutra*, literally, it is the reconciliation of form-emptiness; sensation-emptiness; perception-emptiness; memory-emptiness; and consciousness-emptiness. Metaphorically, it is a state of balance between contrasting ideas and ideals. Practically, it means recognizing that the mind is empowered in its potential to converge the concrete and impermanent characteristics of life. It is this middle path, balance, and convergence that enable *wisdom-in-practice* rather than merely succumbing to chaos, internally, externally, and in-between. Similarly, there is Macdonald’s (1995) “centering,” Wang’s (2004) “third space,” and Aoki’s (2005) “in-between,” as these curriculum theorists sing, dialogue, and reconceptualize the work of curriculum studies.

Peace scholar-leader-educator Galtung (1985), in referencing Buddhist principles, connects the middle-way to peace work:

The doctrine of the middle road is a philosophy expressed as a concrete approach to life. The basic point is “neither too much nor too little,” an approach that will tend to make Buddhists non-fanatic. In the field of attitudes and belief this would imply a tendency to stay away from extreme positions. This could, in turn, make Buddhists, like Quakers, useful as bridge-builders, as contacts between the extremes, perhaps pulling the extremes towards a more “pragmatic” Buddhist position.

Although Galtung propounds the interfaith “middle road” as concrete like roads and paths, the work of peace is often a long, windy, and turbulent process. Buddhist peacemakers are like “bridge-builders.” Peace is indeed also an elusive term, but its foremost definition in Merriam-Webster is “a state of tranquility or quiet.” Peace is stillness. In stillness, form and emptiness rise and fall from moment to moment. Peace is the core; one’s original propensity that is hidden like the Buddhist Lotus Parable of the “Jewel in the Pocket.” It requires patience to find the jewel in us. According to Galtung’s (2017) *Peace: Peace Practitioner’s Guide*, in which his peace equation energizes peaceful vocation—the formula below for peace by peaceful means, that may have multiple factors in the denominator, may serve as a basis. Galtung additionally describes four tasks in building peace:

$$\text{PEACE} = (\text{Equity} \times \text{Harmony}) \div (\text{Trauma} \times \text{Conflict})$$

And four tasks...: [1] Constructing Equity: cooperation for mutual and equal benefit; [2] Constructing Harmony: emotional resonance in the Daoist sense of enjoying the joy and suffer the suffering of Other; [3] Reconciling Past Trauma: clearing the past, acknowledging wrongs, wishing them undone, dialogues about why and how, creating a future. [4] Resolving Present Conflict: making incompatible, contradictory goals more compatible, softening negative attitudes and behavior.

(2017, p. 3)

Both Galtung and the Buddhist peace paradigm encapsulate agency in the individual and in the collective. Galtung’s “constructing,” “reconciling,” and “resolving” seek complex deliberations and actions of the peace bearer(s). He also accentuates the shades of peace, the process, and the individual and communal, being the balance and balancing factors. Likewise, Quinn (2014) in curriculum theorizing peace pedagogy emphasizes that: “Deep peace, deep democracy, entails in this way ongoing encounters with others, in difference; and through such cultivating shared interests and new affiliations—what students, and aspiring teachers, and teachers in [her] study spoke of as ‘unity-in-diversity’” (p. 134). Indeed, this compassionate relay is a unification process *in peace, of peace, for peace*.

Balancing the individual and the communal is an exhilarating project. Simmer-Brown (2017) in advocating for interreligious, intersubjective dialogue, notes “listening dangerously”:

When we truly listen to another, a resonance opens in our hearts, even if we have a conceptual reaction that closes doors between us; it is the human connection that speaks to us. If we are committed to suspending judgment, we find ourselves listening deeply. That listening leads us to hearing our own hearts as well, and we begin to recognize the orphaned identities we carry.

(p. 244)

Simmer-Brown's "resonance" and her call for deep listening and suspension of judgment is yet another middle space for peaceful possibilities. It is the middle where all meets, if only one, we could use the mind-heart purposefully, creatively, and compassionately—*wisdom-in-practice*.

Intrascap Reconsidered

Shariputra, all dharmas are empty of characteristics. They are not produced. Not destroyed, not defiled, not pure, and they neither increase nor diminish. Therefore, in emptiness there is no form, feeling, cognition, formation, or consciousness; no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind; no sights, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, or dharmas; no field of the eyes, up to and including no field of mind-consciousness.

(Hua, 1980, p. 1)

The *Heart Sutra* further illuminates the mind; the Eighteen mind-factors (dharmas) in Buddhist psychology, the sense faculties and corresponding functions and consciousnesses, as the points of bondage and fixation; and the breaking down of boundaries using negation to counteract one-sided thinking and foster holistic rejuvenation. It posits the detachment of the selfish individual (which deconstructs the tangible forms and functions) and transformation into the inclusive individual. It is also the detachment of "things" and the bifurcation or "emptiness" of characteristics. What a peaceful paradox!

Galtung (1985) in appreciating the Buddhist potential in peacebuilding expresses:

According to Buddhist philosophy, the world is filled with contradictions, the whole approach being highly dialectic. From a peace theoretical point of view one possible implication of this is that one should not try to get rid of contradictions, trying to make systems pure. Rather, a diversity with contradictions is both possible and even desirable. And to strive for a contradiction-free reality is meaningless.

(p. 9)

There is a paradox concession required to the understanding of Buddhist "emptiness" or "no." Immersed deeply in the habits of constricted existence and the world of form, the concept of emptiness is both conflicting and comforting. Galtung's call for contradictions and meaning is consoling for peace pilgrims.

In an earlier study of tensions as a teacher-scholar nun, I explored binaries between curriculum theory and practice, and curriculum theory and Buddhist principles. Through the study, I learned about ongoing concessions, or as Grumet (1975) states "*Currere* may not affect the total reconciliation of

objectivity and subjectivity in educational research, but it does commit us to acknowledge paradox, if that is our experience” (p. 19). Attestment to the paradoxes of research, teaching, and being, I have lessened the self-inflicted bondages and fixations, allowing prospects that I would not have imagined, as Maxine Greene (2000) warns: “...human possibility is limited by the truncation of imagination” (p. 23). In curriculum theorizing in a moral-democratic third space, at crossing junctures, I, Leong (2017) abided with a smile:

The smile represents the wordless teaching or phenomenon in Buddhism. It is ironic to touch upon wordlessness, “emptiness” at the completion of this autobiographical research study and writing. Yet, it is this wordless, “empty” smile that constitutes the third space for a teacher-scholar-nun to continuously dwell upon and is reminiscent of the fullness of moral-democratic teaching, learning, and being.

(p. 253)

In face of tensions, nourished by compassionate listening, I realize a temporal moral-democratic third space of Buddhist humor in curriculum theorizing scholarship. I was able to observe the vitality of tensions, see beyond the “forms,” “characteristics,” and “functions,” by enriching them with conceptions of the Bodhisattva’s (Buddhist sages) Six Perfections of generosity, morality, patience, energy, meditation, and wisdom. It is vital to note that the temporal nature of this reconciliation, a responsible, “empty” smile, gives space to the recharging of energy and imagination, foreshadowing ensuing peace-in-progress. This is *wisdom-in-practice* of embracing peace education’s flea-fly-flow propensities.

Intrascapes-Interscapes Expanded

... and no ignorance or ending of ignorance, up to and including no old age and death or ending of old age and death. There is no suffering, no accumulating, no extinction, no way, and no understanding and no attaining.

(Hua, 1980, p. 1)

Writing about ignorance with ignorance deserves a hearty smile. Ignorance is both a foe and friend. It is a shadow. It is also related to the second Noble Truth: Ignorance as the underlying cause of suffering. Yet, according to this section of the *Heart Sutra*, ignorance is part and parcel of the peaceful core, the Buddha nature, which is all-inclusive and in this sense, does not require separate “naming.” However, to arrive at this totality requires calling out of ignorance, so the text continues to mark milestones, quintessential to

awakening of peace. It is through this process of de-essentialization that the sages who contemplate on the 12 links (a. Ignorance, b. Karmic Formation, c. Consciousness, d. Name and Form, e. Six Involvements, f. Contact, g. Feeling, h. Craving, i. Grasping, j. Existence, k. Birth, l. Old Age and Death) and the Four Noble Truths, breakthrough the essentialized self and matters, up to the point of breaking through the conception of awakening for ultimate awakening.

Roy and Zeckhauser (2015), in “The Anatomy of Ignorance” shared: “Like keeping your eye on the ball in tennis or leaning your weight down-hill in skiing, staying alert to ignorance is an unnatural skill that has to be learned. So too is the skill of responding to ignorance effectively” (p. 71). It is the goal in Buddhist peace practices that our passionate response to ignorance disentangles us from its grasp. Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) in “Our Passion for Ignorance,” points to an intersubjective play of ignorance:

... Such a view of learning and teaching requires a humbling move, for both teacher and student must reconcile with the fact that the former is not all-knowing, that the latter is not simply ignorance, and that both are entangled in a complex web of effective attachment to each other and to our own sense of who we think we are. And given how much we invest on our own self-image, the task could not be more formidable.

(p. 453)

The teacher-student connection in the pursuit of knowledge and ignorance is formative and humbling. It is this humbling relationship that is an opening for a collective desensitization of ignorance up to the reconciliation of “suffering,” “accumulating,” “extinction,” and “the way,” that the clarity and exuding compassion in this inevitable beingness and togetherness would ensure ongoing peace-making, peace-keeping, and peace-developing as individuals and collective.

Galtung (1985) connects Buddhist nirvana (awakening/attaining) to peace work and states nirvana:

... should not be translated as “extinction” or similar metaphors used in western presentations. It might rather be seen as some kind of realization of the unity of man doctrine, a self-realization where the anatta (non-self) doctrine is fully realized, in a state of constant sukha (happiness). This would be highly compatible with the idea of peace ... Nirvana is entropy, peace is entropy—hence, in a certain sense, peace is nirvana and nirvana is peace.

(pp. 10–11)

It is exhilarating that Galtung connects awakening with entropy. Awakening and peace are indeed a comprehensive, all-inclusive package of every facet of life including afflictions. Just as awakening requires the full package of existence, peace is packed with its diversity and challenges.

Correspondingly, Orr (2017), in exploring intersubjective contemplations, stresses: “How we can learn from the earth and nonhuman beings, from our human nature and ourselves as a part of nature and indicate how this learning can become part of the education process” (p. 159). She expresses that through de-essentializing self, “rather than falling into a void of nonbeing, the student is ‘actualized,’ that is, experiences [their] being as a totality of the whole” (p. 181). Galtung’s entropy, the disorder or disjunction, parallel to Orr’s inception of the nature and human divide, is reconciled as holistic unification when human agency is exercised for deep peace and *wisdom-in-practice* is reenergized. The key to this unification is not unity as the text advises—“no attaining,” which implies that milestones are reasonable, but not endstones; peace, peace work, and peace education continue to ripple forth.

Interscape

Because nothing is attained, the Bodhisattva, through reliance on prajna paramita, is unimpeded in his mind. Because there is no impediment, he is not afraid, and he leaves distorted dream-thinking far behind. Ultimately Nirvana!

(Hua, 1980, p. 2)

How does *wisdom-in-practice* flower forth? When the selfish self is de-essentialized, the selfless self is brought out of its shadow. The latter is the original propensity of sentients. And peace is rekindled and reignited, and not a new phenomenon to be “attained.” In many respects, it is like Quinn (2011), building on Serres, Montaigne, Ranciere, and others, in curriculum theorizing ignorance, “Committing to Ignorance,” to counter marginalizations of “the tree of knowledge” (p. 34); the peace bearers commit to peace and peacefulness that wells forth within to harmonize the pervasive “suffering” and “fear.” It speaks to agency as in the third Noble Truth. At this stage, the mind is liberated from its “impediment” and we can manage suffering, maneuver fear, and mutate “distorted dream-thinking” to peaceful contemplations. Suffering and fear is transformed into *wisdom-in-practice* to alleviate our troubles. This process is like Daltung’s peace equation that requires practice, patience, and poise in charging the peace “numerator,” imbuing the peaceful core. We have to experience to exist, and the quality of the experience and existence depends on us. Rightly so, peace is lived, “not attained,” lived through compassionate *wisdom-in-practice*. We are alive. Peace is alive in us!

Thoun et al. (2019) illuminate this liberation in their exploration of intersubjective contemplative inquiry:

... rather than considering intersubjectivity as a relational process that is bound to discursive, dialogical, and social formations, we found the human becoming theory and contemplative practices reinforced our view of intersubjectivity as happening in the oneness of all that goes beyond discursive and constructivist positions. Using the skillful means of contemplative practices, we shift the focus onto being (as is) rather than fixing, altering, or changing—an honoring of what is without judgment rather than an urge for comparison, mastery, or critique.

(p. 142)

Contemplations aside, Thoun, Bruce, and Tschanz accentuate ultimate being and letting things *be*, including forgoing the need to categorize and conceptualize peace, words, languages, and really, beings and becomings; peacefully living this totality, this wonderful kaleidoscope, free from barriers and demarcations. We are one and whole!

All Buddhas of the three periods of time attain *Anuttarasamyaksambodhi* through reliance on *prajna* paramita. Therefore, know that *prajna* paramita is a great spiritual mantra, a great bright mantra, a supreme mantra, an unequalled mantra. It can remove all suffering; it is genuine and not false. That is why the mantra of *prajna* paramita was spoken. Recite it like this: “*Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, bodhi svaha*’ – Go, go, go beyond, go further beyond, towards enlightenment”.

(Hua, 1980, p. 2)

All sentient beings have the *Tathagatagarbha*, the awakened nature (*Anuttarasamyaksambodhi*). The Heart-Mind text is an awakening “mantra” as Buddhist monk Fazang (2020) describes the text’s purpose: “*The Sutra on Delivering the Heart of Transcendental Discernment* is a beacon lighting the dark crossroads, a swift boat ferrying sentient beings across the ocean of suffering, lifting up and guiding all those who are lost and confused” (p. 38). With discernment, ride the ferry, soar the waves, strengthen the core nature, and peace is heightened along. When each individual is aware and recognizes the core, peace illuminates all like a room filled with mirrors. Each mirror-like sentient being reflects peace. *Wisdom-in-practice* enables the reflecting mirrors. It is like Quinn’s (2014) pedagogical investigation into her students’ and her student teachers’ peace visuals that shed light on a collective purpose: “Beginning with me, beginning with you, beginning with us; imagine all the people together: peace on earth” (p. 11). The relay continues

to transform. Peace work and peace education never get easier, but *prajna wisdom-in-practice* is our hands and feet.

Intrascape-Interscape Redux

Through this compassionate intersubjective contemplation, you have been the reader contemplator and have simultaneously participated in the relay *in peace, of peace, for peace*. In the writing process, I engage the *Heart Sutra*, and us. Walsh and Bai (2017), drawing from their Buddhist practices, engages “Writing in the Cauldron as Intersubjective Practice”:

Through the practice of placing words images, contemplations, and sensory experiences into the cauldron—while intentionally re-membering our ground of loving-kindness, compassion, empathic joy, and equanimity—returning again and again to this ground—we work intentionally with intersubjectivity in the space between us and also beyond.

(p. 255)

The cauldron is a perfect symbol for this flourishing concoction of intersubjective, boundless peace, nourished by the Bodhisattva’s Unlimited Minds: Loving-kindness, compassion, empathic joy, and equanimity. As such, compassionately writing this peace contemplation is not to be conceived as nihilistic in its intent. Recapitulating *currere*, Pinar (2012) implores curriculum scholars “to study the relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self-understanding and social reconstruction” (p. 44). How are “intrascares” and “interscares” relevant for scholars, teachers, and students?

Interscape Expanded

The intersubjective compassionate engagement between the *Heart Sutra* and the peace bearers is an experience of fundamental wholeness, of original totality; the scope, the depth, and the richness of this peace continue to grow in its expansiveness. *Wisdom-in-practice* has shone the way. This compassionate, awakening journey is Manjurvaja’s (1988) “beyond war and peace: great peace,” as he exhorts—“The teaching of the Buddha points to the realization that our true nature goes far beyond our merely human form. On the basis of this realization true peace can be experienced, and the truly nonviolent life can be attained” (p. 126). There are many non-violent practices, but the beholding of the “great peace” is relevant to every scholar, teacher, and student, recognizing their “true nature,” as aspired in the relay of this

contemplative inquiry. As Gunnlaugson et al. (2019) heed the necessary expansion in contemplative inquiry in higher education:

Intersubjectivity involves an openness to being in contact with another at these deeper levels: by and with another person, a group of people, a text or idea, an animal, plant, mineral, or the entire cosmos. Intersubjectivity informs and makes claims on our individual subjectivity.

Let us repeat: mindful practice generates consciousness and hence brings us into contact with the interior dimensions of subjectivity, which, when it becomes shared, is a central dynamism of the contemplative turn in higher education.

(p. xvi)

This is a call to re-energize contemplative inquiry as we embrace the “collective communitas” (p. xvii) and engage in “contemplative milieus” (p. xvii), in the hallways of academia, in teacher education programs, and in the classrooms; to let intersubjectivity interplay our dynamic individual and collective humanity *in peace, of peace, with peace*.

Another interfaith inspiration, Moritaki (1988) as a survivor of Hiroshima:

An old woman of the Pure Land Buddhists prayed to Amida Buddha, chanting his name; Nichiren women devotees beat drums and chanted the title of the *Lotus Sutra* all around me and alongside many Christians. An old Christian doctor with his wife and several nurses came to us every morning with hot black tea, and prayed that peace and health would be with us during the sit-in. Many adherents of different religions gathered there, but I never felt a sense of strangeness. It seemed to me that everybody present was of one mind.

(p. 134)

Moritaki thought that “sit-in is typical of a nonviolent action” (p. 136) until a small girl asked, “Can they stop anything just by sitting?” He had an epiphany from this provoking question. It is a realization that they are not merely sitting, but they could actually “break through the nucleus of self” (p. 136). Moritaki “put the feeling of the moment into words”:

A chain reaction of spiritual atoms
Must overcome
The chain reaction of material atoms.

(p. 136)

In contemplative inquiry with the *Heart Sutra*, holistically, spirituality made peace with materialism. Gordon (1988) attests: “Peacemakers can attain

depth, direction, and vision in their endeavors when they act as whole beings” (p. 211). The replication of this Buddhist-influenced practice, with mind and spirit as its essence and the reignition of the peaceful core, is significant for scholars, teachers, and students. It is food, fuel, and force for peace work and livelihood.

Curriculum theorizing peace from a Buddhist perspective has heightened the vitality and agency of scholars, teachers, and students as bearers of peace and ultimate non-violence. This is monumental in light of the surging uncertainty of the world, family, and self-affairs. Evidently, Bladermann (1988) with “The Bible as a Teacher of Peace” cautions the victim syndrome that incapacitates peace work: “Those who see themselves only as victim are no longer capable of a life of peace. Without hope there is no education for peace” (p. 85). Fellow scholars, teachers, and students: echo hope and promote collective faith in one’s peaceful core; break the walls; run the relay of compassion and wisdom; and light the interpeace of humankind.

Conclusion

The truth expressed in the sutra is everywhere to be seen;
 It is in our mind, the beginning and end of which are unknown.
 The blindfolded sentient beings fail to see it;
 Manjushri (Wisdom Bodhisattva) and *Prajna* can dissolve their
 confusions.
 May a shower of nectar be poured upon those lost on the Way;
 May they equally be severed from ignorance, and may they vanquish
 hosts of tempters.

(Kukai, 1972, p. 275)

In exploring Buddhist *currere* peace education, *wisdom-in-practice* has lightened the way. This attempt to trail wisdom with words is the greatest irony of penmanship. With expedient, interim language, wisdom with its elusiveness and exclusiveness touched ground. *Wisdom-in-practice* is: (a) Compassionate intersubjective contemplative inquiry; (b) Transformation of the skandhas, unhealthy habitual tendencies that shackle peace; it darkens the skandhas instead of lightening them; (c) Resonance of dualness; (d) Fluctuation that beckons possibilities; (e) Self-control. As a bearer of peace, I reconnect to my core nature through the *Heart Sutra*. The beauty in the sacred texts are its timely and timeless functions. The *Heart Sutra*’s efficacy is precisely in its unfathomableness, its bottomless depths and extensive breadths, which gives space to ongoing co-creation of intersubjective peace education. As the *Heart Sutra* advocates for selflessness, balance, and interconnectedness, counteracting self, ignorance, and disharmony, this *prajna* pen is a wonderful tool for peaceful contemplations as a scholar-teacher-nun.

Compassionate intersubjective contemplative inquiry is a process relevant to students, teachers, and scholars. With the core resonating from the contemplations of the constituents in the classroom and beyond, this palimpsest of peace is fueled by *wisdom-in practice*. This is a significant pulse and pattern for peace education to flourish and reach uncommon grounds. Fellow Jin Jr Shi: Be at peace. Ignite the peace beacon, wear a hearty smile, run the relay, and let the light inter-illuminate and never faint!¹

Note

- 1 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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Part II

**Cross-Cultural Education
Countering Violence**



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4 **Creating an Intercultural Peace Education Course Online with Devised Theatre for High-Ability Teenagers of Different Backgrounds and World Regions**

Kristen Seward and Bekir Olcay Akce

In our world today, peace is an ideal that will never be realized or a promising idea that never comes to fruition. The dark side of human nature's propensity for conflict fans the flames of a culture of war worldwide. When cultures of war and conflict monopolize the news, stirring up rebellion, fear, and hopelessness, cultures of peace rarely make headlines until individuals who have fought long and hard for it are memorialized for their efforts. Even when multitudes of people from every region of the world believe in freedom, justice, and fundamental human rights and can agree upon how these values may become manifest in diverse societies (Mehta, 2019), a culture of peace and our conceptualization of it remain elusive. Peace education, however, holds the greatest promise for extinguishing these flames by promoting "freedom of opinion, expression, and information as integral aspects of human rights and fundamental freedoms and replacing the secrecy and manipulation of information that characterizes the culture of war" (Mehta, 2019, p. 82). Peace education from the cradle to the grave that not only informs but also feels its way towards peace is the key.

Teenagers with High Ability

Our rationale for selecting adolescents with advanced intellectual abilities or high ability (HA) for this study includes their intellectual, social, and emotional characteristics; the lack of research in peace education involving students with HA; and the diversity of adolescents from across the globe who participate in our summer residential academic enrichment programme. A broad sweep of peace education literature with students with intellectual HA resulted in zero sources; however, several sources for other talent areas in the fine arts exist. Adolescents with HA are often driven by empathic idealism and the ability to think critically and creatively about their concerns and hopes for the future. They exhibit heightened intellectual and social and emotional sensitivities and intensities and constantly strive to make sense of

the people and experiences that touch their lives (Peterson, 2012). Lovecky (1993) and Mendaglio (1995) characterize this heightened sensitivity as more intense depths of feeling and emotional experiences, self- and other-awareness (with regard to perspective-taking), passion, and compassion.

An interpersonal component of this emotional sensitivity, intensity, and depth is empathy—“an other-oriented emotional response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else” (Batson et al., 2002, p. 485). Empathy consists of cognitive and emotional aspects: students use cognitive empathy when they seek to understand what someone is thinking and feeling; they use emotional empathy when they take on the feelings of someone else (McDonald & Messinger, 2012). Several devised theatre activities in this course in the Summer Academic Enrichment Camp called for students to focus on one or the other or both. Empathy in children with HA presents itself in pre-school or early elementary, earlier than their same-age peers, and is frequently accompanied by altruistic motivation to help others, often without regard for personal consequences (Hebert, 2011). For the students in this course, this energy combined with the typical developmental tasks of adolescence (e.g., independence, identity formation, feelings of invulnerability, importance of peer relationships) makes the explicit study of peace with these youth deeply experiential and intellectually exciting. Solving meaningful, complicated problems is intrinsically motivating, and the need for autonomy, belonging, and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000) propels them to think divergently and act conscientiously.

The Summer Academic Enrichment Camp

The Summer Academic Enrichment Camp (SAEC) has a long, successful record for engaging students with HA from across the country and around the world in classes designed to stimulate their imaginations and expand their abilities. Friendships develop quickly as students with HA bond over similar academic interests and school experiences and in small group discussions and friendly competitions. Those of us who coordinate these programmes have often stated that our SAEC is the beginning of world peace as international friendships among bright adolescents are made. Yet, we haven't been intentional about helping them to share and understand their unique perspectives and experiences with regard to conflict and peace, to collaborate with their diverse peers to solve problems that disrupt peace, or to co-conceptualize a world at peace. Therefore, it seemed natural to offer a course centred on peace with an overarching goal to create a safe virtual space where universality, sincere communication, reflection, creativity, and critical self-examination take place to promote intercultural conceptions of peace, non-violence, and conflict resolution. Because of these important student characteristics and the unique setting of the SAEC, peace education

as empowerment education (Harris & Morrison, 2013) provided the conceptual framework for autonomy that instils confidence for questioning status quo thinking and action; for belonging that fosters woke empathy and beneficent global citizenship; and for competence that challenges “what is” and moves students towards self-efficacy and socially responsible action (Harris & Morrison, 2013).

Intercultural Education

From its inception, intercultural education has promoted student-centred teaching and learning in classrooms built on the values of fairness, equality, universality, physical and emotional safety, democratic principles, and social justice, where students are empowered to share their beliefs, experiences, and insights, to recognize and problematize their biased thinking and behaviour, and to resolve conflicts in a restorative manner (Gay, 2002). The teachers in these classrooms teach and model empathy and mutual support; respect diversity with regard to race, culture, family income status, gender, age, and disability; establish safety and reassurance through classroom rules, procedures, and norms for behaviour; and select curriculum materials that positively represent multiple cultures and perspectives (Badrkhani, 2020).

Intercultural education shares many aspects with the United Nations conceptual framework for a culture of peace “based on the universal values of respect for life, freedom, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men... and among nations” (Capistrano, 2020, p. 41). This definition includes negative peace (i.e., the absence of direct violence) and positive peace (i.e., the absence of violence and the promotion of actions that create and preserve peace). An understanding of these differences is foundational to peace education (Kurian & Kester, 2019). However, critics claim that the UN’s conceptual framework falls short by focusing on peace as the individual’s responsibility rather than calling for broader social justice through individual and systemic change (Capistrano, 2020). When peace is defined in negative and positive terms, its more contextual, fluid meanings are diminished. When this happens, inconspicuous acts of violence and pseudo-violence prior to, during, and after conflict often remain intact, and “true” peace is unrealized. Conflict on all levels, from intrapersonal to interpersonal, from individuals to families, from families to communities, and from communities to nations, persists in subterfuge through discriminatory policies, malignant propaganda, one-sided media, and derogatory nomenclature. Cultures of positive peace address these important components of true, lasting peace through the preservation of basic human rights and the development of well-informed, responsible, and freedom-focused democracies (Chufamo et al., 2020). Intercultural peace education recognizes these overlapping levels of peace and violence as operating

simultaneously in complex contexts. At the international level, for example, when is waging war (a violent action) an acceptable choice, if ever? The gauge used to measure whether sustainable, equitable peace has been achieved is well-being at all levels—personal, interpersonal, community, ecological, national, and international well-being.

Geneva Gay supports this idea through five characteristics of culturally responsive teaching:

1. Legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learn and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum;
2. Bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities;
3. A wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning [preferences];
4. Students who know and praise their own and each other's cultural heritages; and
5. Multicultural information, resources, and materials in all of the subjects and skills that are routinely taught in schools.

(2002, pp. 31–32)

These characteristics are integral to course design, underscoring the vital role of education in cultivating critical thinking and promoting well-being for all. The importance of honest communication, empathy, and mutual understanding cannot be overemphasized. Defining and understanding the importance of culture and its influences on the values, beliefs, customs, and behavioural norms of individuals, subgroups, and the population as a whole are foundational to building a sense of community in the classroom whether online or face-to-face.

Devised Theatre

Even though its effectiveness has been confirmed (Batdı & Batdı, 2015; Gaudart, 1990; Keles, 2015; McCaslin, 2006; Smith & Herring, 1993; Stephens, 2013; Taşkın, 2013), creative dramatics, including devised theatre, are not widely used as an instructional strategy among K-12 teachers. Many educators relegate drama to a separate fine arts course or extra-curricular activity instead of adapting it to enhance learning in core subjects. However, teachers in any content area at any grade level can use creative drama to establish successful pathways for actively engaging students in the learning process, for providing multiple entry points into the curriculum, and for revealing multiple layers of understanding content-specific topics (Stephens, 2013). Creative drama

techniques can be integrated in multiple ways for various topics and used as a successful pathway for actively engaging students in the learning process (Gaudart, 1990; Smith & Herring, 1993; Stephens, 2013). Students are centre stage where meaningful learning is elevated above acting skills, and knowledge is managed and created through the contributions of teachers and the students themselves (Saglamel & Kayaoglu, 2013). The role of drama in task-based learning, such as devised theatre, allows students to become co-agents in the dramatic learning process and product (Carson, 2012).

As a practice, knowledge in drama is embodied, culturally located, and socially disturbed. This means that knowledge is produced through interaction with others and that reciprocity between participants creates new forms of social and cultural capital. Creative drama is autonomy-supportive because students have choice and voice in constructing knowledge through meaningful learning activities.

As an instructional approach to peace education, devised theatre involves participants in intentional acting, thinking, and feeling their way through complex, interrelated topics, such as justice, social justice, revenge, forgiveness, and peace. As a form of creative drama, devised theatre is a teaching tool that conveys knowledge, arouses interest, solves problems, and change attitudes.

(McCaslin, 2006, p. 261)

Unlike other forms of creative drama, devised theatre is a more serious way to learn, as in our course where weightier topics related to peace in students' lived experiences are explored, including bias, discrimination, and body image. Another benefit of devised theatre is that the rigors of production are non-existent compared to traditional theatre—no staging, sets, scripts, or special lighting. The physical (or virtual) classroom space serves as the stage, and a heightened focus on the learning process requires impromptu, creative deliveries. Students direct their own learning where grades and wrong answers do not exist. Because of this, the devised theatre approach encourages students to create without concern for giving the “right” answer, a common concern for students with HA.

Conceptual Understandings of an Online Culture of Peace using Devised Theatre

The utility and effectiveness of devised theatre techniques across content areas in education and in various contexts is well-documented (Dixon et al., 2020; Dobson, 2019; Clark, 2019); however, applying devised theatre in peace education in online classrooms has not been widely researched, especially those designed for students with intellectual HA. However, studies

involving adolescents in theatre-based pedagogies, especially those that focused on their social and emotional needs, informed the development of our course. For example, Dobson (2019) reported positive social, emotional, and behavioural outcomes and increases in adolescents' senses of hope after participating in a weeklong theatre-based programme. In addition, Horn et al. (2021) created and successfully implemented the *Act Out Justice* model of reflective and collaborative inquiry process to guide conversations about current, divisive topics through six lenses of social justice: sex, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and ability (p. 75). Despite the challenges, education that utilizes devised theatre, including those that explore social and emotional health in online contexts, will likely become more common due to the worldwide COVID pandemic. For example, Dixon et al. (2020) utilized applied theatre and devising techniques online to address individual and community needs and resiliency during the pandemic when communities were quarantined. Participants reported improvement in their mental health and a stronger sense of community, allowing the researchers to show the effectiveness of conducting devised theatre in an "extremely limited, virtual environment" (Dixon et al., 2020, p. 81).

Building Cultures of Peace with Students with HA through Devised Theatre

Convinced by strong arguments by Shank and Schirch (2008), we adopted an arts-focused strategy to explore peace, using "tools that are as diverse and complicated as the human spirit" and creating a safe virtual space where intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts could be expressed, healed, and reconciled (p. 218). Learning is focused on the process of exploration and interaction as much as the product or end result of the experience. Devised theatre, and the process of devising itself, provided the platform for exploring individual perceptions, interpretations, and values while creating "new sense" as individuals and as a community of learners (Oddey, 2015). In this way, devised theatre as an instructional approach takes the form of process drama and becomes a powerful vehicle for promoting intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intercultural peace and well-being created by the participants (Nwabueze, 2017). This kind of education promotes "inclusion based on difference and diversity, where difference is treated as a source of wealth, and mutual support is used to eradicate inequality, discrimination, and injustice" (Añaños et al., 2020, p. 24). Considered from this perspective, devised theatre builds and rebuilds a culture of peace with every lesson where interdisciplinary, collaborative education changes minds and hearts, going "beyond the limits of conflicts to become a daily experience" (Añaños et al., 2020, p. 30).

Devised theatre allows students with HA to explore and experience transformative peace education and to develop their social and emotional skills.

The devised theatre techniques selected for the course foster creativity in communication, product development, thought, and feeling. As ideas and emotions were shared, rich opportunities for affective skill development would present themselves, and through debriefing, students could work through their own and others' surprising, conflicting, and complex reactions. Direct instruction of social and emotional skills has been shown to promote immediate effects for positive self-image, increased social skills, and prosocial behaviour and delayed effects for reduction in anti-social behaviours (Sklad et al., 2012). While our students demonstrated intellectual HA, we wanted the course to intentionally access and develop their emotional and social intelligences as well. In this way, the course would become an intervention that used devised theatre to teach diverse teenagers key social and emotional skills that promote cultures of peace and compassionate action as citizens of one world, including empathy, fairness, and sense of justice.

Capitalizing on the social and emotional characteristics of students with HA, devised theatre techniques require a certain degree of empathy for understanding others' feelings, ideas, and behaviours (Keles, 2015). Sharing, taking turns, and subordinating individual urges for the benefit of the group are key components in creating a safe learning environment (Brouillette, 2010). In addition, the sequencing of creative products is as important as the lessons themselves as students "move between spectator and actor, and between intellectual detachment and emotional engagement" (Holland, 2009, p. 7). At the beginning of our course, cultural and self-awareness activities were planned to establish safety, trust, belonging, and personal well-being that prepared the way for commitment, connections, and emotional risk-taking. Subsequent devised theatre activities were designed to promote emotional connections, perspective-taking, and empathy, and concluding learning activities would foster students' autonomy and competence as they relate to cultural understanding and respect, social justice, and empathic, peace-focused action.

Pedagogical Considerations Relevant for Instructors and Curriculum Developers

Using an elicitive approach to peacebuilding (Shank & Schirch, 2008), students served as resources for one another based on their diverse backgrounds and experiences rather than looking to the instructor to provide answers. Devised theatre requires active participation as students move in and out of various roles in product creation—sometimes leading, sometimes submitting to others, and sometimes *troubling the waters*. Required, however, is a democratic process that fosters empathic relationships and decision-making where everyone's contributions and concerns are valued (Shank & Schirch, 2008).

Students with HA become intrinsically motivated when they find the task appealing, challenging, relevant, and worthwhile. By engaging in devised theatre techniques that involved physical, cognitive, social, and emotional engagement, students became interdependent co-agents in the dramatic processes and resulting products; they act, react, reflect, and *become* (Carson, 2012; Kaptani & Yuval-Davis, 2008). As active participants who influenced and directed the creation of products, students developed competence and acted capably while enjoying the learning process (Gaudart, 1990; Smith & Herring, 1993).

A key component of devised theatre is debriefing about the process of creation after every piece by engaging with diverse others and the products themselves, and how the process promoted other ways of knowing, thereby opening doors for changes in thoughts and behaviours (Aguiar, 2020). Discussing the effects of the learning approach, including how students interpreted and reacted to the thoughts, actions, and products of others, how they determined their levels of participation, how they felt throughout, and how the process affected or changed them is when the most impactful learning takes place. Through this process, students become co-constructors of knowledge with ample opportunities for student choice and voice, and the products that students create become a major part of the “raw” data collected; raw in the sense that the products would be more personal, authentic, and creative than most other forms of qualitative data (Grandi, 2022). Thus, devised theatre as a learning approach becomes a research tool that yields a different kind of data, “an epistemology which is different than that involved in interview methods or focus groups” (Kaptani & Yuval-Davis, 2008, paragraph 3.5).

The Course as Process and Product

The setting of the course, *Acting Up and Acting Out: Creating Cultures of Peace*, was an online, SAEC based at a major Midwestern university in the United States for adolescents with HA from diverse backgrounds and locations. Originally developed for on-campus delivery, the course moved to a virtual format in 2021 due to COVID-19. The course was facilitated by three instructors: a masters-degreed thespian trained in devised theatre, and a professor and a graduate student in Gifted, Creative, and Talented Studies. While the thespian led students through devised theatre activities, the professor observed and noted students’ actions and reactions, sometimes joining in discussions or asking probing questions. The graduate student observed and monitored the online environment. We conducted the course online (synchronously) for three hours per day for ten consecutive weekdays.

The diversity among the facilitators and the small group of participants added to the richness of the experience. At the beginning of the course, ten

students participated, and as the first week progressed, half of them dropped out for various reasons (e.g., dissatisfaction with the course, tired of online learning, or technology/connectivity issues). At the beginning of the second week, five students continued and completed the course. The thespian-facilitator was Puerto Rican, the professor-facilitator was American, and the graduate student was Turkish. Of the five students that completed the course, four were from the United States, and one was from Turkey. The thespian-facilitator identified as gender neutral, the professor identified as a cisgender female, and the graduate student identified as a cisgender male. Three of the students identified as cisgender females: one Native American, one Black, and one White. The two remaining students identified as White and gender neutral.

In a course anchored in devised theatre, process is as important as the products created; how students selected their pieces and how they revised them with feedback from others were centre stage. The theme of identity, a natural theme for adolescents, began on day 1 of the course, continued daily through students' sharing their experiences and creating their devised theatre pieces, and was reflected in their selections of pieces they wanted to perform in the final performance at the end of the course. In the process of introducing and reintroducing themselves through their original pieces, students revealed themselves gradually to their classmates. Each piece was created and re-created, incorporating others' reactions and ideas, including the thespian-teacher, whose role was to conduct, mediate, and challenge students in the evolution of their pieces and to elevate each student's voice and choice. Devised theatre's utility was through the telling and retelling of students' individual stories, which drew students towards one another in ways that few other educational interventions could. As the course progressed, this engendered trust and belonging and inspired students to express deeper and more personal ideas with each successive piece. In essence, their experience of the course led to modest yet meaningful personal change, as evidenced by their supportive gestures, encouraging reflections, and thoughtfully crafted pieces.

At the conclusion of each class session, the co-teachers and researcher-observer met to discuss observations and progress and to make indicated adjustments to subsequent devised theatre activities that advanced students' understanding of course concepts and increased students' motivation and participation levels. This debriefing of our own was an integral part of our experience of the course. As we processed our own thoughts, feelings, and observations, our discussions tended to focus on student engagement and the quality and authenticity of their products. We agreed that the course's virtual format limited the effectiveness of devised theatre activities and that our recording of each class session for data collection may have diminished students' levels of genuine engagement, affecting the authentic representation of

themselves through their products as well as the depth of their reflections. In essence, our young students found it difficult to be authentic when their audience was not “authentic,” as in physically present. As Grandi (2022) observed, an authentic audience changes each participant’s performance just as each performance changes the audience. Without hesitation, we agreed that the course’s goals would have been more effectively achieved had we met in person.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

In the development of our SAEC online course, our overarching goal was to use devised theatre to construct an international culture of peace where students became 1) tolerant of others’ ideas, ethics, and ways of being; 2) empathic about others’ lived experiences and needs for validation; 3) open to others’ cultural values and beliefs; and 4) focused on reflection about their levels of participation in and contributions to the class. Based on the dialogical model, all members of the class would be empowered to interact and exchange ideas; to contribute and critique; and to form and transform themselves, others, and the online environment (Añaños et al., 2020) through the creation of unique products or performances individually or in various groupings. In doing so, we aimed for “a culture of peace [that would] provide future generations with values that can help them to shape their destiny and actively participate in constructing a more just, humane, free, and prosperous society, and a more peaceful world” (Mehta, 2019, p. 78).

The two primary facilitators grounded the curriculum and activities in devised theatre and the tenets of peace education that focus on introspection and cultural understanding. Daily content-based goals included the use of devised theatre to promote 1) students’ exploration of and participation in peace-focused content; 2) students’ abilities to think critically and creatively about conflict, non-violence, and peacebuilding; and 3) students’ cross-cultural knowledge, well-being, and conceptualization of peace. To achieve these goals, the course advanced three of the primary outcomes of peace education: intercultural awareness, understanding, and respect; personal growth and development of peacemaking and peacebuilding skills; and critical examination of justice, social justice, and restorative justice through the lens of human rights (Harris & Morrison, 2013).

Specific Peace Education Standards for Students

Peace Education Standards (Carter, 2008) guided course development and devised theatre techniques. With regard to students’ knowledge of important concepts related to peace education, the course focused on self-awareness, interculturalism, human rights, peace strategies, methods of non-violent

Table 4.1 Skills and objectives for student development of peacebuilding

Skills	Objectives
Analysis of Communication	Identify techniques including representation, bias, balance, multiple perspectives, and active listening skills after viewing <i>The Naked Truth: Advertising's Image of Women</i> , a 2014 TedTalk by Jean Kilbourne (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uy8yLaoWybk).
Communication Enactment	Use multiple-perspective, cross-cultural, and compassionate discourse to create an inspirational speech about a peace organization you are passionate about (real or created by you).
Empathy	Show understanding of and concern for the suffering of others, whether it was caused by oneself or someone in one's own identity group after viewing the <i>African Mean Girls</i> play.
Engagement	Demonstrate thoughts and actions for bringing about and building peace by researching peace organizations, including those that promote social justice for marginalized groups and sharing results with the class.
Envision Peace	Develop and express visions of a peaceful presence and future by creating an inspirational speech about a peace organization you are passionate about (real or created by you) that you intend to support and/or promote.
Adaptation	Practice peace development within cultural contexts using culturally appropriate methods by creating and enacting a site-specific skit where cultural values conflict. For example, a skit about a gender-neutral student (biologically female) who walks towards the boys' bathroom at school but is stopped and confronted by a teacher who insists they use the girls' restroom.

conflict resolution, conflict style, and democratic processes. In addition, the 12 dispositions promoted in the standards were demonstrated in course activities with special emphasis on acceptance, respect, empathy, involvement, courage, and commitment. Students also developed the peacebuilding skills that are listed in Table 4.1.

Using Devised Theatre Techniques in an Online Classroom

The thespian-facilitator of the course was active, encouraging, and critical (in the positive sense of the word), guiding students through devised theatre techniques, observing their fluctuating levels of participation, listening for the acceptance or rejection of ideas, and mediating debriefing after each created piece. Using the elicitive approach described above (Shank & Schirch, 2008), the facilitators allowed students to struggle, to work out differences,

and to direct the development of products, and in debriefing, they shared observations to focus the discussion so that meaningful, open sharing could be achieved. Above all, they valued the process of learning as much, if not more than the products. Just as important as what students learned about the content was what they learned about themselves through the process of sharing, negotiating, struggling, supporting, and creating something new.

Because students shared personal beliefs and, at times, difficult experiences, establishing group norms related to active listening, open dialogue, confidentiality, empathy, and respect were critical to student growth in the course. In an online classroom, this became a bit more complicated as some students did not follow the “technology norms” (e.g., cameras and microphones on at all times and return from breaks promptly). For the most part, however, we created a safe place where honesty, openness to devised theatre strategies, and inclusiveness were satisfactorily achieved. Participation in the creation of student products was high, and debriefing and reflection played key roles in the daily activities of the class. Each day, students worked on different products through devised theatre techniques selected with the thespian-facilitator. As cultures of peace were constructed and reconstructed, the five students who finished the course were enthusiastic about their contributions and relationships with other participants. The culmination of the course was a collection of devised theatre products the students created individually or in groups of various sizes that they performed online for programme staff and parents.

Although students created several products during the course, no grades were given. Students received feedback about their performance related to critical and creative thinking, intellectual curiosity, persistence, independence, enthusiasm, social interactions, emotional expression, and independent/group projects. (For a copy of this evaluation tool, contact the first author.) By the end of the first week (15 hours of class time), students began to trust and confide in each other, empathize with each other’s unique experiences, and actively support one another. Students participated freely and collectively constructed knowledge and meaning through devised theatre activities that supported intrinsic motivation and transformed the students for good and for *the good*. For a sample lesson plan, see Appendix A.¹

Key Considerations Relevant for Instructor and Curriculum Developers

As co-creators and co-teachers, we struggled to find a good balance of peace-related content and devised theatre processes and products. We decided to focus more on students’ self-empowerment and ownership of the messages and products they created and their critical reflection and feedback

to their classmates (Mora et al., 2015). Unfortunately, this led the students to believe the class was more about acting than it was about peace. The tension between content and the depth of thought students invested in their products or performances was felt by the instructors and students (Grandi, 2022), especially when students felt unsure and wanted to be told what to do and how to do it. In hindsight, these young adolescents would have been empowered to reflect, scrutinize, and bring a critical lens to their lived experiences had we focused more content or attention on identity formation and social position, with the supportive role of peace through conflicts or difficulties related to these concepts. We didn't address issues of world peace or discuss peace-related topics such as non-violent resistance, just war, or students' own situated experiences of peace and non-peace in any real depth. Consequently, devised theatre processes and products did not bring out strong emotions as we had hoped, especially emotions that would inspire commitment to action. The instructors recognized and applauded bravery and willingness to share, especially when vulnerability was displayed; however, the online delivery afforded a degree of safety that interfered with these brave, vulnerable moments when students appeared distracted or *acted up or out* outside of the computer frame. See Appendix B for lesson topics and devised theatre activities.

Creating an international culture of peace in a virtual environment presented unique challenges for accommodating the academic and affective needs of teenagers with HA. First, achieving universality and creating meaningful human connections among students was hindered by technology issues, such as daily intermittent internet connectivity, students' inability (or refusal) to leave cameras on, and students' inability to attend class regularly and/or dropping out without notice. Second, the confines of the computer screen hindered everyone's ability to fully capture students' non-verbal gestures and full-body movements, making it difficult to fully grasp students' points of view, opinions, reactions, and understanding. Third, the lack of physical closeness where students could utilize and manipulate the physical space to communicate and/or exaggerate their thoughts and feelings and where they could more fully experience the physical presence of their classmates and instructors slowed feelings of trust and safety (Grandi, 2022).

The contrast in this regard is interesting, while aesthetic distance from their products likely *increased* students' levels of safety in the online class, the virtual distance from their audience *decreased* feelings of safety as trusting relationships with other students and teachers developed more slowly, and the presence of an *unknown* audience in the locations from which each participant joined negatively affected the depth of authenticity and reflection. They may have been reticent to participate fully and genuinely because

members of their household were nearby, such as a parent, caregiver, or sibling, or students observed others in the background of another student. For example, during one class session, a student was joined by an unknown teenage male who made under-the-breath comments and periodically showed his face. This was unnerving for all of us. Two other students' parents could be seen walking around behind them, known to us observers but not to the two students themselves.

Finally, the instructors' attempts to minimize the power dynamic by repeatedly giving responsibility and ownership for learning, creating, and recreating back to the students through devised theatre techniques were sometimes met with reluctance, likely due to lingering insecurity and/or uncertainty regarding what they were being asked to create (Grandi, 2022). Regrettably, students' interests in the experience of and/or the relationships built during the course were not strong enough for half of the students to continue their participation in the course, with even fewer participating in an interview about their experiences six months later. In hindsight, a balance between content (peace), process (devised theatre), and product in the context of students' personal stories about conflict and peace would have transformed individual stories and connected them more quickly to the collective story of peace created through the course, leading to a richer learning experience for all.

Products and Measures of Growth

We measured student growth in several ways. First, a pre-/post-survey was administered, the *Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge Short Scale* (Holgate et al., n.d.). This instrument, adapted from the Association of American Colleges & Universities Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric (2009), contains 14 statements for students to answer using a scale from 1 (not at all) to 6 (very high degree) based on the degree to which the statement represents their behaviours. Examples of statements include *I ask questions about other cultures different than my own*; *I act in a supportive way that recognizes the feelings of other cultural groups*; and *I am aware of my own cultural rules and biases*. Four students completed the pre-test, and only one completed the post-test; therefore, only the pre-test results are included. The range of responses was 2 to 6 with only one student rating *I reserve judgment during interactions with people culturally different from me* as 2 (low degree), and another student rating *I use a worldview different from my own to interpret the views and actions of persons from different cultures* and *I am aware of how my own experiences have shaped my personal rules or biases about cultural differences* at level 3 (somewhat low degree). Overall, 46% of the responses rated statements at level 6, and 80% of the responses rated statements at levels 5 or 6.

Students were then asked to identify the three most personally relevant statements from the 14 statements and then answer the following questions for each one:

1. Describe the experience.
2. Interpret the experience: explain what the experience meant to you.
3. Evaluate the experience: appraise the quality, value, or the importance of an expected experience (pre-survey).
4. Provide a goal statement: what you will do during this trip, assignment, or experience to develop the specific behaviour or experience you identified for the statement.

The statement, *I ask questions about other cultures different than my own*, made three of the students' "most relevant" lists. *I act in a supportive way that recognizes the feelings of other cultural groups* and *I am aware of my own cultural rules and biases*, made two of the students' lists. Students' responses to the questions included being interested and curious about other cultures, recognizing others' feelings through a cultural lens, and understanding how being a White person with privilege attracts judgment from others.

In debriefings, students reported increased motivation and engagement through devised theatre activities. Students who attended and contributed daily made friends and created a support system for each other. Students' participation in the course advanced their skills in creative thinking, reflection, and valuing others' perspectives. Of the five students who completed the course, one felt comfortable enough to share, through their tears, a personal story related to a past conflict that prompted their family to move away from the community in which she had grown up. The reactions during her disclosure as well as the encouraging statements made during the debriefing of the activity were touching, positive, and, dare we say, *peace-inducing*.

Quantitatively, the SAEC's group-administered course evaluation, the *Student Perceptions of Classroom Quality* (SPOCQ; Gentry & Owen, 2004), assessed students' opinions of classroom quality by focusing on the motivational constructs of appeal, challenge, choice, meaningfulness, and academic self-efficacy on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) with a score of 3 as *undecided*. Students rated the course highly in all five constructs: meaningfulness and appeal stood out as strengths, with academic self-efficacy as the relative lowest ranking. This makes sense based on our observations that the course needed more peace-related content that challenged or stretched their ideas, actions, and attitudes related to conflict, discrimination, and positive and negative peace. See Table 4.2 for the SPOCQ results for the course.

Six-month follow-up interviews were conducted with two students; others did not respond to our emails or phone calls. Interestingly, the recollection

Table 4.2 Students' ratings of classroom quality using SPOCQ

<i>Classroom Quality</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Appeal	4.61	0.78
Challenge	4.36	0.65
Choice	4.21	0.88
Meaningfulness	4.67	0.91
Academic Self-Efficacy	4.13	0.95

of the students focused on the devised theatre aspects of the class rather than the concept of peace and the ways in which we explored it. One stated outright, *The course was mostly about acting, and I don't remember thinking about peace*, but the other said, *I made new friends even with the slight disconnect with the technology barrier*.

New Knowledge Gained by Instructors while using Devised Theatre

Devised theatre as a research approach and the data collected through its processes and products are highly personal forms of qualitative research. The products were created, re-imagined with others, and re-created to produce pieces that became more nuanced than the original. The products became refined, and at times, redefined as meaning is filtered through several interpretations of self- and other-imposed meaning. As the course progressed, the students who remained through the end of the course provided genuine support and encouragement for each other in our debriefings. In the qualitative continuum of approaches, our course fell somewhere between focus groups and richly described ethnographies, bordering on therapeutic support groups towards the end of the second week.

With regard to the facilitation of the course, intentionally and solidly linking the devised theatre techniques to peace education concepts as they connected to the students' lives would have led them to deeper reflection about the role of conflict in their own lives, in the lives of their classmates, and in the lives of others in a more general sense. Debriefings that focused on the technicality or demonstration of the products side-tracked richer discussions on the multicultural meanings behind the symbolism conveyed and the emotions evoked. When teaching this course again, the teachers will be more intentional about exploring the peace-related symbols and feelings shared during devised theatre activities to connect them to the lived experiences of the students. In addition, students' products were unintentionally more verbal than non-verbal or other behaviour-based products, likely due to the constraints of technology for which we struggled to accommodate. For example, when two students wanted to express their love for volleyball nonverbally, their imitations of bumping, setting, and spiking a wadded

sheet of paper were very difficult to see when they were near their cameras, yet their facial expressions were hard to see when they backed away from their cameras so we could see their movements fully. These “challenges of embodiment” (Kaptani & Yuval-Davis, 2008) complicated meaning and interpretation and, as a result, stunted deep reflection.

Similarly, vulnerability was also difficult to achieve in a virtual format for many of the reasons stated earlier. Instead, we opted for individual and collective revision of the pieces used in the final performance without carefully exploring the mental, social, and emotional struggle of confronting real and personal peace-related issues. We also struggled to empower students to be change agents for peace in their own families and communities to the degree that we would have liked. To state it bluntly, the course was not as transformative as we desired. Instead of stretching their minds, imaginations, and conceptions of self and others, we succumbed to their protective positions and allowed surface-level engagement and sometimes-shallow products or performances that did not challenge their existing ideas about the role of peace in their lives or stir up a passion to act as agents of change. The kind of consent we secured for research purposes was short-sighted, even naïve, as what we really wanted was the individual student’s consent for us to peer into their physical space, to expand it somehow beyond the constraints of technology, as well as into their social, emotional, and intellectual spaces. Although our overarching goal was achieved to our satisfaction, the daily content-based goals were not achieved to the degree we had hoped.

Instructors who deliver their courses online are advised to explore the themes of place, space, and distance in introductory lessons to recognize students’ feelings about showing their products or performances authentically and fully within the limitations of the computer screen, about where each participant is and who beyond the screen is listening in, and about being together without being together physically and, possibly, emotionally. The virtual distance among students and/or the teacher can become a barrier that stifles the development of emotional connections and deep reflection, thereby affecting the quality of the re-visioned, more genuine, and authentic product for the final performance. Another interesting virtual phenomenon that instructors may want to explore with their students concerns the effects of students’ ability to observe themselves presenting their products or delivering their performances on the screen. Acting, reacting, evaluating, and re-acting occur simultaneously; stops, restarts, nervous laughter, and over-dramatic flair are self-corrected in the moment, and half-hearted products or performances evoke negative feelings that may interfere with authentic engagement. In a very real sense, students and teachers rarely see an “original” product, only what we might describe as self-corrected, *playback theatre* (Fox, 2007).

Research that explores the effectiveness of participation in devised theatre as a vehicle for promoting intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intercultural

peace and well-being is scant, especially with adolescents with HA. Our experience has shown that devised theatre as an instructional approach to peace education and a research tool can be effective as it promotes collaboration in the creation of original products, engenders tolerance, and promotes meaningful reflection. We were successful in promoting empathy and intercultural understanding, and the five students who completed the course began to align their devised theatre products and debriefings with peace-related social justice themes. For that, we are thankful, and our hope remains that our virtual classroom became a small stage for everyday learning that prepared our students for the larger stage known as life (Heldenbrand, 2003).

Note

- 1 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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5 Utilizing Multicultural Read-Alouds in the USA to Support Empathy Development

Linda Gordon

Spend a few minutes looking at social media or flipping through news channels, and a fundamental rudeness and ugliness can be detected, particularly in the unscripted responses online. Outright racist comments and prejudicial behaviors seem to be on the rise in the USA. However, some people claim there is no need to discuss history because we are so far past those issues. School boards and state legislatures in the USA are taking on the role of censoring books out of fear that students will feel guilt or anger at past racial issues, or be exposed to LGBTQ+¹ identities they are uncomfortable with while forbidding teachers from discussing race and prejudice in the classroom (Locurto, 2021; Dawson, 2021). Meanwhile, our children are exposed to increasing vitriol and misinformation on the internet, on television, and in real life. To counter these forces, children must be given the resilience to push back when their peers or online idols are behaving poorly, particularly when that behavior is pulling them into prejudicial ways of thinking. We teachers have the potential to teach our students to see others' perspectives and work to understand the emotions of others, ideally prior to middle school. We can use what Christine Sleeter (2005) called "visionary pragmatism" (p. 181), originally coined by Collins in 1998, to express the reality that teachers must do what is best for their students across competing priorities of larger ethical goals and the realities of prescribed curriculum and assessment requirements. The purposeful use of multicultural read-aloud lessons with a focus on empathy and perspective-taking is one tool toward improving our reading instruction by helping students develop habits of empathy and perspective-taking, explore topics of culture and history, enhance reading motivation across all students, and still meet curriculum demands.

Action Research Methodology and Results

In 2019, I concluded my dissertation research study on the potential for enhancing empathy in third-grade students through multicultural literature

read-alouds (Gordon, 2019). The motivation for that study was the increasing incivility of public discourse in the USA; people simply do not seem to care about others' perspectives and do not connect with the emotions of others. This lack of empathy impacts us from the playground to the legislative hallways and fuels large and small events based fundamentally on prejudice and violence, excused by intolerant thought processes.

The framework for my dissertation research study is based on seminal authors to situate prejudice, developmental interpersonal understanding, and the role of education in supporting social development. Prejudice is defined by Gordon Allport (1979) in his seminal work *The Nature of Prejudice* as "...an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization" (1979, p. 9). When young people face new information that feeds a "faulty generalization," they will typically go along with their peer group's behavior. Robert Selman (1980) points out that adolescents are driven to create and define in-groups and out-groups as well as to overgeneralize and stereotype to create those groups. Belonging to a peer group is a primary driver for adolescents, and enforcing the boundaries of who is "in" and who is "out" is a part of that social order. The psychological and physical damage potential is extreme at this stage, which also suggests the potential for positive change through earlier intervention. Geneva Gay (2011) highlights that although the USA has stated values of democracy, civil rights, and human dignity, American popular culture and individual media and government representatives often set very different examples. Gay (2011) suggests that children must be educated to resist the messages of conformity, material extremism, and emotional extremism and learn to accept and tolerate multiple perspectives while resisting complacency to be able to defend the defenseless.

It occurred to me that if we could support students in the development of empathy, including perspective-taking skills, they could face the issues of prejudice, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and all the other forms of hatred and bigotry, with a tool that gave them an alternative answer. A randomized control trial utilized a program to develop perspective-taking with over 6000 elementary students in Turkey. It showed statistically significant decreases in peer victimization and violence among elementary students in schools that had experienced large demographic changes due to the Syrian refugee crisis (Alan et al., 2021). Studies such as this empirically demonstrate the importance of education in reducing violence and creating social cohesion. Since my highest privilege is my education and my ability to access students and teachers, I decided to see if there was potential to design a curriculum that could be (efficiently) integrated into the existing classroom curriculum without interfering with issues of the state standards in the USA or high stakes tests. To do this, I chose to leverage the strengths of action research.

Action Research

The primary intent of educational action research is "...altering curriculum, challenging common school practices, and working for social change by engaging in a continuous process of problem posing, data gathering, analysis, and action" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 40). Action research in education is focused on improving educational practice as well as having the goal of changing society in a way that improves the lives of students through multiple dimensions: social, political, personal, and professional (Noffke, 2009). Central to action research is the focus of inquiry with or by insiders in an authentic setting in which cycles of action and collaboration bring about change (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Too often in the USA, educational research is seen as the realm of the university, and teachers of younger students are either the subjects of research or the recipients of the research results turned into a curriculum or instructional method to implement. Educational action research brings the authority of the teacher to the forefront of the research, rather than the teacher being the passive recipient of research done by academics. It also provides the opportunity to create a positive change through action for the researcher(s) and participants (Carr & Kemmis, 2009). Action research is particularly suited to enacting change by focusing on the interrelations between individuals, and in education, between students, teachers, and other stakeholders (Bradbury & Divecha, 2020). This ability to enact change is at the core of what research should be doing. The cycles of reflection and action and the very involvement that typifies action research offer the chance to actually do research that has an impact. As Bradbury and Divecha (2020) stated, "...there are routinely great ideas that fail to engage stakeholders and thus fail" (p. 275). By engaging in action research, the interconnected nature of the various stakeholders and the cycles of reflection and action create engagement and enthusiasm for the process and allow a sensitivity lacking in traditional research that enables even the problems and solutions to transform as knowledge is created (Bradbury & Divecha, 2020).

In the case of my research, there was a strong motivation to work toward change, specifically a kinder, more peaceful world, among all the study participants. Although our classrooms were fairly diverse culturally, it was a goal to explore perspective-taking and empathy with multicultural "contact" of an even wider range of diversity. The use of action research permitted me to involve the lived experiences of myself as a participant researcher and my colleagues as teachers and to include the students' voices. Shared lived experience is at the heart of action research. In the case of exploring empathy development, shared lived experience is critical to an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of both the students and the teachers, and creating the cycles of action that occurred. Apgar (2022) points out that action

research can discover interrelationships and create a new future based on interconnectedness, which is at the heart of the desire to support empathy development in students.

Study Methodology and Results

The study in 2018 included me as a participant researcher, five of my colleagues, and a total of 103 students at a public charter school. Each teacher utilized the same ten multicultural read-alouds and discussion questions, and the cohort met after each read-aloud to discuss and plan in a cyclic manner consistent with action research theory (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Data was gathered from audiotapes of my classroom discussions during the read-aloud, audiotapes of the cohort meetings, student work samples, teacher journals, and the researcher journal. ATLAS-ti was utilized to support the data analysis that followed Glaser's (2008) constant comparative method of coding through the recursive cycles of the action research.

The study results demonstrated that the use of multicultural literature experiences with third graders has potential as a pedagogical approach to positively impact their ability to make empathetic connections in their writing and discussion about the stories (Gordon, 2019). The students in the study demonstrated increased development of emotional vocabulary and depth of discussion, including beginning to identify mixed emotions. This age-dependent skill appeared earlier than expected in the study participants (Pons et al., 2004). The increased emotional vocabulary then had the potential to support students' socio-emotional development. Students' ability to take the perspective of another developed over time as well, as they engaged their emotions and made connections to the characters in the stories, even when the settings were novel to them. The use of multicultural literature also offered opportunities to correct some misconceptions students were harboring about various topics. Student self-reporting on the end-of-study survey also demonstrated the motivational benefit of these stories and the discussion format. They reported being challenged and engaged when discussing concepts such as fairness and loyalty. The purposeful activation of perspective-taking and emotional connection to others who were different also offered Gordon Allport's contact theory of being engaged through indirect contact. This indirect contact and purposeful discussion are hoped to have provided foundations for these students that they can draw on when exposed to prejudicial ideas and then must decide whether or not to go along with their peer group in that thought process or to oppose them. Those are the seeds planted in a classroom that have the potential to make a fundamental difference in the social climate of the USA and in other locations where prejudice toward others creates barriers and strife.

Read-Aloud as a Pedagogical Tool

Today's classroom teacher in the USA is pulled in a myriad of directions and asked to complete often conflicting objectives by their state standards, school board, principal, grade level team, parents, and individual students. Simply saying "teachers should teach empathy skills" is an impossible command. First, it insults teachers to imply that they are not trying to support students to have empathy, as they are already working hard to create classroom communities of respect and kindness. Second, to do anything formal and new, they will have to drop another objective. The good news is that a multicultural literature curriculum for empathy development can be inserted with a bit of creativity into most classrooms as part of the reading curriculum and can be used to achieve classroom objectives simultaneously while addressing the empathy development curriculum. Vocabulary development, storyline development, character analysis, author's purpose, context clues, text features, cause and effect, inferences, mood, and word choice are all easily integrated into the discussion (Giroir et al., 2015; Hoppe, 2022; Kesler et al., 2020).

There is significant value to using read-alouds within the classroom beyond the early childhood years (Ariail & Albright, 2005; Trelease, 2006). This is not to say that both guided and independent reading will not be used often; however, far too many teachers move completely away from read-alouds in the upper elementary and middle school classrooms in exchange for more targeted skills for the standardized tests (Kesler et al., 2020). The argument for read-alouds at any age is connected to the shared experience (Rosenblatt, 1994; Trelease, 2006). With the teacher reading, the text can be explored in real-time as it is experienced. There are myriad opportunities for learning in the real-time event of the read-aloud, whether the teacher wants to highlight a literary device of the author, explore the word choice of an unfamiliar word, provide a peek into the thought process of a fluent reader through think-aloud, or pause to explore predictions about the upcoming action (Hoppe, 2022). Beyond the literacy events, there is the opportunity to explore content knowledge and complex topics such as social justice through the guidance of the teacher as the discussion facilitator (Kesler et al., 2020). Classroom read-alouds are also good pedagogy in that they are more inclusive of diverse learners, allowing all students to experience the same text, irrespective of their reading level (Kesler et al., 2020; Trelease, 2006). Struggling readers, English language learners, and younger students all benefit from hearing a fluent reader, and competent readers enjoy the experience of being able to relax into a story. This opens up the opportunity for every student to engage in the discussion where students and teacher cocreate understanding together, a scaffolding and community effect that leads to deeper understanding than would be possible independently, what Kesler et al. (2020) call "interthinking" (p. 218).

While noting that the read-aloud can support a wide range of literacy goals at all educational levels (Kesler et al., 2020; National Reading Panel, 2000; Trelease, 2006), teachers must prepare the read-aloud with both the literacy and the empathy development objectives in mind and spot the opportunities for “teachable moments” within the text (Kesler et al., 2020). This opportunity to engage with social justice topics and real-world issues within literacy is foundational to critical literacy and relies on what Freire (1985) described as “...every act of reading words implies a previous reading of the world and subsequent rereading of the world” (p. 18). During this exploration of the text, issues that exist in the world can also be explored, and opportunities can be created to support students in developing into “...citizens who accept and empathize with others who have different beliefs and traditions” (Bennett et al., 2022). The challenge is how to add the specific, targeted focus of empathy development into the time devoted to read-alouds in the classroom. While even a single probing question is valuable, how might a teacher purposefully build empathy and perspective-taking lessons into their already packed curriculum?

While the goal is to weave discussions of empathy and perspective-taking throughout the classroom culture and curriculum, there must be a place for focused work on empathy and perspective-taking. One effective way to offer empathy development read-alouds is to commit to one empathy read-aloud experience every month, beginning early in the first month of school. The read-aloud is a great community-building opportunity and can also set the expectation of thinking of others in all interactions (Kesler et al., 2020). Again, this time it does not need to derail the current reading curriculum, as those objectives can be easily integrated as well. It is also useful to make this read-aloud a bit different from the usual reading lesson, perhaps by sitting in a different place in the room or even having the teacher sit on the floor with the class to offer a closer learning community.

Another suggestion to set these stories apart in the eyes of the students is to be explicit that they will not be tested on them, nor will they have to do the typical written work all too often attached to reading comprehension. During the 2019 research project, the students understood that the other teachers and I were interested in helping them become the kind of adults who would think of others, show kindness to everyone, and who could help the world become a better place. They were also told that while we might sometimes talk about “regular reading stuff,” these stories would not turn into tests or homework. The students were quite excited by this, and in my classroom and the other classrooms in the project, students were eager for “Mrs. Gordon’s special stories.”

Their interest and engagement were more than avoiding a quiz. Since these read-aloud experiences are discussion-based, the teacher is asking the students to listen and share their thoughts and feelings during the discussion.

This is so much more in line with the way that adults experience reading for enjoyment: the casual discussion of a plot or the exploration of a moral dilemma. Young students thrive when they get an opportunity to walk away from grades, worksheets, and required response paragraphs for even a short time and engage in authentic reading discussion (Kesler et al., 2020). Paolo Freire (1985) pointed out that reading must not be separated from the world that through exploration of text one learns about the world, and the world informs the reader about the text at the same time. Brownell and Rashid (2020) similarly utilized readings on immigration and refugees and found the students responding with increased understanding of the issues as well as empathy for the victims, often mediated by personal connections to their own heritage. When we isolate reading as a skill, it loses higher purposes such as providing "...the opportunity to gain insight into the lives of characters who experience the world like them, and those that live life differently than them" (Brownell & Rashid, 2020, p. 79), and the students lose motivation to read. Our students were asked at the end of the 2019 study what they had learned, and many mentioned learning to enjoy reading more, including "What I learned was to love reading and that each book was its own goals and message" as well as "I learned that reading can be exciting so I'm trying to read more" (Gordon, 2019, pp. 176–177). The read-aloud is an effective pedagogical tool, and it also has the benefit of enhancing student motivation to read and, through reading, to continue to explore the world (Freire, 1985).

Book Selection

There are multiple approaches to take when considering utilizing literature to teach a peace education curriculum. While it is not necessary to adhere to a single purpose and approach for every read-aloud experience, it is beneficial for the teacher to be cognizant of their purpose in selecting a particular title. When engaging in the use of multicultural literature for empathy development with the ultimate goal of prejudice reduction, the effort is situated within critical efforts to enact change through the curriculum. The foundational rationale for utilizing literature for peace education is when the plot of the story, and the actions and decision-making of the characters, can be used to discuss peace education topics, whether conflict resolution techniques, historical events, or cultural values (Carter & Pickett, 2014). Adding to peace education goals, the critical efforts to not only understand but engage in a critique of past and current events will hopefully lead to young people who have the knowledge to be active citizens. Ladson-Billings (1995) called for culturally relevant pedagogy "...to do three things – produce students who can achieve academically, produce students who demonstrate cultural competence, and develop students who can both understand and critique the existing social order" (p. 474). Culturally sustaining pedagogy is

calling for even more focused attention on the students in the classroom to offer them the tools to “...sustain – linguistic, literature, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 95). This does require a teacher in the USA to accept that teaching is inherently a political act and may require difficult decisions depending on the setting of the school, as some states and communities are not supportive of multicultural pluralism in this political climate (Brownell & Rashid, 2020; Paris, 2012). Adding the psychological strategy of purposefully enhancing empathy through perspective-taking practice and utilizing indirect contact for prejudice reduction and resistance to prejudicial thinking patterns requires further consideration for the book selection. This includes a significant look at the individual students in the classroom and their background and needs. Furthermore, today’s teachers in the USA cannot select a book title without consideration toward the general curriculum requirements of the moment (Hoppe, 2022).

The selection of multicultural literature read-alouds is a critical step. Often, multicultural literature is used to provide a “mirror” experience for students to see themselves in the storyline, and representation is undoubtedly important (Santora, 2013). For these stories, however, it is often helpful to offer “window” experiences where students have an opportunity to see into lives that are different from their own (Kleekamp & Zapata, 2019; Logan et al., 2016). During the 2018–2019 research project, the cohort and I purposefully selected two books with Muslim characters because we had heard a couple of incidents of Islamophobia from the students. We also focused on a few book titles with characters who were dealing with low-income challenges, as our student body was economically privileged as a whole. These decisions were made with a conscious desire to expose the students to people who were different from them for the sake of indirect contact and to be able to guide them in discussions that would improve their ability to take the perspective of others. The end goal is to use critical literacy to focus on the history and needs of marginalized groups with these students and support their development as empathetic citizens who would enact change. This has to begin with rejecting prejudicial thinking offered by the media and peers, and hopefully extending to their praxis as they mature (Gay, 2011; Luke, 2013).

Another selection criterion is that these books should use human characters, not animals or cartoons. Many basal publishers have selected stories with animal characters for stories that include socio-emotional themes or issues of values and behavior in an attempt to avoid offending anyone. As a result, the students’ ability to put themselves into the storyline and practice perspective-taking and empathy is blunted. Authenticity is also important. Many children’s books are written by authors who are insiders to the culture portrayed or who have done the work to ensure authentic representation.

There is no reason to use books that continue to portray stereotypes or cultural misrepresentations. Other issues should be considered, such as whether the characters solve the problem without a benevolent foreigner or whether female characters act on their own intelligence and skills while still reflecting their culture. Kleekamp and Zapata (2019) propose four guiding questions to aid in creating a classroom library of inclusive books. Their particular focus is on disability; however, the questions are useful across other diverse storylines, including how multidimensional diverse characters are portrayed, who is telling the story (ideally the voice of the underrepresented group), how are the readers guided to understand the character (i.e. are the readers only given reasons to pity the character, or does the character have their own power and agency?), and are there positive examples of relationships created in the storyline?

An annotated booklist of 40 children's book titles as a starting point is provided in Appendix A.² For those who wish to select their own titles, careful questioning of the authenticity of the cultural representation is required. Useful rubrics can be found, including Hazza and Bucher's (2008) in "Building Arab Americans' Cultural Identity and Acceptance with Children's Literature" and Santora's (2013) in *Assessing Children's Book Collections Using an Anti-Bias Lens*. Additionally, many organizations curate multicultural titles and are regularly updated with new titles. A list of websites to use as a starting point is included in Appendix B.

Teachers who wish to engage in multicultural literature to enhance empathy can choose to select books based on their judgment of what will benefit their particular students at that time. This requires the teacher to consider the social-emotional needs of that particular group of students, as well as their cultural backgrounds and potentially even the events occurring in society at that time (Kleekamp & Zapata, 2019). One colleague changed schools and, within a week, discovered that children were teasing a student because of the ethnic foods in her lunch. In the past, she had begun her year with a reading and discussion of *Each Kindness* by J. Woodson (2012), which is a wonderful introduction to considering the feelings of others, in particular new students. However, in the new classroom, she decided to begin the school year with *The Sandwich Swap* by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdulla and Kate DiPucchio (2010). This allowed her to work on perspective-taking and empathy with the class at the start of the year in a manner that was critically important at that moment to create a positive classroom climate.

Another approach would be to work within a theme, particularly if multicultural literature experiences are used across multiple grade levels. Table 5.1 shows two possible sets of themes. Set A is based on the National Council for the Social Studies (n.d.), and Set B is based on CASEL's (n.d.) core competencies for social-emotional learning.

Table 5.1 Curriculum Themes to Develop Book Sets by Grade Level (Gordon, 2019, p. 226)

<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Set A Social Studies-Based Themes</i>	<i>Set B Social-Emotional Learning Themes</i>
Kindergarten	Family and friends: diversity, similarity, responsibility	Cooperation
First grade	City and jobs: interconnectedness, diversity, responsibility	Self-awareness
Second grade	Personal responsibility as citizens: laws, activism past and present, environmental responsibility	Self-management
Third grade	Country and government: history, structure, past and present	Social awareness
Fourth grade	State history and local ecology (including Indigenous peoples)	Relationship skills
Fifth grade	What is a leader?: leaders past and present	Responsible decision-making

Read-Aloud Technique

Reading aloud is both a pedagogical technique and a social event filled with social-emotional opportunities (Hoppe, 2022). Every interaction with text includes a transaction between the text and the reader, and that moment is unique in time and space as well (Rosenblatt, 1994). When the reading transaction is shared, each individual has their own transaction based on their thoughts and connections, but there is additional sharing with the others in the group. Shared reading includes the opportunity to form community through enjoyment and sharing of self (Carter & Pickett, 2014) and the sharing of ideas and thinking. The interactive read-aloud includes not only the teacher reading the story, thereby offering a model of fluency and expression, but also engaging the students in discussion throughout the storyline (Armbruster et al., 2001; Hoppe, 2022; The International Reading Association & The National Association for the Education of Young Children [IRA & NAEYC], 1998). As the teacher reads, they have the opportunity to model their reading strategies and their thinking by engaging in “think aloud” behavior such as “I’m not sure what this sentence means, I am going to stop and read it again and think about what is happening” or “I hope she is not going to get in trouble when she gets home.” This verbalization of the invisible workings of a mature reader’s thoughts provides insight into the meta-cognition the students need to be developing as they engage with text (Hoppe, 2022; National Reading Panel, 2000). Every student benefits from a read-aloud of a quality story. The struggling readers are offered access to the storyline. They can then be guided to more complex thinking and responses than they would be able to generate if they were responsible for reading

independently. Meanwhile, English language learners benefit from the oral vocabulary and discussion format (Giroir et al., 2015). In addition to the think-aloud, the teacher will also engage the students with questions and discuss their answers. This permits the co-creation of meaning and understanding of not just the literal story but the emotions and responses of the characters and their connections to the students (Kesler et al., 2020). To develop empathy and perspective-taking to reduce prejudice and promote peace, the purposeful design of these questions around perspective-taking and empathy is key.

Question Design

In designing the questions for a story, the dual focuses of curriculum standards and empathy development need to be considered. Without a doubt, some of the questions should reinforce the skills being practiced in the current curriculum moment. What sets these read-alouds apart from the other curriculum is the emphasis on emotion and questions designed to evoke student perspective-taking efforts. A sample of emotion-based questions is included in Appendix C. As these questions are asked, they should not be simply accepted and moved on from, but instead probed and supported to develop with “how do you know?” and “what makes you think that?” or “can anyone else add something to this idea?”

Teachers who wish to use multicultural literature to enhance empathy and perspective-taking should definitely plan questions in advance (Kesler et al., 2020). After selecting a potential book and determining that it is appropriate for one’s class, look for opportunities to stimulate an empathy discussion. Table 5.2 offers questions for the design of that instruction.

Note that this takes practice with young students because they will be initially confused by the fact that they have not been in the same literal

Table 5.2 Discussion Question Development

Design questions for discussions that promote empathy development

Is there an essential background understanding required to fully comprehend the story? Can a probing question or prereading question be used to ensure this background?

Look for opportunities to ask, “How do you think he/she feels?” “Why do you think that?”

Look for illustrations that carry emotional cues such as the use of light and shadow – see if the students can spot them or point them out, and ask why the illustrator might have chosen to draw in that manner.

Focus on questions that begin with “Why,” “Why do you think...?” “Why did the character...?” “Why did the author use the words...?”

Guide students to perspective-taking through prompts such as “Have you ever felt like that?”

Table 5.3 Sample Questions for Diversity Discussions (Gordon, 2019, pp. 98–95)

Sample questions about diverse characters and situations

- Why were enslaved people not allowed to know their birthdays? What does knowing a birthday do for a person? (*Henry's Freedom Box*)
- There are quite a few places where people are poor farmers, like in William's village. Why are they poor? (*The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*)
- What is meant on page 6 by "...we are not always liked here." Do you think this really happens to people? Is this fair? (*One Green Apple*)
- Did Tim have to give away his money? Do we have a responsibility for anyone else? (*The Can Man*)
-

situation, rather than connecting to a different situation with similar emotions. One student wrote that William, from Kamkwamba and Mealer's (2012) *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, was "confused because he had to drop out of school" and compared it to when he "had to drop out of swimming," demonstrating that he could understand the unhappiness and confusion this caused (Gordon, 2019, p. 141).

Another student was able to demonstrate that she understood how William felt when the villagers celebrated his working windmill because she felt the same thing when she sang on stage and the audience clapped.

Supporting students to explore what multicultural characters in stories are feeling and practice taking the perspective of others through connections and imagination are opportunities to develop the habits of empathy and perspective-taking. These discussions and exercises in perspective-taking can promote a mindset that will enable students to engage with diverse people in peaceful and prosocial ways as they mature (Bennett et al., 2022).

The multicultural literature selections also allow the exploration of cultures, settings, and histories that students may not have engaged with before. In some areas of the USA, the questions as to whether students should be exposed to certain historical events or ideas have become political events, and teachers must know what they are able and willing to discuss with students comfortably (Paris, 2012). Purposefully written questions that explore the settings and problems in the story more deeply can open up the perspective of the characters that are quite different from the students in the class and provide windows into other people's situations, as the examples in Table 5.3.

The Discussion: A Living Work in Progress

While questions should be preplanned, there is no way to fully anticipate how a class will respond to a story. This is where the art of teaching comes in, and the teacher must weave the real-life responses into a learning opportunity (Kesler et al., 2020). While clear perspective-taking discussions will

Table 5.4 Responses from Student and Teacher Cohort (Gordon, 2019, p. 147)

Student and teacher cohort responses to *Henry's Freedom Box* discussion

[a student said] I thought it was more like you have to go to work and do a job.
 I can see it was not like that.
 ...they were like "you could just sell people?" so that was something we spent quite a bit of time on discussing.
 ...the part when he is hurting himself, they were also in shock... one kid said,
 "I didn't know that it was that bad. I didn't think it was that bad."
 ...my kids were actually surprised to see the black person in Philadelphia dressed nicely like the white men.
 one of the girls at the end said, "I didn't know how bad it was really for the slaves when they were willing to hurt themselves to be free."
 Another one, he was a little bit embarrassed, he is one of my smartest kids in class, and he said, "Well what I am going to say, I am going to be really honest, I didn't know that slaves got sold."
 I had one student just say it outright, "I did not know it was that bad." He said,
 "I didn't understand, I thought they just worked and didn't get paid."

occur, another path to increased perspective-taking ability occurs when the story and discussion offer the opportunity to discuss history, cultural differences, or general knowledge about the world to share new understandings. In the 2018–2019 study, I was reading *Henry's Freedom Box* by E. Levine (2008) and the teacher cohort and I simply assumed that the students had a reasonable working definition of slavery through the "age-appropriate" social studies they had been exposed to by that point. In debriefing the story, the teachers all reported that students did not have a clear understanding of slavery and, in fact, had been harboring some significant misconceptions, as listed in Table 5.4.

In this case, we could utilize the story and the discussion to provide a better understanding of the institution of slavery, while remaining age-appropriate to third-grade students. Our experience was very similar to responses gathered by Brownell and Rashid (2020) in their read-aloud study on immigration with a third-grade class when they had a student state, "I didn't know that there were such weird laws that were so mean about people just trying to survive" (p. 89). There too, they used a picture book and interactive discussion to explore a historical topic of social justice and were able to expand their understanding of this challenging topic. Both examples show the need to develop both conceptual understanding of social justice issues and how that understanding leads to the students having more ability to respond with more accurate perspective-taking and empathy for the characters.

During another story, *The Can Man* by L.E. Williams (2010), we purposefully began with a prior knowledge question about what the students knew about homelessness. As the majority of the student body was economically

advantaged, the responses were not surprising. Many brought up the idea that homeless people did not get a good education and did not have jobs. One student persevered on “They should just get a job. Why doesn’t he just get a job?” (Gordon, 2019, p. 148). Teachers responded based on their class and their experience. One teacher shared her cousin’s struggle with mental health, and many pointed out that sometimes homelessness occurs after a series of unfortunate situations. Homelessness was a challenging topic; it was clear that parents and other adults had used homelessness as an example of “this is what happens if you don’t do well in school.” While we worked to dispel the myth that people without homes somehow deserved their fate or caused it, we also did not want to plant in the head of an eight-year-old that almost anyone can become homeless, particularly since a couple of the students were experiencing significant financial issues in their families. As teachers, we felt that this topic could have continued and could easily develop into a student-led service-learning project. While we did not have the time to continue further, we were heartened that the students as a whole responded that their thoughts about the homeless had changed “a lot” from before we engaged with the story (Gordon, 2019).

From Interactive Read-Aloud to Peace Education

In the USA and around the world, there is a need for more empathy toward people who live differently in addition to those who are struggling. Teachers strive to create prosocial classroom environments and teach kindness and respect toward others. Nevertheless, it is also possible to look further and work toward planting seeds that provide students with the habit of looking at others through empathetic perspective-taking, which could give them the strength to resist peer-group prejudicial thinking as they age. Allport (1979) posited that the strongest influence on the development of prejudice is not family but rather the peer group one joins. The need to remain in a social in-group is strong, and if a few in-group members hold a prejudiced view of another group, others tend to go along with it. Young students develop their social understanding and skills before becoming their adult selves in society. The use of multicultural read-alouds, specifically selected to enhance perspective-taking and empathy toward those who are different, offers a tool to any educator who hopes to send their students forward to create a more peaceful future. Using the purposefully selected multicultural literature selection in an interactive read-aloud is key because an educator can support the discussion through think-aloud and facilitate the students’ emerging understanding. The students have an opportunity to share and engage in the community building of the read-aloud experience, practice perspective-taking for others, engage in discussion of empathy and emotion, increase content understanding of historical and social justice topics, along with the

additional prosocial skill practice of being supported in respectfully exploring challenging subjects (Brownell & Rashid, 2020; Carter & Pickett, 2014; Hoppe, 2022; Kesler et al., 2020). As my colleagues and I saw firsthand, not only did the students want to engage in multicultural stories and discussions about people who were different from them, but they also wanted to make a difference, most frequently seen when we read the stories about wealth inequity. To move students to action through praxis, possibly in a project, would be ideal. Additionally, the seeds of empathy planted in students can germinate as they encounter opportunities to act with empathy and act on their hope for peace.

Conclusion

Despite calls for accountability and standardized tests along with pushback from some groups in the USA for teachers to “just teach,” classrooms are small societies where culture is shared and developed. Most teachers strive to create a culture of kindness and respect in their classrooms. Ideally, we teachers should also recognize that the work we do on being kind has a larger purpose, one that we hope will move into the larger world as young people who are respectful of differences and open to considering the perspectives of others with empathy. The purposeful utilization of multicultural read-alouds allows a teacher to reinforce reading skills while also entering into discussions on different cultures and people. Working specifically on practicing perspective-taking skills enhances students’ emotional vocabulary and creates a habit of trying to see from another’s viewpoint instead of reacting negatively to differences. This time also supports every reader, permitting both advanced and struggling readers to engage in the text and discussion equally and showing reluctant readers an example of why reading is exciting and worthwhile. Most importantly, these stories provide contact between the students and characters who exist in real life as people in marginalized groups and offer practice in perspective-taking toward them, rather than the typical exclusion response to those who are different, which only enforces prejudice (Allport, 1979). We can reach our goals to teach reading skills and fully engage with the pressing need for peace education through teaching tolerance and empathy within our society; these should never be competing issues.

Notes

- 1 LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and other gender and sexual orientations and identities who are often marginalized in the USA and worldwide.
- 2 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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6 Inter-Religious Dialogue Pedagogy for Teaching Peace Education in Uganda

Simon Masiga

Introduction

Teaching peace education is a vital task that requires collective effort and indigenous contributions along with religious communities and institutions. The multifaith contexts however lay a critical challenge to exploring the role of religious communities and institutions in education that counters cultural and structural violence. The reality of multireligious curriculum calls for a pedagogy that can support the integration of the various values. This chapter posits that the process of teaching peace is influenced by existing perspectives that are religiously driven. The key concepts in this chapter include: religion and religious texts; peace education; nonviolent texts; interreligious dialogue; indigenous perspectives; and social inclusion. The chapter explains how curriculum resources for teaching peace are religion and indigenous practices. Indigenous thoughts from the historical and cultural contexts from Uganda, East Africa, the South of Sahara are its focus. This contributes to the content for interfaith dialogue pedagogy of that region. In this chapter, the terms interreligious and interfaith dialogue will be used interchangeably to mean the interaction of religious leaders and institutions for a common goal, that is, establishing a culture of peace. The terms faith and religion are categorically the same. The phrase interfaith dialogue will be dominantly used for its brevity, not for meaning something different.

Theory and Philosophy

This chapter employs the Integrative Theory of Peace (ITP) to explain how the integration of religion and religious nonviolent texts to enhance interreligious dialogue can provide a practical approach for teaching peace education. This theory is adopted in this chapter because it reveals that there is a religious component in the concept of peace (Danesh, 2006). In explaining this theory, Danesh (2006) explains that peace as the state of human beings is shaped by our worldviews, which include spiritual and religious perspectives.

They influence the establishment of “fundamental elements of a culture of peace, such as respect for human rights and freedom” (2006, p. 63). This is discussed further below. The interfaith and interreligious dialogue presented as an approach of teaching peace is based on this theory.

Additionally, Gandhian philosophy guides the discussions and assertions made here concerning the role of religion in peace education. It provides the framework of understanding the suggested pedagogy for teaching peace through interfaith dialogue. This philosophy holds that religious and moral education are a framework of nonviolence and they form the core of peace education (Agnihoti, 2017). This indicates that religious education is essential for peace education, that is the key assertion of this chapter. To elaborate this further, Agnihoti (2017) explains that “Equality of religions as espoused by Gandhi is an effective tool to counter the increasing tensions among different religious groups” (p. 916). That idea is a framework for peaceful coexistence of religions and equality in social development. It is the central focus of this chapter. It supports approaches to interfaith dialogue for development of appreciation along with understanding of different religious doctrines and practices as goals of peace education. The discussion of religious perspectives for inclusion in curriculum followed a review of literature. The theory and philosophy adopted in this chapter guided the selection of texts and articles for review and reference.

Methods

This study is situated in Uganda, which is found in the Eastern part of Africa in the Global South. And so, the indigenous experiences of using interreligious dialogue will consider the Ugandan context. As part of the Great Lakes Region, Uganda has experienced violent conflicts that have diminished the quality of lives and imposed injustices of different kinds (Bustince, 2010). The conflicts within the region have continued to be a threat to sustainable peace and development. According to the 2014 household census, Uganda is characteristically religious, with over 99% of the population affiliated to some religion. The statistics indicated that 82% of Ugandans are Christians, while 14% are Muslims, 5% belong to other religions, and others have no religious affiliation (Ssentongo, 2022). Given the pluralistic society of Uganda, there is a need to understand how the diversity of religions can work together for peace. Uganda has a council for interreligious activities, which was founded in 2001 as a response to human suffering (Omona, 2020; Busuulwa, 2017). Omona emphasizes that “In Uganda, religion has helped people to understand their environment and relate to it in ways that brought about social development” (2020, p. 176). Therefore, the suggested pedagogy of interreligious dialogue has a basis for its implementation and the context for its appropriation.

Research Design and Approach

This study used a qualitative approach with an interpretative hermeneutics paradigm. It was “Concerned with how texts -both oral and written are understood” (Cercel et al., 2015, p. 18). The hermeneutic method was chosen to enhance interpretation of hidden meanings in religious texts and indigenous experiences regarding interreligious dialogue (Saputra et al., 2021). Through the hermeneutic approach, a deeper understanding of the religious texts and experiences of using interreligious dialogue were possible.

Based on this paradigm, the researcher is the main research instrument (Saputra et al. 2021, p. 34). This study used mainly secondary data on religious teachings on interreligious dialogue and peace education *add more thoughts*. This was supplemented with interviews with scholars and religious leaders having experience of using interreligious dialogue for peacebuilding in Uganda. The procedure for analyzing the data was undertaken through the following suggested steps: understanding the whole text; understanding the text in part; and getting an understanding of the origin textual meaning (Saputra et al., 2021, p. 35; Cercel et al., 2015).

This comprehensive understanding will provide the meaningful interpretation of intended meaning of texts and stories. The concept of understanding in this narrative is dynamic, open-ended, and interactive in nature. This allows the researcher to exercise flexibility and make sense of texts created from different religious, historical, social, and political contexts. Through the interpretative hermeneutics, the religious texts and experiences can be understood within another context (Cercel et al., 2015).

Qualitative and interpretive presentations were reviewed for clarification of the ideas regarding religious perspectives, interfaith dialogue, and teaching of peace. The review involved critical analyses of literature that described how religious perspectives and nonviolent teachings are vital for education, especially for instruction in peace education. Through this interpretive and critical analysis approach, selected texts and articles were analyzed with two main purposes: (1) to provide case studies of religious texts that function as resources for peace education; and (2) to develop the program lesson plan developed by this author based on the pedagogy of interreligious dialogue. The challenge encountered in the review was limited resources and research on indigenous experiences of religious and peace education. Consequently, the sources used were from interdisciplinary studies on religion and peace education.

Limitations. The literature review included dialogue about peace, mutual respect, and harmony. Hence, this study, like Khadijah et al. (2019) explain, does not cover theological issues about the world of religions. The focus is limited to a culture of peace. It does not interpret or perform hermeneutics

on the biblical or Al Quranic texts included in this study. The study was delimited to the exploration of religious texts that could be used as resources for teaching peace. Interpretative hermeneutics was used at the basic level of interpreting texts and thoughts from key informant interviews.

Ethical Considerations

- a. Dignity and mutual respect for all religions. Given the pluralistic religious environment in Uganda, this chapter considers the role played by all religions in enhancing peace education. All religions are acknowledged as being relevant and essential for effective interfaith dialogue and teaching of peace education.
- b. The author obtained informed consent from the key informants and acquired their permission to include their views in the chapter and quoting their names.
- c. Although the author's religious background is inclined to Christianity, the study considered teachings from Islamic religion without bias. The author synthesized and quoted the Al Quranic texts, as presented by the authors from the sources consulted.

Conceptualization of Religion, Peace, and a Culture of Peace

Religion and Peace Education

The concept of religion has historically attracted scholarly and theological debates. The historical arguments and contexts have determined how the idea of religion is being used. Religion is shaped by history that influences cultural and social movements. These are vital in approaching peace education. Advancing the idea of religion must start by rethinking how religion could be defined. Analyzing this from a constructivist perspective, different people will attribute diverse meanings to what religion means (Frazer & Friedli, 2015 as cited in Holland, 2016, p. 1). Although the concept of religion may lack a universal definition, this chapter adopts both the substantive and functional approaches to understanding of religion (Silverstri & Mayall, 2015). The former approach guides the understanding of the contents of religion while the latter expresses the active role of religion.

As we explore the approaches of teaching peace, it is important to appropriate a working definition of religion and religious texts. This will guide our reflections and discussions on the scope of utilizing the word religion as we adopt it in teaching peace and reflect on the religious perspectives that can be used to enhance social inclusion, that is a proposed as paradigm for teaching peace. Silverstri and Mayall (2015) present the existing definitions of religion and analyze how the content therein can be used as resources for

teaching peace education. So, the practical working definition as adopted from Skidmore (2007) as cited by Silverstri and Mayall (2015) includes understanding religion as “a conceptual and moral framework for understanding and ordering lives and communities” (2015, p. 6). In African communities, the ritual element of religion is vital to creating the shared values that are essential for establishing a peaceful community. The manifestation of religion in the indigenous communities has influenced how they participate in discussions of peace and violence.

The religious content that is shared in communities and schools shape the understanding of the concepts of peaceful coexistence and nonviolence. The manner through which individuals approach the discussion of peace education depends on the concepts that shape their perspective about peace and violence. The religious texts act generally as sources of identity and morality. Thus, any effort to teach peace nonviolently requires one to adopt the non-violent texts found in religions’ sacred texts. Case studies for instruction discussed in this chapter were sacred texts found in Christianity and Islam.

Following the avowal by Silverstri and Mayall (2015) that,

It is important to resist the temptations to try to understand faith through homogenizing categories such as religious institutions and communities...when attempting to gain a deeper understanding of how religion works and the many ways that it matters to people.

(p. 7)

Sacred texts were selected without an effort to homogenize them for their use by individual religious institutions and communities. This was rationalized because religious instruction should be all inclusive beyond individual faith (Agnihoti, 2017). Use of sacred texts as curriculum optimizes their instructional purpose in peace education. Humanity as stated by Silverstri and Mayall (2015) is influenced by religion, and it shapes how humans make decisions that express their relationship with the cosmos. The religious motivation fine-tunes the behaviors and practices of humans in relation to the cosmic order (see Silverstri & Mayall, 2015, p. 8). This experience is pertinent to how one acts considering the discussion of peace and violence. It is essential to note that the transformative dialogues in religious discussions are vital for teaching peace. They support advancement of a culture of peace. The role played by religion in teaching peace nonviolently is an important one because conflict and violence have religious dimensions (Best & Rakodi, 2011 as cited in Silverstri & Mayall, 2015, p. 34). The dimensions of religion such as ethical convictions are vital resources to teaching peace. On this assertion, Silverstri and Mayall (2015) have recounted that peace is influenced by religious beliefs that ethics and values can contribute to peace. The beliefs also have aided de-escalation of conflicts.

Hence religious texts and traditions have peace potentials for learners. This is done through local and international discourses on religious and peace education (Silverstri & Mayall, 2015, p. 35).

A Culture of Peace

Scholars and researchers of peace education posit that one should comprehend the view of peace to develop a practical culture of peace. This section identifies a framework for defining peace as adopted from the work of Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2010) on *Peace Education: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace*. This will guide the discussions about peace and a culture of peace.

One concept of peace can be understood in the dimension of social justice. As observed in the framework above, it is the role of teachers to educate about religious teachings as well as establish the conditions for eradication of inequality and other injustice that are catalysts of violence. From Figure 6.1, it is understood that peace is a concept founded on relationships that exist at various of levels of human experiences. The level of relationship with the community and environment influences how peaceful one may lead their life. In the context of teaching peace, it is important to understand the parameters from which we define and create peace. As learners engage, the question to answer is whether the environment is inclusive and conducive for creating a culture of peace. Considering the case study presented by Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2010), the culture of peace emerges from the experiences and reflections of peace advocates. And in this case, they may include: religious leaders, students, community members, researchers, and educators of peace. They play a vital role in imparting religious and social values that are essential for developing a culture of peace.

Considering values for establishing a culture of peace, Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2010) comment that: “it is absolutely important that personal and family integrity are protected and promoted...Respect for human dignity, fundamental freedoms, democratic participation, the fulfilment of basic needs and economic equity are roots of peace” (pp. 23–24). The African indigenous community has made efforts through the Ubuntu worldview to create communities of respect and dignity for humanity. However, various religious beliefs and practices have challenged this worldview and peaceful coexistence. The traditional belief that child sacrifice yields wealth, for example, has savaged the rights of children and their human dignity. This in any way has caused violence.

We can further appreciate that the conceptual dichotomy of understanding peace as negative and positive peace, as elaborated by Galtung (1996), broadens our perspective on what part religion can play in the development of peace curriculum. The curriculum would hence focus on both eliminating

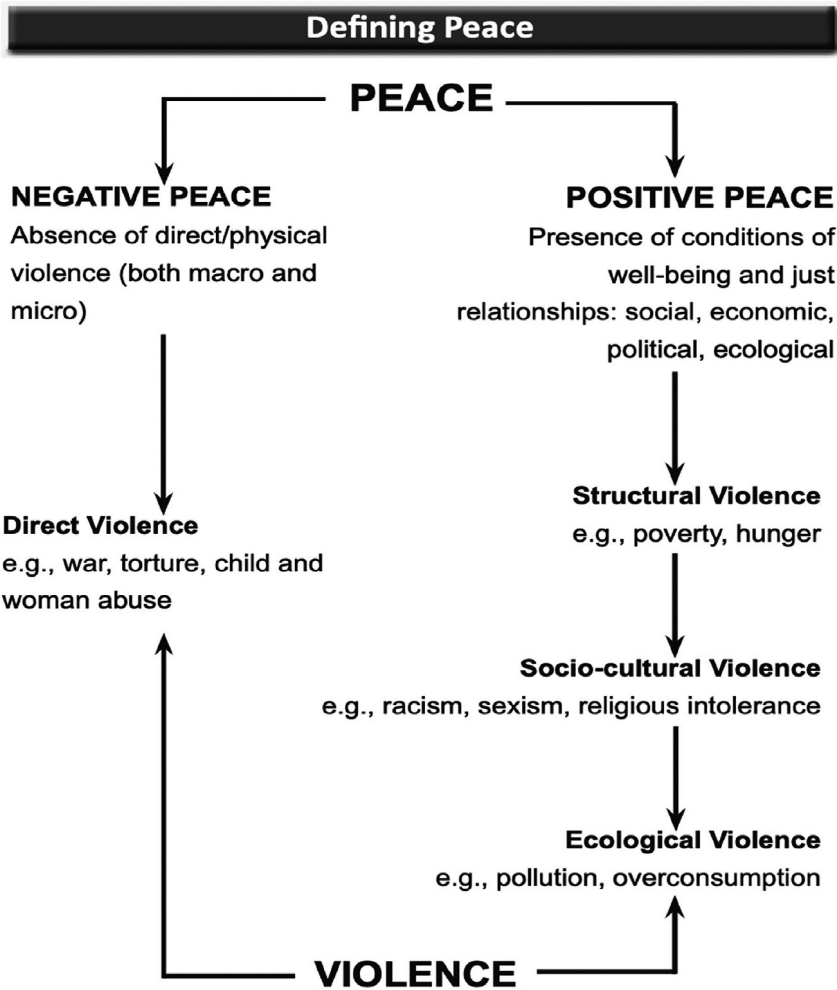


Figure 6.1 Framework for understanding peace.

all facets of violence and creating the conditions for social inclusion and well-being. It may as well aim at improving the approach to livelihood and managing the emerging social and spiritual challenges. As Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2010) have argued, I want to equally draw a disclaimer that majority of the conflicts that have existed in our ancient and contemporary society have been largely driven by political and economic goals other than faith/religious matters.

For example, tracing the history of peace education points to the focus that the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) provided after the end of World War II (Burns & Aspeslagh, 1999, p. 28). Equality, justice, and values education have been some of UNESCO's (2015) goals for peace education, promoted through establishing a culture of peace. This is central to the work of religious institutions. The advocates for peace education argue that peace should be a part of the curriculum. For instance, in the curriculum of religious education, peace and conflicts are critical matters of discussion. Especially, religious teaching that calls for peaceful coexistence. Peace is a spiritual state that is expressed in various aspects of human life. This challenges us to incorporate the spiritual dimension of teaching peace. As explained by Danesh (2006) in "Towards an Integrative theory of peace education," this may enhance the development of culture-peace and unity-based worldview that are prerequisites for peace education (2006, p. 55).

The Religious Nonviolent Texts

This section explores the various religious texts that can be used as resources for teaching peace education. Texts from the Judeo-Christian tradition and Islamic tradition are the dominant religious traditions in Uganda, thus the curriculum described herein. The religious texts presented in this chapter provide the religious framework for enhancing the understanding of the religious phenomena in the existing religious traditions. The religious non-violent teachings are discussed as case studies and instructions for consideration and inclusion in the interfaith dialogue. Sacred texts that originate from the traditions of Christianity and Islam will support the development of the structure of interfaith dialogue, a proposed pedagogy for teaching peace.

The texts for reference are extracted from the work of Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2010). Other texts were obtained from the Key Informant interviews with the stakeholders at the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU). Both sources present excellent scriptures that can be a basis for teaching peace because religious or faith traditions have specific goals for promoting peace. The interviews indicated that the Bible and Quran have texts that address conflicts and peace issues. As it will be revealed shortly, the spiritual and faith traditions have made it imperative for them to cooperate. The following are examples for inclusion in peace and nonviolence curriculum.

According to the tradition of Christianity, Jesus Christ is considered the prince of peace and the author of peace texts. This was declared at His birth (c.f., Luke 2:8ff) and He promoted the same teaching during His time on earth. According to Bishop Lwere, "*Jesus taught us to agree with your adversary, hence acknowledging that were brother despite of our religions and you don't have demonize other people*" (Phone Interviews on 11/01/2023). In his

opinion, the call for brotherhood is a key Christian teaching regarding peaceful coexistence. Bishop Buyondo shared a testimony during the interviews to stress the idea of brotherhood. He said, “*Dialogue promoted brotherhood that has reduced tension and enmity. Coexistence was the historical agenda for interreligious dialogues on Impact FM, a Christian radio, since my tenure from 1997–2005*” (Oral Interviews with Bishop Buyondo on 9/01/2023).

The Christians, according to what the interviews revealed are expected to focus on the unity of the body of Christ not the differences brought about by the religious traditions. During the interviews, it was recounted that, “*Theme of peace cuts across the sacred books of Christianity and Islam and other religions like Bahai movement has equally important texts for addressing peace*” (Oral Interviews on 5/01/2023). This stresses how the biblical texts regard the subject of peace.

From the interactions with key stakeholders of IRCU, there are essential elements emphasized as important in implementing interfaith dialogue. For instance, “*Speaking with one voice as religious leaders -a prophetic voice to the nation,*” and “*ensuring that one family speaking one language to address peace and conflict issues affecting humanity*” (Phone Interviews on 11/01/2023 and Oral interviews on 9/01/2023). Scholars have pointed out elements that are essential to teaching peace from a Christian perspective. According to Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2010), they include: Rejection of Violence (c.f., Matt. 26:51–52); Love and Reconciliation (c.f., Matt. 5:43–44; Rom. 12:17–21); and Use of transforming Initiatives (c.f. Matt. 5:9, 39–41; Hosea 2:20). The texts for teaching peace are embedded in the biblical passages that reveal the dignity of humanity as created in the image and likeness of God (c.f., Gen. 1:26–27). This shapes the perspectives and curriculum of peace education. The biblical worldview is the reference for Christian efforts toward peace education. For example, the golden rule established by Jesus Christ in Matthew 7:12, shapes both attitude and behavior toward peaceful coexistence.

Likewise, the Islamic tradition has religious texts that promote peace non-violently. The philosophy of Islam emphasizes peace with God and fellow human beings (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace, 2010, p. 52). The passages from the Holy Quran reveal how peace is imperative and nonnegotiable in Islam. There are four main themes based on the discussion by Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2010) with reference to the holy Qur’an. This will be complimented by the work of Khadijah et al. (2019). First, condemnation to killing to save the human race (Sura. 5:32). There is encouragement to demonstrate mercy to all creatures, as exhorted by Sura al-Isra 17:701. Second, promotion of equity and justice through kindness (Sura. 60:8). This reveals how Allah loves equity and so encourages dialogue to allow equal

participation. Third, peace is the word of salutation from the most merciful Lord (Sura.36:58); Fourth and finally, justice and all acts of doing good are preferred to shameful deeds of injustice and rebellion (Sura.16:90). As Khadijah et al. (2019) assert, Surah al-Kafirun 109:1–6 call for no rejection, but encourage acceptance, coexistence, and mutual respect.

The religious texts included here are core to the framework of teaching peace nonviolently. They provide case studies for instruction that can facilitate the teaching of peace using an interfaith approach. They are the rationale for an approach that focuses on religious teachings that contribute to peace education across diverse religious traditions. The texts promote mutual understanding, peaceful coexistence, along with rejection of exclusivism and promotion of inclusivism that contribute to sustainable peace (Khadijah et al., 2019). The texts as indicated herein facilitate the establishment of interfaith dialogue on the ethics and principles of dialogue. This crucial in and beyond classes of peace education. The topics and length of conversations, as argued by Khadijah et al. (2019), should aim for transforming attitudes and increasing knowledge and skills of learner during the interfaith interactions. The next section presents the pedagogy of interreligious dialogue, discussing some of indigenous perspectives and experiences of religious and peace education, the principles of interfaith dialogue pedagogy and approaches for implementing this pedagogy.

Interfaith Dialogue: A Pedagogy for Peace Education

The approach of interfaith dialogue to teaching peace education calls for reflection on the principles and procedures that form the science of learning peace education (Abdool et al., 2007). Pedagogy is critical in a cycle of learning. This section explains how interfaith dialogue can support a pedagogy for teaching peace education in Uganda. There is a strong relationship that exists between religious experiences and peace education (Ibid). In the proposed pedagogy, it is asserted that interfaith dialogue enhances the integration of religion for effective teaching of peace education. The pedagogy of teaching peace suggested herein is based on the multicultural education strand. Multicultural education as pointed out by some Rodriguez (2011) “has been around in educational circles for quite some time. It attempts to understand the different cultures that inhabit a territory, or region or even the world” (p. 5). This kind of pedagogy allows learners and their instructors to have a better understanding of people who are different or come from a different culture: what they think, what they believe in, what has been their history. By understanding peoples from other cultures, this type of pedagogy provides a way to integrate the cultural, social, ethnic, and religious differences and eventually, help in global understanding, tolerance, and peace (Rodriguez, 2011).

Interfaith Dialogue and Peace Education

Considering the context of Uganda, the volatile history of Ugandan communities indicates how interfaith dialogue has contributed to peacebuilding. For instance, during the interviews, it was revealed that,

The 1990–1996 historical conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Kampala city saw emergences of boom attacks in Bwaise town, and so religious leaders consider to establish interfaith dialogue as a mature way of handling conflicts and they started a local radio telecast programme of ‘Omuntu ne Katonde we’ (a person with their God) to discuss the universal doctrines of peace among other religions.

(Oral Interviews with Bishop Buyondo on 9/01/2023)

Interfaith dialogue from this background was very essential to enhance unity in diversity and peaceful existence. Through the interfaith dialogues, the radio program of “*Manyanya Kyokiriza (Know what you believe)*” (Oral Interviews on 9/01/2023) was promoted as a mechanism to enhance peace through dialogues. The interfaith dialogue has become the most appropriate way of understanding other religions and information that is relevant for peacebuilding.

According to a special report by United States Institute of Peace (USIP, 2004) entitled, “What Works? Evaluating the Interfaith Dialogue Programs,” interfaith dialogue is a fundamental place where different religious traditions interact and converse based on their religious beliefs, doctrine, and practices (2004, p. 2). This special report on the interfaith dialogue programs further indicates that interfaith dialogue is understood as a program or an approach that allows conversations that promote mutual understanding between religious institutions to promote peacebuilding. Through interfaith dialogue, individuals from different religious traditions can interact in a free and safe environment.

In Uganda,

The IRCU has championed the building of the culture of peace, especially during the crisis of Rwenzori region, and the Northern Uganda crimes against humanity, the religious leaders worked collectively to address conflicts through interreligious dialogue.

(Oral Interview with Omona on 5/01/2023)

This reveals how dialogue has enabled different religious groups to work together in peacebuilding. The IRCU, according to Bishop Buyondo in the oral interviews, also championed the exchange program of credible voices of East Africa-dialogue among youth of the East African Community. Holland (2016) recounts that interfaith dialogue encourages participants to

consider the religious otherness and welcome the reality of religious diversity. The uniqueness of the interfaith dialogue is the religious content and spiritual culture embedded in the conversations or dialogue. The approach of interreligious dialogue in Uganda has been made very indigenous. On this aspect, Omona noted this during the interview. “*Interreligious groups such as Acholi Leaders interreligious group was initiated by IRCU and it is active in addressing issues in Northern Uganda by mobilizing communities for dialogues*” (Oral interviews on 5/01/2023).

Making interreligious as an integrated aspect of community, make it a unique methodology for addressing peace issues. The interfaith dialogue in Uganda has contributed to the mobilization of communities toward embracing peace and guide the citizens to avoid practices of violence and injustice and human rights abuse. Commenting on some cases studies of interfaith activities, Silverstri and Mayall (2015) recount that the dialogue is established on the religious heritage of nonviolence and peacebuilding. The central idea in interreligious dialogue is the conversation and cooperation that happens at institutional or individual level. According to the scholars that Holland cites in his work, the integration of interfaith dialogue and religious education enhances great transformation (Ysseldyk et al., 2011; Patel and Meyer, 2011 as cited in Holland, 2016, p. 3). The transformation described here aids in reducing hostility, fostering positive attitudes toward people of other religions, and increasing knowledge about religious traditions. The pedagogy of interfaith dialogue allows for ideological, epistemological, and ontological examinations of the religious traditions and perception of differences (Keaten and Soukup, 2009; Siejk, 1995 as cited in Holland, 2016, p. 3).

Teaching peace education through the approach of interfaith dialogue considers key components such as social inclusion and mutual coexistence. One of the ways to implement peace is integrating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of peace education by applying them to real-world situations.¹ In the context of learning components, Omona was asked during an oral interview on what he considers as elements essential for effective interfaith dialogue. He recounted that, “*Interreligious dialogue should focus on contextual issues affecting people equally*” (Oral Interview on 5/01/2023). This view suggests that understanding key issues affecting people is an essential aspect for inclusion in this proposed teaching approach. Another important component in using interfaith dialogue that emerged during the oral interviews is “*the use of persuasive language that rallies the communities to embrace national dialogue through negotiations that would see everyone wining and speaking as one voice*” (Phone interviews on 11/01/2023). The language of communication or instruction can be considered as a strong factor for teaching peace through interfaith dialogue.

The interfaith approach suggested has a multidisciplinary dimension in it. That by encouraging interreligious conversations, the multifaith reality is

used as a platform for conversations of peace and conflict. Bishop Lwere during the phone interviews stressed that

Given that Uganda have over 95% religious population, the interreligious council of Uganda has used this as an opportunity to speak for the voiceless and exercise social justice through interfaith dialogue. The religious communities in Uganda respect their leaders and so they can listen to them obediently.

(Phone Interview on 11/01/2023)

From this view, it can be noted that religious environment or context plays a key role in effective implementation of interfaith dialogue. Scholars have asserted that the interaction at this level of multifaith creates proper understanding of the roots religious differences that often lead to violence. This understanding helps to promote the peaceful alternatives (Smith and Carson, 1998, as cited in Rodriguez, 2011, p. 5).

The religious dialogues support counteracting the notion of cultural violence. Without an approach for interreligious conversations, the potential of religion can be made inactive in contributing to peace education. The suggested pedagogical approach will hence help to shape the education policies and consciousness of learners and instructors. According to what has been argued by some scholars, the universal analysis of the dimensions of conflict are critical steps of consideration too (see Bernal 2003, Mayall 1990, Toft 2007 as cited in Silverstri & Mayall, 2015). The focus of interfaith dialogue according to Silverstri and Mayall (2015) is on maximizing the different peace potentials embedded in the different religions. The potential to promote peace is fully embedded in every religion, which should be included in curriculum since it can influence cross-border relations.

Integrating religious values of indigenous approaches to implementation of peace belong in the curriculum. Interfaith dialogue as a framework can enhance a broader integration and community participation in peace education. The pedagogy of interfaith dialogue should also involve the participation of religious leaders in the process of teaching. This can be incorporated through baseline studies, cases studies, or guest lectures. Through this collaboration, it is possible to produce more-effective program activities for teaching peace education. The collaboration involves interreligious cooperation that influences implementation of peace discussions/curriculum.

Content of Interfaith Dialogue Pedagogy

In the interfaith dialogue pedagogy, the content will include religious ethics, values, attitudes, and practices of coexistence. It is at this point that I want to note that education in the indigenous society was inseparable from

religion. In fact, reflections on education in African indigenous communities reveal how education is rooted in religion. According to the explanation given by Nwokeocha (2020) in his chapter, "Africa' Educational Development in Perspective," one can underscore how indigenous African people developed rich cultures and social institutions in education and religion. Every action and learning in the indigenous community have the experience of ancestral worship and connection to the spiritual world. The implication is to demonstrate how social life is anchored in religion. Commenting on this dimension of spirituality and livelihood, Nwokeocha (2020) recounts that,

religion is the primary source of morality and values system and this is true not only in the industrial but even more so in the traditional societies. Most of the indigenous African societies believed not just in their ancestors but also in the existence of the supreme being.

(p. 4)

The spiritual orientation of life in African communities explains why there is a religious background to the existing phenomena. For example, Nwokeocha (2020) points out that Africans have gods that are responsible for justice and other aspects of life. This influences how they approach the subject of peace and violence and how they interpret the causes and remedies of conflicts and violence. So, the concept of peace, justice, and morality are equally necessary for inclusion in indigenous education.

Writing on the goal of indigenous education, Nwokeocha (2020) asserts that,

The indigenous communities associate religious education to peace education. There is no line that separates the two. In any case, to achieve peace education, then one needs to be rooted in their religious community. The education promoted solidarity and enabled them to live in harmony with one another and the environment.

(p. 5)

This points out the indigenous perspective of religious and peace education. There is no doubt that religious education was carried out with the goal to sustain peace and solidarity in the community. When religion is fully integrated in an education process, then it is possible to advance peace culture. Nwokeocha (2020) found that the values and norms that were based on religious beliefs guided dispute resolution in the community and "The by-products of the traditional religions were *morality* and *collective conscience* founded upon truth, honesty, justice, fair play, and other virtues" (2020, p. 5).

The universal and inclusive nature of education in an indigenous community is based on established religious systems. The religious background or foundation enables the establishment of universal values that are vital for developing peaceful communities (Nwokeocha, 2020). The relationship between religious education and peace education is a natural one. This is visible in how indigenous education is structured. The curriculum of indigenous education has religious and peace education concepts fully embedded. Scholars have found that indigenous experiences of education involve communicating knowledge, skills, practices, values, and belief systems from one generation to another in a culturally linked manner (see Scholars cited in Nwokeocha, 2020, p. 7). The perspective of an indigenous education system indicates that the experience of religious education contributed to how the community interpreted and understood the cultural values and customs. These enhanced the development of resources, spiritual ritual practices, and worldviews.

Accordingly, religious education based on the African indigenous perspective provides learners with knowledge regarding existing religions and their functionality. And one of the functions of religion is promotion of peace and equal rights. The curriculum of religious education includes lessons on morality, justice, respect, values, and beliefs. These are core to teaching peace education. Violence is often associated with sin in Christian religious traditions. The history of peaceful coexistence as rooted in the indigenous world view of communalism has influenced the initiatives in peace education and social well-being.

Commenting on such initiatives, Gross (2017) in “Revisiting Peace Education” recounts that, “studying education’s role in peace and conflict is often justified by the need to help secure the future against further violations and human right, whether based on ethnicity, religion, and gender” (p. 4). It is quite clear that religious education has a vital role to play in teaching peace. Religious education can be considered as a vehicle for enhancing peace education. The concept of religion can guide our interaction with the reality of humanity and existence of conflicts. The focus for any reader is to explore the role of religion and religiosity in peace education.

Peace education in Uganda is progressively underdeveloped, both as a philosophy and a process. Studies have been done to inform the practices and curriculum of peace education. A study was carried out by Ugandan researchers and educationists, for example, on the conceptions of peace by children. This aimed at addressing the challenges related to peace education and transforming the perspectives of the violent history that is held by different groups of people, to inform peace education practices, and curriculum. According to Gross (2017), the findings of the above study are crucial to conceptualizing peace education in the context of indigenous communities. The experiences of children as agents of peace education and peacebuilding

are very significant. Gross (2017) further shares the main insights for peace education. She writes,

Across the findings, insights for peace education include (1) linking peace education with local conceptions of peace, (2) locating ways in which children think of themselves as agents of peace – linking peace education substance and pedagogy with children’s sense of urgency and agency, (3) engaging children in thinking about and providing services oriented towards meeting basic needs in society, (4) developing content that focuses on peaceful practices, and (5) fostering sharing, communication, and role cohesion while also encouraging a critical reflection on their limits.
(2017, p. 7)

To make sense and use of the above findings, we need to read them from an indigenous perspective. For instance, the linkage of peace education with local views about peace is critical to establishing a culture of peace. This determines who the children, youth, community members, and other learners or custodians of peace promotes peace education nonviolently. Another critical aspect pertains to pedagogy that promotes engagement and involvement of learners as agents of peacebuilding. The Voluntary Standards for Peace Education identify the skills of students, their educators, and school administrators that support peacebuilding and learning in schools (Carter, 2008). Carter has guided that agency with the concept of comprehensive citizenship, whereby learners enact their agency across several domains of peacebuilding citizenship (Carter, 2021). The development of the agency increases participation and intellectual abilities for management of peace discussions. The way learners interact with the resources and concepts of peace is crucial to peace education.

The indigenous experiences of peace education align it to the richness of African culture, language, and religious diversity. A study carried out by Adeyemi and Salawudeen (2014) on indigenous proverbs and peace education in Nigeria affirms this assertion. They found out that:

- a. Indigenous experiences in the use of proverbs indicate that proverbs are veritable tools for education in values, religious practices and beliefs, and social attitudes that are essential for peace education
- b. Communalism is the basis for unity in the society and proverbs are the indigenous forms for socializing peace education to children and youth
- c. Locally used proverbs can serve as indigenous model for indigenous peace education. So, applying them in the curriculum of peace education can enhance participation in establishing positive peace and shaping the values of honest, modesty, and communalism.

From the above study, it can be pinned that indigenous experiences of education have essential components that are vital for teaching peace education. The richness found in the religious and cultural practices, rituals, and language is a point to start when referring to indigenous perspectives in peace education. As seen from the findings cited herein, education in the African Indigenous Society was not separable from religion. The religious dimensions of education were considered consciously or nonconsciously as vehicles for peace education. This has enabled the sustainability of the Ubuntu worldview that is unique to African communities, and adapted into African peace education (Marovah, 2021).

Methodology of Interfaith Dialogue Pedagogy

This section describes the methods of teaching peace education through interfaith dialogue pedagogy. I will explain how the approach of interfaith dialogue based on some experiences of indigenous communities can facilitate peace education and peacebuilding. The methods of teaching peace education in the suggested pedagogy include use of cases studies, storytelling, and social initiatives for positive peace. Thinking about a methodology of interfaith dialogue pedagogy should start with reflecting on the principles and procedures that make the process of learning effective. In an interview with Omona, he recounted that,

Interreligious dialogue has been implemented through dialogues in form of workshops and interpersonal conversations and negotiation with stakeholders concerning the content of issues at hand, setting of ground rules for effective discussion and finally the thematic areas for discussions.

(Oral interview on 5/01/2023)

His submission indicates that workshops are useful in conducting interfaith dialogue. This would help participants to appreciate different views on the subject of peace through group discussions on thematic issues that are identified. What I consider as equally important in making this methodology effective is the use of negotiation, setting ground rules, and agreeing on what to be discussed. Like any in other curriculum, content and methodology are very essential elements.

Scholars have suggested that constructive empathy and logical reflection are essential to establish a conducive milieu that allows evaluative conversations during dialogue (see Engebretson, 2009; and Siejk, 1995 as cited in Holland, 2016, pp. 4–5). A perceptively safe interaction environment shapes the choices and perspectives of learners of interreligious dialogue. Hence, the pedagogical methods suggested here aim at creating an environment of learning peace education.

For effective and meaningful interfaith dialogue, the methods of delivering learning should ensure that learners have respect for one another and they are willing to suspend judgment and work together on common challenges, other than conflict dimensions of the social space (Schottmann, 2013 in Holland, 2016, p. 5). Interfaith dialogue forefronts the importance of accepting the value systems that are inherited in other religious traditions. Through the facilitation of that instruction, learners can be motivated to acknowledge the values and contributions of different religious beliefs and traditions.

Use of the Case Study Methodology

In the process of teaching peace education through interfaith dialogue, case studies are part of the methods for facilitating the learning process. A case study of the IRCU will be illustrative. An IRCU exists in Uganda with the responsibility to enhance discussions on peace, justice, and well-being. The IRCU delivers services through religious leaders, structures, and infrastructure that cascade from national to the grassroots levels. It also works with institutions, including health facilities, universities, schools, vocational/postsecondary institutions, and regional and district governance structures (dioceses, deaneries, fields and Muslim districts, counties, and villages). The interreligious council operates largely on the pluralistic approach to dialogue and, in minimal cases, some traces of inclusivity can be seen. By using this approach of considering all religions in Uganda as legitimate and adequate in shaping human experiences, the council promotes peace and conflict transformation, sustainable human development, and network development among the religious leaders, communities, women, and youth (IRCU, 2017, p. 2). Given the essential role of religion in human development, religious dialogues have been encouraged in times of peace and conflict in Uganda, and religious leaders have stood as a vanguard of development. Scholars have hence appreciated the work of religion in general and the IRCU, in particular, in promoting the development of the country in the sectors of economics, politics, and education (IRCU, 2017).

Further discussions on the experience of using interfaith dialogue in Uganda will be based on the article by Omona (2020) that presents the work of the IRCU. The IRCU has used dialogues to actively participate in creating peaceful coexistence within and between communities. Through these dialogues, they have mobilized assets for attending to cases of conflict and violence. The discussions are based on the spiritual strength of each religious tradition that subscribes to the IRCU. The religious groups have individual moral influence on their followers. Humanity is guided by the religious teachings found in the different traditions.

To strategically address issues of peace, justice, and governance, the IRCU launched the Inter-Religious Institute for Peace (IRIP) in August 2012. This institute supported a campaign to unite Ugandans. Through this institute, the IRCU has been pushing the agenda for peaceful coexistence to another level, notwithstanding the challenges encountered on the way. The IRCU has also deployed itself to nurturing integrity, peace, justice, and good governance by popularizing shared vision and values so as to make Uganda a truly peaceful and justice-loving country. It has advocated for the need to address the main challenges that undermine integrity, peace, justice, and good governance.

Use of Storytelling Methodology

Scholars have made storytelling an effective method of teaching peace education through interfaith dialogue. According to the work of Khambali et al. (2019), teaching through storytelling is considered effective to address issues of concern as the learner is supported to reflect and transform their mindset peacefully and in harmony within the diversity of faith. While using this method, the instructor chooses stories that can enrich the social lives of the learners. These can be based on the teachings of the religious texts as well as historical stories that broaden the worldview of the learners and enable them to understand different belief systems. It is advised that the whole practice of sharing learning through storytelling should be done within a safe and authentic environment that gives room for transparency and genuineness in the expressions during the class (Khambali et al., 2019). Indeed, healing from violence in Burundi has been accomplished through storytelling as peace education (Timpson et al., 2022). Interfaith dialogue pedagogy creates environments that allow learners to share their stories that have constructive experiences in building a culture of peace and living in harmony as humanity. This is one of the effective methods of learning through interfaith dialogue can be achieved. It can allow learners to be introduced to skills, norms, and values associated with learning in a religious-pluralistic environment. Each learner has a story for their religious tradition. Interfaith dialogue allows this story to be told and heard.

Conclusion

The practical question that is sought to be answered by this chapter is how interreligious dialogue can serve as a pedagogy for teaching peace. Interreligious dialogue facilitated through a pluralistic approach is presented as a nonviolent means of peace education. This approach encourages indigenous communities to participate in culturally relevant as well as pluralistic peace

education. The religious nonviolent texts found in different religious traditions are the resources for teaching peace education through interfaith dialogue. This dialogue, according to Danesh (2006), is a replica of the unity-based worldview which the Appendix highlights in a lesson plan based on this pedagogy of interfaith dialogue.² As indicated above, interfaith dialogue will support learners to uphold unity in diversity and will appreciate the ultimate objective of the creation of an inclusive peace culture. Through this approach of teaching, the universal ethical principles of morality, justice, and rejection of prejudice and segregation can be implemented. These are critical aspects of peace education. Regarding the case study and the storytelling methods of interfaith dialogue pedagogy, the course instructor has an important task to facilitate learning by creating an active and safe learning environment where the dialogue can thrive. This can allow learners to share experiences and shape their own understanding concerning the religious values and beliefs of every participating learner (Holland, 2016). The proposed pedagogy survives on the principles and ethics of dialogue, the willingness of learners to learn from each other, and the level of tolerance and respect that they demonstrate.

Key Informant Interviews with Stakeholders of IRCU

(All interviewees gave consent to audio recording, and citing their names in the quotations).

1. Rev. Dr Andrew David Omona, Senior Lecturer at Uganda Christian University and Coordinator of RLJPN and Researcher, Oral interviews on 5/01/2023 at 11:00–12:00 pm
2. Bishop Joshua Lwere, Senior Board Member of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda and General Overseer of National Fellowship of Born Again Pentecostal Churches of Uganda, Phone Interviews on 11/01/2023 at 16:25 to 17:00 pm
3. Bishop Herbert Buyond, Senior Board member of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda and Bishop of Born Again Faith, Oral Interviews on 9/01/2023 at 10:45–11:40 am.

Notes

- 1 The Voluntary Standards for Peace Education (Carter, 2008), that lists competencies identified by peace education researchers, support pedagogies for that field. There are standards for students, teachers, school administrators, and teacher educators that serve as guides for pedagogies of peace education.
- 2 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

7 Ethnopedagogy

Exploring Peaceful Traditions of Indonesia's Sundanese Indigenous Communities

Ilfiandra and Mohamad Saripudin

Introduction

A school is a place for the growth and development of peaceful individuals, peaceful relations, and peaceful communities (Calp, 2020). However, the research by Kartadinata, Setiadi, and Ilfiandra (2016) in Indonesia showed that building a peaceful classroom climate was not yet a teacher's enacted mission, and most students perceive their classroom climate as not peaceful. Due to the need for a peace-oriented pedagogy in their schools, Indonesian students tend to lack a peaceful cognitive style of learning (Kartadinata, 2020). Therefore, they consider violence as a normal part of the school. Tragically, students have been experiencing bullying, vandalism, persecution, and brawls that even end in murder. Data from Sistem Informasi Online Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak (Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children) presents that there were 1044 cases of violence experienced in Indonesian schools throughout the year 2022 (SIMFONI PPA, 2022). Several other cases were not reported because they were resolved amicably or were covered up for fear of defaming the reputation of the person or school.

The prevalent conflicts and practices of direct, structural, and cultural violence in Indonesian schools reflect learning needs in the dynamic Indonesian society. The diverse cultures and longstanding knowledge traditions of the nation's multicultural society, where people from over 1300 communities live together, present the possibility of demonstrating cooperation and creativity through non-harmful problem-solving. In Indonesia, several indigenous communities have traditions that have knowledge and practices of peace, existence, harmony, concern, handling conflict, and fighting violence. The Sundanese community is one of the indigenous communities that have this tradition. This study explores the Sundanese indigenous cultures and practices, which can be used as a resource for curriculum and instructions that counter violence in Indonesia and beyond.

In general, Indonesian schools, as part of their curriculum, do not teach students the skills to resolve conflicts constructively, which frequently results in violent action unless the root causes of the conflict are resolved (Setiadi & Ilfiandra, 2019). Peace education in Indonesia does not have a clear framework. All Indonesian education units, from elementary to tertiary institutions, do not have peace education programs designed by the government (Kartadinata, Suherman et al., 2016; Setiadi et al., 2017). This situation can be explained that peace education as a goal in modern education did not gain sufficient momentum before the 21st century (Harris & Morrison, 2012). In many countries, government support for peace education is minimal (Carter, 2006). In the case of Indonesia, the government has viewed peace education as not necessary or urgent beyond addressing the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (Wahyudin, 2018). Nevertheless, based on the Preamble to its 1945 Constitution, one of Indonesia's long-term goals is to develop and organize peace and global education. Based on this constitution, academics from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia continue to study the basis for culturally sensitive peace education.

Peace education is, ideally, a contextually and culturally responsive method of providing curriculum and instruction. Therefore, peace education in Indonesia and elsewhere can be more meaningful in the curriculum when it incorporates the country's social and cultural context, needs, and aspirations. Peace education in Indonesia needs the inclusion of local cultural and spiritual values that are in harmony with universal values (Chowdhury, 2010). With that goal, the content of culturally responsive peace education must include values that are alive and rooted in indigenous communities (Castro & Galace, 2010). Indigenous communities provide spiritual principles and traditions that are a compass point for paths to peace and solutions to conflict (Carter, 2015, 2021).

Exploration of the values of peace education in Sundanese local wisdom is in line with the history of the development of Indonesian education. Indonesian education begins with multicultural understanding and acculturation with the religions adopted by the community (Harits et al., 2016). Nevertheless, modern education in Indonesia is heavily influenced by European culture (ibid). Education policies in Indonesia are mainly impregnated with neocolonial logic (Yulindrasari & Djoehaeni, 2019). Modernization and foreign cultural investment have eroded Indonesian culture (ibid), thus eroding indigenous knowledge and educational practices.

Local cultural values in Indonesian education continue to fade. The Sundanese people's fairy tales, for example, are no longer taught in schools. The contents of Sundanese fairy tales usually teach mutual help, calm dealing with conflict, and no goal of winning when resolving conflict with others.

It is this absence of peace pedagogy in a local culture that this chapter tries to explore. It aims to build the initial construction of peace pedagogy, curriculum, and instruction that can strengthen the philosophical and scientific foundations of peace education that support the responsive design of education. The authors discuss the Sundanese local wisdom, the Sundanese local wisdom inheritance system, the implications of Sundanese local wisdom on peace pedagogy, and peace education curriculum and instruction. This chapter has two appendices that can be accessed via the link at the end.¹ Appendix A presents a list of values that can be used as a reference for the design of a peace education curriculum. Appendix B has an example of instruction in peace education using one method of inheriting the Sundanese local wisdom. Sundanese local wisdom reflects a life of peace and harmony. All the values that develop in the beliefs of the Sundanese teach people to live in harmony with God-Nature as well as peace with self and others. The Sundanese people are known as gentle, compassionate people who love and protect one another. This local wisdom is passed down through several oral cultures.

The Context of the Study

Indonesia is an archipelagic nation and one of the world's largest multicultural countries. Defining Indonesian culture is difficult because of its diverse cultures, religions, ethnicities, languages, and traditions. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics data released in 2022, Indonesia's population reaches 275,361,267 million, with 17,000 large and small islands, 1300 ethnic groups, and 1001 regional languages (BPS, 2021). Sundanese is the major indigenous community in West Java Province. It is the second-largest indigenous community after the Javanese in Indonesia. Based on the Central Bureau of Statistics data for 2010, the population of the Sundanese community is 36,701,670 people, or equivalent to 15 percent of the total population of Indonesia (BPS, 2010). Sundanese refers to understanding culture, ethnicity, geography, government administration, and social systems. In its development, the Sundanese term connotes a human or a group of people called *Urang Sunda* or *Sundanese* (Ekadjati, 1984). From a cultural point of view, Sundanese is "a person or group of people who grew up in a socio-cultural environment and lived and use Sundanese cultural norms and values in their lives." Etymologically, the word Sunda comes from the word *Su* which means everything that contains elements of goodness. According to Sanskrit, Sundanese is formed from the root word *Sund* which means luminous or bright. In the Kawi language, Sunda means water, an area with lots of water or a fertile area. Because of the beauty of the Tatar Sunda or Pasundan area, this area used to be called *Paris van Java* (Ilfiandra et al., 2021).

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach because it intends to understand and interpret the meaning of a phenomenon in a natural setting (Gall et al., 2007). Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, since 2011, has developed an ethnopedagogical research scheme that explores local wisdom and recognizes cultural entities as a philosophy and foundation of educational values. The authors utilize the results of these studies for further analysis. Therefore, the method chosen is meta-ethnography because it synthesizes qualitative research (Noblit & Hare, 1988). The meta-ethnographic method was a design that involves induction interpretation aimed at synthesizing or summarizing research results. Meta-ethnography is a form of synthesis of the results of ethnographic or another qualitative method that was interpretive.

The primary data source for this research was the 2011–2013 Ethnopedagogical Research Report, comprising 15 research reports. Alwasilah et al. (2009) view ethnopedagogy as an educational practice based on local wisdom in various disciplines, with cultural knowledge or local wisdom as the primary source of educational innovation. Cultural entities and local wisdom are sources of reference for moral, social, and spiritual behavior and dispositions needed to transform peace into personal and social life (Kartadinata, 2013a). Thus, local wisdom can be used as a source of innovation in educating about peace, or it is called the pedagogy of peace.

This research consists of four steps: identification, selection, abstraction, and analysis. At the selection stage, the study emphasized the aspects of substantial and contextual relevance as criteria for the acceptance of a research result to be part of the unit of analysis. Even though there was one study located outside Tatar Sunda, in Lampung, to be precise, because it considered the strategy side of value inheritance more, it was decided that this research would be a part of the analysis. The selection criteria for research results consider the research area more than the research question. Thus, all the research titles (15) were used as units of analysis to fulfill the minimum number of meta-analytic studies. The abstraction step was to find the “meaning in context” of all related research results, including the social and theoretical context. This abstraction process was still limited to taking the essence of each research based on the similarity of the research focus. This abstraction step includes grouping similar research results based on processes, events, and activities.

The analysis step was an interpretation process to find meaning. Data analysis was focused on general themes using thematic techniques and content analysis. It ended after a persistent pattern or trend was found. Before getting the conclusion, experts on Sundanese culture confirmed the results of the meta-ethnography. Then it was interpreted through a review of relevant literature and research. This stage aims to lessen subjectivity so that the

reliability and validity of study findings can be considered. The interpretation used multiple perspectives, similarities, differences, and interrelationships between themes. Confirmation results from Sundanese cultural experts strengthen it.

Findings

Diversity is the uniqueness, richness, and identity of Indonesia. Local wisdom is a form of knowledge, belief, understanding, insight, custom, or ethics that guides human behavior in an ecological community and determines human dignity. Based on the results of the meta-interpretation, it was found that the local wisdom of the Sundanese people is an existential characteristic. This feature is reflected in the harmony of relations with God-Universe within oneself and with others. Peace with a holistic dimension becomes a cultural entity. The Sundanese people who form a triangle reflect the balance of the dimensions of self, as shown in Figure 7.1.

The Sundanese construction of total peace places God as the highest substance and explicitly mentions the name of God and the Universe that parallels between intrapersonal peace and interpersonal peace. This concept differs from the total peace concept developed by UNESCO (2005). The UNESCO concept places inner peace as the pinnacle domain, and the substance of Peace with Nature relates to harmony with nature and Mother Earth. In the results of the analysis and synthesis of the concept of complete peace, the Sundanese find a metaphor to explain the essence of peace with God and the Universe, peace with self, and social peace.

Peace is the identity of the Sundanese people because the word Sunda comes from *Saunda*, *Sonda*, and *Sundara*. *Saunda* means granary to symbolize fertility and prosperity. *Sonda* means good, superior, happy, and happy according to conscience. According to Sanskrit, Sundanese is formed from the root word *Sund* which means light and bright (Ilfiandra et al., 2021). The word Sundanese means good/white/clean/brilliant or anything that contains

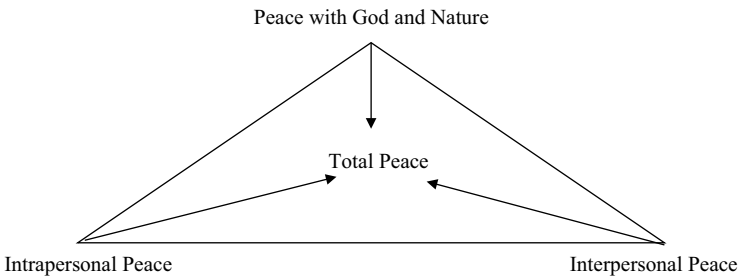


Figure 7.1 Total peace of the Sundanese.

goodness (Ekadjati, 1984). The life goal for the Sundanese also shows a strong connection between the word of Sundanese origin and peace. The goal is to live in prosperity, have a peaceful heart, gain glory and peace, be free forever, and achieve perfection (Warnaen, 1987). The total peace elaboration of the Sundanese people is presented as follows.

We Are Only Puppets, and It Is God Who Has the Power: Harmony with God-Nature

The global peace of the Sundanese people is related to relations with God and the Universe. Religious values are in the form of mutual tolerance to create harmony in life and self-awareness that we are God's creatures that were created together with other creatures. If we never disturb or damage it, surely the surrounding creatures will also take care of us and will not bring disaster. Religion in the form of belief in ancestors, taboos, and rigidity as ancestral heritage is a guide to preserving the natural environment. The Sundanese disagree with the term natural disaster. According to them, nature is unlikely to cause disasters if humans can take good care of it. The harmonious relationship with God and Nature is reflected in the beliefs of the Sundanese people with a phrase sung in a song called *pupuh asmarandana*.

The Sundanese accept as true that they came from God and go back to God. They believe in God's arrangement. They have the desire to take lessons from harmful events. The Sundanese have faith in the power of God. God determines one's fate, as reflected in the expression: "*Jodo, pati, bagja, cilaka, Pangeran nu nangtukeun*" (Maryani & Yani, 2013). This expression describes the belief of the Sundanese that God has determined soul mates, life and death, and happiness and misery. The dynamic and confident personality of the Sundanese can be found in the expression: "*Urang mah darma ihtiar, hasil henteuna disanggakeun Kanu Kagungan*" (ibid). This expression means that a human's task is only to make an effort. Success or failure is left to the will of God Almighty.

Based on a verbatim interview by Nurjanah et al. (2013) with the tribal chief of Kampung Naga (a village in the Sundanese community), the Sundanese people are bound by rules to obey God's commands and protect nature.

In everyday life, the people of Kampung Naga must obey the rules set forth in the form of *pamali* (taboo) which are passed down orally....

(Nurjanah et al., 2013)

Pamali brings the belief that the Sundanese people do not destroy nature. They believe that if nature is hurt or injured, then we as humans will be hurt. Everything in the universe should not be cut down arbitrarily. However, it

must go through the path of proposing and marrying nature or begging in a good way. The awareness of oneness with the universe did not disappear, even though later other beliefs and religions arrived in Sundanese land.

Human harmony with nature has a special meaning for the Sundanese. The closeness of the relationship with nature is described through belief.

leungit sirah cai, di tuar cai, balangsak kahirupan jeung leuweung sumber kahirupan jeung kahirupan, ngajaga leuweung sarupa jeung ngajaga kahirupan, miara leuweng sarupa jeung manjangkeun kahirupan.

(Hayati et al., 2013)

The text above means that forests give much life to humans, being a forest is the same as being life, and preserving forests is the same as making life prosperous. It reflects how highly the Sundanese people appreciate the existence and function of nature. Nature, for the Sundanese, is also a creature that has its own language. The attitude of sincerity and honesty of humans interacting with nature will bring humans to understand the signals conveyed by nature itself.

Be a Good Person: Harmony with Self

The Sundanese's personal harmony can be found in the expression:

kudu hade gogog hade tagog; nyaur kudu diukur, nyabda kudu diunggang; batok bolu eusi madu; ulah elmu ajug; henteu gedeg bulu salamar; ulah papadon los ka kolong; leleus jeujeur liat tali; muncang labuh ka puhu.

(Koswara et al., 2013)

When summarized, the meaning of the expression is that Sundanese people personally are straightforward, honest, courageous, firm in their stance, responsible, fair, thinking outside, and love the motherland. Regarding personal relations, the Sundanese view is that humans must have good views. According to Nurjanah et al. (2013), the life orientation of the Sundanese is “*hirup bagja, aman, tingtrim, ngahenang-ngahening, luhur darajat, ngeunah angeun ngeunah angen, sampurna dunya aherat*” (happy life, safe, peaceful, calm, high-ranking, no shortage of food and no trouble, perfect afterlife world).

According to Nurjanah et al. (2013), four characters describe the Sundanese people. First, *leber wawanen* means brave because he is right, afraid because he is wrong, and has a patriotic spirit and high nationalism. Second, *kukuh kana janji* means sticking to a promise. Third, *medang kamulyaan*, or prioritizing the glory of life, is reflected in everyday life. Fourth, *silih asih silih*

asah silih asuh, asih ti gusti, diasah ku alam, and diasuh ku manusa means loving each other, caring for each other, love from God, nurtured by nature, and nurtured by humans. Harmony with self is marked by the awareness that every individual's behavior will return to his personality. In the context of peace, this is reflected through the expression "*melak cabe moal jadi bonteng, melak hade moal jadi goreng,*" which means good will not give birth to bad.

Expression *ngeunah angen ngeunah angeun* means his heart is comfortable, and the vegetables are delicious (Sukanta & Dedi, 2011). This expression illustrates about Sundanese worldview relating to the harmony and balance of the outward and inward aspects of man. The development of the outer aspect cannot be separated from the progress of the inner aspect. There is always a close relationship and mutual influence between the two. In pursuit of inner satisfaction, Sundanese people are guided by the expression "*tiis ceuli herang mata; titip diri sangsang badan; wong becik ketitik wong ala ketara*" (ibid). This expression means that life needs calm and peace. Behavior must be adapted to the situation and conditions. Everything good will be seen, and so will the bad things that will be seen.

Other People Are Our True Selves: Harmony with Others

The relationship between the Sundanese and others is not exploitative or expansive because they think that other people are themselves. Harmony with others is built and maintained based on the principles "*mipit kudu amit, ngala kudu menta, nganggo kudu suci, dahar kudu halal; kalawan ucap kudu sabenerna, ngahargaan batur sarupa jeung ngahargaan diri sorangan*" (Patriasih, 2013). This principle means humans must ask permission to take someone else's property. They are only allowed to eat halal food. Uphold the value of honesty in behaving and communicating. Respecting others is equal to respecting ourselves. The harmony of Sundanese life with others is not limited to relations with figures that appear physically but also with creatures that have supernatural dimensions. This idea can be seen from the expression "*hirupna manusa teu saukur akur jeung batur selember, oge natangga jeung nu ngalebur*" which means that human life is not just to get along with others but also to be neighbors with others (Nurjanah et al., 2013).

According to the results of interviews with Nurjanah et al. (2013), Sundanese people use several principles to live together with other people. Especially living side by side with neighbors.

In the association of fellow citizens, we must adhere to the principle of "*Ulah ngaliarkeun taleus ateu!*" which means do not spread matters that cause unrest, conflict, and division. Humans must live like "*Kawas Gula Jeung Peueut*" and "*Panggiri-giri calik act, repeat Pagirang-Happy Tampian*"

which means that humans must live in harmony with each other, there is no hostility, and they must strengthen one another.

(Nurjanah et al., 2013)

The urgency of social harmony for the Sundanese people is reflected in how they behave and respect their fellow creatures. When dealing with conflict, the Sundanese principle of the “middle way” is not about the relationship “lose and win” but rather “preserve life.” Sundanese people find it difficult to accept victory if they have to stand on the death of others. This principle can be found in several stories in literature. Sunda, nothing is a tragedy or ends in a tragic event. The Sundanese are also encouraged to establish good relations with other people. This suggestion was conveyed by the traditional head of the Kampung Naga (one of the Sundanese communities). “As a person, you must have good manners and behavior. In communicating, you should guard your words, and actions to avoid hurting others. In order to be accepted by other people to behave well” (Nurjanah et al., 2013).

The highly empathetic behavior of the Sundanese in placing others as important as oneself is illustrated by this wise saying:

upami tea mah katatamuan heug urang keur digawe boh di sawah boh di kebon, pami kantun sapakeun deui kajeun tinggalkeun pacul mah di dinya, tuturkan anu neang bilih aya kepentingan nanaon ulah rek aral, ulah rek subaha, ulah rek melang kana paculeun.

(Mulyana et al., 2012)

This expression has a meaning: when a guest arrives, while we are working in the fields or the garden, or while we have more work to do, someone picks us up to tell us that there is a guest, leave the job immediately because the guest is very interested, do not be upset, and do not have to worry about leaving work. The value of social care is described through the expressions “*ngajaga ngariksa, sapapait samamanis, sabagja sacilaka, hirup silih tittipkeun nya diri*” which means life must protect and supervise one another, always maintain togetherness and cooperation, and love one another and trust one another (Mulyana et al., 2012). A life belief based on the spirit that helping others is a way of helping oneself.

Strategy for Inheritance of Local Wisdom Values

Sundanese culture has characteristics that distinguish it from other cultures. In general, the people of West Java or Tatar Sunda are gentle, religious, and very spiritual. This tendency can be seen in the sayings of *silih asih, silih asah, and silih asuh*: loving one another (putting compassion first), perfecting

or improving one another (through education and sharing knowledge), protecting one another (taking care of one another). The values taught are generally spoken in soft words and language in mottos, advice, and proverbs, passed down orally. Various strategies for inheriting values are used, including literature, *kakawihan*, *babasa*, traditional games, botanical lexicon, architecture, breathing, *pikukuh papagon*, dance, eating rituals, and even religious tourism. The way to educate local wisdom values is not forced. There are no sanctions or prizes, but it allows people to choose imaginatively and take lessons from all the story's events.

In the repertoire of classical Sundanese literature, the theme is that patience, perseverance, steadfast loyalty to customs and manners, and efforts to get closer to the Almighty are the ways to achieve perfection in life. Through *kakawihan* (a traditional song in the Sundanese language), children learn to have a cheerful rhythm and linguistically contain games of form and meaning. There is transitivity and theme progression to support recreational features. In addition, the value of togetherness appears in games. For example, "oray-orayan" requires them to line up, hug each other, waddling while singing songs. *Papagon* culture breathes in the form of testaments, mandates, consequences, and taboos passed down from generation to generation through cultural learning (enculturation) and socialization. *Pikukuh* culture is carried out through taboos in society carried out from an early age toward children. Taboo is done for the protection of the soul, mandala, and traditions.

The values of harmony with the environment are contained in the ethnobotanical lexicon reflected in traditional houses. Local wisdom in the ethnobotanical lexicon can be seen in making handicrafts from bamboo and coconut shells to various containers. The value of harmony in the ethnobotanical lexicon is also evident from the well-maintained village environmental management. The interpretation of local wisdom includes: (1) building bamboo houses whose raw materials are safe and earthquake-resistant; (2) spatial planning and zoning of land use on a microscale with sacred forest, prohibition, and cultivation; and (3) environmentally friendly land management using traditional equipment. The physical architectural system and its cultural behavior still maintain harmony between humans, the built environment, and their natural environment. It is in line with the concept of sustainable architecture.

Strategy through language and proverbs is an idiom that contains connotative meaning taken from the body, behavior, and human nature. It can also be from the names of things, animals, and plants, in the form of slogans, advice, or proverbs that develop from mouth to mouth, so that either directly or indirectly, it is used as a kind of guideline and measure in evaluating actions. It is used daily to advise children, interact with others, criticize subtly, and instill values in adults.

The pattern of imitation or demonstration is used in inheritance through the *Melinting* dance by the queen to mothers and fathers who are still descended from the sultanate. Analysis of the value of meaning, symbols of movement, and customs contains the values of persistence and readiness to seek fortune for the equality of life and happiness of life, an attitude of respect and politeness, and freedom in creativity to build identity. Traditional games contain moral messages, such as the values of togetherness, honesty, responsibility, open-mindedness, and obeying the rules. Traditional games are a genre or a form of folklore that is circulated and passed down from generation to generation, using tools or not, functioning as a means of entertainment, and having social, transcendental, and ecological dimensions.

Implementing traditions like *haolan*, *muludan*, *syawalan*, and *tahlilan* ceremonies contains fundamental and instrumental values. The basic values are obedience to the will of the elderly, obedience and respect for *kyai* (Islamic Scholars), rejecting things that are against the teachings of Islam, rejecting things that destroy morals, dressing to cover the private parts, respecting the elders, the spirit of friendship, kinship, harmony with nature, non-material oriented, and simplicity. A strategy to enrich the spiritual experience for the balance of life through the development of community-based tourism through pilgrimage to places that have puritanical values and are even sanctified. The process of inheriting local wisdom, especially in consuming rice, has been instilled from early age to adulthood, not only by the nuclear family but also by the bilateral family, with the role of the mother, who is more dominant than other family members. From an early age, the values of togetherness and cooperation have been instilled through homework, helping with activities in the fields and gardens, helping to process and grind cassava, and helping parents run a business. Generally, the value of local wisdom is inherited through generations of traditions without rationality but through myths and symbols.

Discussion

The research results show that harmony represents the peace of Sundanese people, which is holistic because it has dimensions of harmony with God-Nature, oneself, and others. The Sundanese people's philosophical, religious, and cultural views of peace have the connotation of a "positive sense" reflected in the word "peaceful." The Sundanese understand peace as a state of tranquility that is synonymous with "calmness of mind and heart" (Webster, 1993). From a psychological perspective, peace is the consistency of peaceful thoughts, feelings, and actions. Peaceful behavior means the act of maintaining harmonious relationships. Feeling peaceful is harmony between aspects of oneself, beliefs, and values that facilitate harmonious relationships (Anderson, 2004).

The local wisdom of the Sundanese goes beyond the dimension of identity because it is responsible for maintaining the diversity and sustainability of the environment, the harmony of the social system, and the balance of life between the worldly and the spiritual realms. As moral and cultural values, harmony becomes the communal identity of Sundanese people and an existential locus. The configuration of harmonious values of the Sundanese people increasingly affirms that peace is the need of all people, just like happiness, justice, and well-being (Webel & Galtung, 2007). This idea is in line with the view (Xiaoping & Enrong, 2004) that morals and traditional thinking place harmony most valuable and spiritual treasure. The integrity of the peaceful dimension of the Sundanese is in line with the view of Koejaraningrat (2004) that cultural values are related to five main issues, namely: values regarding the nature of life, human work, human position in space and time, human relationship with the environment, and human relationship with others.

As a part of nature, the Sundanese rely on the esthetics of their natural surroundings, both microcosmically and macrocosmically. As God's creatures, Sundanese people appreciate the esthetic harmony in their lives by always being grateful and safe. As individuals pursue external and internal progress, Sundanese people align their esthetic desires proportionally. Sundanese society in the past was a society with a religious way of thinking, the same as humans everywhere (Sumardjo, 2009). When faced with a difference of opinion or conflict, they were faced with "*tiis ceuli herang panon, tiis ti peuting ngeunah ti beurang, dan leuleus jeujeur liat tali.*" This expression means being gentle, preventing conflict, and maintaining peace, but not ignoring the principles espoused.

The Sundanese aim to live in a peaceful, spiritual, and religious society (Kartadinata, Suherman et al., 2016). This tendency is seen in the slogan of *silih asah, silih asih, and silih asuh*: love one another, perfect one another, and protect one another. Apart from that, Sundanese also have several values of modesty, humility, respect for the elderly, and love for the little ones. The essence of Sundanese cultural values is the demands of the Sundanese people to carry out life and livelihood in their relationship with God, their person with fellow human beings, and nature (Mulyana et al., 2012). God is all-knowing. Therefore, man must serve God, and the Sundanese must have a good outlook (Setiawan, 2008). The environment will provide benefits if it is preserved, and environmental damage occurs because the value system that places humans is not part of nature (environmental wisdom). For the Sundanese, the natural environment is not to be subdued but to be respected and cared for (Indrawardana, 2013; Suyaatmana, 1993).

The Sundanese definition of peace, which has an intrapersonal dimension, is reflected in the values that everyone should have a good outlook. These values are the essence and an ontology of the Sundanese people built

through self-dialectics. The peace of the Sundanese is seen as a condition of harmony between self-aspects, which is reflected in a friendly personality that includes behavior, circumstances, and attitudes (Sims et al., 2014). Peace is shown by nonviolent actions and maintaining harmonious relationships; peaceful conditions are reflected in harmony between aspects of oneself; and peaceful attitudes are reflected as beliefs and values that facilitate building harmonious and nonviolent relationships. Sundanese people's relations with others are not exploratory or expansive because other people are themselves (Kartadinata et al., 2018).

The peaceful interpersonal relations of the Sundanese people are as passionate as the values that form the foundation of the peaceful Global Citizenship Education model (Ifiandra et al., 2021). For example, the value of respect for fundamental rights in the Charter of Manden (Mali); interaction based on respect in Ubuntu (South Africa); tolerance of differences in Shura (Oman); respect for freedom, justice, and order in Hurriya, Karama, Aadal, and Nithaam (Tunisia); prosperity and love for all in Hongik Ingan (Korea); shared responsibility for building justice in Multiculturalism (Canada); freedom, equality, and fraternity (France); solidarity and complementarity in Buen Vivir (Bolivia); and humans become an inseparable part of nature in Sumak Kawsay (Ecuador). All these values are transformed into the school's framework, the nation's core values, become the state constitution, and are part of the education curriculum (UNESCO-IICBA, 2017).

Regional Differences of Peace Values

At the fundamental level, the peace values of the Sundanese are universal, just like those of other peoples, ethnicities, and nationalities, but differ in their sources and expressions. In comparison, differences in the value of peace in various countries can be seen in Appendix A.

The main values of the Sundanese people are harmony and togetherness. A dispute is a more familiar word than conflict. The main principle held by Sundanese in resolving disputes is "*cai na herang, lauk na yarn*" which means solving problems without causing problems. The strategy commonly used to resolve disputes is "badami" or deliberation by involving a third party as a respected figure to help bring the two disputing parties closer together. *Badami* begins with a *gapura* (acknowledgment of feelings of guilt) by the two disputants as proof of their willingness to open up. Furthermore, the two parties "*menta hampura*" (apologize) to each other, and finally, the third party asking the two disputing parties to promise to always live in harmony (Danadibrata, 2016). For children's quarrels to be resolved with a partner symbolizes peace. When they fight and want to be friends and play again, the two children must link their little fingers with a smiling expression as a symbol of sincerity to continue their friendship (Basarah, 2021).

The Implication of Pedagogy of Peace

Transforming the wisdom values that live and develop in the community into the core values of peace education in schools is challenging. The issues can range from philosophical issues to delivery techniques. In the context of the delivery system, several experts with their respective terminologies recommend the need for a unique pedagogy for the implementation of peace education, for example, peace pedagogy (Harris, 1990); peace-focused pedagogy (UNESCO, 1998); peace education pedagogy (UNESCO, 2005); peace education pedagogy (Teachers Without Borders, 2023); pedagogy of peace (Shapiro, 2010); and *pedagogi kedamaian* (Kartadinata, 2013b). Based on the findings, interpretations, and analyses of the core values of peace of the Sundanese and their inheritance strategies, several implications for the pedagogy of peace can be drawn, which are described as follows.

The design of a peace pedagogy foundation strengthened by cultural values is not solely for the appreciation of historical wisdom but more so that education does not lose its cultural identity. Maintaining cultural values in the same format and expression as in the past is unwise. Reviving and passing these values to future generations through a contextual peace pedagogy is essential. Peace pedagogy is in line with the culture that develops in society. Because pedagogy is always related to the local context, cultural values as living values can become the foundation and contents of a peace pedagogy to build a culture of peace in schools.

Suppose it is related to the peace education curriculum. In that case, the values of peace in students need to be developed holistically in personal, social, and divine dimensions. In order not to seem exclusive, the values of peace should also equip students to fully understand micro-macro issues in the dimensions of time, past, present, and future. Wholeness in the context of this time is considered necessary so that students no longer rely on past romanticism that the Sundanese once lived in peace and harmony. Holistic in the context of space is also seen as necessary to encourage students not only to care about issues at the microlevel in the context of their immediate environment but also to care about issues of global peace.

The system of inheritance of peace values in the Sundanese prioritizes oral traditions and terms with symbolic messages. An abstract that is too high will be an obstacle for students to absorb its values. The implementation of pedagogy requires multiple channels and strategies because of peace pedagogy's holistic and collaborative nature. Implementing embedded peace pedagogy in the learning process is preferred because it directly relates to the essence of education in schools through teacher–student learning interactions. Teacher creativity is the keyword in implementing peace pedagogy so that the development of peaceful values does not slip into conventional learning patterns through a didactic approach.

Peace pedagogy should provide space for students to explore, share, and work together so that the classroom atmosphere becomes more dialogic. The broadening of students' perspectives on peace requires a teacher figure to act as a facilitator rather than a power holder. With participatory principles, the implementation of peace pedagogy avoids efforts to indoctrinate students because it encourages the development of student perspectives on peace issues. The implementation of peace pedagogy allows students to learn and work together, not compete.

The strategy of peace pedagogy is to encourage students to "experience themselves" the learning experience of peace in the classroom by raising various issues from the context and scenes of students' authentic lives (Ilfiandra et al., 2021). Students are encouraged to build ideas or concepts about peace through class activities. A constructive approach will encourage the development of a new paradigm for students about peace because teachers are more flexible and process-oriented. With this principle, the classroom atmosphere becomes more humane because it emphasizes the growth of students' personal, social, and affective domains as a result of empathetic, respectful, affirmative, and caring teacher behavior, a sign that the teacher personally has become a peaceful person first.

Indicators of successful implementation of peace pedagogy are more implicit than explicit because the impact cannot be felt immediately. An indicator of the success of a pedagogy of peace is transforming a culture of violence into a culture of peace. This cultural transformation becomes a social force to build a peaceable classroom and a peaceable school. Then the class can become a zone of peace. At the individual level of teachers and students, indicators of the success of the peace pedagogy are reflected in the acquisition of a peaceful mindset, peaceful states, peaceful attitudes, and peaceful personalities. Because peace in schools is not just an individual matter, the whole school approach, at the individual and structural levels, is predicted to be more successful in building a culture of peace in schools (Ilfiandra et al., 2021).

Curriculum and Instruction from Sundanese Total Peace

Indigenous concepts of peace exist in various cultures worldwide (Carter, 2015), including the Sundanese. The concept of eternal peace in the daily life of indigenous people influences conflict avoidance and solutions to conflicts (ibid). Several indigenous peacemaking concepts can be aligned and adapted to modern society (Carter, 2010a). Indigenous peoples' educational structures encompassing worldviews, languages, and traditions can inform peace education theory and practice (Huaman, 2011) so that the concept and configuration of Sundanese local wisdom can be adapted into the peace education curriculum.

Adapting the peace education curriculum from local wisdom is a good step for a country like Indonesia that does not have a formal peace education curriculum. The absence of instructional resources, such as an implicit or explicit curriculum, is one of Indonesia's problems with peace education. Carter (2010b) calls it the root-feeding peace education that consists of experience, policy, and curriculum. Adapting a peace education curriculum from local wisdom can indirectly overcome two problems: the curriculum and the instructional needs of teachers who are unprepared and unequipped for a pedagogy of peace in modern education.

The total value of Sundanese peace can be included in the formal/explicit or informal/implicit curriculum. Both formal and informal curricula focus on three learning domains, such as affective, cognitive, and practical experiences (Carter, 2015), or components such as knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Carter, 2008). The formal curriculum will use formal instruction (what is taught), and the informal curriculum will use informal instruction (what is captured) (Carter, 2015). Formally, the content of peace education from Sundanese local wisdom can develop the values in Appendix A. These values are explicitly integrated into school subjects (conventional learning). For informal instructions in passing down the total peace values of the Sundanese people, teachers can use learning methods adapted from the traditional way of inheriting Sundanese fairy tales, singing (*kidung/kakawih*), dancing, and traditional games. An example of a peace education lesson plan that uses fairy tales is attached in Appendix B.

Conclusion

The peaceful values of the Sundanese people intersect with the values of virtue that apply universally across ethnic groups, cultures, religions, and even countries. Peace pedagogy from Sundanese local wisdom can be used as a way to combat violence in schools. Because peace pedagogy based on local wisdom contains instructions about life balance, dealing with conflict, and living with other people, this peace pedagogy will influence teacher–student interaction, teaching, and classroom climate. Peace pedagogy provides space for students to explore, share, and work together so that the classroom atmosphere becomes more dialogic. The implementation of peace pedagogy allows students to learn and work together, not compete. Sundanese local wisdom knowledge can also create a peace education curriculum. Related to the peace education curriculum, students' peaceful values must be developed holistically in personal, social, and divine dimensions. Implementing the curriculum into the learning process is preferred because it is directly related to the essence of education in schools through learning interactions.

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Note

- 1 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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Part III

Countering Violence in Responsive Education



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8 Memorials as Sites for Peace Education

The John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park in the USA

Lucy E. Bailey and Amanda M. Kingston

Introduction

Memorials and museums are important sites for peace education in a world suffused with violence. Such educational sites can mark, acknowledge, and heighten awareness of historical violence, foster spaces to bear witness, nourish community, and invite healing and reconciliation vital for transforming a troubled world. They can enact and propel citizenship education in Carter's (2021) terms by increasing awareness of human rights and responsibilities within and beyond one's own geographic spheres (p. 1). As so much of our learning and teaching practices occur outside of formal schools, by coming together to common (Ingold, 2018), we must imagine and develop peace pedagogies and sites for peace education alongside those in formal education. Additionally, many memorial sites in particular exist in open-air, public spaces that can be accessible during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, or provide virtual tours and learning opportunities. In this essay, we describe our engagement with the peace pedagogies of one public site, the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park (JHFRP) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which highlights centuries of African-American history and commemorates the Tulsa Race Massacre (1921) in Oklahoma. We conceptualize this park as an ongoing site of peace education that invites powerful local engagements which foster peace practices that others can consider in memorials elsewhere.

We first provide an overview of scholarship at the intersections of material culture and peace education in which we situate our inquiry. Drawing from scholarship on peace education (e.g., Harris & Morrison, 2013), museums for peace and persuasion (e.g., Apsel & Sodaro, 2020; Barrett & Apsel, 2012), witness consciousness (Tamashiro, 2018), commoning (Ingold, 2018), citizenship education (Carter, 2021) and the materiality of learning places (Ellsworth, 2005), we describe the important functions of marking and honoring sites of violence, fostering cultural awareness of dimensions of violence, and reflexive and transformational learning such memorial sites can offer. We frame these practices as peace pedagogies. In doing so, we embrace

Cremin's (2016) notion of "many peaces" (p. 4), which recognizes many forms of peace and, by extension, many forms of violence. We focus on the JHFRP's peace pedagogies and extend an invitation to consider how memorial sites elsewhere can function as peace education spaces. We see publicly accessible memorials and monuments as undertheorized and underutilized spaces of mourning, healing, and teaching that can resist violences of forgetting and cultivate ontologies of attending and becoming.

As teachers who live in the state of Oklahoma in the USA, we analyze the JHFRP's ongoing lessons for peace through site visits, material analysis, observations, and embodied walkography (Bailey & Kingston, 2020a;b). The park is an urban public space with open walkways, memorials, and, at its center, a commanding sculptured Tower of Reconciliation that rises 26 feet into the Tulsa sky. This affirming site centers African-American history in Oklahoma and marks the losses from the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre that occurred when a mass of White Tulsans set fire to a vibrant all-Black neighborhood, burned it to the ground, and injured and killed hundreds of Black citizens (Tulsa Riot Report, 2001). Historians describe it as the "single worst incident of racial violence in American history" (Ellsworth, n.d.). Emphasizing agency, resilience, and hope, this park commemorates locally grounded violences while connecting to a broader history of direct and structural violences against African-American people. This "sacred" park in downtown Tulsa (<https://www.jhfcenter.org>) resides on land where Muscogee Creek, Osage, and Cherokee people settled in 1838 after White leaders forced them from their homelands. The site thus represents varied layers of slow and direct violences while honoring local knowledge, memory, and community. We conclude with activities and lessons that engaging with such sites can offer for peace education.

Grounding Concepts and Scholarship

Peace education is necessarily contextual and dynamic, as are the terms themselves. Zembylas and Bekerman (2013) contend terms such as "education," "peace," or "conflict" are "constructs whose meaning is negotiated by active participants and put to work in complex social relations" (p. 204). This dynamic conception of peace education suggests the importance of indigenous meanings of the geographic contexts in which memorials and museums rest. Some sites of peace education are unique to local contexts while others also have profound national or global salience. Through meanings designed in particular sites and monuments as well as visitors' own working definitions and conceptions of peace, visitors to such sites can also keep varied meanings active within and beyond the site and produce new meanings as well. Learners bring their own orientations to such engagements. Carter (2021) notes that "the contextual conditions of the

instruction, perceptions of the curriculum and the instructor, affective state of the inquirer, cultural responsiveness of the instruction, and access to inquiry tools are determinants of [learners'] engagement in the inquiry process" (p. 7). Cumulatively, through attending local events, we suggest memorial sites invite opportunities to intervene in and speak back to profound instances and narratives of violence.

While scholars have long linked education and peace, formal peace education scholarship emerged throughout the 20th century in response to world wars, justice movements, and structural violences. Harris (2004) conveyed that peace education consists of practices and postures which point students to peace, later expanding with Morrison in their comprehensive overview, the idea that within peacelearning is "a seamless transition between learning, reflection, and action" (Harris & Morrison, 2013, p. 31). In our ongoing engagements with the possibilities of peace education, we find this definition important because it underscores plurality in its embrace of "many peaces" and peace actions (Cremin, 2016, p. 4), just as there are many violences (Pearce & Dietrich, 2019).¹ Taking into account layered local meanings and social contexts, we move within peace(s), peacelearning(s), and peace education(s) when attending (Ingold, 2018) memorial sites. We must consider how such learning practices can be entangled within public memorial and museum sites.

There exists a long history in peace studies and museum studies for peace, such as the International Network of Museums for Peace, an organization focused on establishing international museums that memorialize acts of violence and nourish witness consciousness of human suffering (<https://sites.google.com/view/inmp-museums-for-peace>; Tamashiro, 2018). These important educational and commemorative sites have detailed how violence festers, grows, and erupts in mass scale brutality. Yet, critical peace scholars have noted that some museums can glorify rather than interrupt violence. In recent years, some museums and memorials, as Apsel and Sodaro (2020) note, have shifted away from their elitist moorings that center the nation-state and celebrate war heroes or victories to instead render visible through material markers the atrocities nation-states, a violent construct itself (Jones, 2017), have wreaked on groups across the globe. They embrace a "human rights framework" that focuses on violences powerful groups have committed against vulnerable ones. Such spaces work to raise awareness and, importantly, persuade and encourage behavioral change for a better world. They are educative. Their architecture, design, and characteristics intend to "make visitors experience past violence to convince them to change the way they view and act in the world" (Apsel & Sodaro, 2020, p. 8).

The design of some memorials is interactive to enact their persuasive function. They can encourage sensory engagement with the embodied effects of violence. Some have described the architecture of the Holocaust Memorial

Museum in Washington, D.C. as a structure that teaches through sensory experiences (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 99). The building's design, texture, hues, lighting, exhibits, images, and materials direct visitors who come to bear witness to experience the site's teachings in embodied ways. The structure moves visitors through the building in a gradual physical descent that accompanies its depiction of the worsening of the European crisis that led to the atrocities of the Holocaust. Such architectural pedagogies accompany other forms of curriculum, interaction, and engagement in the space.

Marking and honoring local sites of violence and fostering geographic awareness of their violent dimensions are important peace pedagogies and practices. There is a "geography of memory," Alderman and Inwood (2013) write, in which we associate certain events with particular regions, as they have demonstrated in their important work on civil rights memorials and analysis of racist toponyms and civil rights reclamations (Alderman & Inwood, 2013). Geographies of memory can be local as well. Scholars analyzed efforts to change the name of the historic Brady District, in downtown Tulsa, which was named after an early leader who was also a member of the White supremacist group the Ku Klux Klan and who participated in the 1921 Massacre (Brasher, Alderman & Subanthore, 2020). These analyses animate how recognizing, understanding, and engaging with place-based meanings and their violences are sometimes necessarily local and ongoing as new information surfaces. Carter (2021) notes that inquiries based on a particular geographic context can stimulate valuable knowledge for fostering engaged citizenship. As we become aware of local events and meanings, and identify key factors influencing our engagements in inquiry, we can nurture conditions for civic action (p. 7).

In public sites of pedagogy, many people, objects, and elements of nature can become teachers and learners, as these are constructed roles that morph and dissipate when we move in and with the world to attend to its teaching (Bailey & Kingston, 2020b). We bring our interests and experiences to memorials as places of peace pedagogy and peacelearning, always becoming and learning through the messages of the sites and our interactions with them. Non-human agents contribute to ongoing meaning-making and bear witness to "wounding and healing" (Thompson & O'Dea, 2012).

Case Study Context

Contextualizing the memorial under study is important for peacelearning and peace pedagogies. Our site of contemplation, JHFRP, honors African-American history in the territory now known as Oklahoma. This region reflects a rich African-American history that intertwines with the histories of Indigenous peoples. Historian Hannibal Johnson (2012) notes that intersections between people of African and Native descent in the Americas stretch

back to before the 16th century (p. 4), yet scholars have often overlooked or ignored these intersections (p. 2). African-American and Native-American peoples intermarried, lived in community, and eventually, some Native groups absorbed European ideologies that hierarchized racial groups, which led to enslaving people of African descent (Johnson, 2012). In 1830, Jackson's signing of the Indian Removal Act had devastating effects on Indigenous sovereignty, encouraging White settlement and forcing Native peoples from their homelands to western regions like Oklahoma. Today, Oklahoma is home to 38 federally recognized nations² (Johnson, 2012, p. 305).

Among those forced West were both free and enslaved African-American people who lived among the Native groups. Although they were a minority of the migrants overall, Johnson (2012) notes that "they suffered the highest mortality of all" on the trail (p. 27). The racial patterns of settlement emerging from Westward expansion and freed status were the largest establishment of all-Black towns in the country: "Nowhere else, neither in the Deep South nor in the Far West, did so many African American men and women come together to create, occupy, and govern their own communities" (O'Dell, n.d.). From the end of the Civil War to the 1920s, Black residents in the region created dozens of all-Black towns for support, protection, and advancement, some enduring today.

Black settlers also joined the land run in Oklahoma, leading to the 1906 establishment of the Greenwood district in Tulsa. The vibrant, prosperous, and active Black community began with Ottawa W. Gurley's construction of the first Greenwood business, which served as a rooming house, grocery store, and initial site of a church. Gurley clearly envisioned a prosperous community in the future when he bought 40 acres of land that he intended to sell to Black families. Following this initial sturdy footprint, the district grew and flourished with hundreds of businesses, churches, and schools. At the apex of Greenwood's prosperity in 1920, the U.S. census recorded 11,000 Black residents. The massacre in 1921 reduced over 35 city blocks of this rich community life to rubble in days. Beginning on May 31st through the morning of June 1st, an armed White mob rampaged the community: setting fires, destroying homes, and assaulting Black residents. Estimates place the death toll near 300, destroying 1,300 homes, and causing millions of dollars in damage. Despite the brutality of the White attackers, courts dismissed cases, insurance companies denied claims, and legislators and educators excluded the event from the school curriculum.

Yet Greenwood residents rebuilt, and the district remains a site of renewal today, hosting numerous hotels, shops, and markers of its robust history. A 2001 commission to study the massacre investigated the events of 80 years prior to understand and amplify knowledge about these events beyond the active cultural and community memory that survivors and their descendants kept alive for decades. Among the varied violences associated with the

massacre is its utter erasure from broad public memory and school curriculum for decades before the commission took up the charge to document the events. This work included changing the original language describing the events as a “Riot” to “Massacre” so as to accurately name the White perpetrators and details of the violence. Community members conceived the JHFRP out of this commission, and the park opened officially in 2010 (<http://orgs.utulsa.edu/spcol/?p=281>).

Case Study Site

The stated mission and intent of memorial sites can aid in preparing visitors for peacelearning. The vision of the JHFRP is to “transform society’s divisions into social harmony” and to promote “reconciliation and generate trust through scholarly work and constructive community engagement” John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation (<https://www.jhfcenter.org>). This language reflects the site’s orientation toward action. The namesake of the site, Dr. John Hope Franklin (1915–2009), was an American historian who was instrumental in amplifying the contributions of African-Americans to American history in numerous publications and efforts, including through his monumental book, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African-Americans*, now in its 10th edition (Franklin & Higginbotham, 2021). He was born to parents with African-American and Choctaw ancestry. His father, Buck C. Franklin, was a lawyer who lived in Greenwood. In the wake of the massacre’s financial and human devastation, Franklin worked for years to seek justice for the Black community.

The park is a historic literary landmark as well as an International Site of Conscience (2023). As a dedicated Site of Conscience, the park embraces a human rights framework and network intended to honor events across the world that fuel remembering acts of human violence and peace. Notably, this international community conceptualizes links between memorialization and current events. JHFRP teaches about past events while inviting continual action and responsibility for current violences. For example, the JHFRP served as a site of community gathering, protest, and art during the 2020 Black Lives Matter movements, and in spring 2022, Tulsans gathered in solidarity for Ukraine (Slee, 2022). It is open for 12 hours daily, with some guided tours available, and includes a virtual tour on the website. It also contains links for curriculum, events, and additional information (John Hope Franklin Center, 2022).

The JHFRP center rests on three acres at the edge of the Greenwood district in downtown Tulsa. The park, created by artist Ed Dwight, invites entry from three openings through a sturdy black rod iron fence lining the site. It features powerful artwork made of granite and bronze, memorials, a labyrinth, a water feature, benches, shrubs and trees, and a series of ten sizable

storyboards detailing African-American history in Oklahoma. The park's three key dedicated areas include the Hope Plaza, the Tower of Reconciliation, and the Healing Walkway. The JHFRP inspires visitors to consider particular questions, such as, "as an outdoor museum, how does the park 'read' differently from a book, poem, essay, picture, survivor's testimony or memorial plaque?" (JHFRP brochure). This pedagogical question nourishes our reading of the park's peace pedagogies. Our engagement focuses on how peace pedagogies are enacted through our *embodied sensory attention, communing and connection, and fostering action.*

Learning to Listen: Multisensory Engagement at Hope Plaza

Reading both the structured lessons of the memorial site's pedagogy and the dynamic meanings that emerge in open public sites fuel peacelearning. The first of the three designated areas, Hope Plaza, is located inside the main entrance. A 16-foot-tall granite circle with three sculptures made of bronze situates within a plaza grounded in concentric circles. It lives against the backdrop of a curved wall fountain that releases a sheet of glimmering water during the warm months of the year. Each sculpture depicts individuals based on the historical photographs of the 1921 massacre: Humiliation represents a well-dressed Black man holding a hat with his raised arms in surrender; Hostility depicts a White man with holes in his shoes and a rifle slung casually across his shoulder poised for assault; and Hope depicts Maurice Willows, a White man, once the director of the American Red Cross, holding closely in his arms a Black baby born on June 1, 1921, during the violence (Figure 8.1). Humiliation, Hostility, and Hope rest within one granite structure, depicting distinct yet interlinked actions, emotions, and experiences associated with the massacre's horrific events.

At first entry, the memorial site first "reads" as fixed through its clean lines and powerful granite and bronze structures symbolizing its substantive history. The bronze statues, towering over visitors, stand in sharp contrast to the striking light gray hues. Yet, even within a few moments of entering the plaza, the text of the space opens its pages to life, movement, detail, and sound to reveal its constantly changing contours. While history remains firmly grounded in a text of stone and bronze, its various meanings are layered and unfolding. On a guided tour, a guide will ask visitors, "What do you see?" upon viewing each statue. In one tour, visitors commented about clothing, posture, or emotional reactions before the guide observed, "No one said human." Silence followed this comment. In another tour with middle and high school students, a guide pointed out that the only representation of a Black man in Hope Plaza was one with his arms raised in surrender, potentially erasing the Black residents who pushed back to defend their homes and businesses. Silences and absences have lessons to teach as well.



Figure 8.1 The Hope statue, JHFRP, Tulsa Oklahoma.

Photograph by Amanda M. Kingston (2021)

Non-human agents are teachers as well. The statues rest in a place lush with foliage (Figure 8.2) throughout the year, misted with the sounds of the cascading water fall in the spring and summer, giving way in winter to thick shrubs and spidery tree branches stretching bare against the sky. The site pulses with movement amid the statues. Birds move among the trees while the bustling urban landscape hums in the background. The breeze moves branches and leaves as varied visitors seeking to bear witness move through the space, which invites reflection with and alongside other sentient beings. Some seek shelter in the summer under the cool shade of trees and by the cold waterfall. The living—trees, animals, foliage, human engagement—seem to bear witness to us as well. Are we reading and hearing their lessons? How do the cycles of seasons speak to cycles of violence and peace of which the 1921 massacre is a part? How does rain or sun influence our reading of the text of this site—when do comfort and discomfort shape our willingness to read and hear? What do the wisdom and witness of the trees reveal about our own presence in history and current events?

Peace practices engage multisensory engagements: we can hear, feel, see, and taste violence. It leaves scars. Other peace educators recognize the lessons of nonhuman agents. Tamashiro (2018) observes the scars of bullet holes in the trunks of trees remaining from the massacre at the *Sơn Mỹ* memorial in Vietnam. The trees continue to grow tall and strong while also offering stories of violence, bearing witness, and healing (p. 65). At the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum, an American elm tree



Figure 8.2 The texture of the park's pedagogy.

Photograph by Lucy Bailey (2022)

nicknamed “The Survivor Tree” watched over the site where domestic terrorism killed 168 individuals and continues to watch over the memorial today. Similarly, nonhuman agents are present throughout the JHFRP to engage visitors to listen and to invite meaning-making.

Lessons of Connection and Commoning

Any space can invite peacelearning through inviting commoning. Inquirers at memorials across the globe can consider how designers and visitors structure sites to invite conceptual, material, and interpersonal connections or create such opportunities on their own. Anthropologist Tim Ingold (2018) describes commoning as central to the work of learning and becoming. For Ingold, education is not transmission—it is a continual process of renewal nourished through “attending to things, and to the world” in a social process (p. 2).

Rather than conceptualizing curriculum or education as *passing down* or *transmitting* knowledge as if it is a package to bestow, education, like living, is experiential and communal:

[I]t is through participation in each other's lives—through the ongoing and unrelenting efforts of young and old, immature and mature, to reach a concordance of sorts—that education proceeds and that knowledge, values, beliefs, and practices of a society are perpetuated.

(p. 4)

Ingold suggests that, wherever it occurs, education of concordance is commoning. The JHFRP's creation as a *public open accessible space* is constitutively oriented to commoning. It invites breaking down of divisions and coming together in innumerable interactions across time, conditions, and purposes.

We read the park's textual design to invite commoning through its layout, use of circular symbolism, and open spaces. An expansive walkway connects the six concentric circles of Hope Plaza in a gentle slope to the center of the park to another set of spirals where the Tower of Reconciliation rises in its spiral magnificence. It is the heart of the site. A wall of ten large storyboards embedded in plaza walls detailing African-American history in Oklahoma encircles the tower (Figure 8.3). A hedge circles much of the tower plaza behind the walls similarly symbolizing continuity. The Tower of Reconciliation depicts a visual progressive historical narrative that, in a slow gradual spiral from its base to its very top—where small bronze figures reach for the sky—depicts events in African-American history. Some are echoed in the writing on the ten storyboards on plaza walls. Benches around the tower invite rest, attention, and contemplation.

The intricate face of the tower depicts individual people situated in historical events, including the Trail of Tears. Although it covers hundreds of years of history (1541–the present), the long intertwined visual narrative emphasizes temporal continuity aligned with the urgent pedagogy of Sites of Conscience. In this depiction, we see the past and the present linked in a long continuous line to suggest memorialization is never fixed but speaks to present circumstances and ongoing violences and peace efforts. The impressions move from life in Africa, the forced entry into the Americas through chattel slavery, the continued forced removal of Indigenous peoples, the Civil War, the art and music of Black Americans, and the establishment of land-grant Historically Black College and University, Langston University, Oklahoma statehood, the growth and prosperity of Greenwood, the events of the 1921 massacre, the rebuilding of Black Tulsans, and more. At the top we see figures, “reaching higher while reaching back,” pushing up while reaching backward to help others.



Figure 8.3 Section of the Tower of Reconciliation, depicting its texture and detail.
Photograph by Lucy Bailey (2022)

The work of the spiral suggests that events build on one another, histories expand, and narratives entangle both woundedness and healing in African-American history within this space. Dwight etched words such as murder, arson, looting, and Greenwood into the tower as well as depictions of men shaking hands under the larger word, reconciliation, near the top. To commemorate the 1921 massacre is to honor all the violences that occurred before and after and to honor resilience and commoning before and after as well. The text of this statue teaches that the 1921 massacre is not a solitary event; it is a part of a larger tapestry we all weave through our actions and events. Finally, while the spiral physically ends, it echoes further and further into the sky with the local and national events of the present day: the 2016 police murder of Black Tulsan resident Terrence Crutcher, the sovereignty of tribal nations declared in the *McGirt v. Oklahoma* ruling, the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, the commutation of Julius Jones' death sentence, and

on, and on, to local, national, and global events. The consequences of 1921, before and after beat in every present minute at the memorial, is commoning with today and tomorrow as evidenced by the ongoing community art projects along the perimeter commoning the site to current events.

The pedagogy of a public memorial space such as this invites relation and connection. In this site, the storyboards invite and require moving around the wall within the open plaza to stand and read alongside others; the circular space symbolizes movement without boundaries, beginnings, or endings. On my most recent visit, I (Bailey) moved around the site, sitting on benches, drawing, thinking, and watching as people moved within and out of the space. In the plaza, I joined the space where a few men were listening to music on a mobile speaker, talking and singing along softly, greeting me as I moved by. Another man rested against one of the 12 historical story boards; this one marked Black soldiers' bravery in the Battle of Honey Springs in Oklahoma in 1863. This battle, a Union victory, was influential in Civil War events in the West. As I engaged with this marker, I thought of the layers of violence and resistance visible: the violence of war events, the centering of Black men's bravery in fighting against the violent Confederate cause, and the site's memorializing of Black men's role in Union efforts as resistance against violent erasure from this history.

The visitor sat on the ground, chiseling, engrossed in his task, his small black backpack next to him with a small teddy bear roped into its back. He nodded, but we did not speak. As I watched and sketched, fellow sojourners joined the space, walking slowly, pausing to scan words on the storyboards, one mouthing "hello" with a smile, others grouping around the Hope Plaza statues gesturing gently and nodding, bearing witness alone and in community. One man approached me to talk. He said he was from California and had never heard of the massacre until coming to Tulsa, talking softly and standing closely as we reflected on the tower together.

The tower at the center commands ocular attention. One must circle again and again to read the sculptural narrative journey it relays as one time period melds into another. Yet, its lessons are also deeply kinesthetic in its chiseled features of hands reaching up to the sky and the shape of people's forms protruding from the sides of the tower. It calls for touch, a call that is unrequitable; its textured history is out of reach, and the tower is rightly protected to direct the eyes to bear witness to the full narrative. One can touch the raised print on the storyboards, the words warm to the touch in the sun.

The plaza teaches lessons of common humanity and also links between African and Native lives historically in this region, connections that sometimes fall out of common memory. Memorials elsewhere will depict—or

occlude—other connections intrinsic to their geographies. Johnson (2012) underscores these regional intersections historically, noting “prior to the rush of whites onto Oklahoma territory [as settlers], persons of African ancestry and Native Americans had, to some extent, peacefully coexisted, and sometimes even collaborated and commingled” (p. 61). The figures on the tower and the storyboard information teach these lessons. The first storyboard importantly emphasizes the longevity of this history, counting the erasure of geographic connections, knowledge, and identity.

We have been here for more than four hundred years. We have been called many things: Africans called Natives, Citizens of the Five Civilized Tribes, and Slaves. In the sixteenth century we walked alongside the Spanish as they searched for lost cities of gold.

In 1719, we accompanied the French up the Arkansas River, bringing trade goods to the Osage and the Wichita. When the Americans came, we were among them. We rode with Thomas Nuttall in 1819, and with Major Long in 1820.

When Washington Irving visited in 1832, we were already here to meet him. We were scouts and interpreters, explorers and runaways, women and men, infants and children, slave and free.

We sat down beside the campfires of the Caddo and the Pawnee, drank the pure waters of the creeks and rivers, and felt the prairie wind in our faces. With Africa in our blood, we built new lives in the land of the blackjack and the tallgrass, the eagle and the buffalo, of Wah’Kon-Tah and the skies that never end. We have been here for centuries.

We were Oklahomans before there was an Oklahoma.

(JHFRP.org)

Other storyboards narrate similar interconnections: a young enslaved girl in a Cherokee settlement acted as an interpreter and Black soldiers’ participation in Civil War events leading to the Cherokee Emancipation Proclamation. These interconnections set the stage for lessons of today. In response to and with the Black Lives Matter protests during the summer of 2020, the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Center and other community organizations promoted the community art project *And Justice for All: No More Silence*. Art for the project was displayed at the JHFRP. A few signs spoke specifically to protecting Black trans* lives, and others utilized multiple languages to signify the entanglements of justice and injustice experienced by many people (Figure 8.4). The site invites readings of intersecting histories and resistance to the erasure of important geographic contours and connections, carrying these lessons to the present day.



Figure 8.4 Black trans lives matter poster at JHFRP.

Photograph by Amanda M. Kingston (2020)

Call to Action: Moving Pedagogies

Memorials can contain pedagogies of movement and interaction that invite action. The third section of the JHFRP consists of a labyrinth made up of connecting hedges called The Healing Walkway (Figure 8.5), which surrounds the tower, invites visitors to move alone in contemplation of the events represented in the site. Reflecting the spiral symbolism of the Tower of Reconciliation, the labyrinth is framed by a large marker with the phrase, “Lifting as we climb—the eternal verities shall prevail, by B. C. Franklin.” On each side of the marker stands the entry and exit to the labyrinth. The website enhances details about the site and allows a virtual tour for visitors from afar (JHFRP.org). We attend to the site’s layered context and our relationships to it, drawing from Gruenewald (2003), “Learning to listen to what places are telling us—and to respond as informed, engaged citizens” (p. 645).

The Healing Walkway invites movement as a pedagogical practice, moving visitors back and forth around the Tower of Reconciliation in a circular design—reinforcing observations of history and the present moving back and forth, always linked together. The labyrinth pulses with various meanings from symbolism: readings from Greek myth find labyrinths dangerous with lurking monsters and religious readings decree labyrinths as spaces for ongoing contemplation, spirituality, and wholeness. The virtual tour’s entrance to the Healing Walkway, not noted in the physical space, includes a directive to think and move within its space in a particular way. The architecture thus teaches directly, encouraging visitors to “take a meditative walk



Figure 8.5 The Healing Walkway in front of the Tower of Reconciliation.

Photograph by Amanda M. Kingston (2021)

and consider the events of the past, but also consider your role in serving as a change agent” (JHFRP.org).

The labyrinth beckons a pedagogy of individual contemplation alongside the open communal space of the plaza. These structured dimensions underscore both individual and communal responsibility. The wording charges those who move within the labyrinth to contemplate the past as they journey through the walkway and their responsibility to consider how they can embrace the identity of change agents when they emerge. It beckons walkers to consider themselves as “change agents,” and in so doing, to begin to cultivate a potentially new identity in the process. Aligned with the urgency of marking historical erasures of violence and enduring social divisions like those leading to the race massacre, the pedagogy challenges the visitor to act. Framing the urgency in binary terms, “Will you be an agent of change or a bystander? What exactly can you do?” In this messaging, the visitor’s movement and contemplation within the labyrinth enact a peace pedagogy embodying the very movement taught in the site, inviting contemplation that results in purposeful movement and action.

In entering between the solid green hedging that lines the labyrinth on my (Bailey’s) most recent pilgrimage (Bailey & Kingston, 2020a) to the park, my eyes attend to the thousands of tiny green leaves and varied hues within the thick texture of connecting brambles that produce its solid rectangular shape. I reach to touch its texture, which is thick, firm, against my hand, and refusing to give way. It holds me on the path, directing my steps, requiring me to either turn back or to proceed toward the exit. There are no other ways

out. Like the entrance, the pedagogy of the exit to the walkway similarly charges me to emerge from this pathway transformed. The wording speaks to visitors' varied roles and avenues for contemplation and action:

As you exit the healing walkway, park visitors are encouraged to commit themselves to actions that will emerge as positive change toward reconciliation. What can you do as an individual? A friend? A parent? A leader? A business owner? A neighbor?

(JHFRP.org)

This space thus nurtures a connection between attending, learning, and becoming—epistemology and ontology.

In a guided tour I (Kingston) completed with middle and high school students, a guide asked students to walk the Healing Walkway, finding one word or phrase to focus on with each step. Quietly, the students walked, some fast and slow, some passing others carefully by the hedges, until all, in their own time, eventually reached the end. The guide asked students to share their thoughts. Some students chose words from the Hope Plaza, others chose a personal experience. The guide asks the students to consider: what about this word or phrase could invite change? How can we keep “walking with” these ideas after leaving the walkway?

The pedagogy of the walkway is invitational and directive, movement within a broader space designed for movement, which evokes emotion, “makes complicated events decipherable and compelling,” and “fosters civic engagement” (Apsel, 2020, pp. 8–9) beyond the site. The pedagogies of engagement are inscribed deeply into the park to become, as Apsel (2020) describes some contemporary peace museums, a place of “remembrance, education and persuasion” (p. 9). This is peace pedagogy in its memorializing that moves and moves with the walker. Walking engages and transforms the walker in contemplative becoming, the walking, in this sense, walks the person who moves throughout the space (Ingold, 2018) to become a change agent. The design turns “memorializing into action,” asking the visitor to change, directing and guiding, teaching, persuading, and encouraging actions toward peace.

As we noted earlier, an aspect of comprehensive citizenship education is “geographic knowledge,” which can shape one’s “understanding of citizenship” (Carter, 2021, p. 7). In this sense, memorials within the locales in which people move exposes members of and visitors to “what is [happening] and what has happened in a space to think thoroughly about it, then respond with civic action” (Carter, 2021, p. 7). Rather than conceiving of curriculum as fixed text, as lessons certain individuals deliver, we conceive of knowledge as in part “grown along the myriad paths we take as we make our ways through the world in the course of everyday activities” (Ingold, 2018, p. 212)

as channeled within public spaces beating in the heart of local areas. Their ontological pedagogies transcend solely intellectual lessons. The local contours of meaning, through listening, commoning, movement, protests, and bearing witness, nurture geographic knowledge toward peace education locally as citizens of a global world as well.

Contemplation and Application

The active language of “lifting as we climb” on the entry to the Healing Walkway is aligned with the highest component on the Tower of Reconciliation, which represents bronze figures climbing and reaching back to others as they reach for the sky. Reconciliation is a central message of this site of peace. Public memorials offer opportunities for geographic inquiries that beckon many forms of peacelearning. We provide examples of peace practices, pedagogical questions, and teaching activities in relation to this site that others can consider and apply when reading other memorials as texts. Learners and teachers bring their own orientations as well.

We welcome teachers and peace pilgrims to think locally about memorials salient to their communities. Which material aspects of the site work to beckon nonviolence? How does the site invite varied engagements? How does the site invite us to *attend*? Who do they call to act, and in what ways? How do pedagogical lessons differ for children and adults? What do the sites ask us to do? In the end, individual and collective becoming is essential to peace practices. Informal public sites such as these teach peacelearning through bearing witness, learning, and becoming.

An important lesson from this site is that accessible parks and memorials can fold a steady call to remembrance and action into the rhythms of people’s daily movements in their geographic spaces. Stopping by the park on the way to lunch, sitting and playing music, moving through the labyrinth for recentering, and organizing rallies or community art projects that call attention to ongoing injustices all invite lessons necessary to orient oneself toward peace as new violences erupt around us. Public memorials like the JHFRP exist to invite connection, peaceful thought, and concrete action beyond particular events; they invite peace ontological orientations for every lived moment. Large movements of violence(s) begin with small acts, as do large movements of peace(s). Walking, commoning, and bearing witness can be peace practices.

We see memorials as dynamic sites that offer ongoing opportunities to learn amid the living pedagogies of nature and alongside other sojourners who enter the space. Each memorial bakes cultural and geographic meaning into the site, yet these meanings shift with interactions, visitors’ knowledge and orientations, and ongoing violences locally and globally, such as recent Black Lives Matter gatherings and rallies for Ukraine in the wake of Russian

invasion in 2022. While monuments remain firm representations of history, their meanings evolve. Past and present are constructions; peace pedagogies require continual linkages between and across sites of violence locally and globally.³

Notes

- 1 In a rich dialogic format, the authors describe the contingency of peace and forms of violence which include structural, cultural, and physical violence, with both individual and relational aspects (p. 274).
- 2 Please note: Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples use varied terms to describe the Indigenous peoples of North America. The terms include the specific nations with which Native groups of people affiliate as well as terms such as Sovereign Nations, Tribal Nations, First Nation, Native-Americans, and American-Indians. We include the problematic phrase “5 Civilized Tribes” in a quote from the park memorials that was used commonly in this region historically to describe five prominent Nations in the territory now known as Oklahoma.
- 3 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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9 Families' Discourse in Polarized Societies When Talking about Violence with Their Children in Catalonia

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The articulation of people and communities while respecting their differences is one of the most compelling challenges in global societies where diversity is the quintessential constituent. Lately, the movement toward social and political polarization is a disquieting trend everywhere, especially when the central space of encounter and understanding disappears to make way for prejudices and violence that reject and exclude “the other” (Aín & Logioco, 2021; Bradsma, 2017; Diamond, 2015).

In Catalonia, an autonomous region within the Kingdom of Spain, the process toward political self-determination has, since the last months of 2017, cracked open the whole social system making it difficult to peacefully address controversial issues (Barbet, 2020; Barceló, 2018; Cetrà et al., 2018; Turp et al., 2017). Certainly, a long tradition of peace and truce legislation dating back to the Middle Ages inspires, nowadays, the quest to preserve order and stability in the region (Mateu, 2017), but the sentiment of intensification of violence, not only within the political arena but also puts the citizens in permanent tension. As Balcells et al. (2021, p. 15) state, “the policy of secession, once pursued, can create a form of identity that has social spillovers in terms of affect and stereotyping”. In such a context, both the menace of severe polarization and violence flare-up become plausible, bringing along an invaluable opportunity for peacebuilding. In this sense, despite an evident risk of violence escalation persistently fueled in the political arena, most researchers report a social trend toward pacification that makes the Catalan case worthy to analyze (Balcells et al., 2021; Della Porta et al., 2019).

Regarding child violence in Catalonia, studies predominantly consider discrimination toward Roma children that forces them to permanent mobility (Hellgren & Gabrielli, 2018; Vrăbiescu, 2017); bullying, a major plague in

schools (Sidera et al., 2020, 2021; Zafra et al., 2021); sexism and gender violence, which is surrounded by social laxity (Enguix, 2021; Gelis & Abril, 2020; Montserrat et al., 2022); the constant arrival of unaccompanied migrant children that collapses social services (Baños et al., 2021; Galguera, 2020); domestic violence and its repercussion in child victimization (Aguilar & Pereda, 2022; Seinfeld et al., 2022); poverty increase due to the current economic crises (Ferret et al., 2020; Narciso et al., 2022); jihadist violence after the perpetration of a massive attack in 2017 in Barcelona by young Muslims educated in Catalan schools (Antúnez et al., 2019; Ferret, 2022; Membrives & Alonso, 2022); mental health disorders and infant and adolescent suicide before and after the pandemics of COVID-19 (Casañas et al., 2018; Suárez, 2020); and subjective well-being related to the accomplishment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Corominas et al., 2020; Llosada et al., 2017). This variety of literature offers quite a “normal” picture of the spread of violence in most European countries and its impact on the youngest. In this line, the annual reports launched by the Catalan ombudsman for childhood grievances represent a major and actualized source of data (Defensor d’Infants i Adolescents, 2021).

In this context, the educational system struggles to offer protection to schooled children by prescribing all sorts of procedures that teachers must follow. In 2021, the central government passed a law (Ley Orgánica, 8/2021) to foster integral safeguard through the creation, in all the schools, of a new figure responsible for the prevention and intervention of all kinds of child abuse. Nevertheless, this brand-new coordinator of well-being and protection presumably will be a teacher without any specific preparation or skills to address violence. All in all, a multiapproach response to violence is still needed, and the involvement of more educational agents cannot be delayed anymore.

Thus, this study seeks to contribute to violence de-escalation and peaceful conflict resolution by focusing on families due to their socializing and educational potential. The impact of the “home curriculum” in the school curriculum is undeniable and has been well established by most sociologists that claim bidirectionality in the relationships between family and school (Epstein, 2019). As a result, international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reckon that one of the clues for rethinking curriculum is the realignment of roles and responsibilities between school and family: “education can no longer be reduced to teaching, learning, and assessing in an in-person setting. It also encompasses a growing range of opportunities for schools and families to strengthen each other and collaborate in the pursuit of shared goals” (Operti, 2021).

According to Elder and Greene (2012), parenthood is political. These authors ponder that families “perceive their job of raising children to be

harder than ever and more important than ever, and they are deeply concerned about providing for and protecting their children” (Elder and Greene, 2012, p. 5). Initially at home, children and young people forge the attitudes and skills to understand the world and to interact with it (Capano & Ubach, 2013; Jiménez & Hidalgo, 2016; Nardone et al., 2003; Torio, 2006). In this process of appropriation, family discourses play a paramount role, particularly when dealing with controversial issues that lead to positions that oscillate from prejudiced to open dialogue (Crespo, 2011; Hinojosa & Vázquez, 2018). The study specifically considers four typologies of violence that sooner than later most families must tackle: gender, cultural origin, disability, and bullying.

Therefore, bearing in mind that in a polarized social context it is more plausible that the response to these four manifestations of violence places families at opposite extremes—violence, intolerance, and rejection vs. peace, respect, and inclusion—the interest resides in analyzing the elements that support their discourse and the family dynamics in front of peace education (Morales, 2020).

Building Bridges in Polarized Societies

Following McCoy et al. (2018), we understand polarization as a process where the normal multiplicity of differences in society is increasingly aligned around a unique dimension, the contrast of differences becomes reinforcing, and people increasingly understand and describe the society in terms of “us” versus “them”. It is not, as can be seen, an expression of disagreement, something completely natural and healthy in democratic societies, but of “tribalism”, a type of grouping that exacerbates competition against each other for political, cultural, economic, religious, gender, or generational reasons, among many other. Additionally, we share with Lozada (2014) a social view of polarization (not just political polarization) that extends to the family, school, parish, and neighborhood the dynamics of confrontation and rigidity through the constraint of the perceptual field (dichotomy), a strong emotional charge (loss of nuances), personal involvement, and exclusion and intolerance.

Among the reasons that stress the worthiness of stopping antagonisms between the extremes and building bridges, Jilani and Smith (2019) envision segregation inside own community, disapproval and hatred of opponents, and pressure to not accept diversity. According to the authors, these attitudes translate into less cooperation, deception, reaffirmation, and attack resulting in weakening of families, more stress, frustration, and negative impact on health. Finally, a culture of destruction and attack takes place where obstructionism, loss of confidence in institutions, and difficulty to reach consensus and resolve common problems ensues economic costs,

instigates hostility, and incites violence. Even though these reasons seem more than enough to try to avoid polarization in our societies, here we defend that the problem is neither in the difference nor in the discrepancy, but rather in how we peacefully coexist within confrontation.

Thus, taking a step forward, along with Stitzlein (2012), we maintain a proactive view on polarization that considers that individuals and groups have the right to dissent, and that discordance is not only legitimate but stimulating. As Mouffe (2009) argues, the objective does not consist of eliminating discrepancies and passions, but of acknowledging “the enemy” as the legitimate opponent to join in the pursuit of democracy. That is why more and more voices advocate that a healthy democracy appreciates controversy provided tools and strategies to disagree in peace are available (Bradsma, 2017; Caireta & Barbeito, 2018; Gholami, 2018; Hess, 2009; Huddleston & Kerr, 2017).

Families' Share in Confronting Social Violence

In the document entitled “Strategy for the rights of the child 2016–2021”, the Council of Europe (2016, p. 8) states that “the family, whatever its form, is the fundamental unit of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of children. Children enormously value relationships with their parents and siblings”. This implies that despite the archetype changes, the family, as a vital reference, remains (Perez-Brena et al., 2018; Trivette et al., 2010). Moreover, considering an interactive model of family (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002), it is necessary to highlight how children themselves influence the parenting practices and acknowledge their role in parent–child construction (Cummings et al., 2014; Perez-Brena et al., 2018). In this way, the family (all its members) plays a key mediating role between individuals and society.

As it has already been stated, today’s communities are constantly faced with the dilemma of following the path of violence, domination, exploitation, and individual gain or the path of peace, respect for life, social justice, and altruism. Agreeing with Harris (2013) and McCoy (2019), preventing the intensification of division and mistrust in our societies is the responsibility of both political leaders and the citizenry. Thus, the family, as the first agent of socialization and cornerstone of society, must take, and certainly takes, a position on this dilemma that portrays their children’s present and determines their future (Ismailbekova & Megoran, 2020).

Children and adolescents, exposed as they are to all kinds of violence, can easily fall into a superficial and stereotyped analysis of human diversity leading to simple, expeditious, exclusionary, and violent solutions toward different people or groups categorized as “enemies to defeat”. Then, intentionally, or not, they take a stand that may contribute to what Garcès (2020)

labels as “crises of shared futures”. Consequently, if we are to live in peace, it would be essential for families to embrace a more regenerative than punitive discourse and put into play tools and strategies for reconciliation and reconstruction of the social fabric. According to the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2020), the health emergency has altered lives all over the world and, among the keys to addressing the situation, this organization recommends talking to children—regardless of their age—with freedom and honesty, listening openly and attentively, asking questions while recognizing that we do not have all the answers, using a positive and empathetic language, keeping calm and controlling stress, redirecting negative behaviors in the right direction, encouraging, and offering support and consolation. At its core, it is all about emphasizing the social responsibility of the family and its commitment toward active peacebuilding because “it makes eminent sense to situate peacekeeping efforts in family settings, working alongside children’s caregivers to improve the often-violent circumstances in which they live their daily lives” (Taylor, 2019).

Conversations at Home Related to Violence Associated with Gender, Cultural Origin, Disability, and Bullying

As established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Article 3 of Resolution A/RES/53/243 (UNESCO, 1999), the development of a culture of peace is linked, among other elements, to “the possibility for all people at all levels to develop skills for dialogue, negotiation, consensus-building and the peaceful settlement of disputes”. In the present social scenario, the new generations need skills to manage diverse, even opposing, sensitivities and points of view since they are bound to face global challenges that require them to make decisions in plural environments (Oxfam, 2018). Now, the challenge for families is to stimulate the capacity to maintain difficult conversations in peace as the basis for building fair relationships at home, in school, and in the world.

It is not within the scope of this chapter to discuss the four types of violence selected—gender, cultural origin, disability, and bullying—but what is clear is that they are a scourge in most communities. Its relevance can be easily explained because children experience this sort of marginalization at a personal level, in face-to-face relationships or through social networks, as well as at the societal level, on the local and global affairs.

Since families are highly permeable to the environment, these situations fuel conversations at home and serve to set the directions to be followed by its members. Dualistic logic, as remarked by Martínez-Hincapié (2019), leads to polarization that ignores the paradoxes of life and seeks to exclude differences. In the name of “good”, all kinds of atrocities are justified,

imaginaries of domination are legitimized, and violence within each person is ignored and even excused. As a result, direct and frank communication stops and all contact with the other, the enemy, who is stereotyped and homogenized and to whom all kinds of bad intentions are attributed (identity fraud), is avoided.

Therefore, a balanced dialogue is essential for social cohesion in democratic societies and the point is to see how skilled families are, in general, to maintain difficult conversations at home. Of course, this means not always reaching an agreement, but trying to cope with discrepancies (Caireta & Barbeito, 2018). Hence, it is necessary to advance from the elitist dissemination of truths—which responds to a hierarchical perspective of communication—to the bidirectional and respectful exchange of knowledge through a dialectic process (Servaes, 2000), although this transition may generate discursive lines that transgress the dominant ideologies.

Any peace education curriculum or instructional strategies applied in the school either collide or align with the values and skills present at home, which implies that it is necessary to consider the family as a paramount agent in peacebuilding. Being so, Taylor (2019) affirms that family literacy programs are most effective and that:

Every effort should be given to sharing this family literacy peace work, with the intent of creating new frameworks for sustaining peace in human societies, whilst becoming more proactive in our responses to the destructive impacts on human societies caused by the ravages of war.

(p. 6)

Objectives and Method

The main goals of this study are (1) to find out how families address violence with their children in polarized societies; (2) to identify possible deficiencies in their communication skills; and (3) to provide some guidelines for an empathetic and nonviolent discourse at home.

From a mixed model, where both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are combined, firstly, we approach the reality through a non-experimental post-hoc study to provide a context and to contrast the results obtained attending some variables (sex, age, educational level, number of people at home, type of school attended by children, and children's age). Secondly, we delve into the participant's perceptions to grasp how they, as active agents, understand and act within this intersubjective and holistic reality.

Prior to data collection, the Ethical Committee at Ramon Llull University thoroughly examined and approved the research project. Hence, during the

whole process the ethical principles for social research, as well as the standards for responsible investigation and innovation provided by the *Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and Commission*, and the World Medical Association standards (WMA, 2013) were preserved ensuring beneficence, respect for human dignity, justice, transparency, anonymity, and data protection.

Sample

The participants in the study are 1,480 Catalan families with sons and daughters schooled in infant, primary, and secondary education (3–16-year-olds). The sample is constituted of families contacted via school family associations and school principals who accepted to take part in the research. The respondents to the questionnaire were mainly women (82%), aged between 30 and 50 (83%), born in Catalonia (85%), university graduates (64%), employees (87%), and married or with a partner (77%). Most of the families lived in cities bigger than 100,000 inhabitants (40%), and only 16.5% resided in municipalities under 4,000 inhabitants. Households with four people predominated (55%), followed by those with three people (24.5%), five people (12.5%), two people (6.5%), and more than five people (1.5%). 59% of families had two children, 27% had a single child, 11% had three, and the rest (4%) had four or more children. Concerning the family composition, parents with sons and daughters represented 88%, parents, children, and other people amounted 6.5%, and diverse configurations characterized the remaining 5.5%. The annual income corresponded to well-off families (27.5%), families with medium-high income (42%), medium-low revenue (21.5%), and low-salary (9%). Children were schooled whether in state schools (63%) or in subsidized charter schools (32.5%), while some families had children in both types of schools (4.5%).

Instrument

Data collection was conducted through an instrument that combined Likert-scale items and open-ended questions around four assumptions dealing with violence.

The sections that make up the questionnaire are:

- a. Profile of the respondent
- b. Experience regarding violence associated with gender, cultural origins, disability, and bullying
- c. Family involvement in community
- d. Family views on current society
- e. Communication at home

Then, the discourse around the four assumptions is analyzed identifying:

- f. Communication patterns and topics
- g. Controversial issues that families address with their sons and daughters
- h. Optional free comments

Design

The research approach is interpretative, delving into the subjects' perceptions, and supported by both quantitative and qualitative data. Prior to data collection, the instrument was revised by nine experts obtaining an optimal Kendall's coefficient of concordance. It was also tested in a sample of 221 families (Cronbach's alpha = 0.824). As a result, some items were reformulated, but none had to be eliminated. The final questionnaire was distributed online through databases from both schools and family associations.

As for the analysis, concerning quantitative data, we used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 26.0 to examine the results. Regarding qualitative data, the coding process followed the steps indicated by Braun and Clarke (2006) and the peer debriefing technique (Brantlinger et al., 2005). The analysis was conducted by two independent researchers. Posteriorly, a randomized 30% of the discourse was examined by a third researcher with an index of agreement (Kennedy, 2005) ranging from 81.5%–98.5% depending on the item.

Although we considered several variables (respondent's role in the family, age, sex, birthplace, number of inhabitants of the city where they live, educational level, marital status, number of people living in the household, number of children, family composition, family income, type of school attended by children, and views on bullying, racism, disability, and sexism), here we will present the results globally, except for "communication at home", the principal dimension targeted in this chapter, where the influence of the most significant variables will be explored: sex, age, educational level, number of people at home, type of school attended by children, and children's age.

Results

We inquired about families' direct experience with violence associated with gender, cultural origin, disability, and bullying. The results revealed that someone in 27% of the families of the sample had suffered bullying, 22% underwent sexism, sexual harassment, sexual or gender discrimination, 6% suffered racism, and 4% were discriminated on grounds of disability.

Also, we wanted to know the families' involvement in community affairs (social responsibility) through their participation in the school and the

community, as well as their commitment toward more globalized problems. Related to participation in their children's school, we found out that only 28.5% of families had an active role whether as representatives in the school council, as members of the families' association, or organizing extracurricular activities. Similarly, families participating in the community represented 24%, contributing as policymakers, members of NGOs, neighborhood associations, social foundations, unions, and cultural, leisure, or sports clubs. When questioned about their feelings and attitudes regarding global problems, families declared being worried (35%), having the impression that they should do something (23%), experiencing impotency (15.5%), indignation (15%), or responsibility (11%), and only 0.5% acknowledged feeling hatred. Their predominant attitudes were giving financial support (40%), standing aside (29%), participating in demonstrations (19%), and being social activists (12%).

When inquired about their perception of current society, most families quite agreed or totally agreed with the statement "our society is violent" (73%). Then, they remarked that "our society is discriminatory" (86%), as well as "our society is racist" (80%), "in our society there is machoism" (86%), "our society is homophobic" (70%), "our society is more and more divided" (80%), and "our society is less supportive" (53%).

Regarding the prime dimension of the study—communication at home—we asked about how the conversations between adults and children were in general. According to the arithmetic mean attained, there are families that talk about what personally affects them ($\bar{x} = 2.41$), debate about current affairs ($\bar{x} = 2.37$), and deal with controversial subjects ($\bar{x} = 2.29$). However, they admit spending more time listening to music, watching videos, or playing computer games than talking to each other ($\bar{x} = 2.23$). There are families that believe that communication at home is satisfactory ($\bar{x} = 2.19$), while some state that their children do not consider their opinion as parents to make decisions ($\bar{x} = 2.13$) and even admit losing mutual respect, shouting, and getting aggressive ($\bar{x} = 2.12$). Moreover, half of the respondents confess not always paying attention to their sons' and daughters' opinions ($\bar{x} = 2.09$), think that their children tend to share their concerns with their friends ($\bar{x} = 2.04$), and recognize they find it difficult to put themselves in each other's shoes ($\bar{x} = 2.00$).

Hereinafter, we will examine these results with regards to the contrast variables: sex, age, educational level, number of people at home, type of school attended by children, and children's age. The tables with our data are shown in Appendix A.¹ Table 9.1 shows significant differences connected with sex in the item "At home, we do not talk about what affects us personally". To explore this difference, we present the means and the standard deviations in Table 9.2, where it can be observed that the men most agree with the fact of not talking at home about personal issues. Regarding the age

of the respondents, we found significant differences in six items (Table 9.3) that indicate, as can be seen in Table 9.4, that younger parents think more that conversations at home are not about personal issues ($\bar{x} = 1.92$) and find it difficult to show empathy. Also, the eldest group of parents responded above the rest that listening to music, playing video games, or watching series occupied more time than family conversations ($\bar{x} = 2.38$), that their sons and daughters confided more in their friends ($\bar{x} = 2.25$), and that parents–children communication was unsatisfactory. Finally, parents aged 30–50, which represent the vast majority, highlighted that their sons and daughters do not pay much attention to their opinions when making a decision ($\bar{x} = 1.85$).

The educational level significantly affected five items (Table 9.5). Uneducated families were a minority and reported, more than the families with primary, secondary, or university studies (Table 9.6), that they did not talk about personal issues ($\bar{x} = 2.60$) or discuss current affairs at home ($\bar{x} = 2.40$), that they tend to avoid controversial or polemic topics ($\bar{x} = 2.60$), and believe their children have no interest in their opinion ($\bar{x} = 2.20$). But it is the families with secondary education that declare devoting more time to listening to music, playing video games, or watching series than talking to each other ($\bar{x} = 2.36$). Considering the number of people living in the household, we did not find any significant differences (Table 9.7); however, the type of school attended by children (Tables 9.8 and 9.9) influenced the perception of families with sons and daughters in different schools (state, charter, and private) saying that their children entrusted their friends more than their parents when having to decide about something ($\bar{x} = 2.22$).

Children's age had a significant effect on six items (Table 9.10). To better analyze these differences, we present the means and the standard deviations in Table 9.11, where it can be perceived that families with children under 12 years old try more than the rest to avoid talking about controversial or problematic topics ($\bar{x} = 1.79$). When children are aged 12 or more, families declare that they would rather share their worries with friends than with parents ($\bar{x} = 2.26$) and that their daughters and sons do not pay much attention to their opinion when making decisions ($\bar{x} = 1.94$). Finally, families with both younger and older than 12-years-old children reach higher punctuation in three items: passing more time listening to music, playing video games, and watching series than talking to each other ($\bar{x} = 2.38$), losing mutual respect, yelling, and getting aggressive when arguing ($\bar{x} = 1.96$), and recognizing that communication at home is not as satisfactory as it should be ($\bar{x} = 1.90$).

To complement the questionnaire, parents had to give their views regarding four difficult situations at school dealing with racism, gender identity, rights of disabled people, and bullying. After reading each scenario, they had to position themselves for or against the victim's claims for equal treatment, give some reasons for their decision, and explain how they would

approach these situations with their children. Lastly, if wished, they could add further observations or commentaries. To begin with, we found 406 comments admitting not talking at home about controversial topics such as those in the given examples. In this category, 53.4% simply answered “no”, 34.2% considered their children were “too young”, and 12.4% said that the topic “never come up”. For example:

- No, we don't (N° 7).
- My twins are only six years old, there are too young to talk about such issues (N° 196).
- No, we never had the occasion (N° 110).

Families having conversations related to controversial matters (646 comments), said, firstly, that they wanted to promote open communication at home (55.9%), secondly, that they had to cope with a real situation (28.5%), and, thirdly, that they faced a home-based discussion (15.6%). For instance:

- We often talk to our children about controversial topics so that they can avoid stereotypes or generalized opinions. We want them to be free to decide, always respecting themselves and other people (N° 66).
- My son is adopted, and it's hard for him to talk about his origins. When I talk to him, he usually shuts down and tells me he doesn't want to talk to me. We don't argue. I respect his rhythm, although I take advantage of any occasion to bring up the subject. He is angry with his biological parents, and I try not to make him feel guilty. Besides, he has an Asperger's disorder. We always value and comment on the difficulties or opportunities that are presented to him because of his condition (N° 580).
- I am a divorced mother. I have raised my child almost alone. With my own resources. The taboo subject at home is to talk about my son's relationship with his father. When I try to talk to him there is bad talk... (N° 130).

As for the trigger that gave rise to the conversation (241 responses), 45.2% were based on a personal experience, 30.7% were related to something that happened at school, and 24.1% came from the social context. For example:

- We talk about his grandfather's suicide. It opens the debate of whether it is right or not to have the choice to end your own life (N° 80).
- We talk about a boy that suffers bullying at school. My son always helps him by telling the teacher, and now his classmates nickname him “the snitch” (N° 179).

- We usually talk about current issues because my eldest son (15 years old) follows the news and has many concerns (N° 197).

The topics of conversation (2,273 mentions) were arranged around 26 categories grouped into three blocks. In the first block (frequency > 100), we found: sex and gender (37.8%), politics (18.6%), cultural origin and ethnicity (9.7%), bullying (8.1%), and social injustice (4.6%). In the second block (frequency 10 > 100), we identified: addictions (3.4%), ICTs and social networks (2.6%), disability (2.4%), death (1.9%), values (1.8%), religion (1.7%), authority (1.5%), COVID19 (1.3%), relationships (1.1%), sustainability and climate change (0.9%), and economy (0.5%). Finally, the third block (frequency < 10) was represented by: health and illness (0.3%), old people (0.3%), education (0.3%), animals (0.2%), consumerism (0.2%), physical image (0.2%), leisure time (0.2%), adoption (0.1%), time limits (0.08), and language (0.04%).

Despite completing all the sections of the questionnaire would take one hour or more, 25.6% of families decided to add something else (530 comments). Once analyzed, free contributions expressed families' thoughts in two principal directions (46.6%): consciousness for commitment toward community issues and reflections on current society. For instance:

- Today society disregards many topics that are considered controversial or taboo, and nothing is done about them. We should focus on these issues to promote a good coexistence both at school, in the neighborhoods, and in all public and professional spaces, with all the diversity of the population (N° 36).

Also, families remarked on the difficulty of positioning themselves (39.1%). For example:

- To decide the answer within the 4 categories without an explanation has been difficult, I have a son and a daughter and sometimes I would have answered differently if I thought of one or the other (N° 81).

Some families went further and made suggestions (7.7%), such as:

- I think that our society goes very fast, and we are short of time in general, which means that we do not have enough time to think and talk about certain issues with our children and that may worry them. The inputs that come through social networks, TV... do not help to create a more social and fair society. I think that we have also become malicious and with few disinterested personal relationships. I believe that

many lectures or audiovisual documents on these topics would be needed in schools, in the adolescent stage it is especially important that they become aware of them and have the tools to identify and deal with them (N° 194).

Then, families revealed the need to share some personal experiences (6.6%):

- To take care of children who suffer bullying (I suffered it) is fundamental, but as a mother having a child who bullies others is so sad... and I can only act from the heart. There is no sense in punishment... it's more complex than that, it's disappointment, it's desolation, it's falling to the ground.... it's to start again and to understand that we adults have also failed. Thank you (N° 66).
- The topic of disability is still a taboo, we have lost many friendships because not everyone is able to adapt to us... For example: not going to a crowded place, not being able to do an excursion, or simply not having to witness a sensory attack... in the end you are left with only unique and sincere friends (N° 96).

In Figure 9.1, we expose the categories that emerged concerning communication at home.

Discussion

To begin with, it is important to look back at the respondents' profiles. Although the questionnaire was widely distributed around the territory, participants were mostly women, middle-aged, born in Catalonia, holding a university degree, married (or with a partner), with two children schooled in state schools, forming a nuclear family, with medium to high income, and living in urban areas. Thus, we have a solid representation of the middle-upper class that portrays quite well the parents–children dialogue, but we still need to approach families from other nationalities and social backgrounds. It is striking to confirm how family matters are handled by women, even when they are well-educated and employed and could better claim for their rights (Giménez-Nadal et al., 2019). Similarly, in a case study on 25 couples around the world, it has been established that “women still do more childcare and housework than men in every country studied” (Deutsch & Gaunt, 2020, p. 3). Accordingly, the struggle for a more equalitarian society in terms of gender needs urgently a revolution within each household.

Families with socioeconomic well-being, like most of the sample, suffer violence too. Bullying affecting more of a quarter was their main concern, proving that children experience direct or indirect violence on a daily basis at school. Likewise, gender discrimination was denounced by nearly a

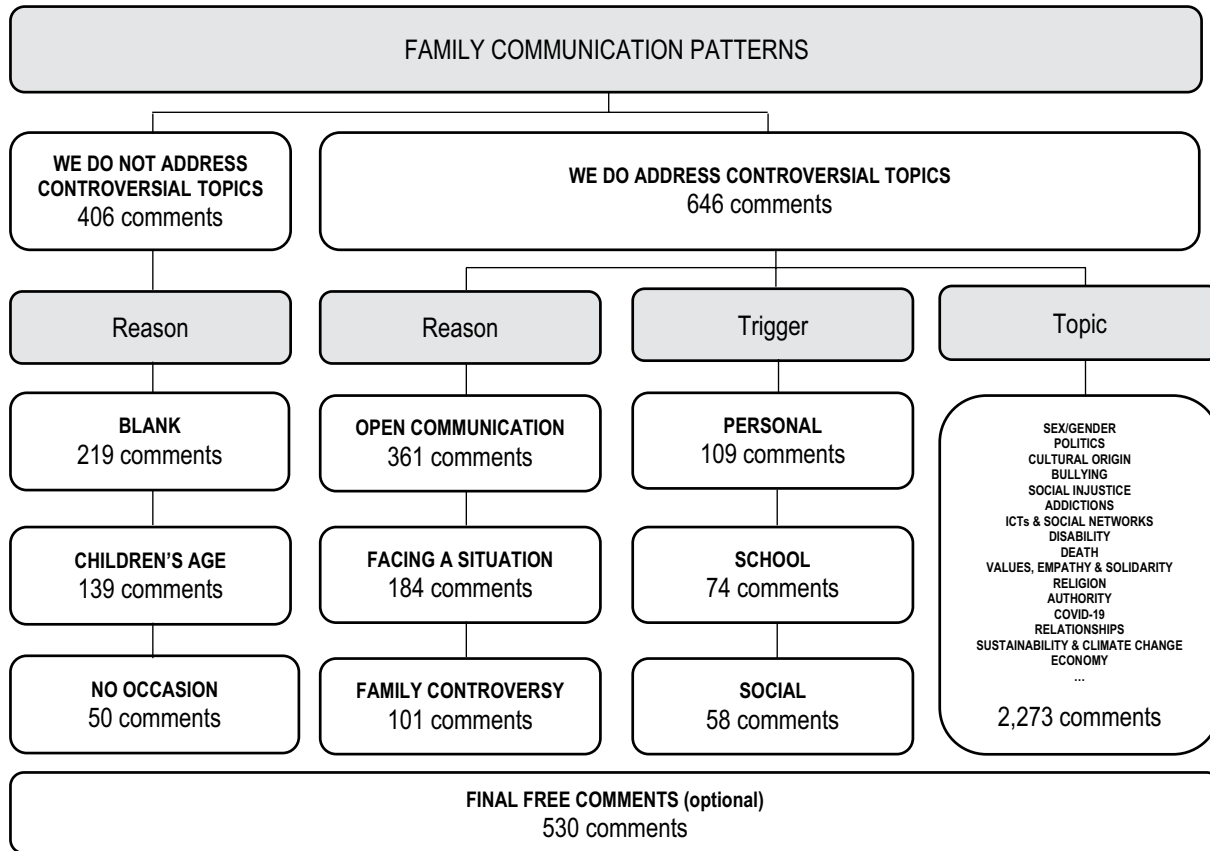


Figure 9.1 Analysis of the communication patterns.

quarter of families, which could well be explained by the visibility that recent campaigns have given to sexual abuse and equal rights claim for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people (LGBTQI+), and of course, by the female bias of the sample. Then, racism is also voiced, but only by a small percentage matching the number of respondents from other cultures. And finally, violence associated with a disability is less represented, among other reasons because the violence they suffer has a paternalistic cover. As Labella and Masten (2018) state, there is a corpus of research supporting the idea that both risk and protective factors for the development of aggression and violence reside in the family system, and then, we wonder why there are not more studies and programs focused on peacebuilding at home.

Families' involvement in community affairs is minoritarian. About one-fourth of families participate in their children's school, and a few less contribute to the development of their neighborhoods. Such inhibition is sensed by children who grow up without proactive examples of social responsibility. At the global level, half of the families contribute by supporting several causes with money or by taking part in demonstrations. Only slightly more than 10% consider themselves activists. The rest, stand-aside. According to Esteban and Schneider (2008), Jilani and Smith (2019), and Lozada (2014), polarization diminishes the will to contribute to the common good, a fact that especially affects the most vulnerable.

If we hope to build peace from the grassroots, parents (anonymous people) will need to take a more active role, as Alesina and La Ferrara (2000) or Garcès (2020) remark. Certainly, it is not enough to show concern for what happens on the Planet, think that something should be done, or feel powerless or indignant, which is the case of nine out of ten families. This passive approach sharply contrasts with the families' pessimistic image (expressed by more than three-quarters) of a more violent, discriminatory, racist, macho, and divided society and the belief (indicated by half) that current society is less supportive than it used to be. According to (Tuna & Tan, 2020), the social structure is critical in the acceptance and legitimacy of violence. The social framework naturalizes violence and, at the same time, refrains individuals from acting, leading them to believe that there is nothing than one could do. Also, there's a wrong but shared myth supporting violence as a means for defending the common good. As a means of example, Akpuh (2021), opposing the culture of peace, even goes so far as to affirm that structural violence is necessary for the proper functioning and stability of human society and to prevent chaos.

Another part of the problem is the generalization of some kinds of violence and its prevalence from one generation to the next one. The comparative research on violence against women in Europe, for example, concluded that nearly 80% of women declared this kind of violence to be common in

their countries (Vázquez et al., 2021). Other studies attribute the resigned acceptance of violence to a deficient education (by parents and teachers) in values such as generosity, solidarity, or goodness and to the addiction to some substances that originate violent behavior (Gázquez et al., 2021). In addition, the negative effects—volatility, uncertainty, economic recession, and anxiety—caused by the pandemics, the Russo–Ukrainian war, the migrants' death at sea or at the borders, along with other major conflicts cannot be ignored in a complex and globalized world. In this line, Sorokowski et al. (2020) consider that the fear from social contact due to COVID-19 can increment prejudice against foreign nationalities. But despite everything, families wish a better world for their children; then, as Renzulli et al. (2021) claim, parents should encourage their children to orientate their skills toward common good and social trust. Maybe now, thanks to the Agenda 2030 (UNESCO, 2015) and similar initiatives, more and more families (and not the vulnerable ones) will be encouraged to take a crucial and agent role in the world (Taylor, 2019).

Results concerning communication are practically halved, with a slight tendency toward the bright side. This is not good news because it indicates that there is a significant number of families that simply do not talk about what affects them personally nor do they debate current issues or address controversial topics. Our apprehension is supported by some studies stating, for example, that adolescents suffering from cyber victimization report problematic family communication (Cañas et al., 2020), or that family communication patterns impact civic and political participation in adulthood (Graham et al., 2020). Much worse is to find that listening to music, gaming, or watching series occupies more time than family conversations. Or that they lack empathy and even lose mutual respect, shout, and get aggressive during family discussions. On the one hand, some of these factors have been identified as blockers of positive communication (mutual ignorance, not listening, and attacking each other), and on the other hand, empathy is at the basis of dialogue and understanding and brings something essential in polarized societies: human connectedness and compassion (Bertelsmann Foundation, 2017).

Supposedly, children prefer to share their concerns with their friends and trust them more than their parents. This lack of confidence could be more typical of adolescents, which is worrying enough. In turn, parents also admit that they do not always consider what their children think. However, children's right to participation is well established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) and yet, it is not fully recognized by society, nonetheless by families and schools. Thus, communication at home is by no means considered satisfactory. Here, we see a sound opportunity to include communication skills in parenting programs aimed at being able to sustain an open dialogue about any topic.

Especially focusing on controversial issues, a significant number of comments (35%) indicate that families do not address problematic topics without further explanation or try to justify it because of the age of the children or lack of opportunity. As for the families that talk about any topics at home, we have seen that they believe in open communication and had to face real situation or a discussion. There are well-known strategies that foster positive communication between opposed views: deep democracy, Nansen dialogue, philosophy 3–18, the Soliya method, nonviolent communication, conflict mediation, restorative practices, and socio-scientific controversies (Caireta & Barbeito, 2018), among others. All these strategies could help to dismantle the discourses that claim violence and those that only consider social, economic, and political variables and disregard individual suffering. Using the terminology typical of the field of positive conflict management, it will be convenient to “destabilize” the fossilized narratives to introduce elements of complexity and resort to creative thinking as a source of new and acceptable solutions. Along with Martínez-Hincapié (2019), we believe that valuing individual efforts is resulting in a new concept of empowerment, which helps to overcome the idea that only great deeds transform reality.

The topics addressed cover a range of relevant social matters, with sex and gender—in part associated with adolescence and in part connected with the world’s critique to the patriarchal society—politics, cultural origin—racism, migrations, diversity, identity—bullying and social injustice being the most significant. In short, together with Kilmurray (2019), the idea is to evolve from a numerical diversity to a relational diversity where people from different groups interact with each other as human beings.

Conclusion

To achieve the first objective of the study aimed at finding out how families deal with violence with their children in polarized societies, we needed to ascertain that families do, in fact, face different types of violence at home. It was also important to know their commitment to the community, as well as their views on today’s society in general. After verifying that most families experience violence, we dare to emphasize that the family is quite an underestimated target for tackling violence and fostering peacebuilding in society, considering that they long for a more peaceful context to raise their children. According to Hinojosa and Vázquez (2018), the first step to generalizing the culture of peace consists of paying attention to family relationships and their influence on people’s behavior. Families should play a mediator role between individuals and society in peacebuilding, mainly because they perceive a worse present in terms of violence, discrimination, racism, and solidarity. From a bidirectional concept of family, children are not mere

receptors but constructors; therefore, together with Comellas (2008), we defend that families involved with their context provide children with experiences of commitment that influence their attitudes. Consequently, in terms of school curriculum and instructional strategies for peace, we shall recommend taking into account children's family background.

To identify possible deficiencies in families' communication skills (second objective of the study), we focused on general patterns of communication, on their motives for discussing controversial issues, and on the topics they were worried about. The conclusion is clear and worrying: about 50% of families acknowledge having problems with communication. Thus, it would be advisable to instruct and empower families with strategies for nonviolent communication that should be included in parenting trainings promoted by schools.

Finally, our third objective was to provide some guidelines for an empathetic and nonviolent discourse at home. To advance in this direction, the research has produced a dossier on communication strategies for families and a glossary of terminology related to violence, social polarization, and culture of peace (see Appendix B). Communicative skills cover language and expressions that must be avoided; coherence between visual, vocal, and verbal language; assertive messages; empathy and interpersonal connection; reflecting feelings; paraphrasing the message; asking for clarification; reformulating to add nuances; the importance of the silence; appreciative inquiry; nonviolent communication; restorative circles and questions; mediation and conflict resolution strategies (including consensus building); and social and emotional skills. Here, our goal is to enrich the home curriculum resulting in a more peaceful family environment that contributes to peacebuilding education a school.

Finally, it is important to point out some of the most important limitations of the study, namely: biased sample in terms of gender (women respond), social class (upper-middle-class families), and cultural origin (Catalan). Therefore, in future research, it will be necessary to translate the instruments into more languages and use other qualitative methodologies, such as focus groups or interviews, which permit oral exchange.

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Note

- 1 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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10 Conflict Coaching in the United Kingdom

Youth Leading a Transformative Approach to Conflict

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Introduction

Recognizing that young people are the experts in their own lives is vital in order to secure maximum engagement when responding to violence and building peace (Altiok et al., 2020). Similarly, young people occupying leadership roles in the processes of reducing violence, managing conflict constructively, and building peace is critical (Ebenezer-Abiola and Moore, 2020). There is growing evidence of the contributions children and youth can make towards peace in their contexts (Gulliksen, 2015; IAHPCR, 2009). At CRESST, a not-for-profit organization based in Sheffield, England, we believe conflict coaching is a process that can enable this, including building the skills and developing the principles young people need to work towards the elimination of violence in schools.

For over 18 years, CRESST has worked with schools and other organizations across the UK to empower young people (and the adults who work with them) with the skills to resolve conflict constructively. Peacebuilding in schools is a complex and challenging process. For this reason, it is important to highlight that peacebuilding in schools is not a passive act. Peacebuilding through conflict coaching is challenging, though exciting work, requiring strategic engagement, and the untiring pursuit of reconciliation. However, we believe this engagement and hard work enables young people to develop the skills to address conflict constructively and build active, lasting, and meaningful peace in their lives, schools, and communities.

This chapter will first explore the development and history of conflict coaching as an approach derived from Mediation with Non-Violent Communication skills at the core. Conflict coaching emerged over 30 years ago to support individuals in handling disputes when mediation was either not possible or not appropriate. The coach used mediation skills to support individuals in exploring, understanding, and constructively responding to their situation. It continued to develop based on mediation and conflict resolution processes and was initially used in universities to create one-to-one

intervention programs for disputants. Some models are influenced by executive coaching programs and take tools and techniques from these areas. More recently, conflict coaching has taken hold in key economic sectors including government, healthcare, and education.

The chapter will then describe the core skills, principles, strategies, and activities which are taught, valued, and experienced throughout the CRESST training process. We reflect on how these support the teaching of peace and the potential for working towards the elimination of violence in schools. Additional topics explored include how the conflict coaching approach promotes empowerment and agency for young people and increases the understanding of others' positions, perspectives, and needs and how it develops empathy and creates a transformative understanding of self and others. These areas are critically discussed alongside current research in the field, theoretical and philosophical perspectives and further supported by the inclusion of case study examples from young people, teachers, and school leaders that have previously worked with CRESST. Finally, the chapter concludes by identifying the challenges faced in implementing conflict coaching in schools, highlighting the need for comprehensive planning, commitment from school leaders, professional support and training, and a truly student-led approach to ensure the successful and meaningful implementation of conflict coaching schemes.

What Is Conflict Coaching?

Conflict coaching is a dynamic, future-focused, and individualized method of numerous applications, based on the voluntary commitment of people engaging constructively in conflict (Noble, 2006b). This engagement may include the resolution of a conflict or relational dilemma, prevention of dispute escalation, improving communication skills, developing and practising Non-Violent Communication (NVC) skills, reflection, understanding interaction strategies, and creating plans for managing conflict (Brinkert, 2006; Noble 2006a). Conflict coaching models vary; some approaches view the coach as the expert and some are more person-centered. Frequently, a blended approach of these two distinct views is applied (Jones and Brinkert, 2008).

The History of Conflict Coaching

Conflict coaching is a process more than 30 years old, emerging from the field of conflict resolution when engaging both parties in mediation was not possible (Brinkert, 2006). Historically, conflict coaching can also be located within executive coaching processes, where professionals may be taught specific skills to improve job performance or other forms of training and

mentoring in order to prepare for professional advancement in line with organizational change (Witherspoon and White, 1996). Executive coaching pedagogy recognized the value of developing a better understanding of conflict styles and conflict-resolution skills, particularly for senior leaders and managers (Brinkert, 2006).

Conflict coaching is also present in a number of educational settings. Conflict coaching programs began at Macquarie University in 1993 and at Temple University in 1996 (Wilson, 2020). At Macquarie, the conflict coaching program was an individual problem-solving focused approach for those who were involved in a conflict with another party who was unwilling to engage in mediation (Tidwell, 1997). Temple University developed a student conflict coaching program focused on conflict styles, later expanding to preparing students for confrontation, mediation, and becoming more engaged in issues related to diversity (Brinkert, 2006). More recently, in the University System of Georgia, thousands of participants have been trained in conflict-resolution processes including conflict coaching, many citing the value of this in their professional lives (Brinkert, 2016).

In the last 20 years, the application of conflict coaching is increasingly visible in its use by practitioners with broad professional identities, an increasing number of conflict coaching communities of practice, and its application in key economic sectors including government, healthcare, and education (Brinkert, 2016).

Conflict Coaching: Key Approaches

Although conflict coaching is being more widely practised in diverse forms, many conflict coaching programs and applications have been developed from notable conflict resolution models. This section outlines three key models: the Comprehensive Coaching Model (CCM), the CINERGY Method (CM), and finally the CAOS model to provide the context for the emergence of the CRESST Conflict Coaching process.

Comprehensive Coaching Model

The CCM was created by experienced conflict coaches Tricia Jones and Ross Brinkert and is influenced by their work as conflict communication researchers, teachers, training development professionals, mediators, and consultants (Wilson, 2020). The model draws on social constructionist perspectives and works on the basis that conflict is communication-based, socially created, and communicatively managed within a specific social and historical context (Folger and Jones, 1994; Brinkert, 2006). As individuals socially construct conflict, the model creates opportunities for them to deconstruct, reconstruct, redefine, and reinterpret the conflict, their roles in it, and their

wider relationships (Brinkert, 2006). By implementing expert and facilitative approaches, CCM coaches aim to foster client empowerment by actively providing information and resources for the client to reflect on possible courses of change of the conflict, without forcing a reflection or change (Jones and Brinkert, 2008).

The CINERGY Method

The CINERGY™ Model (CM) is concentrated on supporting individuals to reach conflict management objectives through a goal-oriented and future-focused process (Mediators Beyond Borders International, 2023). Developed by Cinne Noble (a lawyer-mediator and coach certified by the International Coaching Federation), this model is predicated on three different pillars: coaching, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and neuroscience (Wilson, 2020). Created to help people gain competence and skills in managing interpersonal conflicts, the coaches must also be willing to participate in a process of self-determination and discovery as they will not be given strategies, advice, or opinions from their coaches (Noble, 2006a; Noble, 2012; Wilson, 2020).

CAOS

The CAOS Conflict Coaching model was developed from 20 years' of experience working in community-related fields of mediation for individuals and/or organizations wanting to develop and practise more creative and effective responses to conflict (CAOS Conflict Management, 2020). The model challenges the individual to recognize their role in a conflict and to take responsibility to find a way towards a resolution by examining their own behaviors and perspectives (Sharland, 2011). Coaches, who self-refer to the process, should emerge from the maximum of three sessions available to them from their own conflict coaches; more able to respond effectively to difficulty (CAOTICA, 2012).

The role of coaches for the CAOS model is to support clients to create their own solutions without providing advice, suggestions, or views (Sharland, 2011). A CAOS practitioner engages in an experiential and principle-based process of continuous learning, focused on interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, open-mindedness, and creativity, never reaching an endpoint in learning but recognizing they can still always develop (CAOS Conflict Management, 2020; CAOTICA, 2012).

Conflict Coaching: Violence and Harm

Johan Galtung explained violence in terms of three dimensions, direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence, and suggests that these three

forms of violence feed and reinforce each other (Galtung, 2000). The aims of CC are to provide the opportunity for a participant to reflect on their difficult, harmful situation and their responses to it in order to help them identify different ways of reacting that support them in dealing with it more constructively (Sharland, 2011). This may not initially appear to connect with addressing these three dimensions of violence; however, there is some evidence that initiatives (particularly in schools), which focus on problem-solving, personal growth, and relationships, may have an impact on violence at the personal, structural, and cultural levels (Katic et al., 2020). Finnis (2022) suggests that when schools implement approaches that focus on mending relationships and managing conflict and tensions, there will be fewer occasions when harm is caused and these approaches in turn can develop a greater sense of community. Additionally, to avoid replicating historical harms and navigating complex, rapidly changing societies, students need to be provided with effective means of practising the skills required to connect, belong, and actively participate as part of a larger, interconnected community (Velez et al., 2020; Veloria et al., 2020). Schools may be the most appropriate institution to target in addressing issues of harm and violence by promoting productive citizenship and social responsibility, which in turn could reduce antisocial and criminal behavior (Morrison, 2002). The following content of this chapter aims to provide a practical example of implementing CC with young people to support them to navigate and manage their responses to forms of harm and violence they may experience in school and beyond.

CRESST Conflict Coaching Approach

CRESST developed a model for secondary schools in the UK, with students aged between 11 and 18, to deal with the same problem faced by adult mediators 30 years previously: what to do when an individual student needs support dealing with a relational difficulty, but mediation is either not possible or not appropriate. Previously, CRESST had piloted student-led mediation schemes, developed from a successful primary peer mediation model but evidence showed that teenagers were unlikely to use these schemes sufficiently to warrant the input needed to launch them. The problem was particularly pertinent in diverse and demanding large comprehensive schools in the area, where conflict emerges between friends and is rapidly dealt with by ending friendships and changing or establishing new friendship formations, often at the expense of people's sense of security, connection, and relationship-building skills. In very multicultural schools, differing perspectives and lack of understanding and tolerance increased group conflict and schools sought alternative models to build peace.

For most young people, conflict – both on and offline – is an inevitable, sometimes exciting, and often painful and destructive part of life. CRESST believes that these young people are capable of learning and practising skills that enable them to explore and engage positively with conflict and to find their own positive resolutions. CRESST's Youth Resolving Conflict (YRC) approach offers educators a range of training options tailored to meet the needs of students and schools, of which conflict coaching training is the core element. CRESST provides intensive conflict coaching training to older student volunteers (frequently aged between 14 and 16). These student volunteers then work with staff to set up a scheme in schools to support young students dealing with friendship issues and other low-level conflicts. The trained coaches report ongoing benefits in terms of knowledge and understanding of conflict and a sense of being able to contribute to their peers, and the coaches report feeling supported in handling their situations more confidently (CRESST, 2022b). Follow-up surveys of 38 conflict coaches 4–7 months after their training indicated that there was a statistically significant self-perceived improvement in students' knowledge about conflict and how it affects them as compared with the baseline survey (Paired *T*-test, $p < .05$). There was also a statistically significant improvement in how 27 beneficiaries of conflict coaching felt about their situations compared to before conflict coaching ($p < .000001$) with an average of 88% accepting that they now 'Understood things better', 86% accepting that they now know what they need to think about or do next', and over 82% likely to 'Come back to see a conflict coach in future if struggling with something' (CRESST, 2022b).

The CRESST Coaching model has four components, which are taught consecutively, but the students are encouraged to move between the stages fluidly in response to what the participant is saying and doing. These are:

1. **Listen:** Without interrupting, hear what the participant wants to say about their situation.
2. **Summarize:** Reflect back on what's been said.
3. **Guess needs (empathize):** Check what universal human need was not met for the participant.
4. **Ask Open Questions:** Ask appropriate open questions following what the participant has just said so that they can fully explore their situation, responses, and ideas.

The multidirectional process' in the model is displayed in Figure 10.1.

The CRESST model is based on the CAOS approach in that it is fluid, person-centered, and skills- and principles-based. However, at the heart of the CRESST model is the understanding that tensions deepen when people have unmet needs that are not acknowledged or understood. When people

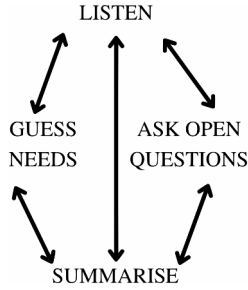


Figure 10.1 CRESST Conflict Coaching Model.

hold tightly to a position, they focus on strategies to meet needs, which may be in opposition to others' strategies. When they are supported to understand deeper drives, their values, or unmet universal human needs, they are able to think more freely and creatively about the strategies they might employ to meet those needs. The focus is on connection and understanding with themselves and others. Many strategies arise once this has been achieved. For this reason, the CRESST model incorporates the principles of Marshall Rosenberg's Non-violent Communication which provides the young coaches with the tools they need not just to help a person explore what's been happening but to feel genuinely heard and understood for how this has affected them and why.

The Role of Coaches

Coaching provides a safe, confidential space for the student participants to pause and reflect on their own situations. In CRESST Conflict Coaching, the coach (also a student) listens and asks appropriate, open questions to direct the conversation back to the person's own experience, for example, 'So what would help you?', 'What do you most want?', and 'What's important to you here?'. The student coming for coaching has complete ownership of the process. They decide the content of the coaching session, and they choose what direction to take it in. This means the process builds their self-confidence and view of themselves as capable of finding constructive responses to difficult situations. The coach does not impart skills or understanding to their client; they listen, summarize, guess unmet universal human needs, and ask open questions to help the participant understand themselves and others, and use their existing skills creatively. Open questions encourage and support the client in exploring their situation. The two young people (the coach and the participant) are on an equal footing. Because the coach doesn't give advice, try to fix the problem, or join in, this is a unique opportunity for the students attending coaching, one that they rarely get with

friends, teachers, or other adults in their lives, to find their own way through a difficult situation.

Non-Violent Communication (NVC)

The CRESST CC model builds on the CAOS model in being principle-based and participant-led. At its heart is the core philosophy of Non-Violent Communication, that humans are always trying to meet needs, and that when people in conflict receive empathy for unmet needs, they become more able to think imaginatively about others' perspectives, and become creative about strategies to meet their needs in ways that are less likely to cause harm.

NVC is a powerful and transformative communication approach to reframing how we understand and express ourselves and how we listen to others. It focuses on observing and understanding behavior, hearing needs, and identifying and articulating what we want in a given situation, whether this relates to understanding, connection, or action (Rosenberg, 2003). Rose (2006) describes the steps of NVC and their use in an education environment: the first step is to make a nonjudgmental observation and reflection on what has been seen or heard. Next is to identify feelings related to the observation. The third step is to connect a need to the feelings. Following this, a request is made connected to needs. In a classroom, a teacher may use NVC as in the example below to begin a dialogue with a student who is interrupting the lesson by talking to others:

I see that you are talking with your friend as I am giving an instruction. I feel frustrated and concerned when you are talking to your friend as I am giving instructions, because I think that other students won't be able to hear and understand what I need them to do next. I feel frustrated and concerned, because I need the students to be able to do the task I am giving them the instruction about to help them learn in my lesson. Please can you wait to talk to your friend until after I have finished giving the instruction?

In CRESST's CC model, although the principles of NVC are central and apparent in the methodology and approaches, the implementation of NVC differs slightly as the conflict coach in the model is encouraged to listen, observe, and reflect back what has been heard and observed, identify a need from this, but doesn't make a request from the coachee. Due to the principle of ownership during the CC process, it is important that the coach does not lead the participant into the requests and that the participant generates their own ideas if they feel comfortable in doing so. Equally, the elements of NVC in CRESST's CC may just include the needs and feelings parts – it depends on what the participant wishes to discuss and explore during their coaching

session. However, the guessing of unmet needs supports the coachee in understanding their position, letting go of fixed ideas about strategies, and so that they are more able to move towards empathy and reconciliation.

Aims and Principles of CRESST Conflict Coaching

The aim of the CRESST two-day YRC Conflict Coaching training is to develop a strong and confident cohort of student conflict coaches, who can handle tensions and difficulties constructively. These students internalize the philosophy of NVC and the principles of the CRESST CC model. They become adept at using the skills of conflict coaching to support younger students who are in conflict to understand and create ways forward for themselves, or to release the tension and stress of conflict through dialogue with a coach. Through CRESST's monitoring and evaluation processes, it is evident that conflict coaches receive significant and long-lasting benefits from the conflict coaching training (CRESST, 2018). The younger students who they coach also benefit from the restorative support received, gaining empowerment over their situations, and confidence in their abilities to better understand and resolve difficult situations. Ultimately, the whole school benefits from signing up to methodologies which constitute a whole-school approach to positive and restorative conflict resolution, with conflict coaching at its heart.

Additionally, CRESST believes that the process of embedding transformational change towards more peaceful, less-violent schools is best supported by using the skills and principles of NVC and restorative approaches in the actual teaching content and methodology. This ensures that the skills and principles are not just taught, but are embodied and permeate the life of a school.

In addition to NVC as a foundational approach, three core principles underlie the CRESST CC model; these are developed from the fundamental principles of adult mediation, as expressed through elements of the CAOS Conflict Coaching and Mediation models.

1. **Ownership:** The participant 'owns' the conflict coaching process. They decide on what content to discuss and on ways forward if they want to, while the coach provides the process. The participant is the expert on their situation, and the coach never advises them. This is very important, because the students only receive two days of intensive training in CC, and are therefore not experts in conflict resolution able to give informed guidance to others about resolving conflicts.
2. **Impartiality:** Coaches don't take sides – including with the person who they are coaching. They are not advocates. They recognize that when someone in conflict receives support or admonishment for their *position*, their belief in the position grows stronger. However, when they receive

empathy and understanding, they hold less tightly to their position and think creatively to move towards connection, with themselves and others.

3. **Confidentiality:** Coaches learn to adhere to strict confidentiality practices. However, they are also given tools to support them in debriefing safely so that they feel supported in processing their responses to sessions. They are taught how to identify and report safeguarding issues that may arise in sessions, who to communicate these to in their setting, and which procedures to follow.

Skills

Throughout the two-day training, the students learn a wide range of different skills including but not limited to collaboration, communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity. However, the following are key skills on which the training methodology is specifically focused, and the students are regularly encouraged to reflect on and share their progress of these throughout the training:

Listening with full attention. Students learn how body language and facial expressions can demonstrate good listening, and this provides a chance for the person speaking to express themselves fully. This is in direct contrast to ‘bad’ listening, how people habitually ‘listen’ but actually instead give advice, diagnose, join in, and tell their own stories instead of listening fully to the participant.

Summarizing. This skill involves the conflict coach listening to the participant and reflecting back a summary of what they heard. Through the coach echoing what they’ve heard, the participant gains ‘ownership’ of their story knowing they’ve been listened to. It could also be the first time the person hears their own story back, and this can provide further clarity and insight into their experience.

Questioning. The main role of the coach during the conflict coaching session is to explore the participants’ perspectives, situations, thoughts, and ideas about a conflict or issue they are experiencing. Coaches do this by asking open questions, guiding, but not leading participants to share information and feelings about their situation.

Empathizing. Being able to understand and share the needs and feelings of others is a key skill of a conflict coach. Although coaches are not expected to take sides, they empathize as they listen and ask the participant how they are feeling. They also infer needs during the process, associating these with feelings. This shows the participant that they are really being listened to. If the coach doesn’t identify the implicit need correctly, this becomes an opportunity for the participant to identify their own needs for themselves.

CRESST CC Methodology and Training

Case study research involves systematic data collection and analysis procedures, and in many cases, the findings can be generalized to other situations through analytic (not statistical) generalization (Yin 2002). In the subsequent section of this chapter, we introduce CRESST's methodology for training CC as a case study example which has been impactful in implementing a pedagogy of peace and nonviolence within the schools which CRESST has worked with in the UK. The reader is encouraged to interpret the following information through a naturalistic approach, developing their own interpretations, and taking ideas from the case study into their own experience (Rowley, 2002).

CRESST presents this training methodology and the pedagogical tool of CC training with and for young people as a case study example of years of ongoing work and development of conducting training in schools. The context of developing this training approach has been within the UK state schools and within schools who have frequently approached CRESST for support in this area. Data have been collected through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, which inform the ongoing development of this training approach. The reader is encouraged to recognize the process presented in this chapter as a snapshot of how the training was implemented at the time of writing and that CRESST acknowledges the need to adapt according to the needs within the school, educators, students, and the context, and continues to do so.

CRESST Training

CRESST's CC methodology and two-day training as part of the YRC project draws from Sharland (2011) but has been adapted based on the experience of the staff at CRESST working in the field of mediation, and with young people in a range of education contexts. If a school has decided they would like to begin a CC initiative in their school, before the two-day CC training is implemented, assemblies are delivered and a series of PSHE Association accredited CRESST lessons, *Curious about Conflict* (See examples in Appendix A¹), are recommended for all Key Stage 3 students prior to the coaches being trained. This spreads awareness of the coaching system and embeds some of the core skills of coaching more widely throughout the school community. Students are then encouraged to apply for the role of a conflict coach using an application form that requires both adult and peer referees. If there are a large number of applicants, school leaders devise their own methods for selecting the students who will undertake the training with CRESST. Additionally, school staff also receive training to enable them to understand the scheme and support the coaches effectively.

The two-day training follows a comprehensive plan which enables students to build and practice their skills, evaluating their challenges and progress throughout. While Appendix B lays out the CRESST Conflict Coaching Process, specific elements of the CRESST CC methodology are detailed below:

School engagement. Secondary schools who are struggling with conflict in specific areas may approach CRESST for support and are offered a range of interventions of which CC is one. School leaders engage with CC when they want to increase engagement and motivation within their older cohorts, enhance communication and transferable skills prior to students going on to further education, and deal with arising specific conflict situations. These involve but are not limited to persistent and distracting low-level conflicts within and between groups of friends, factions arising due to cultural differences leading to the eruption of conflict in lessons or at break times, and specific groups of students being unable to access the full educational opportunity available due to their difficulty in engaging with the behavioral norms of the classroom.

Baseline assessment. Once conflict coaching has been agreed, the training begins with the students completing a baseline assessment questionnaire. This assessment is focused on the students self-assessing their understanding of conflict and its effects and how confident they feel at handling it.

Peace indicators. Early on in the training, the students are given the opportunity to create peace indicators for their school (Bevington, 2020). Put succinctly, peace indicators are ‘the signs we look to in our daily lives to determine whether we are more or less at peace’ (Firchow, 2018, p. 3). Students individually reflect on three things concerning conflict: (1) what their school is currently like, (2) what they would like it to be like, and (3) if a visitor visited the school, what indicators of peace would there be and what it would look like. These indicators are then analyzed by the CRESST team after the training to create a succinct list for the school to use for monitoring and evaluating peace in their school. Using one of these indicators, at a four-month follow-up visit, all but one of the 18 conflict coaches at one school indicated that there were now fewer fights in school. Other indicators, such as levels of stress, showed less change, but students indicated that they were greatly influenced by external factors such as exams and weather (CRESST, 2022a). Measuring such indicators in schools without conflict coaching would help control for such factors.

Ice breakers, games, and energizers. Throughout the training, breaking up the focused conflict coaching activities, are strategically placed ice breakers, games, and energizers. These games vary in form, but they

are always focused on specific conflict coaching skills (such as active listening and cooperation), and are often physically active, involving the students standing up or moving around. The students are encouraged to make connections between the skills within the game and their conflict coaching practice. The games are repeated throughout the training to ensure it remains dynamic and students have a chance to improve. This allows the students to identify and reflect on their developing competencies as individuals and as a team.

Active listening skills. Listening is not a passive act, as it is an effective agent for bringing about change (Rogers and Farson, 2015). An important part of dispute and conflict resolution, active listening is taught and used in a variety of different contexts and through a wide range of approaches (Royce, 2004). Active listening involves a focus on body language and other nonverbal indicators, such as pitch and tone of voice and the words used, as well as reflecting back to the CC participant, in the paraphrased form, the emotions and feelings expressed in their narrative (Bogdanoski, 2009). During CRESST's CC training, students are given opportunities to understand and learn the importance of employing active listening skills during CC. They practice and reflect on these skills regularly through CC sessions.

Human Needs

Human needs are often referred to as the drivers of peoples' actions and the motives behind human behavior (Guillen-Royo, 2014). There are numerous psychological theories and assumptions about universal human needs which differ widely (Staub, 2003). Even within the CRESST team, consisting of a varied group of trainers from different personal and professional backgrounds, the epistemological and theoretical stances related to the human needs theories of course also differ. However, a consensus is reached for this CC training: that students should understand that needs frequently drive human behavior, and strong feelings can arise when needs are met or unmet. Human needs are often something that most humans across any culture and across any time period in history could relate to, for example, safety, comfort, food, entertainment, connection etc. It is emphasized to the conflict coaches that having needs is simply part of being human; we all have needs and they are very important to us, and we implement different strategies to fulfil these needs.

Student coaches are taught in the training that identifying and guessing an unmet need during the sessions can help demonstrate understanding, deescalate strong feelings, and facilitate readiness for problem-solving. This is explored practically by creating a large 'iceberg' on the floor using ropes, and exploring different conflict scenarios by labelling the thoughts, needs, and feelings involved on the iceberg. Students learn that many actions and

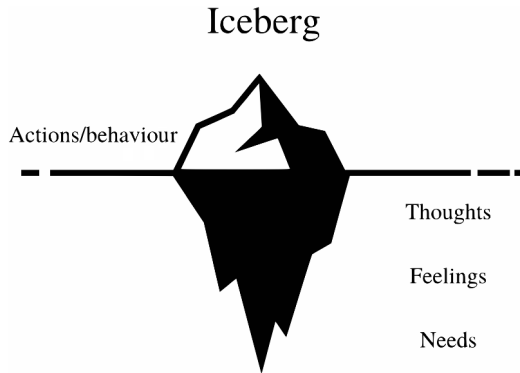


Figure 10.2 Exploring the needs of iceberg (CRESST, 2015).

behaviors are related to needs or unmet needs, often resulting in a wide range of thoughts and feelings. They recognize that actions and behaviors are just the tip of the iceberg and that as conflict coaches, they need to help participants explore what is hidden beneath the surface. Students may also use improvised drama, standing in the different labelled areas of the iceberg to explore and act out these different concepts (Figure 10.2).

CRESST understands that being a conflict coach can be challenging mentally and emotionally. Throughout the training, mindfulness and grounding strategies are shared and practised with students to help support them with their own needs and feelings that may arise during conflict coaching. The benefits of mindfulness as a strategy to manage strong emotions and stress are well documented (Suttie, 2018). CRESST employs these strategies in the training to enable the student coaches to become more aware of what is going on for them and allow them space for a pause and a regenerative break. Mindfulness approaches in conflict coaching can provide coaches with the opportunities to become more present, intentional, and better able to keep the coaching participant’s interests and objectives at the center of the coaching process (Noble, 2006a). Students are encouraged to practise these skills regularly as they move on from the training.

Practice. Research into acquiring and mastering new skills not only emphasizes the amount and quality of practice required for this but how practice is connected to values, purpose, and long-term goals (Miller, 2020). Throughout the training, student coaches are given regular opportunities to practice learnt skills and the conflict coaching methodology. After having been taught a new skill, for example the skill of reflecting, the students will be given a short ‘Listening Practice’ for 5 or 10 minutes where they discuss a conflict scenario with a

partner, and focus on practising this new skill or strategy. Conflict scenarios shared during the practices may be provided by the trainers or created by students themselves from personal experience. When working in a pair students must swap so both get a turn practising the skills. After the practices the student coaches then reflect and evaluate either in the pair or with the large group, sharing challenges, successes, and ideas. As the skills are built up throughout the training and more of the practicalities are learnt, students can practice the complete process of a conflict coaching session from start to finish.

Practicalities. Young people are more likely to be engaged in school initiatives if there is genuine involvement and participation from them, when they are able to collaborate with educators, when they are given opportunities to contribute to the school community related to something meaningful and significant to them, and if these contributions are being noticed and acknowledged (Butler et al., 2005). This is why there are many elements of deciding on and understanding the practicalities of implementing CC that happen with the students during CRESST's CC training. Student conflict coaches are given an opportunity to develop their own ways of introducing themselves and bringing the CC session to a close, following guidelines. They are not given an exact script to follow, because once the students understand the principles and skills of CC, they can introduce these in their own words, providing a genuine and realistic explanation to participants of their role as a conflict coach and the process of CC.

Some further practical elements that students need to understand are what not to coach, and how to troubleshoot some common challenging scenarios. It is important to remember that student conflict coaches are not counselors. They are capable and informed young people, able to conduct conflict coaching sessions by the end of the training, but they are still minors and they are not expected to conflict coach a range of safeguarding issues that could arise in CC sessions. This includes, but is not limited to, abuse in any form, anything involving damaged property or money, and bullying. Students are reacquainted with the procedures within the school for such issues, ensuring they understand how to identify and report safeguarding concerns, using the support systems already in place at their schools to ensure the safety of themselves as coaches and the participants.

Finally, before the end of the training, a key adult in the school, who is responsible for supporting the students, joins coaches to see their progress and skills in conflict coaching through observing a listening practice. The adult then spends time answering students' questions and discussing the practicalities of implementing a conflict coaching scheme in the school. These discussions and questions may include the logistics of organizing a timetable for students to volunteer during form/lunch/break times to provide

CC sessions, deciding which room or space in the school is most appropriate for them to provide CC, and the best way to launch and promote the scheme within the school community. Once again, ensuring that young people’s questions and suggestions are taken seriously here is key to the success of the scheme and a positive start.

Affirmations and evaluation. Drawing the training to a close, the students are given the opportunity to recap and evaluate the conflict coaching skills learnt during the training. Students may be asked to provide affirmations of the different CC skills that have been improved through peer and/or self-evaluation. This reflection period is key for recapping everything that has been learnt during the CC training, but engaging in peer assessment is mutually beneficial for students (Black, 2003).

The final step before the student conflict coaches return to their usual classes and begin implementing their CC initiative is for them to complete a final evaluation. Similar to the baseline assessment, it is focused on the students self-assessing their understanding of conflict and its effects and how confident they feel at handling it, but additionally which aspects of the training they found the most useful. This enables CRESST to compare the student responses, prior and post training qualitatively and using paired t-tests to evaluate the impact on student understanding of conflict but also to continually evaluate and improve the training methods based on student input (Table 10.1).

Table 10.1 Examples of evaluation scores after conflict coaching training (CRESST, 2022b)

<i>Self-Assessment Questions Asked of Students Before and After Conflict Coach Training</i>	<i>Mean Values</i>				<i>t Value</i>	<i>Probability</i>
<i>(The further a t value from zero, the larger difference exists between the two sample sets)</i>	<i>Before</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>After</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t(76)</i>	<i>P(T ≤ t) 2-tail</i>
1. How well do you feel you know what conflict is, how it arises and how it worsens?	3.65	0.6	4.81	0.4	-13.62	<i>p</i> < .0001
2. How well do you understand how conflict affects you?	3.74	0.8	4.47	0.6	-7.35	<i>p</i> < .0001
3. How easy do you find it to talk about issues and listen to people in ways that reduce the harmful effects of conflict?	3.73	0.9	4.56	0.5	-7.67	<i>p</i> < .0001
4. How confident are you in helping others to resolve conflict creatively?	3.71	1.0	4.71	0.5	-7.43	<i>p</i> < .0001

After Training

Once the students are trained as conflict coaches, they can offer up to three sessions for a younger student in a tense or difficult situation to explore the situation, how it's impacting them, and how they want to move forward. There is evidence that students trained in the coaching model develop strong transferable communication skills that support them well beyond their time at school (CRESST, 2018). Younger students benefit from gaining the support of trained peers who understand and embody restorative principles and can facilitate self-empowerment processes for others. CRESST continues to be available to schools to help support the scheme and also has a one-year review follow-up evaluation system in place.

Successful Implementation of Conflict Coaching in Schools

Restorative approaches (RA) in schools describe practices that aim to build healthy school climates, by creating space for people to understand one another and develop relationships (Kidde, 2017). The term RA encompasses numerous different forms of practice and interventions, including mediation, circles, conferencing, and restorative justice (Hopkins, 2002; Payne and Welch, 2018) Although RA in education have gained traction and popularity in recent years, conflict coaching is still emerging as a restorative approach to be used with youth and in schools. At the time of writing, there is still limited peer-reviewed research that explicitly identifies the successes and challenges of implementing CC in schools. However, research is widely available on similar RA in schools and CRESST has a wealth of experience working with schools implementing RA, such as Peer Mediation programs. As there are parallels between these approaches, this section will draw on research and CRESST's experience training and implementing these RA approaches to highlight key areas that may indicate the likelihood of a successful implementation of a CC initiative in schools.

Professional Training: To ensure success in any new educational implementation or practice, it is important that there is training and ongoing support (Desimone, 2009). In the context of RA, Howard (2009) underlines that the successful development of RA includes not only the development of new skills and techniques but the delivery of training to students and staff. High-quality training from an expert is an important factor in training for RA. Song and Swearer (2016) suggest that having outside 'expert' training is valuable to ensure a good start in implementing RA, having a long-term consultant is critical for any lasting effects in schools. This is why all CRESST trainers have a wealth of experience in education and conflict resolution and are

available to support schools after training. Additionally, this further underlines why the one-year review evaluation process is so important.

School Leadership: When schools are considering moving towards RA, including nonpunitive methods of managing behavior, resolving conflicts, and promoting reconciliation, the actions and attitudes of the school leaders are key (McCluskey et al., 2008). Leadership teams in schools not only have to be committed to RA but also demonstrate this by active modelling of the approaches in order to aid the success of implementation (Howard, 2009). In the context of CC, this suggests that school leaders should not only understand the training, but actively support the CC scheme by monitoring and encouraging the referral of students to conflict coaches. This is because teams watch their leaders closely, the actions, messages, and decisions they make, the culture they create, and what they stress is important (Taylor, 2004). However, although school leaders are vital, a top-down, bottom-up reform process where both leaders and teachers are committed, can help to develop a critical mass of support in the school (Cameron and Thorsborne, 1999). Although it is beneficial that leaders are committed, engaged, and trained in RA, the teachers and students must also be committed to the methods as well. These approaches can only succeed and flourish if teachers are able to lead and take ownership (Spratt et al., 2006) and students take an active part also (Rudduck, 2007). This is further supported by Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory, which emphasizes the importance of actors at all levels, working and playing a part towards peace and reconciliation (Paffenholz, 2014).

School culture and community. Culture is the values and symbols that affect an organization, and in the context of schools, this can also relate to the student, parent, and teacher perceptions of the school (Wren 1999). In order to implement RA such as conflict coaching effectively, a change in attitudes and a shift in school approaches to conflict and reconciliation are necessary (Gregory et al., 2014). Building a strong school community can be directly related to the consistency of school-wide implementation and the creation of a multi-tiered system of support (Martin, 2015). This underlines why the practicalities section of the CC training is so important, to provide a space where the students can ascertain and understand the support systems in place for them as they implement and lead the CC initiative.

A further ingredient of success may also be seen in how widely the CC initiative is shared within the school community. When schools want to address conflicts, they need to implement a strategy that reaches the whole school community, developing a culture of nonviolence, where relationships are valued and prioritized (Cowie et al., 2008). As the

CRESST Conflict Coaching initiative is focused on YRC, it is recommended that schools combine this approach with other restorative approaches that align with the aims and principles of conflict coaching. Furthermore, a whole-school approach should include the adults in school also using the RA methods to resolve the conflicts with each other, and the adults must practise what they preach to the students (Cameron and Thorsborne, 1999). This can be a challenge as many school cultures are still designed to instill attitudes of obedience and conformity that are unfavorable to reconciliation (Vaandering, 2014).

Student-led. Young people are most directly affected by education policy and practice, but are often least consulted about it (Cook–Sather 2002 in Bahou, 2012). Steps should be taken to empower students to take a more active role in shaping or changing their education (Seale, 2010, Kelman, 1990). It is necessary to alter the view of students as passive recipients of knowledge to active participants, in order to replace the hierarchical relationship with a collaborative partnership between the staff and students (Rudduck, 2007). The importance of students leading in peacebuilding was affirmed in July 2020 by the unanimous adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution 2535, which underlines the vital role meaningful youth participation has in building sustainable peace (United Nations Security Council, 2020). For CC, students are leading the sessions with the logistical support of key adults in the school. However, the adults must be prepared to listen to students about how CC could be implemented in the school setting for its success. Research in responding to student voice emphasizes the significance of seriously considering student perspectives in making improvements and changes in education (Rudduck, 2007). Surface-level implementation of student opinions or suggestions demonstrates insincerity, which could create alienation from an initiative (Mitra and Gross, 2009).

Long-term plan. Time and resources need to be made a priority if a school community wants to promote and sustain a new RA initiative (Marshall et al., 2002). Implementing CC should be part of the school development plan, which includes long-term targets, continuous cycles of evaluation, and regular improvements to the initiative. Schools need to reconcile the extra time and energy used in implementing RA, by understanding that this investment will reduce the likelihood of future conflicts (Brown, 2014). Schools also need to ensure that multiple adults in their community are able to support the students to lead CC, so that staff turnover doesn't affect the initiative negatively. Furthermore, any long-term implementation plan should be part of a school-wide approach, which incorporates teachers, administrators, parents, and local community meetings, creating a culture of reconciliation in and around the school (Kidde and Alfred, 2011). This could include planning time in the

school calendar for student conflict coaches to recruit, train, and mentor the next cohort of conflict coaches. Students could also lead workshops to show and train parents and other school community members in CC. Implementing new RA initiatives in schools requires a commitment to thoughtful and well-implemented approaches, but research has demonstrated that this can enhance the school environment and develop more resilient, self-regulating, and empathic communities (Flanagan and Clark, 2014).

Conclusion

Working for over 18 years with schools and other organizations across the UK, CRESST recognizes the potential of CC as a pedagogical tool to empower young people to better understand and resolve difficult situations. CC is a process that can enable this by building the skills and developing the principles young people need to work towards the elimination of violence in schools. Not only do students who are trained as conflict coaches receive significant and long-lasting benefits from the conflict coaching training but the younger students who they coach also benefit from the restorative support received, gaining empowerment in situations which challenge them and confidence in their abilities to address the difficulties they face.

To help ensure the success of CC in schools, this chapter has drawn from research on restorative approaches. This suggests that students and adults should receive high-quality training from an expert, which includes ongoing support as they implement the scheme. Additionally, the leadership team within the school is involved in the training so that they can develop a long-term plan for the scheme, as well as modelling the training effectively throughout the school through their words, actions, and behavior. This will enable the creation of a school community and culture dedicated and committed to peace in which the scheme can thrive.

Note

- 1 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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11 Decolonizing English as an Additional Language Curriculum

Addressing Cultural Violence in a Colombian School

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Introduction

In this chapter, we explore how a local school in Colombia begins to transform an oppressive, colonial English as an Additional Language (EAL) curriculum into one which challenges structural and cultural violence. The K-11 independent school is located in a low-socioeconomic-status neighborhood in Zipaquirá town, about 40 km away from Colombia's capital city, Bogotá. It is the only school in Zipaquirá classified as a bilingual institution by the Ministry of Education, La Estrella School (pseudonym).

To begin, we discuss how English language programs often promote structural violence and how colonial perspectives still prevail. We describe the rich sociocultural and historical context of Zipaquirá, where La Estrella is located. We then explore how critical theories of the South, including Freire's (1970) and Fals Borda's (1978) theories, can inform critical, decolonial approaches to EAL programs in Colombia. Data from the initial stages of a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project conducted at La Estrella are presented. We draw on sociocultural theories to critically examine the current views of the school community and the structure of the curriculum, as we imagine how the EAL curriculum could contribute to the construction of peace. Finally, we consider the possible implications for ongoing work in supporting the redevelopment of the EAL curriculum based on Freire's (1970) and Fals Borda's (1978) critical theories and how its co-construction will be incorporated in the PAR cycle. While we discuss these implications within the context of La Estrella, we imagine these implications could inform other schools that are engaged in similar critical reimagining of their approach to language education.

EAL in the Colombian Context: Postcolonialism and Structural Violence

Around the world, language education has been one tool of colonization, as colonizers' languages are frequently imposed as the primary language of

schooling. In our increasingly globalized world, English has become a tool of colonization, not just through its ongoing use in England's previous colonies but also through increasing "linguistic capital dispossession as English takes over space that earlier was occupied by the national language or the other mother tongue" (Phillipson, 2009, p. 338), perpetuating the view of English-associated cultures as superior to the local culture and, as a result, constituting a form of cultural violence wherein local culture is perceived as inferior and no longer wanted. Particularly in Colombia, foreign language education is heavily influenced by external international organizations and elite international schools. For example, the national government drew on the policies set by international schools and recommendations by foreign consultants working for the British Council to develop the National Bilingual Program (NBP). This policy prioritizes English over other languages. Scholars have been highly critical of the NBP, including its use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to measure English language proficiency, without consideration of whether CEFR was appropriate for the Colombian context or key issues of power at play when implementing an external instrument (Bonilla Carvajal & Tejada-Sanchez, 2016). The NBP ignored the extensive expertise of Colombian researchers and instead positioned external organizations and consultants as holding the necessary expertise (Correa & Usma Wilches, 2013). This exclusion of local expertise within the NBP mirrors the exclusion of local expertise within international schools, which often prioritize *foreign* or *native* English teachers. Foreign teachers are often paid more than local teachers, and their compensation packages include other benefits, such as flights and housing. Both international schools and the NBP rely on imported ideologies, resources, curriculum, assessments, and scholars based on a logic of coloniality (Bettney, 2022a). This logic of coloniality, which currently permeates K-12 foreign language education, perpetuates views that anything associated with "the foreign" is somehow superior, including foreign languages, foreign ways of teaching, thinking and being in the world, displacing the value of local languages and culture, and therefore representing a form of cultural violence.

It could also be argued that the imported EAL curriculum is a form of structural violence. Structural violence "describes social structures that stop individuals, groups, and societies from reaching their full potential" (Farmer, Nizeye, Stulac & Keshavjee, 2006, p. 1686). Structural violence often appears invisible and could be unintended; structural violence does not involve an "aggressor" and is not always explicit and visible, but influences human beings so "that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations" (Galtung, 1969, p. 168).

Hegemonic language ideologies which position English language as superior to Spanish and Indigenous languages reflect Colombia's colonial history

and the presence of ongoing colonialistic ideologies within these spaces (Bettney, 2022b). While Colombia's 1991 national constitution recognized the country as multiethnic and plurilingual, minority languages were deemed co-official with Spanish only in the regions where those languages were traditionally spoken (Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2021), failing to recognize the dynamic nature of Indigenous communities, which cannot be demarcated by solid geographic boundaries. Additionally, the constitution explicitly recognizes the rights of Indigenous communities to use their own languages in schooling, yet the NBP exclusively emphasizes and incentivizes English and Spanish at the expense of local Indigenous languages (Bettney, 2022b; Gómez Sará, 2017; Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2021). For example, universities only recognize Spanish–English bilingualism, deeming the multilingualism of Indigenous as not meeting the entrance and graduation language requirements (Usma Wilches, Ortiz Medina & Gutiérrez, 2018). Decoloniality is therefore “a communal project of critique toward the European Modernity born in Latin America that exposes the colonial effects on the Latin American cultures” (Castañeda-Londoño, 2019, p. 225).

For the past century, there has been significant interest in the decolonization of education in Latin America. However, most of the practical application has focused on bilingual education projects within Indigenous communities. Currently, the rapid and pervasive spread of English language teaching at all levels of public and private education in Latin America requires the application of decolonizing theories to language classrooms. Most critical scholars are not calling for an end to English language teaching in the region. Instead, they call for the recognition of how both foreign languages and foreign language teaching methodologies have been systematically promoted through international organizations, like the British Council, heavily invested in language teaching and programs within those countries (Usma Wilches, 2015, p. 26). Guerrero (2018) argues that English teachers in Latin America can engage in decolonizing their practices and classrooms by moving away from a foreign top-down model and move toward approaches based on a “dialogical relationship among different types of knowledge” (p. 129). As teachers reflect on their own practices, they can create new contextualized practices that do not “just adopt foreign methodologies but adapt, contextualize them or, better, develop their own methodology based on local research and context analysis” (Le Gal, 2019, p. 162). For instance, in the project we present in this chapter, one aspect we are focusing on for the decolonization of the EAL curriculum is on empowering the local culture as one of the EAL program goals. For this, we hope students will move beyond their discourse of English language and culture as superior to the local to an opportunity to communicate and share their local culture with international students from other schools and engage in dialogic conversations that celebrate and embrace difference.

Unfortunately, while there is a great deal of discussion in the region about the need for decolonizing language education, at the moment, “colonial perspectives still prevail, circumscribing and limiting the nature and scope of educational reforms and curricular projects” (Fandiño-Parra, 2021, p. 165). Decolonizing must prioritize practical application in classrooms through examining problematic ideologies, policies, and pedagogies and reimagining language teaching through a critical, contextualized lens. Decolonizing foreign language education in Colombia requires a recognition of this logic of coloniality and how it promotes unequal relationships of power and cultural and structural violence.

Start of the Journey: The Local Community

Internationally known for its tourist attraction, the Salt Mine Cathedral, Zipaquirá, where La Estrella is located, has a rich history that is less known from precolonial history to a long history of activism since the time of Colombian independence to the current days. Zipaquirá is the land of the Zipa, inhabited by the Muisca Indigenous people since precolonial times. After colonization, it became a municipality and city of Colombia, South America. It is located 49 km north of Bogotá, the capital city of Colombia. It has a population of approximately 100,000 people on a surface of 194,000 km² at 2608 km above sea level (Municipios de Colombia, n.d.).

It was in Zipaquirá where one of the fundamental chapters preceding independence took place: “La revolución de los comuneros” (Comuneros revolution) with the creation of “Las Capitulaciones de Zipaquirá” (Pérez Silva, 2017). In more current history, Colombian literature Nobel Prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez, studied his final years of high school in Zipaquirá. The current president, Gustavo Petro, also studied in Zipaquirá. It is in this culturally and historically rich region that the school presented in this chapter is located.

La Estrella is a private K-11 school, well known among locals because of its EAL program. As of today, it is the only bilingual school in Zipaquirá. As mentioned by the school principal, it attends mostly local families with low- to lower-middle-socioeconomic status, which in Colombia is named as strata 2–3 (the range is 1–6 from strata 1 being the lowest). Before the COVID pandemic, the school population was around 150 students. During the pandemic, it grew to 500 students due to its low fee structure (personal conversation with the school principal).

The school is located in a less-known section of Zipaquirá. While Zipaquirá receives plenty of national and international tourists visiting the Salt Mine Cathedral, La Estrella is located about 5 km from it. Its location could not be more different. The school is surrounded by buildings, local shops, and industrial factories, including plenty of car workshops. The main

entrance is on a main road that connects Zipaquirá with the next town, Cagua. The road is used by trucks, buses, and cars, presenting long traffic jams. Air and visual pollution due to so much concrete, dust, and trucks is well known and commented on among locals.

Even though the school has views of the Andes mountains where Zipaquirá sits, green spaces are absent around this area. The school has a large green area, highly valued by the students as the few remaining green spaces of the location (personal conversation with focus groups). Most of the teachers and families live in the surrounding suburbs, and many live across the street (personal conversations with teaching staff). Public transport buses pass in front of the school entrance. However, there is no walking path to wait for it. The buses are not reliable, and the traffic jams can be severe. It often takes 60–90 minutes to go to the town closer to Bogotá, Cajica, 15 km away.

I (Carolina), one of the authors of this chapter, Colombian born and who recently moved back to Colombia after 14 years living overseas, was interested in the history of Zipaquirá. Carolina heard and read about this school while living for three months in Zipaquirá. It had a good reputation among locals as it offered the only EAL program in the location. I contacted the school principal and founder to learn more about the school community. During the conversation, the school principal explained their interest in a curriculum renewal. With over a decade of experience in critical pedagogies and PAR, I was invited to rethink the curriculum along with the school community. We established a shared view of a more place-based focus for this renewal with a strong sense of social justice and critical peace education theories. The school principal stated the interest to initiate this curriculum renewal with their EAL programs and agreed on a PAR approach. The first stage was established to meet the community and understand their views, interests, and challenges regarding their EAL programs. It was carried out over a month, during the last term of the academic school year.

Curriculum renewal to counter violence was desired in this land of sharp contrast between a history of activism to a reality of pollution and social struggle, where identity sometimes seems only connected to a focal tourist attraction and the promise of a multilingual education that the school offers.

PAR and Critical Theories: Countering Structural and Cultural Violence

Social transformation in Colombia is conceptualized beyond the provision of resources toward hope, empowerment, and reconciliation (Castaño Rodríguez, Quinn & Alsop, 2021). The surge of critical pedagogies, initially inspired by authors such as Paulo Freire from Brazil and Orlando Fals Borda from Colombia, aimed to disrupt disempowering structures through

a focus on resistance, transformation, and hope. As stated by Freire and Araujo Freire (1994), “Without hope, we are hopeless and cannot begin the struggle to change” (p. 8). Within the context of critical pedagogies and theories from South America, often related to *popular education*, local knowledge is prioritized and education serves as a social and political transformational tool. As Crowther et al. (2005, p. 2) state, popular education is: rooted in the real interests and struggles of ordinary people; overtly political and critical of the status quo; and committed to progressive social change (Crowther et al., 2005, p. 2).

PAR directly connects with popular education as it also has political aims and is committed to empowering communities that have been historically marginalized in order to generate change. Popular education and PAR are emancipatory in nature. For instance, Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) places emancipatory education as central to empower local communities, historically marginalized, working *with* them. As Gutiérrez (2016) describes:

Emancipation is not a top-down process, where the ‘ignorant’ will receive enlightenment from elites in the know. Rather, emancipation is a process which can only be achieved from within, by the active participation of the oppressed in the very process of developing the intellectual resources to inform their practice in order to overcome domination. Education, in this view, is an intrinsically dialogical process.

(p. 61)

The Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda, like Paulo Freire, considered that *popular education* could and should generate processes of social change and political action. For Fals Borda, *Vivencias*, “a term that implies something more than what is merely experienced, but actually what is lived” (Gutiérrez, 2016, p. 62), is at the very center of *popular education* and PAR. Fals Borda helped to construct PAR into a form of participatory research in which participants are central to the research design, aims, and results from the very beginning. *Vivencias* are manifested and valued in every step of the research. Education works *with* instead of *for* the local community (Fals Borda, 1987). Knowledge and power are intertwined in PAR. As Pereira and Rappaport (2022) puts it, PAR deals with “the transformational powers of the working classes to effect social change through a revolution from below” (n.p.). Fals Borda states that the two main aims of this interconnection of knowledge and power are: “1) to enable the oppressed groups and classes to acquire sufficient creative and transforming leverage as expressed in specific projects, acts and struggles; and 2) to produce and develop sociopolitical thought processes with which popular basis can identify” (p. 330). It is at this intersection of knowledge and power that grass-root groups, the oppressed

and disempowered, “become protagonists in the advancement of their society and in defense of their own class and interests” (p. 330).

Even though Fals Borda’s PAR and theory of transformational pedagogy have inspired and informed an entire school of thought within critical theories in Latin America and beyond, “Colombia is far from the society he aspired to help build through his tireless intellectual activity” (Gutiérrez, 2016, p. 63). The school and community where this study is situated, well represents the current state of the popular class in Colombia. EAL programs, we believe, reflect those conflicting aspects of education that Freire and Fals Borda worked on transforming. EAL programs often serve a disempowering role, a top-down colonial approach, and from the perspective of critical pedagogies and PAR, they reproduce social inequalities and injustices. As described above, EAL programs often disempower local communities by imposing imported knowledge, culture, and language. This represents a form of structural and cultural violence.

This project aims to rethink an EAL program, from a grassroots level, to serve a purpose of transformation and resistance to oppression and domination, bringing back the power and value to the local; local knowledge, culture, and language to and by this contribute to the transition toward peace that Colombia is currently experiencing.

Capturing *Vivencias*: Listening the Voice of the Community

This PAR project uses *vivencias* as central to understanding and working with the local community. Over the course of a month, I visited and worked with the community. Data presented follows a PAR cycle of participation, reflection, investigation, and action. Findings are co-constructed with the participants and help to understand the contrasting views and voices of the community, including their hopes, frustrations, and challenges.

Data includes chains of conversations with students, teachers, and the school principal that occurred regularly through diverse encounters, over a month with the main goal of understanding and immersing in the local knowledge and culture. Chains of conversations have been used in PAR studies as they represent multivoiced and multisited encounters (Lomeli, Dilean & Rappaport, 2018). Anonymous online surveys were also carried out with teachers and parents/caregivers to include their voices in their views and perceptions of the EAL programs.

Additionally, students from diverse groups, covering all levels of middle and high school, created posters representing their feelings and thoughts regarding diverse aspects of the current EAL program, of English language in general, and of their hopes for the EAL program in the future. Participatory observations took place daily over a month, with diverse classes from the EAL program, across primary and secondary classes. Finally, a two-hour session was offered to the teachers to share and discuss the findings from the

students and parents, identify their main interests, needs, and worries, and co-create a plan for moving forward.

Drawing from sociocultural theories, particularly Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 1986, 2005), we explored the different intersections and contrasting voices that were generated over this first stage. ANT makes visible the diverse actors, human and beyond human, that contribute to the contrasting realities. For instance, the green space at the school and absence of green spaces in the community were of significance for the students in their perception of their learning and understandings. The school and classroom were another teacher for them. The relational notion of ANT contributes to “understand the active role of human agency not only in the construction of facts, but also in the very existence of the phenomena those facts are trying to document” (Latour, 2014, p. 2). Within ANT, power relations are unstable and changeable, including historical systems of domination; power relations are manifested when produced and reproduced between actors and their entanglements; practice and action are emergent and relational, constructing a changing reality (Deleuze, 1988).

We also draw from a capabilities-perspective methodology as suggested by Castaño Rodríguez, Barraza and Martin (2019). Capabilities-perspective methodology recognizes that culture, personal experiences, interactions with the human and nonhuman as well as their positioning in the community, all contribute to create their *vivencias* and their motives for their actions and thoughts. A capabilities-perspective methodology is a relational approach that focuses on capabilities rather than what is missing or what is perceived as “gaps,” a form of “glass half-full methodology.” We believe this methodology provides a way to progress in the understanding of the community, in providing a voice, and in co-creating transformation and emancipatory pedagogies.

Diverse Voices from the Community: Colonial Legacy and Transformation

I am feeling undervalued after reading the comments about their [students and parents] wish of having more native English [speaker teachers] but I know we as teachers can change that mindset.

(post-it comment, Teacher Agency Workshop session,
anonymous, November, 2022)

How do I feel? Enthusiastic about the opportunities of growing. Anxious because of the possibility of keeping in [the] comfort zone.

(post-it comment, Teacher Agency Workshop session,
anonymous, November, 2022)

These two quotes represent the general feelings of the EAL teachers at the school. Conflicting feelings of disempowerment and fear with those of hope for a change to happen. These quotes are part of numerous responses from

teachers while making sense of students' and parents'/caregivers' comments regarding the EAL programs. Among their discussions regarding what could and should change if they were to address students' feelings, needs, and interests, the following were common themes that emerged: *innovations, new learning scenarios, bring real materials like food, tools, clothes, create new ways of teaching* (poster created by the EAL teaching team, anonymous, Agency Workshop, November 2022).

Among the suggestions offered on how the leadership team (e.g., school principal) could support these changes, the most emergent suggestions were: *Time for area meetings and spaces to share new information, and resources, I feel undervalued because in some cases we don't have resources to make a ludic or different class to improve the students' knowledge* (post-it added to a poster created by the EAL teaching team, anonymous, Teacher agency workshop, November 2022).

Themes that suggest the importance of a PAR project and of challenging the colonial, disempowering status of English language and culture were common. Words such as *undervalued, anxious, and disempowered* were commonly used when sharing their *vivencias* at the school and their feelings regarding students' and parents'/caregivers' views of the EAL programs. These findings support Bettney's (2022b) report on the status of bilingual programs in Colombia and how their practices and policies represent hegemonic language ideologies. As Ives (2013) states, English language programs connect to larger questions about power and access, and represent structural violence as English language and culture are positioned as superior to local knowledge, practices, and culture.

Vivencias shared by the students, suggest that they identified English as language and culture of privilege:

I like English because [it] is the most important language. For example, we can communicate with other persons, in other countries, the opportunities for the English are a lot.

(Post it added to a poster creation exercise with students from diverse year levels, anonymous, November 2022)

I want to work in another country.

(Post it added to a poster creation exercise with students from diverse year levels, anonymous, November 2022)

[We like it] because we want to travel around the world and also because of the job opportunities that speaking English could provide for us.

(Post it added to a poster creation exercise with students from diverse year levels, anonymous, November 2022)

As these three quotes suggest, most students positioned English language and culture in a higher power position, a hierarchy. They perceive that English language acquisition goes beyond communication and provides opportunities for a better future elsewhere; rather, it is a means to displace the value of local knowledge and culture. This overall utilitarian goal and perception of English as a language and culture superior to local knowledge, and even other languages, were also identified in the surveys that parents/caregivers filled out. Only in one case, a student stated that the main aim of learning EAL was connected to personal growth and broadening understanding: *I like to learn any language because that expands my knowledge and make me open my mind* (Post-it added to a poster creation exercise with students from diverse year levels, anonymous, November 2022).

Additionally, students' perception of their EAL programs was commonly of a textbook-centered approach that needs to be changed toward a more dynamic approach in which "conversations, singing, watching movies" (see attachment: poster creation, November 2022) could be central:

[We need] to change the [w]hole English program, cause we are only doing book and more book and it is horrible, I am not learning much of it.

(Post it added to a poster creation exercise with students from diverse year levels, anonymous, November 2022)

I would like to have a dynamic class that help[s] us [in] a more fun way to learn, with different techniques and not only the normal way that we know. And a way that I could be not so bored.

(Post it added to a poster creation exercise with students from diverse year levels, anonymous, November 2022)

[We would like] games, activities, practices, expositions. All [the] things related to fun dynamics.

(Post it added to a poster creation exercise with students from diverse year levels, anonymous, November 2022)

As mentioned in the students' comments, textbooks were central to all classes. English language textbooks were imported and central to the EAL curriculum from primary school all the way to the end of high school. During observations and conversations with EAL teachers, it was evident that classes relied heavily on their textbooks, even though teachers preferred to investigate other approaches if given the chance. However, as teachers stated during conversations, "parents expect us to cover the textbooks and the workbook as they have bought them and they are expensive" (personal conversation, November 2022).

From the month of *vivencias* that were shared and created with the students, teachers, and parents/caregivers, conflicting feelings and views emerged. A teaching community that feels disempowered but still has hopes for something to change; students and parents/caregivers who mostly position EAL as superior to local knowledge and culture, which they believe could offer a better future somewhere else; and a perception of an EAL that needs change to move away from imported textbooks. Teachers also identified as a strongly disempowering force, the notion of native speakers as a recurrent wish from the students, such as in the following comment:

[We need] more interactive activities, use less [of] a boring book and have activities to go out with the school to talk with native persons here in our country.

(Post-it added to a poster creation exercise with students from diverse year levels, anonymous, November 2022)

By contrast, teachers and students also presented hopeful views for changes to occur. Changes suggested, for example more dynamic classes, did not reflect an awareness of how power and knowledge are interconnected and how teachers' feelings of disempowerment could be connected with complex hegemonic views of English language and culture. However, teachers did acknowledge the importance of change and validation of local knowledge, and suggested the need for a space of ongoing conversations and co-construction of a new EAL curriculum. As suggested by Fals Borda and Freire, change needs to come from within. In this case, the teachers decided that a minimum of a weekly meeting should be carried out over the school year to discuss changes and transformations. Teachers,' students,' and families' views and feelings were shared with the school principal, who agreed on the need for a change. A two-hour, weekly meeting has been established for the 2023 school year with a focus on emancipatory theories from the South and the possibility of co-creating an EAL program that values local knowledge and culture and brings back the activism history of transformation that Zipaquirá holds.

Rethinking EAL Curriculum for the Construction of Peace: The Beginnings of a Decolonizing Curriculum

The role of education in the production and perpetuation of epistemicide, that is epistemic violence (Paraskeva, 2016; Paraskeva and Steinberg, 2016), specifically through the ongoing control and force of Western knowledge systems, needs to be identified and understood if resistance and transformation are to take place. In line with emancipatory pedagogies and PAR, resistance frameworks could offer opportunities to create counter-spaces that move beyond the colonial hierarchies of EAL. Theories of resistance are described

by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) as theories which “are different than social and cultural reproduction theories because the concept of resistance emphasizes that individuals are not simply acted on by structures” (p. 215). Within this framework, counterstories to colonialism and hegemony could be discussed with teachers and students, particularly those stories of activism, resistance, and transformation which are part of Zipaquirá’s history. To decolonize the EAL curriculum, dialogical, reflective, and critical discussions need to be central to the weekly sessions that will be carried out. Local knowledge, local history, and culture need to be central to this new EAL curriculum. To disrupt disempowering structures through a focus on resistance, the aim of the EAL program needs to be carefully reconsidered.

So far, what has been discussed and constructed with the teachers to resist and move beyond a colonial framework is:

- To revise popular education and PAR theories from Freire and Fals Borda to bring local knowledge and history to the forefront of their teaching and learning experiences;
- Contextualizing textbooks within the framework of colonialism and using them critically;
- The local community and spaces should be explored as part of their learning, with the contrasting history of coloniality and activism, and how to create dreams of multiple hopeful futures;
- EAL will be positioned critically, and explored as a tool for emancipation and empowerment within dialogical multicultural and multisite spaces in which students can discuss their journeys of reviving their hopes and wishes for their local community;
- In particular, the fundamental aim informing the contents and learning objectives of the new curriculum has been established as “Hope.” The curriculum and pedagogy used will be based on pedagogy of Hope in which hope toward the future of Colombia is revived.

For instance, one of the original learning objectives for Year 10 students in the previous curriculum was: “The student can use Relative clauses, Future continuous, Reported speech, Noun phrases with postmodifiers, and Adverbs of manner in discussions with others and descriptions of the future.” This has been modified to:

Students critically analyse news and articles about the future of the world, using relative clauses, Future continuous, Reported speech, Noun phrases with postmodifiers, and Adverbs of manner in discussions with others and descriptions of the future, to provide a critical stance of how they wish Colombia to look like in the future and what they need to do in order to contribute to that future.

Learning intentions for this learning objective include:

Students will investigate, through diverse media, including interviews to local people, the history of Zipaquirá during Bolívar independence movement, and discuss in groups how Zipaquirá could look like if Bolívar was still alive and working on his ideals of freedom and independence. Students use Reported speech to share through written and oral reports, their conclusions, including their feelings and diverse thoughts about it.

These two examples above are an illustration of what is being discussed at the moment. However, it is envisioned that students will actively participate in the construction of this new curriculum (see other examples in the Appendix¹).

Resistance and emancipation from hegemonic language ideologies, policies, and practices will challenge structural and cultural violence, contributing to the construction of peace through the elimination of structural and cultural violence. This confrontation and resistance of EAL as a superior language and culture, could empower students to reposition their local culture into one of pride. It could help to validate the locality in a more hopeful and brighter future in which students and teachers contribute to rewrite Zipaquirá's history and revive its activism and transformational roots to contribute to a transitional society toward peace. For this, Freire's and Fals Borda's critical theories and popular education will be central and inform all aspects of the project so that change comes from within. The two-hour sessions will be a space of reflection and dialogical critical conversation of dreams of futurity and transformational actions of the present. Particularly, the EAL curriculum will continue to be revised, so that it moves beyond a Eurocentric and Western-centric thought, toward one which promotes diversity of thought and perspectives, prioritizing local history and knowledge. This new curriculum will also challenge cultural and structural violence by identifying how Eurocentric curricula "dehumanises large populations in the world as being deficient in culture, intellect, and values" (Mbembe, 2017, p. 25).

Final Remarks

In this chapter, we presented initial findings from a PAR project at La Estrella School in Zipaquirá, Colombia. Drawing on critical theories, particularly from Freire and Fals Borda, we reimagined how EAL programs could be critically transformed as part of larger aims to examine and push back against cultural and structural violence within school communities. It is our hope that the start of this journey, shared in this chapter, provokes reflection and encourages inspiration to consider what is possible in the

construction of decolonial EAL curricula and its role in the elimination of violence and the construction of peace.

Note

- 1 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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12 A Holistic Approach to Peace Education

Experiences of Putumayo, Colombia

Yesid Paez Cubides

Introduction

Putumayo is a province located in the southwestern part of the country. Most of its territory is part of the Amazon jungle, but for political and economic reasons, it is not considered entirely as such, at least in terms of policy and planning by the central government. Its population is estimated to be 341,513. It has 12 ethnic groups, and their territory is 24,885 km². The ethnic makeup of Putumayo is varied; besides indigenous groups, there are people of African descent and people from other regions of the country (Colonos) who have migrated to settle down and set up businesses. It has historically suffered from exploitation and violence, which is traced back to the 1900s into five main periods of violence: 1) religious missions, agricultural expansion, and extraction (1900–1946), particularly cinchona and rubber. As a result, indigenous peoples have been displaced and decimated, and their cultural and ancestral traditions have partly disappeared and been deemed unimportant (Cf. Hardenburg, 1912). However, some indigenous peoples have struggled on and gained access to education and ways to preserve their traditions; 2) political violence (1946–1962), when political rigidities exacerbated and the country was deeply divided between liberals and conservatives; 3) oil exploitation (1963–1976) at its highest, which redefined the socioeconomic activities in the region; 4) Coca (1977–1987), which is the result of lack of solid national plans to incentivize agriculture and build adequate infrastructure in the country, amongst other factors. 5) Finally, drug dealing, guerrillas, and weak state intervention between 1988 and 2006 have been the direct consequences of issues rooted in land ownership, accumulation of wealth by central elites, and lack of political participation (Bello & Cancimance, 2011; Cartagena, 2016; Perez, 2016; Rojas, 2007) (Figure 12.1).

The present chapter is the result of a multi-sited ethnography (Paez, 2022) that explored the potential of formal and informal education in bringing about alternative conceptualizations of peace and dynamic forms of enacting them (Marcus, 1995). Thus, rural and urban schools, the local library,



Figure 12.1 Putumayo Province, Colombia (Frike, 2012).

and social movements (women's organizations) were the focus of this study. The underpinning principle of this ethnography was to listen actively and respectfully to participants and open up to their experiences from a horizontal perspective where both researcher and participants learn together (Escobar, 2018; Molano, 2001; Soyini, 2012). Thirty participants made immense contributions to this study: 12 schoolteachers, 5 people from the local library (librarians and volunteers), and 5 members of women's associations. I had conversations with other members of these communities, but the number of people in interviews and focus groups was reduced due to the availability and willingness of some participants.

I used a narrative approach whereby people could tell their stories revealing connections to the social, economic, political as well as the moral lessons surrounding peacebuilding from a local perspective (Britton, 1970; MacIntyre, 1981; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Listening to participants' stories was a way to gain a meaningful connection to their experiences, which also allows forms of co-activity in the fieldwork (Soyini, 2012). Communication and action are portrayed in the narratives of this chapter.¹ The writing process is also evocative and seeks to represent actions and claims in order to understand

education agents' experiences in times of conflict and their contribution to peacebuilding (Clifford, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Conflict and Lack of Educational Opportunities

Education, at least from a formal point of view, has been a relatively new experience in Putumayo. There are schools in the main urban centers and some rural areas, and there are no higher education institutions except for a few offered as distance programs by universities from other regions. Schools often lack resources, and there is competition for students and the allocation of resources. Furthermore, some schools have been built up by the community – particularly in the countryside – as the presence and intervention of the state have been scarce, as witnessed by a teacher with more than 10 years of experience in the region:

Nobody thinks of going beyond primary or perhaps secondary school. (...) Poor people don't have the chance to go to university. It is absurd, but can you imagine it was the dear parents who paid to teachers when we started in Vereda.² They could afford that because of the coca business. (...) The government neglects this area, they just don't care about this place, so people here don't have access to the education they deserve.

(Wilson, Schoolteacher)

Coca business quickly became a profitable activity in contrast to agriculture due to the lack of infrastructure and economic incentives. Every aspect of society has been percolated by coca business for good and bad. Whereas it has served to finance institutions like schools, churches, local businesses, and the like, it has also been the cause of the deterioration of the social fabric and the exacerbation of violence and territorial disputes. A culture of opulence spread amongst many inhabitants of the region that had access to large amounts of money (Torres, 2002). Students would often stop going to school to help their parents in the coca cultivation and production. In the late 1980s, guerrilla groups, mainly the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) took control of the territory and served as a mediator in the community who imposed order and profited from the production of illegal crops, which created the consolidation of parallel states in various regions of Colombia (Oslender, 2008). In this sense, the role of the FARC is widely disputed, and various regions have experienced the presence of this armed group and its effects differently. Finally, the 'paramilitary' tried to take over the regions controlled by the guerrilla by means of massacres, stigmatization of the population, alliances with the police and the military, and other crimes against the population (Bello & Cancimance, 2011). The war is the first and foremost referent for the entire population together with illegal

crops, especially for young generations. Young people are trapped between the ideological rigidities of the conflict and the lack of opportunities. This is evident in classrooms and playgrounds, where children and young people relate to others through games, gestures, attitudes, and words full of internalized violence. This has been the case in rural schools:

I would say, “Alright, we’re going to do an activity under the shade of a tree”, the thing is to do something other than maths, problem solving, something different to help them relieve the monotony, for example, on a sunny day like this because children get stressed. They did drawings of fighter planes, crop-spraying planes and helicopters shooting overhead, and showed children firing rifles at them. So I asked, “who are these? And they said they were in the drawings. “These are us, shooting them so that they don’t annoy us here and go away.

(Jose, Schoolteacher)

Together with the normalization of violence and war-like games and language, silence as a defense mechanism got installed in the everyday life of the population. The armed conflict has configured modalities of interaction, oppression, male dominating culture, and marginalization of vulnerable members of the communities, especially children and women. Massacres in Putumayo in the 2000s killed men and left women alone with their families and the task of reconstructing the social fabric (Bello & Cancimance, 2011). Likewise, women would be left alone, and processes of reparation and land restitution would benefit mainly men. Thus, not only has violence come from armed groups and illegal activities, but also the state has perpetuated forms of structural violence in the form of neglect, ineffective/inexistent reparation initiatives, and policy.

Education: Widening the Perspectives

Although formal education – institutions such as schools and universities – has been incipient in Putumayo, there have been other forms of education making sense of their history, traditions, and challenges in the face of the conflict and state neglect. However, some schools have liaised with NGOs and governmental institutions working on community projects to do some work around peace education and cope with the challenges of the conflict present in the classroom. This has constituted a platform for educators and children to communicate their experiences and come up with creative narratives that question the war and propose new paths outside violence:

We received an invitation from the ministry of culture and the Centre for historical memory to participate in a memory related project. (...)

Then we met CANTOYACO, a local communication association, which is great because you meet people and enterprises that share your interests. (...) and we came up with a strategy called ‘El Tigre is not as bad as it is portrayed’. So, we came up with this to say, ‘Look, people say things about our town, they say we are violent, dangerous, they say there’s nothing here but violence’.

(Antonio, schoolteacher)

Incidental learning is embedded in everyday life, where traditions, views of the world, mixed cultures, and perspectives intertwine and reconfigure forms of daily living. Informal education, on the other hand, occurs in social interactions in workplaces, families, communities, and social movements where learning takes place from one another; furthermore, a dimension of informal education – popular education – unfolds and is often underpinned by a sense of struggle for social justice and challenging of structures of dominations (Freire, 2017). Thus, the local library and social movements (mainly women’s organizations) epitomize this form of education. They have constantly offered alternatives, seeking to bring about forms of change. Finally, non-formal education is an alternative/complement to formal education and systematic learning (Foley, 1999; Novelli, 2010). It is in the context of different educational sites where alternative responses to the conflict will emerge.

Peacebuilding Education: Re-imagining and Conceptualizing Peace Locally

The school as the main institution of education has witnessed the effects of the conflict from various fronts. First, the armed actors inspected schools for what they called forms of ‘indoctrination’ contrary to their revolutionary ideologies. Schools became places subjected to ideological contestation, and the school community was heavily scrutinized. Both guerrilla groups and paramilitary exerted control over schools. Second, the school was often used as a refuge from the military’s attacks. In rural areas, for example, there were mines surrounding schools and places where children would play:

There was a lot of violence in the classrooms, because children did not resort to anything other than the use of sticks, toy weapons, toy rifles. The only game for them was ‘you are the paraco’ (paramilitary) and ‘I am guerrillero’ (guerrilla member). There was no tolerance, children got upset very easily, like ‘shut up,’ ‘look, that boy is annoying me!’ There was even physical aggression like punches, or a pencil stuck in a student’s shoulder, or the hand... erm, they were children affected by the conflict, perhaps that’s because they’re witnesses of it, aren’t they?

(Fernanda, schoolteacher)

However, despite the scrutiny, education agents have come up with initiatives to counteract the devastating effects of the conflict on the communities. Such strategies have been anchored in the vicissitudes and challenges of the context, which supersede the conventional approaches to peace education based on instruction and normative approaches (MEN, 2013; 2015; Schimmel, 2009). Whereas the war has imposed silence and isolation, some schools promoted forms of socialization and communication that helped communities restore trust and mutual help. Thus, formal education proves to be a site for community life, superseding the physical boundaries of the institution and promoting spaces for community-building in the middle of the conflict:

People had to know their ID number backwards and forwards. People couldn't have marks on their bodies, and it was a mandatory to know your neighbours' name. If your neighbour was stuck in a checkpoint, they (the paramilitary) would ask you if you knew this or that person. And if nobody knew them, that person would be removed (and die). So, it was like an obligation to know each other, and that is when we came up with the big idea of the pageant, because it is big, and we do it once a year.

(Maria, Headteacher)

Unfolding Peace through the People's Voice

Despite the fear imposed by the war, some schools seek to break the cycle of acceptance sustained by silence. The display of strategies emerges from observing the consequences of the conflict in the classroom and outside the school. Children and young learners bring their anger and tensions to the school, and teachers respond with dialogue and creative alternatives. Very often, children reproduce patterns of violence they have faced at home or in social environments or remain fearful (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Thus, dismantling violence or fostering the use of diverse forms of expression is a task for schools immersed in the context of conflict.

War and its logics are internalized and reproduced in children's everyday life. Their language, actions, and play are permeated by what is evident in their environment. This is evident in schools and other educational sites such as local libraries where children spend time learning and playing. Thus, educational sites become places where such logics can be contested creatively. Children can be invited to replace their war games with other forms of games that re-signify their experience of play. Moreover, forms of relating to other children and adults acquire nuanced meanings that invite to give up violence and aggressiveness as the primary resources of socialization.

Thus, education agents mobilize their initiatives outside the institution and invite members of the community to restore social bonds through the

use of their voice. This is radically innovative in a context where silence and mistrust are survival mechanisms. Furthermore, children and teachers begin to question the realities of the conflict and identify possible strategies to counteract the dominant warlike ethos. Likewise, the local library is a place where initiatives and a sense of tiredness of war motivate actions that break the cycles of violent conflict:

We did an activity in the park to encourage children to give up their toy weapons and play instead. The children who went had to take their toy weapon with them and put into a bag before they passed through a tunnel made out of 'fique' bags. They would give up their toy and we would wait for them at the end of the tunnel with a round of applause, a drink, rice pudding, and then we played with them.

(Gloria, Librarian)

Education agents in the library – the librarian and volunteers – have witnessed the effects of the conflict and decided to dismantle such effects in the premises. They practice a pedagogy of alternatives where violence is not allowed. Such practice invites children and young people to re-imagine their games, language, and actions beyond the rigidities of war. This is not always an easy task, but a library has the potential to consolidate an ethos of no violence, while offering alternatives for children to reshape their experiences of childhood and sociality. Furthermore, they supersede the physical boundaries of the institution and connect with people in public squares, hospitals, and distant indigenous communities.

It is this endeavor that constitutes a praxis in Freirean terms (Freire, 2017; Gill, 2014): in the practice of learning how to read and write, members of distant communities (children, young people, adults, and the elderly) have found spaces where imagination and diverse forms of communication are articulated. In doing so, people have been invited to envisage new forms of living and explore possibilities outside the imposed logics of war. What is more, the intergenerational component of these activities strengthens and recognizes what indigenous culture understand as vital in their forms of bond-making: intergenerational communication fosters learning and passing of knowledge. This has been a central aspect of this initiative, as a young volunteer who has been part of the library for more than five years explains:

Letras libres, a project... We go to the villages with books to promote reading. We go to a certain place and then we have to walk carrying our bag full of books. (...) We laugh a bit and then we read aloud. Sometimes the community chooses the books. We engage in a dialogue about the book, we share opinions and knowledges. Then we do an activity based

on the readings, it can be a collective story, a drawing, or something that all the members do, so that they can talk, imagine, and express their opinions.

(Leidy, Library volunteer)

Unfolding Peace through the Recognition of Human Dignity

Educational sites become spaces where people recover their voice, which implies the possibility of self-expression, dialogue, and action. Social groups and schools (through activities, pedagogies, actions with the community, and extracurricular activities) make efforts to remember their communities (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). This is a process of gradual reconstruction on cultural, physical, and ontological levels (Taylor, 1992). As people use their voice and engage in dialogue, they can transform realities and restore their sense of identity. Dialogue is, in this context, not only the possibility of difficult conversations but also the potential for creative forms of expression in which the other appears as a human fellow. It is in the proposal and rehearsal of forms of expression and languages (gestures, signs, art, and emotions) that people (re)configure forms of existing and re-existing. Such forms of interaction bring about new understandings of the self-equipped with a sense of value and dignity that only happens in relation to others:

We worked on a project with ONDAS (an NGO) about the right to live in peace. We also did traditional games. We also thought of doing a more inclusive activity with parents, that was a championship with the small towns. Every week we had a female and male team, and we went to a different town and played football as a way to know each other, to interact better. (...) the idea was to make school reach the community and be a peacebuilding place... A championship to make people know each other, play, talk coexist peacefully particularly.

(Luisa, Headteacher)

The main contribution of (formal and informal) education is the restoration of communities, which takes place in a two-fold manner. First, people (including education agents) are made aware of their voice and exercise their right to express, which reinforces their sense of dignity (Appadurai, 2013). This does not happen in a hierarchical manner; on the contrary, it is a horizontal dialogue where people make sense of the world and their circumstances together, and there is a place for dissenting – it is necessary. They understand that they deserve to live in a community where their voices are listened to, and that their rights and needs are attended. Second, such awareness triggers a sense of action with others: they know a different world is possible. Some members of those communities refuse to accept the project

of violence and propose alternatives constructed through a creative and many-voiced dialogue:

(...) we did some work in the school garden called ‘school garden: a place for social interaction,’ because that’s what it is, in the school garden you learn background knowledge of students and their parents, and we try to connect that to the academic (activity). We learned from each other, and thus we were like building up those spaces of tolerance, peaceful spaces where one speaks and the other listens and so on. And it should be participatory.

(Fernanda, schoolteacher)

Restoring a sense of dignity is compelling since it allows people to take initiative and narrate their own histories. In this sense, the articulation of projects with government institutions and NGOs has been pivotal. Some initiatives have motivated schoolteachers and social groups (like Tejedoras) to tell their stories through strategies such as storytelling, memory work, and photography, amongst others, which has helped them reinvent their identity and, therefore, renovate their sense of dignity. For example, El Tigre, a small unit of Valle del Guamuez, were victims of a massacre in 1999, which caused the displacement of people and the profound sense of disconnection with the rest of the region. People from other regions and the national media contributed to the formation of a stigma. The inhabitants of El Tigre were seen to be violent, drug dealers, and guerrilla members. Thus, stories told on the radio such as ‘*El Tigre no es como lo pintan*,’ (The tiger is not as it is portrayed or not what it seems) appeals to the redefinition of an identity marked by violent acts and structural violence:

11-grade students are making a video for homework; it is an Eco touristic strategy about the region. They are making this video with images of the region and [creating] an Eco touristic plan to sell. I told them I would come with 15 people from Bogota. People say El Tigre is a dangerous town, but other people say it has a lot of flora and fauna to explore. So, the plan is to collect the people at the airport in Puerto Asís. That is their job. [I say,] ‘Go ahead!’ Let’s see what they come up with.

(Wilson, Schoolteacher)

In the terrain of peacebuilding, there are different hegemonic conceptions of peace associated with security, state-building, conflict resolution, human rights, and others (Richmond, 2010). However, those approaches fail on two fundamental levels; first, the population suffering from the conflict has become the object of their approaches and not subjects with a voice (Richmond, 2006; 2007; 2013; Richmond & Mitchell, 2012; see the case of

Human Rights discourses in Santos, 2015). Second, those subjects understand more than anyone else what needs to change to revert the structures of oppression no matter where it comes from – usually from armed actors and the state itself. Those affected by the conflict are the ones capable of understanding the significance of oppression and the conditions for liberation, as well as what it takes to achieve it (Freire, 1970).

Unfolding Peace through Materiality

The conflict in Colombia has been historically rooted in issues of injustice and inequality in different forms, be it land ownership, political participation, access to employment or education. The political elites have disputed over economic control at the expense of the well-being of regions, which includes education, infrastructure, security, and environmental degradation. What started as a confrontation between liberals and conservatives has evolved into parapolitics (politicians involved with paramilitary members) and corruption. Here, then, it is essential to recognize a material dimension of peace. However, it does not strictly rely on material goods. Peace is partly understood as the realization of projects of infrastructure, education, health, and others that provide the communities in remote regions or affected by war with alternatives to overcome isolation, deprivation, and low standards of living – although such inequality also exists in big cities:

I already told you something that summarises everything: peace and hunger means no peace. Why is that? If there are no roads, you can't trade your products and therefore you can more provide at home. 'No roads' implies you can't [mobilise to] study, and if you don't study, you can't support your family. You miss opportunities. I always say, 'Peace with hunger means no peace'.

(Jenny, Female Social Leader)

This is a powerful statement that captures the struggles of millions of people in the country. The political discrepancies of the elites and central governments have deprived regions of welfare and development opportunities. The state has been so inefficient that guerrilla groups have acted as parallel governments, even more so after the demilitarized zone put in place from 1999 to 2002 during peace talks with the FARC (Franz, 2016). Since then, the dominant conceptions of peace have been connected to security and state-building, although such approaches have spectacularly failed to provide any solution to violence and inequality. Whether drug dealing, ideological differences, or presumed collaboration to one or another side of the conflict, all has served as an excuse to displace peasants and steal their lands (Molano, 2001). This is more problematic as peasants in Putumayo, for example, and

other regions have changed their economic activities due to lack of infrastructure or pressure from illegal groups (Baquero, 2014). For instance, some indigenous communities have been trapped in the conflict and have been displaced or their territories have been reduced due to the presence of armed actors (ASCEK, 2011).

Even up to this date, and despite the peace accord, Putumayo remains partially isolated, and its infrastructure is deficient. The lack of completion of the peace accord, political will, and corruption have perpetuated situations of social and economic inequality, which has manifested in the resurgence of violence (Jiménez & Zuluaga, 2021). For example, some towns still do not have access to drinkable water or permanent electricity, which is detrimental to their living standards. In recent years, the capital suffered from a flood that destroyed a quarter of the city and reconstruction has been slow (Vásquez, Gómez, & Martínez, 2018). It is here that understandings of peace are materialized in concrete actions such as entrepreneurial organizations and initiatives that benefit the communities at the economical and educational levels, particularly those who have been affected the most by the war and the culture of violence.

There is more than just one issue at play and strategies to cope with them. The armed conflict has displaced more than four million people internally (Shultz et al., 2014). In this sense, the state has conducted processes of reparation that include land restitution (Minagricultura, n.d.). However, families that have been displaced often separate and, when restitution comes, only men receive the property deeds. This leaves women and their children in a vulnerable situation, which shows that even the state perpetuates forms of gender violence. Women have organized themselves and acted in the face of structural violence and injustice. A sense of conscientization has empowered women in Putumayo and other regions of the country – partly because of the war has encouraged them to be socially and politically active:

We created some organisations, nine in total. (...) we appointed a coordinator, and she was part of *weavers of life* (Tejedoras). So, she showed what we were doing through records, evidence, and invitations to see our initiatives. They visited us and were interested in working with us, so they trained us, because we have some common goals and we both want to work for the community, but particularly for a gender: women. We are women and are strong. Now we are recognised.

(Jenny, Female social leader)

The creation of entrepreneurial activities is fundamental for women to overcome structures of violence and domination. Women have liaised with NGOs and other state actors to consolidate forms of local enterprise and cultural organization. Here, too, peace is connected to possibilities of action

emerging from dialogue and cooperation. Women have understood the causes and effects of the conflict and feel compelled to act on solutions that break cycles of violence against women, which opens dimensions connected to gender equality and equity.

Thus, the material dimension of peace is not just ‘matter,’ that is, infrastructure per se, but rather the possibilities that emerge in the series of relations that take place between the human and non-human – e.g., there are ecological notions at play too. The lack of material goods and infrastructure is a fundamental aspect, but what is also relevant is the series of interpersonal transactions of interests, common goals, and synergy that make agency possible. This is particularly relevant in the case of women who have created entrepreneurial initiatives to overcome issues of oppression and violence. There is a link between the material and ‘an agency of motion and transformation’ leaning towards better conditions (Chow, 2010). Therefore, a material dimension of peace needs reconsideration as material factors shape society and bound human prospects (Coole & Frost, 2010):

They talked about problems related to the community, its organisation, or a serious issue. Sometimes things like ‘I go to the mayor office, and nobody helps me. We need to learn how to make a formal request, so I go to the stationary and they charge COP 5000 (2 US dollars). So, they said, “Teach us how to make a formal written request”. They felt the confidence to ask for help. We managed to take the laptops or tablets and taught them how to use them, to use Word and write their formal request’.

(Leidy, Library volunteer)

This shows that notions of peace connected to materiality go beyond physical boundaries. Here, there is the recognition that the communities historically marginalized need to be provided with opportunities to navigate the social world. To do so, they need to be in contact with material and non-material resources that make agency possible through the exercise of skills to navigate social spaces. By reaching diverse communities and helping them become proficient and aware of more technical/bureaucratical processes, the local library has facilitated people’s access to rights and forms of well-being. New capacities for agency emerge from the interaction of systems, ideas, and resources (Coole & Frost, 2010). Both social movements and education agents recognize the disadvantages of poor infrastructure and the precarity of the state institutions in the region. Thus, the spread of illicit crops is a result of the absence of opportunities for people to be well at social, economic, and cultural levels:

El tigre has always been a target for NGOs because of the direct conflict. Some [projects] have been productive; others have been a way to waste big

amounts of money and haven't had any social impact... For example, there were 9 NGOs managing money from Plan Colombia. They brought 9 heifers from Cesar (the Colombian Caribbean region) for the peasants to substitute coca crops. Heifers from Cesar, the contexts are different, there cattle breeding is extensive. The heifers were wild and some of them fled. That never worked well.

(Antonio, Schoolteacher)

There is a development agenda based on western notions attached to any project of infrastructure that usually clashes with local well-being and forms of relating to nature (Cf. Escobar, 2010). There are certain rituals, views, and practices inserted into those relations between the material and the environment that normally give account of more profound and sociocultural legacies of people. With the introduction of alien practices – which require a gradual transition and careful consideration, some practices, ancestral knowledge, and environmental concerns are displaced. For example, cattle breeding goes against the natural environment (the Amazon, tropical jungle), and even so it has extended at the expense of the Amazon – and what it means for the planet (Molinares & Prada, 2018). Thus, peace in its material dimension inhabits in people's agency and the transformations in the ways the material environment, the circumstances, networks, ideas, and people themselves work together towards the transformations of sociohistorical conditions (Coole & Frost, 2010; Escobar, 2018).

Finally, women have become politically active at local and national levels through the work of memory. For them, memory of the conflict constitutes an important factor in the reconstruction of the social fabric, which takes place through negotiation of identities and contestation of versions of the conflict – this is a dialogical dimension with all its complexities (Paulson et al., 2020; Sanchez-Meertens, 2017; Taylor, 1992). Memory work has been carried out by communicating their stories in creative forms and collecting war artefacts and objects that help construct a reflecting retelling of the conflict. Much of this has been carried out without any help, but women have persevered to create a memory museum. Oftentimes, women have also told their version of events in national platforms and called for change:

In 2011 we went to the launching of the book '*Women, Coca, and War*'. We thought that we had so much to tell, so we invited The Centre for Historical Memory, so they helped us with a book. (...) not many people participated, because they wanted money. They thought that would make money for The Centre, so they wanted their share. Others were scared. Once the book was launched, many people were against us, because they felt that was incomplete, that they wanted to tell their stories.

(Female social leader)

Such processes are not always smooth, and conflict emerges all along. However, synergies and valuable work take place in schools, libraries, and social movements where common goals underpin their initiatives and projects. Dissent is a necessary condition for peace to emerge, but conflict and difference are dealt with in more sophisticated ways that exclude violence (Zuleta, 2011). Tensions inside schools and groups together with lack of support are also evident at times, but that is also a constitutive element of peace as a project woven in the everyday of communities, expanding and scaling at different paces (Mac Ginty, 2021).

The terrain of peace education supersedes schools (or/and universities) and their physical boundaries. It is necessary to recognize the enormous contributions made by social movements, local libraries, and schools when mobilizing outside the institution. Peace education can take different forms that address the needs and fundamental issues of a given context (Carter & Guerra, 2022; Harris, 2004; Schimmel, 2009). Likewise, dialogue and the possibility of more sophisticated conflicts are to underpin peace education – conflicts as opportunities for creative change (Zuleta, 2011). Dissenting voices should coexist and co-create new realities of change based on non-violent modalities. Here the challenge is, when education is done well, to dismantle warlike mentality and bring about the voice of those silenced and marginalized (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Young, 1990).

The work with the communities is fundamental to attain consensus and significant changes in peacebuilding. While the work of schools is still fundamental, when done well (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000), it needs to go beyond the content given by the normative conceptions of peace curriculum determined by political projects. The experience of the communities should be at the heart of any initiative and every context has its particular challenges and circumstances (Molano, 2001). The experience of conflict by children may reveal possible ways to address peace education in which they find radical alternatives (Sanchez-Meertens, 2017). Likewise, education, both formal and informal, can be a site for memory that leans towards negotiation and reshaping identities and forms of existing with others and the environment (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Paulson et al., 2020).

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed ways in which peace education is mobilized from within educational sites from a holistic perspective. The school, local library, and social movements (women's associations) have conceptualized peace. They have come up with creative strategies through which understandings of peace connected to people's voice, human dignity, materiality, and others are constantly re-negotiated, rehearsed, and worked at. This presupposes a dynamism of forces translated into actions, messages, and provocations that

invite people to re-think their place in the world and see themselves as possessors of agency and will. This is possible, nevertheless, due to networks and cooperation with organisations, family, and community members, and other material factors at hand that facilitate such processes that may differ depending on the context.

In the face of adversity – armed conflict, state neglect, and scarcity – both formal and informal education have constituted platforms for creativity and resourcefulness. It is important to highlight that some state institutions (e.g., Victims Unit and Centre for Historical Memory), NGOs, and individuals (e.g., artists, companies, and volunteers) have contributed to enrich the spatio-temporal dimensions of peacebuilding education. This is an ongoing process open to new modes of doing things, ideas, people, institutions, and other material and non-material factors leaning towards mitigating social inequality and ever-changing sustainable forms of peace. In all this, ecological visions are vital since this is a region where such concerns find roots in everyday experiences – whether those of destruction, enjoyment, or use of nature.³

Notes

- 1 The personal identities of the quoted participants have been masked with pseudonyms.
- 2 *Vereda* is a subdivisional administrative part of a municipality in Colombia.
- 3 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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13 Adaptive Instruction

Peace Education in Argentina during a Pandemic

María Teresa Barrios, Melina Coll, Luciana Rodini, Ornella Uberti and Eliana Irene Martinez

Introduction

The CoPaz Foundation for Peace Education and Nonviolence was founded in 2017, inspired by the Spanish organization Ilewazi ONG.¹ The mission of the CoPaz Foundation is to strengthen the construction of the cultures of peace defending human rights and sustainable social development for a more just, equitable, and dignified world, as well as promote safe spaces for participation, dialogue and collective learning, mediation, as well as constructive and creative approaches to conflicts and situations of violence. Likewise, the Foundation upholds a vision of the world in which social justice prevails, where everyone has the opportunity and the skills to contribute to peace, the fulfillment of human rights, and a sustainable environment free of violence. CoPaz is made up of people of all ages who develop very diverse disciplines. They unite in CoPaz for the genuine and common interest of promoting peace education and nonviolence through formal and nonformal instruction aimed at less favored populations due to inequality, discrimination, and situations of vulnerability.

The CoPaz Foundation is located in a marginal neighborhood of the city of Rosario, Province of Santa Fe, Argentine Republic, whose population is made up of many indigenous people: 14,089 people belong to the Qom community of this province and 13,466 people are part of the Mocoví population (Gamitolo et al., 2020).

People from northern Argentina migrated several years ago to this area in the south of the province and formed neighborhoods with special characteristics where they live together in marginal conditions and struggle for the maintenance of some aspects of their ancestral culture.

It is important to note that the families that live in the neighborhood represent a highly vulnerable sector of the population due to the lack of public services and adequate infrastructure, a situation that is aggravated by the high rate of drug use, which implies profound inequality of opportunities.

In these marginal neighborhoods, affected by situations of poverty and discrimination, the CoPaz Foundation has carried out, under normal sanitary

conditions, different education for peace actions, especially for girls, boys, and young people, through face-to-face art workshops, ludopedagogy, philosophy, and sports activities. It also adapted its informal instruction to the context of distance learning. CoPaz workshop is one of the important activities of this Foundation.

CoPaz workshops are held at the Cultural Center “El Obrador”, which depends on the Culture Secretariat of the Municipality of Rosario (Santa Fe, Argentina), located in the southwest area of the city. There, children and adolescents are offered workshops with communication and play experiences from the culture of peace, which seeks to add to the disarticulation of violent ways of relating to each other. The neighborhood where the Cultural Center “El Obrador” (Workshop) is located, has many conflicts, which sometimes show children and adolescents naturalized violence as a way of relating. Therefore, CoPaz has been working in the neighborhood since 2018 and 2019 in person, and from 2020–2022 remotely, bringing material with activities to do in the family.

These workshops based on art and play are understood as ways of processing emotions linked to the behaviors necessary for the construction of peace. Motivated by peace education with a socio-affective and problematizing approach, a practice inextricably linked to the postulates of popular education, CoPaz promotes social transformation and the process of becoming aware of the existence of nonharmful ways to resolve conflicts. It provides workshops in literature, music, and ludopedagogy. From literature, the aim is to approach, in a playful way, children and adolescents so that they can achieve their own artistic creations in a climate of harmony and participation; from music, to develop the pleasure of enjoying personal and collective musical experiences; and from ludopedagogy, to reflect critically on the attitudes taken toward conflicts, tending to strengthen, cooperative and conciliatory behaviors, through games and reflection on the practice.

This chapter will detail the workshop objectives and the pedagogical tools implemented, in addition to the record of the shared experiences. It will situate the neighborhood context in which the problems to be worked on arise, and the theoretical approach through which these workshops and activities are designed to have an influence on the children and adolescents who come to the “El Obrador” Cultural Center.

Theoretical Framework

Conflict and Violence

CoPaz seeks to build, together with children and adolescents, alternative responses that do not involve violence as a response to conflicts. We approached the CoPaz workshop models by using peace education, ludopedagogy, and popular education approaches. To address the problem of violence, it is

necessary to see it from a territorial perspective. It is for this reason that the city is understood as a: “space of struggles and conflicts as a structuring dimension of urban dynamics and its evolutions over time; meanings that dispute among themselves hegemonic, alternate and counter-hegemonic positions; meanings that gain or not legitimacy” (Chaves, 2015, p. 4).

In relation to the concept of violence it is interesting to think about what Fernando Carrión (2008) expresses:

Violence has spread throughout the countries and cities of the region with its own peculiarities and rhythms, causing various changes in the logic of urbanism (shielding of the city, new forms of residential segregation); in the behaviors of the population (anguish and helplessness); in social interaction (reduction of citizenship, new forms of socialization); and in the militarization of cities and the army in the streets. Adding to this, the reduction of the population’s quality of life (homicides, material losses).
(p. 2)

Orsset (2001) explains that violence is multipoverty. In addition to the lack of economic resources, there is “poverty of protection (in the face of violence in everyday social relations), poverty of understanding (due to difficulties in access to the reflexive handling of information), and poverty of participation (due to social fragmentation and demobilization)” (p. 30). Peace education is one of the most common approaches to address the issue of conflict and structural violence.

Peace Education

In Argentina, the origin of the disciplinary field of peace education dates to the late 1990s. Although earlier pedagogies are recognized by the Montessori; Cossettini; Jares (1999) considered peace education to be: an educational process, dynamic, continuous, and permanent, based on the concepts of positive peace and creative perspective of conflict [...], and which, through the application of socio-affective and problematizing approaches, aims to develop a new type of culture, the culture of peace, which helps people to critically discover reality in order to be able to situate themselves before it and act accordingly (p. 124).

It is understood that the process of building the culture(s) of peace seeks to unlearn violent forms of relationships, as well as aggressive, intolerant, unjust, patriarchal, and oppressive behaviors. In this context, peace is understood as a device to “learn” to “unlearn” violent reactions linked to negative emotions and build another way of managing such emotions (Nieto Durán, 2012).

Therefore, CoPaz is positioned from a socio-affective and problematizing approach. From this perspective, the practice of peace education must be

linked to the practice and postulates of popular education to seek social transformation and the liberation of learners and educators. Practices through which the objectives of peace education are carried out include ludopedagogy and experiential knowledge. Ludopedagogy is inspired by the practices of popular education in Latin America and emerges as a working approach of the Center for Research and Training in Recreation, Play, and Camping “La Mancha” in Uruguay (Rickly, Ara del Amo, 2011).

According to Wilmer Rickly and Olga del Amo (2011), ludopedagogy is an educational methodology of intervention along with sociopolitical and community advocacy. This concept has three parts:

Practice: is the playful experience, the action promoted by games and activities.

Analyze reality: that is, collectively build knowledge from reflection on individual and group experiences.

Return to practice transformed: this means that we put into practice the knowledge acquired about reality to operate and transform it with our actions and attitudes.

The methodology applied by CoPaz is to put into practice a wide repertoire of playful activities, reflecting together on them, their effects, and their projections. The ludic-artistic experience can be related to the activities generated through games, representations, and interpretations. It is within the framework of “learning through experience” and is inclined toward activities that involve aesthetics and education. It has to do with play, symbol, celebration, and representation (Abad, 2006).

Traditional education tends to favor the development of logical-verbal skills worked by the left hemisphere. However, neuroscience warns that promoting the use of both hemispheres equally generates better learning. This is achieved through the implementation of multiple sensory techniques, real experiences, and a holistic methodology that involves several elements for the same topic; for example, the use of visual thinking, fantasy, evocative language, metaphor, direct experience, multisensory learning, and music (Ruiz Bolivar, 2004).

To transform attitudes and behaviors belonging to a violent culture, it is necessary to work with people’s reactions and emotions, and using a trans-disciplinary approach is essential. We account for them to provide for the transformation of attitudes toward conflicts, aggressive behaviors and the development of inclusive, cooperative, and conciliatory attitudes. The goal is for participants to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the concepts and their own emotions through their experiences. For this reason, CoPaz considers that art and play are also ways of processing emotions linked to the behaviors necessary for peacebuilding.

Popular Education

Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (1970) is considered a pedagogical theory applied to social reality. Education is seen as a fundamental tool for cultural transformation, where social praxis is an inseparable unity of reflection and action. The theory emphasizes the importance of the criticism of individuals and collectives for the liberating processes of the popular field to develop fully.

The starting point of popular education is a reality that needs to be transformed and is an ongoing process, in which individuals become aware of oppressions and work to overcome them through social practice. Elements of popular education include the recognition of popular knowledge, the need for such knowledge to dialogue, the modification of the educator–educate binomial, and the transformation of the social reality of those involved. The *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970) has its starting point in the social practice of this reality. It is in this process that the actors become aware of it and take a position to transform it. It is through social relations and deep dialogue, that we take a position and can transform reality, in other words: "the full realization of the human task is the transformation of reality for the liberation of human beings" (Freire, 1970, p. 85).

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

(Freire, 1970, p. 45)

Popular education is not simply a prelude to raising awareness, but rather a permanent process of reflection and dialogue on practice that is inevitably linked to the organizational process of the popular classes.

Methodology

In this chapter, we combine both a qualitative perspective and a methodological approach typical of the social sciences, based on the case of the implementation of the Ludopedagogy for Peace workshop in Toba neighborhood of Rosario City. Some quantitative perspectives also implied the consultation of theoretical materials on topics related to peace, violence, conflict, and ludopedagogy.

These two methodological tools were applied, examined, and complemented with the experiential background of CoPaz members themselves. This is not a minor ingredient for the team since it provides the necessary support for this work to be as explanatory and concise as possible.

Theoretical foundations of our work were in the literature that CoPaz staff read (Cabezudo & Haavelsrud, 2013; Díaz et al. 2014; Fiori, 2005; Freire, 1970; Gouveia et al. 2010; Nisbet 1987; Pérez & Martínez Heredia, 1987; Torres, 2001; Wilmer & Del Amo 2011). Concerning the availability of theoretical production, many works refer to the problems faced by Latin American cities with the implementation of social projects by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Likewise, some works specifically study what violence is, how it develops, and what dynamics characterize it.

The following methodological tools were used for the analysis of the topic in question:

Reading of thematic information resources was used to learn about the functioning of other social organizations in various Latin American countries.

Information collection also occurred through visiting the neighborhood where we work continuously to know it personally before we carry out fieldwork. These tools are used and adapted during the data collection and curriculum design process.

Participant observation and experience was carried out in the framework of the three workshops given by CoPaz: Ludopedagogy for Peace, Literature, and Music. CoPaz volunteers from different fields, professions, and ages, provide these workshops for children attending the “El Obrador” Cultural Center located in Toba neighborhood of Rosario.

Provocative informant interviews after several meetings with CoPaz members, a list of interview questions was drawn up to guide the design of instruction. These were: what do we understand by peace? What do we understand by conflict? What do we understand by popular education? Why is education in human rights necessary? What do we want to be? What do we not want to be? Why will we do volunteer work? How will we work? Is volunteering a form of assistance?

Neighborhood Context

The Cultural Center and Toba neighborhood were created in 1991, with the purpose of integrating the new inhabitants, mostly indigenous people, into the local territory. From the early 1960s to the present day, ethnic groups (Wichí, Qom, Toba, and Mocoví) from Chaco State have migrated to the city of Rosario. In recent decades, they have also been joined by migrations from neighboring Paraguay and the Misiones State with other peoples and customs (Guaraní ethnia).

The official website of “El Obrador” shows that its main objective is “to facilitate access to tangible and intangible cultural goods. It operates with respect for cultural diversity while it addresses a complex sociocultural framework by articulating the different forms of knowledge in order to improve the

population's quality of life. The Obrador's work is aimed at revaluing the identity aspects of this population, promoting their rights, and seeking their insertion at some level of the formal economy" (El Obrador, 2015).

To meet this objective, different workshops are offered: Hip Hop, acrobatics, dance, serigraphy, textile basket (making by a Qom referent), sewing, Qom language, pottery, guitar, toy making, as well as other workshops and micro-enterprises with a sustainable-development perspective.

Although the neighborhood has regularly built parts, it is surrounded by irregular settlements. At present, people of the following ethnic groups live together in it: Qom, Mocoví, Wichí, and Guaraní, recently arrived migrants, or third-generation migrants born in Rosario with the so-called "*Roche*" or "*criollos*" identity.

The people living there are highly vulnerable. There is a lack of basic services and infrastructure; the streets are destroyed, and when it rains there is flooding. There are also large accumulations of garbage and contaminated water on the sidewalks and in the gutters. Access to drinking water is through an irregular connection. This passes through ditches with rotten water to the houses or through communal taps. The situation is getting worse day by day, as more families arrive in the neighborhood due to temporary internal migration as well as migration from other countries, such as Paraguay.

Another very important issue in the neighborhood is police violence. In recent years, there have been strong confrontations between community members and the police force. "There is brutal treatment of the community. We are from the north of the country, but our children were born and raised here. It is not just a matter of defending our native roots, but we demand civilized treatment," said a neighbor in an interview with the newspaper "El Ciudadano/Cosecha Roja" (2016). Neighbors also claim that the police verbally mistreat them and that they are often ignored because they do not understand their language:

(...) if a (Qom) person fights, the police say 'let them kill each other'. If they are stealing from the school, (the police) say 'well, let them steal' (...) the police are blaming my neighbor, but it is a lie because I saw when they shot him. It was the police. And now he's back, but it's not the same police. They don't do anything anyway.

(Corbeta y Rosas, 2017, p. 24)

This everyday violence rooted in social structure is inseparable from the inequality and exclusion that children, adolescents, and young people experience daily. The subsistence of the young members is achieved through the collection and sale of cardboard, street scavenging, the itinerant sale of handicrafts (in the city center, children and adolescents generally circulate at night in bars selling handicrafts), and begging.

In addition to the lack of infrastructure and extreme poverty, the families that continue to arrive because of the migrations face cultural barriers. In

several situations, they feel discrimination, for example, when they must send their children to school and go to health centers.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which started in 2020, brought with it various difficulties with which the inhabitants of the neighborhood had to deal. The deepening of labor precariousness had a negative impact on family economies, reducing income and job opportunities. Finally, there has been a lack of connectivity, whether for work or study. This has left many people out of the educational system. While CoPaz works in this context, it aims to add to the disarticulation of violent ways of relating as it applies theories that underlie conflict and peace education.

CoPaz in Action

CoPaz has three workshops in operation; here we will detail their objectives and the main collection of material, anecdotes, and shared experiences.

Instructional Formats

Literature Workshop

The major objectives of the literature workshop are:

- To bring children and youngsters closer to literature in a playful way so that they can do their own artistic creations.
- To stimulate the pleasure of reading and dialogue by creating a climate of harmony and participation where solidarity, empathy, respect, and tolerance prevail.
- To awaken interest in oral and written texts, motivating the production of literary texts.

Activities of the Literature Workshop

Presentation of Alejandro Lerner's song: Niños del 2000 (Release Date: 2006, Artist: Alejandro Lerner, Album: Songs for Girl People)² to express in drawings what remained of this song. Below are some verses:

*To the children of this world I sing
So that whoever hears their plea
Sings a song of love for the children of the planet.
Will grow up singing in freedom.
Sing with your heart for the peace of this earth.
The world has another chance today*

Then we invite the children to reflect on the following concepts: Freedom, Peace, Hope, Love, Listening, and Evil. Children expressed: "Freedom is not

going to school if I don't want to", "Peace is not fighting with my brother" and "They are mean to me because they call me 'fat' at school".

During the round of conversation, the importance of expression and the way of communicating were addressed, emphasizing that the latter is fundamental to achieving effective communication. We also dialogue about how fundamental it is to be gentle with our friends and mates.

This was followed by the interpretation of Marta Gómez's song "Para la Guerra, nada" (For the war, nothing). Artist: Marta Gómez, Release Date: 2016, Album: Songs of the Sun, Genre: Children's music.³

One of the stanzas reads:

*For the wind, a kite
For the canvas, a paintbrush
For the nap, a hammock
For the soul, a cake
For the silence, a word
For the ear, a shell
A swing for childhood
And for the ear, an accordion
For war, nothing.*

A dialogue activity was proposed to comment and express what made them feel sad and angry: "I want a game and dad cannot buy it for me because he does not have a job", "I am sad because you do not invite me to play", "I feel sorry that daddy challenges me" (Figure 13.1).



Figure 13.1 Children drawing their thoughts.

The feelings and sorrows were captured in drawings and words, bringing Marta Gómez's song as inspiration to create more poetic wishes. Children were able to create the following manifestos: "For the Garden and the land 'Alhua' Seeds (Alhua is a word in the Qom language that means land); For Dad Work; For the Love a Soul; For the Teeth a Smile".

Conclusion. We can highlight the motivation to learn concepts related to peace, nonviolence, respect, and, above all, friendship, which was a central axis of children attending Copaz workshops.

Having one of its bases in the dialogue of knowledge proposed by popular education, children taught us several words in Qom (Toba) language, for example, "land": *Alhua*. This shows that, in these workshops, we all learn, we are nourished by the knowledge of others and therefore, the educator–educatee relationship must be modified.

Music Workshop

The major objectives of the Music Workshop are:

- To promote listening, understanding, and expression of musical elements through enjoyment.
- To develop the pleasure of shared musical experiences.

Activities:

A basket with several percussion musical instruments was presented, which were individually approached by each member of the workshop, exploring their execution in different parts of the room. It was possible to observe how, gradually, they spontaneously integrated into smaller groups.

The goal of the workshop facilitator was to act in each group, allowing the group members to find their own rhythm, and inviting them to listen to the sounds created by another group. In this way, different breaks were generated in the environment, interspersed with individual melodies, gradually transforming into a collective expression.

Conclusion. Vocal, instrumental performance, and body movement were the messengers of expression. Sounds, rhythms, and music evoked sensations, experiences, and shared moments. The development of significant musical activities such as collective singing, joint instrumental performance, games, and dances are community manifestations that highlight the social function of music.

Ludopedagogy Workshop

The major aims of the Ludopedagogy Workshop are:

- To reflect critically, through games and art, on the attitudes toward conflicts.
- To transform aggressive or individualistic behaviors into inclusive, cooperative, and conciliating ones.

Three work axes were presented in this opportunity: Cooperation, Expression of Feelings, and Self-esteem and Identity.

Activities of the *Ludopedagogy Workshop*:

1. Cooperation: The advantages of collaborating, helping, and not competing. Two variants of the same game were proposed, one competitive and the other cooperative, to reflect on the feelings that arose from both situations. First, it was proposed to play the traditional “chair game”. Then, a variant of the same game was developed, the “Cooperative Chair Game” where the objective is to make room for all to sit down so that no one loses. In this game, either the group wins or the whole group loses, so the important thing is companionship, cooperation, and the notion of group.

In conclusion, after going through the two-game experiences, children were asked to comment on which one they liked the most. The reflections that emerged after the collaborative game were very interesting from an emotional and corporal point of view. When they finished playing the collaborative version, they were very happy and enthusiastic. When asked: “Which game did you like the most?” they answered loudly and with a smile “The second one”. And when we asked “Why?” they answered: “Because we helped each other, and nobody lost”. “Because we hold each other so nobody fell from the chairs”.⁴

2. Expression of Feelings: The importance of identifying and expressing one’s own and others’ feelings.

The first activity consisted of making a net with a ball of wool. The ball of wool is thrown among the participants, indicating to whom it is passed and why, looking for a good characteristic of the participant to whom it is thrown: “I pass it to... because he/she is a good friend”. This activity aimed to encourage children to say gentle things to their mates since many times they are more used to saying aggressive words to each other. This constructed net will be moved, trying not to break it, and then decided among all the participants when to dismantle it.

Next, several faces expressing different moods were placed in the center of the circle: sad, happy, angry, and bored, among others. Each one took the one he/she wanted, pasted it on a sheet of paper, and drew the body, telling why he/she felt that way. Finally, a circle is made and all the information that was generated during the workshop is collected.

In the first activity, when asked to name their classmates with good characteristics, many accompanied their stories with anecdotes about why they were good friends, generating complicated laughter in a pleasant atmosphere. In the second activity, some took the opportunity to tell what made them sad, leading to discussions among the participants. The closing of the workshop had positive results. Many children were able to express what they felt and in which specific moments, highlighting especially that it made them happy when they played with friends and sad when they were told ugly impressions. Therefore, it was productive to go back to how they had felt in the first game, where they heard nice sentences about themselves at the end of the activity.

Happiness: “when you get a present”, “when I play with my friends”, “when I am with my friends”, “I feel happy when I get together with my friends”, and “When I go to my aunt’s house”.

Sadness: “when your friends leave you”, “when a relative or a dog dies”, “when I am insulted”, and “when a father leaves with a daughter and doesn’t tell her mother”.

3. **Self-esteem and Identity:** the aim was to encourage reflection on self-esteem and the right to identity. The workshop included three activities: first, the reading of the story “I go with myself” by Raquel Díaz Reguera. It is the story of a girl who is in love with Martín, but he does not pay attention to her. To get Martín to notice her, she decides to listen to the advice of her friends and change herself, gradually losing everything that made her special, losing her identity, until she is no longer able to recognize herself.

In the end, the girl realizes that she no longer cares if Martín looks at her because now she cannot see herself. She set out to draw herself with some characteristics she likes about herself and add something that she identifies with. Children were encouraged to draw themselves with their own characteristics.

In conclusion of this activity, just by looking at the cover of the book, the children began to describe the girl, highlighting some physical characteristics: “She has four eyes” and “She has a square head”. After the reading, they began to talk about things they like to wear and how they look, and that sometimes people say you should change them. The coordinator showed

her leg with scars and they worked around what things identified them and made them unique. Some mothers were present at the time of the reading and also contributed to the talk about the importance of accepting oneself as one is. One child, attending the “identity” activity, represented himself with his scars on his face and wrote “I don’t care what they say, I like my body and the way I am”.

Adaptation of CoPaz Activities to Distance Learning Mode

In March 2020, a COVID-19 pandemic caused school closures throughout Argentina. Education was thus required to occur outside of the schools and other places of contact-based learning, except for students’ homes. The socioeconomic characteristics of their families, due to the availability of learning resources, had a direct impact on the education of students. In this pandemic scenario, we asked ourselves, *What could we do? How could CoPaz help?* The mandatory isolation and the impossibility of holding face-to-face workshops forced a creative proposal to maintain contact with the young people who had participated in CoPaz workshops. The idea of creating the booklets for distribution to them became possible through a donation of sheets of paper. The booklets produced by the CoPaz volunteers assumed the commitment from action, with the conviction that education for peace cannot remain in theory but must be expressed in concrete and possible actions in, with, and for the community. The CoPaz booklets generated the real possibility of “access to curriculum” free of charge and in paper format. They were also published on the Internet page of CoPaz for downloading and possible printing by the community in general. We believed it was necessary that the contents of each booklet be given in a mixed way, on the one hand following the order of a program, with allusive dates (Day of Peace and Non-violence, Day of Spring), and other contents that were incorporated at the time of curriculum production in order to explain a specific situation that was occurring, for example, the armed conflict in Ukraine.

Methodology for Distant Instruction⁵

Object: We understand that the object is aimed at the contents and learning objectives. According to Legendre (1983), “the object is the reason for being of the educational system”. Therefore, the goal of the educational system is given by providing tools so that human beings can enhance their abilities in order to interact in the communities in which they belong, helping to solve their problems. The object, as a conceptual or methodological approach, helps us determine the topics that the booklet should contain. Thus, we understand the object as content, constituting in our case, the principles, attitudes, values, skills, and tools. In the same way, we incorporate cultural

practices and language, as well as socially valid and necessary knowledge (Casarini, 1999).

At this point, as activists and researchers, we asked ourselves the following questions: *How to introduce education for peace in this sector of the population in the pandemic period without using face-to-face teaching?* Is learning it worth it? Why would they be interested in learning about a culture of peace?

The answers to these questions can be found in daily work, in the children's responses to the notebooks, in those of the mothers when referring to the experience. Reality is complex and contradictory, and it brings us closer to problematic situations on a daily basis as we have the agency of promoting a culture of peace in all circumstances.

For Nisbet (1987) the agent is the "concrete materials through which skills are chosen, coordinated and applied" (p. 30). This includes the use of teaching resources. In a conceptual perspective, the agent is the one who admits that teaching praxis is supported by means that make learning more positive and effective.

Teaching Resources

Teaching resources are the means or materials through which the objectives, content, and activities are provided, in order to promote knowledge. The materials correspond to printed material and other types of materials, such as digital, video, photo, and audio, as well as physical materials such as blackboards. *Didactic resources* are classified as: expository, expressive, printed, and audiovisual (Villarreal, 2002), in this case the resource to be used will be printed. The booklet option was selected by the Foundation to be produced in paper format (although it is also available in digital format on the Foundation's website for free download), so that children, through their senses, make contact by themselves. The paper format was designed to reach out to the vulnerable families who do not have access to technologies.

The people in charge of assembling the booklets must choose and organize the didactic resources that will become part of each booklet in order to achieve the planned objectives. While picking the teaching material or resources, the person in charge (state official, teacher, parent, volunteer, or activist) must take into account certain conditions and characteristics; among them, the selected elements can be suggested to encourage the future reader, which are consistent with their age, interest, and cognitive level.

The creation of a booklet is a resource that constitutes an enriching task for all of the intervening actors, both for the recipients and for the creators. The goal is to prepare booklets, or what could be didactic notebooks or guides, for learning. The activities developed in the booklet lead the recipient to develop a playful task while learning and developing critical thinking. It also generates a more lasting and meaningful learning.

This type of booklet is made for a sector of the population in particular, according to its characteristics. But we also understand that this same methodological concept can be used to develop booklets for different age levels (children, preadolescents, adolescents, adults, older adults) different educational levels (primary, secondary, university). We even propose that it can be a tool to be used in public or private institutions for workers, in order to promote a culture of peace among the individuals that comprise it.

In this situation of great adversity, such as the one experienced worldwide by the pandemic, it was decided to collaborate with an entrepreneurial spirit. We invite readers to take this entrepreneurial and creative attitude to make their own booklets at home, at school, at their company, at their organization, and even in public institutions such as Municipalities or the Judiciary.

Methodological Principles. It is important to highlight that, taking into account the methodological principles, these provide us with a double tool in the preparation of the booklets, both to prepare them and for their assembly or adaptation.

- *Previous ideas:* work on previous ideas, starting with what the learners are familiar with.
- It is advisable to take *specific problems*, they can be general (environment, peace, segregation) or closer to the daily problems of the student (some particular problem of the area in question, such as a broken street, felling of trees, etc.), all applicable to the teaching–learning process, adapted to their age, cognitive, procedural, and attitudinal level.
- *Diversity of information sources:* by working with different sources of information, students will be able to perceive different approaches, strengthening their critical view. Today, educators have a large number of activities available for free on the Internet.
- *Playful:* the booklet created must offer dynamism in the teaching–learning process. It is our hope that this study tool promotes the elaboration, maturation, and consolidation of personal conclusions, so that the recipients of the booklets can show intellectual autonomy and are capable of building new knowledge.

Structural components of a didactic notebook. The booklets can be made in different ways, then the formal modality of them will be developed, respecting methodological structures and components. However, as will be mentioned, since the purpose of these booklets is formal education, even informal, the existence of these points is not necessary in the booklets, for example, that parents make for the education of their children or in other form of nonformal education. We will develop below what its formal characteristics are:

Cover: Put an attractive image that represents the Institution, logo, drawing or image with which it is shown. It can also be a photo or drawing of the family if it is a parent who is making the booklet for their family group.
Index: In the index all the titles, subtitles and epigraphs must be included, and their corresponding page so that the subject can be located quickly.

Presentation: How to use the notebook. At the beginning it is advisable to indicate the use and function of the booklet, constituting a frame of reference. The use and function of the didactic notebook and the support material are required to fully comply with the instructional function. It constitutes a frame of reference to start the study.

If the booklet is going to be used by organizations, the methodology to be followed must be defined at least in broad strokes, how the contents will be addressed and their assembly in a global way. Thus, we will give the student an idea of what can be found in the booklet, what is expected of the recipient of the booklet, and the time needed to use it. We advise this point to be short, no more than one or two paragraphs, in colloquial language. It should be placed before the main text, containing, general purpose, reading guides, all kinds of explanations that you consider useful before accessing the work and reading material.

General objectives. The general objectives of the lessons are those that allow clarifying the conceptual, procedural, and attitudinal requirements to which attention must be paid in the teaching–learning processes. At this point, it is recommended that the objectives be stated in a general way, that specific objectives are also accompanied, according to the chapter of the booklet, and on the cover of each one (it can be in the footer or header). These constitute a guide for the student, in this way they can go to the specific objectives in order to obtain guidance on what aspects they should pay more attention to in their readings. Attitudinal or behavioral skills or abilities or previous knowledge will be used for the purpose of stating the objectives.

Outline summary of contents. In a schematic and summarized way, the student is presented with the points that make up the corresponding topic, thus facilitating access or reinforcing the topic in the case that he or she already had knowledge of it.

The summary is a very important element, in each section, since it gives a quick overview of the topic and links it to the subsequent topics.

Study theme: each booklet has a main theme. For example, in the booklet exposed at the end of this study, the main theme has been “The month of peace”, “Month of spring”, and has sub-themes to develop, such as: a poetry of the spring of a well-known Argentine author for children, or mandalas to paint for the little ones referring to spring.

Content development: it is the central part of the booklet. Here a general presentation of the subject is made, placing it in its field of study, in the context of the general course, and highlighting the value and usefulness that professional work or work within the organization will have for the future. In the presentation of the contents, the approach from which they have been selected and sequenced must be made explicit, thus showing the position assumed against the various theories that address the object of study. This information must be provided in understandable terms and is generally presented after the conceptual diagram.

These are the characteristics that the booklets can contain, according to the place where they are going to be used. They can be carried out in a formal or more informal way, according to the place where they are going to be used, from a family home to a formal Educational Institution or a State Institution, for the latter it will be necessary that it reflects the “formality” of the same. If it is done by a parent, the inclusion of elements such as “content outline” will not be necessary.

Multidisciplinary Activity-Based Peace Education in Addressing Multipoverty

The current situation in the neighborhoods on the outskirts of large cities is one of extreme precariousness and absence of conditions that help promote spaces for the inclusive development of children. This is why NGOs play a leading role in the absence of state presence in these territories.

CoPaz positions itself from the sociocultural theories of education for peace and considers that the practice of pedagogy for peace must be inextricably linked to the postulates of popular education in order to seek social transformation and the liberation of the educational community.

In this sense, the workshops presented have provided different tools in the form of communicative strategies. These have favored the integrative function of the neighborhood since children from different areas of the neighborhood have participated in them.

The work carried out by CoPaz seeks to build together with children and adolescents alternative responses where the primary objective is to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Violence is represented by multipoverty.

We have seen that many families have difficulties in accompanying the children’s educational process.

CoPaz’s work included an ethnic perspective, incorporating the Qom language into their own activities. As explained in the literature workshop, there they decided to write the lyrics in Qom of a song: “Aluha”, Seeds, for the Earth.

Taking into account all these variables, CoPaz proposed, within the workshops, to present different strategies related to peace education, as stated by Xesús Jares (1999), a dynamic and continuous tool that helps to become aware of and critically reflect on reality in order to transform it.

Therefore, it was proposed that these resources should include and recognize other alternative forms of communication: special spaces and times for reading; enjoyment of spaces for dialogue; active and conscious listening to the situations to be resolved; a place for artistic expression and the expression of feelings and emotions.

Following this line of work, one of the fundamental purposes of CoPaz is to foster a collaborative attitude, which is reinforced in many of the proposed activities, most explicitly in the aforementioned “Collaborative Chair Game”, in which players had to help each other to win.

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Following this line of work, one of the fundamental purposes of CoPaz is to foster a collaborative attitude, which is reinforced in many of the proposed activities, most explicitly in the aforementioned “Collaborative Chair Game”, in which players had to help each other to win.

We interpret that this type of activity is of great interest, given that, as proposed by Ludopedagogy (Rickly and del Amo, 2011), to achieve meaningful learning, it is necessary to go through the experience, to theorize reality, and to return to it in a transformed way, that is, to prefer playing as a team rather than winning individually.

This learning cycle, from a socio-affective perspective, is a potential generator of change, which we maintain, and contributes to nonviolent action.

Conclusion

Multipoverty manifests in different forms such as unequal opportunities in education, health, legal identity, and economic opportunities, and therefore, the indigenous communities get unequal life chances. The structural violence can only be addressed by using a multidisciplinary approach, for example, applying activities in local language, arts-based participatory activities such as workshop models and ludopedagogy CoPaz (2023).⁶

The notebooks are pedagogical tools for different age groups with careful content, gender perspective, disability, human rights, and multicultural identity. Ephemeris, figures to paint, poems, crossword puzzles, stories, and other playful activities are resources to teach peace and reduce violence typical of the neighborhood context through the game.

We understand education for peace as a continuous educational process where the critical analysis of reality and the violence of the context is promoted and justice, cooperation, solidarity, the development of autonomy, and personal empowerment are promoted. In this way, it is encouraged to cultivate inner peace, peace with others respecting and valuing differences, and peace with the environment to live in harmony with the earth.

We bet on Pedagogies for Peace to achieve this, as critical, libertarian, creative, alternative, and participatory pedagogies that respond to new educational, horizontal, democratic, dialogical, holistic, and “non-banking” forms. These pedagogies reject discrimination, patriarchy, colonialism, and extractivism as forms of oppression that prevent peaceful coexistence.

Because many small people, in small places ... are changing the world.⁷

Notes

- 1 In 2016, María Teresa Barrios, co-founder of CoPaz, participated in a course on Culture of Peace and Human Rights of children and adolescents organized by the University Jaime I. Then, she volunteered for the NGO Ilewasi. This NGO is dedicated to the promotion of human rights of children and adolescents.

She returned to Argentina with the decision to do something similar, where she met with Alicia Cabezudo, and they created the NGO CoPaz (Peace Builders) in the State of Santa Fe. After a couple of unsuccessful attempts, the Centro Cultural El Obrador opened its doors to CoPaz volunteers.

- 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nMEKn0la5Q>
- 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBF1sEqGzGw>
- 4 The game starts around chairs displayed in a circle. There is always one participant more than the chairs available. Participants must walk briskly around the chairs following the rhythm of the music. They can do it by dancing. As soon as the music stops, each person will try to sit on one of the chairs, and whoever is left without sitting down will be eliminated
- 5 Many of the ideas in this section have been taken from the article: Gouveia, E., Bejas, M., & Atencio, M. (2010). Propuesta teórica para el diseño de un cuaderno didáctico en la enseñanza de geografía. *Revista de Artes y Humanidades UNICA*, 11(2), 186–204.
- 6 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>
- 7 Phrase said by the famous Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano.

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Appendix

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Part IV

**Pedagogies of Transformative
Hope**



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14 “Engaged Pedagogy” with Hope

Dance Instruction to Heal from Violence in South Africa

Lliane Loots

Framing Dance Instruction as Storytelling

Nigerian author Ben Okri (1996) says, “stories are the secret reservoir of values: change the stories individuals and nations live by and tell themselves, and you change the individuals and nations”.¹ For FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY, these words of Okri offer a guiding philosophy that exemplifies both our performance work and the performance intervention-education provided by FLATFOOT. Any work that engages performance is a place and space of stories. At its core all performance is an act of storytelling; stories spoken in a character’s words, or in embodied movements that speak in the silent but powerful ways in which we individually or collectively move. Sometimes we tell our own story, sometimes we tell a story reflected from our imagination, sometimes it is the story of where we come from, who we are – stories of history and politics – and sometimes we tell the stories of the lives of others. This desire to perform – to tell stories – is, perhaps, a desire to reflect ourselves back to our world, to reflect our world back to us and to try and make sense of our physical, lived-in realities. Early modernist Antonin Artaud, for example, declared that theatre’s double is life, that all performance should supposedly hold a mirror up to life, its “double” (1931).

Beyond just the enactment and performance of stories in theatre spaces and on stages – and the mirror to life – are the more contemporary applied disciplines of theatre and dance that have a long history that recognizes that the numerous performance-based approaches and methods of engendering and telling stories are – in and of themselves – courageous tools towards shifting power around whose stories are told, heard, danced and listened to. As early as 1974, August Boal (1979, p. viii) stated that,

... theatre is a weapon. A very efficient weapon. For this reason, one must fight for it ... theatre can also be a weapon for liberation. For that, it is necessary to create appropriate theatrical forms. Change is imperative.

These applications of performance-based methods of interrogating and negotiating the advocacy of storytelling as a means to shift both our personal and political lived reality is so elegantly echoed in the opening quote by Ben Okri. If, as Okri suggests, we are able to change the reoppressive stories we hear, write, speak, dance and live within, then – perhaps – we begin to shift not just ourselves but the world around us too. Perhaps too, this is not always on the scale of the grand and the big, but a war waged (to pick up Boal's (1979) martial imagery) on what might simply be the local problematics and the oppressive (often unspoken) everyday reality of our lives.

Engaging the Politics of the Everyday

In recognizing the 'everyday' and the 'local' as key arenas that play out ideas of home, belonging, identity, knowledge production, war/peace politics and any potential resistance or emancipation, the most political arena for change – for peacebuilding – becomes the personal. De Certeau (1988) argues that placing attention on the 'everyday' is an interrogation of how everyday life responds to structural attempts to organize how we live. For de Certeau this practice is a "surreptitious reorganisation of power" (1988, p. 14). This reorganisation, de Certeau (1988) continues, is not unconscious but instead a weighty – and perhaps knowing – engagement with community, with daily events and experiences that allow for attention to any and all relationships within these local and everyday spaces. Thus, a focus on the everyday allows exploration into how an individual subject is able to "negotiate around violence, structural and overt, around material issues, or indeed how [the subject] deploys or co-opts these" (Richmond, 2009, p. 331). The space of the everyday is thus, as argued, a political space where, as Berents and McEvoy-Levy (2015, p.116) suggest, "those who are most marginalised and written out of formal political discourses, find collective meaning and organise in response to conflict, violence and exclusion".

As a South African storyteller who works in the embodied practice of dance and its methodological applications towards ideas around belonging and community – peacebuilding at its most personal – this chapter offers a narrative enquiry (storytelling, if you will) into using dance as a tool for building community and teaching peace in a case study of FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY's² intervention work done in urban, rural and (specifically for this chapter) refugee communities in Durban, South Africa. I take up Randy Martin's (2005, p. 59 as cited in Lepecki, 2005) notion of "dance as a continuing site of self-recognition" that pushes me to interrogate my own everyday corporal practices as dancer and teacher, towards listening and hearing the (everyday) stories of the dancers with whom this work (and my life) intersects. This chapter is an opening up of discussions around

African creative practices of resilience, around everyday resistance and how this is articulated in community dance programs and how FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY are trying to open up practices of peaceful participation in not just our dance programs, but by extension, in the redefinitions of community and of belonging. At FLATFOOT we see our creative dance practices as the local and everyday practice of peace.

Dance as an Act of Peacebuilding in (South) Africa

Pruitt and Jeffrey (2020, p. 3) offer insights that significantly locate dance as medium for peacebuilding and intervention when they state,

Bodies are targets of violence, but they are malleable, so they can also resist and produce different political possibilities and identities, and in the process generate new social configurations.

Further, by ‘peaceful participation’ and the cognate bigger pedagogy of ‘peace education’ we are engaged with, firstly, the intersectional purvey that peace is the engagement with processes that help both social/political conflict resolution, but which also look importantly to creating personal everyday spaces of self-realization and belonging that allows for marginalised youth to have their humanity – even transiently in the dance work we do – fully realized. Peace, as is often defined,³ is not only the absence of war, or even just the politics of conflict resolution, but more and more in the humanities – and those of us working in creative practices in community-driven dance/arts education in Africa – peace is also, as is being argued, the everyday and localized attention to ideas around (but not excluded to) identity, belonging and home. Of necessity, this means an intersectional engagement with ideas around race, gender, class, sexuality (etc.). In stating this, and in reflecting on the work of FLATFOOT, I accept the methodological challenge articulated by McCandles and Bangura (2007, p. 75) when they say African peace scholars need to develop “endogenous and alternative theories, methodologies, and analyses forged in the crucible of the epistemological, social-political, cultural, and economic conditions of African realities”. It is the hope that this chapter, this narrative inquiry into some of the community-driven dance intervention work FLATFOOT does, is one small moment of considering the very localized and everyday practices of learnings around peace.

These impulses of FLATFOOT’s localized dance intervention work echo, again, the ideas of Pruitt and Jeffrey (2020) when they eloquently refute claims, by formal peace bodies as globally broad and encompassing as the United Nations, that arts-based peace work and interventions are ‘soft’ and thus not serious. They argue that this “tendency to render dance – along

with other everyday politics and everyday life practices – invisible, thereby dismissing arts and dance-based approaches” (2020, p. 3) is antithetical to the idea that “bodies cannot be ignored in approaches to transforming conflict” (2021, p. 23). Ideas – the everyday political and cultural ideas – of community and belonging are not abstractions in times of war, conflict, fear or terror; these concepts sit on the body and, in this embodiment, are the real and everyday spaces of power and the negotiation of unfolding identities. Pruitt and Jeffrey (2020, p. 3) suggest that,

... dance, as an aesthetic, embodied medium, can support peacebuilding in its capacity to embrace emotions, support relationships across difference, supplement and sustain verbal linguistic forms of dialogue, and bridge understanding of the local and the global.

I would like to add to Pruitt and Jeffrey (2020) by saying that in some spaces of conflict and violence, these dance and these “everyday politics and everyday life practices” (2020, p. 3) are not just a support to bigger (read ‘more serious’) agendas for peacebuilding, but that they are in and of themselves acts of peacebuilding and social repair. It is here that I begin to negotiate some of the work that FLATFOOT DANCE Company are (and have) been doing in Durban, South Africa.

Methodologies of Enquiry

This chapter has thus far engaged scholarly research and critical analysis of selected writings in specified relevant arenas of performance studies, applied theatre studies, peace studies and the growing field of dance studies. All of this has been done by engaging books and journal articles from a wide range of global sources. Significantly, however, as I and FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY are located in South Africa and thus the African continent, the discussion has made a bold claim – supported by authors like McCandles and Bangura (2007, p. 75) – to re-imagine peace studies, dance studies and the congruent education studies, as part of a decolonial push that asks scholarship, research and practice coming out of the South to be mindful of socio-economics, history and politics that frame Africa. This research thus also looks at how and why an African researcher interrogates African case studies in a manner that pushes against Western hegemonic notions of meaning, ownership and indeed whose stories are being told by whom. This has been done as a way of framing the second half of this chapter which steps into offer a narrative enquiry case study of FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY’s dance intention work in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

I employ the logistics of a collective case study⁴ in the sense that I reflect on both my own and on the FLATFOOT teaching team’s input, and beyond

this, my reflections, collectively of the young girls and women that make up the participants of this dance program. A collective case study involves studying multiple cases (and in this case, lived realities) simultaneously in an attempt to generate a still broader appreciation of particular issues. Beyond this too, as the nature of the lives of these young women (discussed later in this chapter), are potentially hazardous, writing about them as a collective, felt like an ethical way to negotiate their personal anonymity and to focus instead on my work and the work of FLATFOOT in terms of the interventions offered. This chapter thus chooses to mainly interrogate what FLATFOOT does and how we do it – a reflection more on our own pedagogical processes in this dance program – offering the least possible interrogation into the personal and private lives of the young women we worked with.

Since this is quantitative research that places myself and my reflections of own dance intervention work (with two of the FLATFOOT dance teachers) into my analysis, methodologically this is also an autoethnographic case study – see for example Holman Jones (2005) – that requires the author/researcher to locate personal practice as an ethnographic (in this case) narrative enquiry. I propose (in this chapter) this autoethnographic methodology with the aim of describing and appraising my own – and FLATFOOT’s – embodied dance peace intervention work that allows for a critical and communal sharing of evolving experience and knowledge. Autoethnography is form of an inquiry that allows the researcher (in this case myself) to immerse themselves in the research and the sharing of experiences via this written narrative reflection (see similar examples, Kinchin & Thumser, 2021, and Baesler, 2017). Further, Nicolas Holt defines autoethnography as a “highly personalised accounts where authors draw on their own experiences to extend understanding of a particular discipline or culture” (2016, p.18). Peter McIlveen further clarifies that “the prominent features of autoethnography as writing about oneself as a researcher-practitioner, not an autobiographer, is a specific form of critical enquiry that is embedded in theory and practice” (2008, p. 15). In this project, this was done in a manner that pointedly celebrated ‘everyday’ acts of peace through my/our dance interventions that celebrates the small ways we – as Okri (1996) suggests – change the stories we (and the young women we dance with) tell ourselves. As such the tools for this narrative autoethnographic enquiry were firstly, the small everyday interactions between myself, the two FLATFOOT dancers/teachers and the young women in the project. Secondly, I worked with the two FLATFOOT dancers/teachers not only as shared project facilitators but also to have them in the capacity of ‘critical friends’⁵ so that we were able to dialogue and collectively reflect (after each class or session) on our dance teaching and facilitation experiences with these young women. In this way I was able to interrogate and negotiate my own experiences and temper and expand my experiential ideas via two other sets of input and feedback.

And while both of the two FLATFOOT dancers/facilitators were imbedded – and thus not impartial – in the project, their voices assisted my own reflection by offering was of seeing that I missed or that had not connected to the larger enquiry. As critical friends they assisted the quality and, in some instances, my understanding of our work.

Ethically, this study thus does not name, interview or did not request any personal data from any of the voluntary participants. In choosing to look – via autoethnography – at my own (and FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY's) processes and experience, I am turning the focus onto myself as an embodied researcher (dancer-scholar perhaps?) and how I met, engaged, understood and now reflect upon the work being done by myself and FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY in this program. This autoethnographic reflection is finally about pushing more deeply linked personal and political reflections – via a very specific localized case study – on dance as an intervention methodology for ideas of peace that has the potential to shift (even transiently) the lives of young African women.

In the light of this, perhaps some of the limitations of this study are, firstly, that it is context specific. The hope, of course, is that this localized collective case study will open up possibilities for other contexts and other situations to consider similar programs and methodologies. Secondly, another potential limitation is that I chose not to share a dance curriculum of what was done in each of the actual sessions. I offer instead a reflection of the context (both political and personal) of the participants (as a group and as a collective case study) of FLATFOOT's working/evolving dance methodologies, and of myself, as we engage, via this dance program, with peace work through dance in Durban, South Africa. Given that this is context specific, I felt it not appropriate to offer a curriculum that may or may not re-enact any success in different contexts; the focus is on the intervention politics. The focus has been and is thus on ideas of these dance programs as intervention and towards a politics of finding dance strategies that begin to humanize disenfranchised youth in Durban. This leads on, of necessity below, to an overview of FLATFOOT – who we are, where we come from and what we do.

FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY

The impulse that began FLATFOOT in 1994 was seeing the lack of qualified and trained black South African contemporary dancers (particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and Durban). Initially I operated with no funding, just the political and artistic impulse to offer dance training to those who had historically and economically been denied access due to the apartheid systems. In 2003, after a long nine-year journey of seeing these classes (and my practice) grow, FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY became a professional full-registered contemporary dance company.

We set out a three-teared mission that saw the company work on three creative levels:

1. To offer a professional dance company (*FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY*) that creates contemporary dance work that engages with the context (both indigenous and modern) in which we live as South Africans.
2. To offer young adult dance training that skills youth for a career in the dance industry.
3. To offer quality dance education and dance community engagement in our province, which do not exclude any ‘body’ who wishes to join, no matter their race, gender, sexual identity or disability.

Thus in 2003, while honoring our roots in training and development, *FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY* set out professionally to ensure that dance and arts education was available locally to any and all in the areas we worked in regardless of rural or urban living, and understood the need to redress the lack of cultural/arts education particularly in rural and poor communities where schools often did not (and still do not) offer arts and culture programs. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown regulations in South Africa, which began in late March 2020, *FLATFOOT* was engaged in education and dance intervention programs with about 1000 youth aged between 5 and 26 years of age annually in both urban and rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal. Most of these programs were forced to shut down for two years over 2020 and 2021 because of COVID-19 social restrictions, but as we emerged into 2022, many of these programs tentatively began again. We are still trying to make sense of the everyday lived consequences in the lives of the youth we work with and of how COVID-19 has (and continues to) affected the work we do not least from a medical/health perspective, but from the shifted politics around access, increased levels of poverty and hunger and significantly the increased socio-health fear of community spaces.

Given our locations on the East coast of South Africa and on the Southern tip of the African continent, *FLATFOOT*’s work – even before we start to dance – has had to also address the economic particulars and realities of some of the localized issues such as:

- Poverty (and hunger)
- High levels of HIV/AIDS
- High levels of family violence
- Severely rigid gender and social role expectations for the boy and girl child
- Xenophobia

Many of the young people with whom *FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY* works are rooted in 42%⁶ of the South African population that faces severe

poverty, and many do not eat every day. In this landscape it might appear that a feeding scheme would hold more merit than a dance program. But, as post-development thinking sets out, FLATFOOT has taken the socio-political to begin to imagine a process which offers “alternatives to development rather than alternative development” (Matthews, 2004:3 73) knowing that feeding schemes help, perhaps, in the short-term but do not generally mitigate large scale hunger. Our agency, and what we could offer as dancers ourselves, was initiating access to carefully imagined (and always negotiated) creative dance practices that opened spaces for everyday experiences of community and belonging. Yes, we dance, yes, we perform and hold concerts for family and community, but mostly the programs are set up as local spaces where these youth, to again quote Berents and McEvoy-Levy (2015, p. 116), “find collective meaning and organise in response to personal and political conflict, violence and exclusion”.

Before narrating how we do this and in what frames of intervention we work, it is significant to first interrogate the underlying principles which guide our community engagement work at FLATFOOT.

Education is never a neutral process. How we are taught and what we are taught often assert political agendas around our perceived place in society. This was affected, for example, in the long apartheid years in South Africa with a racially segregated education system that created separate education processes for black and white learners with the overt understanding that young black children were being educated to fill the ascribed role as the subservient working class. In post-apartheid South African education, while there are still evident historically asserted racial divisions, further divisions continue to exist in terms of class and choice of school, dependent on both accessibility and affordability. Often township and rural schools (for example) are still beleaguered by poorly trained teachers and the absence of cultural programs due to funding cuts. FLATFOOT’s search for an alternate learning paradigm for its dance education and intervention work came initially from the 1994 political impulse of challenging racial, class and gender exclusions in dance training, in challenging who has access, and (significantly) who can dance. For this, we turned to radical education theorist, Paulo Freire.

Turning to Paulo Freire and bell hooks

In Freire’s seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), he began to outline an alternate system of learning and teaching that he called “liberation education” (1970, p. 53). This education moved away from looking at learners as empty vessels that needed to be filled with the knowledge that a teacher would bestow on a pupil (what Freire called “the Banking System of Education” [1970, p. 54]). He argues that, at best, this way of thinking about

learning is deeply alienating to any learner, turns the learner into a “welfare recipient” (1970, p. 55), and significantly for our work, takes agency away from the learner.

He proposes a problem-posing method of education which allows the learner to draw on their localized knowledge and (everyday) understanding of the world. As such, the educator and learner enter into a mutual learning process. He argues that education is liberation, and further that “liberation is a praxis” (1970, p. 60). Freire did not, of course, talk about dance education, but this profound understanding of the political, social and cultural imperative of education offered FLATFOOT insight into re-thinking dance education and community engagement practices that wanted to move away from looking at dance training and practice as only about a product-driven modality of “training dancers”. All of the professional dancers and dance educators in FLATFOOT speak openly about how, beyond the footlights and salary, “dance saved my life”.⁷ This often-heard phrase is a response, not to hours of training and arguable a productive job in a scarce creative labor market in South Africa, but to a feeling of “belonging and of family”⁸ experienced in the everyday working environment. It is exactly this sentiment that propels FLATFOOT’s understanding of dance as a peace intervention and, further to echo the idea that our programs are – in and of themselves – acts of peacebuilding and social repair in a country devastated by intersectional histories of colonial settlerisms, apartheid racisms, post-independence corruption, state capture and increasingly xenophobia linked to unresolved political arenas of poverty and inequality.

The FLATFOOT dancers and I begin to imagine a dance education program located in South Africa that is not only about well-executed leaps and turns, but about this agenda “becoming more fully human” (Freire, 1970, p. 55). Of necessity, this involves a deep understanding that in the context of Africa and South Africa, dance education can become an activism for re-thinking who we are, how we are able to understand our own worth; and, perhaps also, what we give value to. All of these are deeply personal negotiations around creating personal everyday spaces of self-realization and belonging that allow participants/dancers to experience their humanity. We placed focus on process-driven dance education programs and favored using dance and dance education as a tool – or indeed a strategy – towards other kinds of embodied learning that engages our ideas around belonging and home.

Our programs use dance as an intervention methodology which begins to use the problem-posing method of education. The idea here is not to set ourselves up as teachers who are all knowing. Rather we enter into the community teaching and learning dance space as participants with the youth in a way that our processes allow the youth agency in negotiating potential solutions to their own identified problems. This may be finding joint and

facilitated solutions to something as simple as not having dance clothes to wear to classes or needing to miss classes due to family commitments but it might also include issues of sexual violence and school/family bullying. As we jointly negotiate issues raised or encountered, we are growing the ability of these youth to find agency. Inside of the dance work with these youth, we grow the ability to be quiet and listen (to facilitators and to each other), we grow a sense of community by practising working in unison and knowing that we stand next to somebody that needs care, love and respect. We grow a sense of wonder and joy that comes from the delight of dancing and being part of concerts and public performances. We consider these young dancers we encounter each year in our dance programs as carriers of valuable self and social knowledge.

Our programs set out to offer assistance towards helping these youth interrogate themselves so that they can explore possible strategies of empowerment and rejuvenation outside the prescriptions of race, gender, class and health issues that dominate and often seem to determine their life paths. Through dance and its engagement with the body, FLATFOOT begins to interrogate these almost pre-determined above-mentioned issues of race, gender, class and health that ask the learner to put themselves (alongside us) in the positions to re-think their own social and cultural relationship to localized systems which they have identified as being oppressive in their lives.

Significantly, we set up these programs knowing that many of the young learners who participate will never seek to become professional dancers or choreographers. They voluntarily join these programs because, firstly, it gives them a cultural outlet for self-expression (something not often offered in impoverished rural or township education systems). Secondly, it teaches a sense of critical agency that values who they are and what they have to say. This is especially valuable with our girl-child gender interventions, where the confluence of gender stereotyping, gendered education, religion and patriarchal social values often leave the black girl-child the most vulnerable and marginalised members of her community. Finally, something we never really talk about in critical pedagogy, these after-school dance programs are great fun, and they allow for social interaction between different races, classes, cultures and genders that offer different everyday ways of being in community.

Scholar, author and social activist, bell hooks, in appropriating Freire for her own deeply felt encounter with educational process and pedagogy in the US, pushes what she calls the “transgressive boundaries” (1994, p. 13) of education when there is an understanding of “education as the practice of freedom” (1994, p. 13). She calls this “engaged pedagogy” (1994, p. 15) and it is a recognition that we need to “... teach in a manner that respects and cares for the soul of our students [as this is] essential if we are to provide

necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (1994, p. 13). The use of ‘engaged’ by hooks, implies a mutually agreed relationship between teacher and student (choreographer/teacher and dancer). Further, she argues, this relationship has to be one of deep care – and I argue, of trust – that creates first and foremost an environment where ‘learning’ can happen. At FLATFOOT we have taken hooks’s impulse on board recognizing that care and trust in a learning environment are created in the everyday rituals that evolve as a practice of belonging. The time spent greeting dancers before classes, attention to stories of family as they may come up, attention to injuries or illness, as teachers always being on time and always showing up, making sure every dancer has water, sweeping floors, and other preparations – even before the dance class begins – create a holding space of familiarity and recognition that allows for ownership of mutual learning. If this is the space into which the dancers enter, then there is never a need to persuade or coax the youth to start class, to find space on the floor, or even to spend that 5 or 10 minutes before class, warming up. The focused sense of self needed for dance is already present in the way these before class rituals have opened access, voice, belonging and indeed – as Berents and McEvoy-Levy (2015, p. 116) suggest, allows the “most marginalised and written out of formal political discourses, [to] find collective meaning and to organise in response to conflict, violence and exclusion”. FLATFOOT works with primarily black rural and township communities and added to this, in environments where children/youth are often not given space to think, speak or feel beyond the socio-economic needs of the family and material conditions they find themselves in. In many ways these youth we work with represent the most marginalised in South African society in their intersectional identities of being black, economically disadvantaged and mostly under 18 years old. Hence, hooks (1986) insights have been cogent and applicable.

In some ways, our work comes to confluence in Freire’s later 2014 ideas where he writes about the complicated emotional and political arena of hope. In *Pedagogy of Hope* (2014), Freire offers an invitation to those working in emancipatory and alternate models of education, to engage through hope. For Freire this is an ontological endeavor, where we begin to act in the world to transform oppressive conditions, expanding possibilities for social justice. One key to achieving this is what Freire calls democratic dialogue aimed at “opening up to the thinking of others” (Freire, 2014, 22) – in many ways this is a re-articulation of what FLATFOOT means by “Living Democracy” (engaged below). Our work has (and continues) to aim to find a pedagogy that, despite legacies of violence, silenced histories and inequities of lived experiences in South Africa, we work to foster everyday resilience by refusing to let hope be extinguished.

FLATFOOT's Living Democracy

Herein lies the relevancy of our work and any that similarly works with these performance-based intervention methodologies work – be this in schools, grass roots and community programs, colleges and universities. FLATFOOT, in trying to identify this dance intervention and peacebuilding work, and the myriad facets of how our dance work (in all the manifestations of our three-teared mission) tackle the oppressive and often unspoken everyday realities of the lives of dancers, trainee dancers, dance educator and project participants, have begun to use the term “LIVING DEMOCRACY” to describe our work. While it is a term that may evolve, at this point we feel that it echoes a desire to breathe life into our very contemporary South African dissolution with what seems to be a narrative zeitgeist of a failing state and political state capture – so blithely referred to as ‘democracy’. By ‘living’ we are indicating a process – of becoming human, of an embodied experience of human rights and of finding belonging. We are aiming to shift (claim back?) the artistic space to negotiate our own ‘living democracy’ as an act of constantly negotiated social repair. Once again, this dance work is not a support for other peace initiatives, but we claim this dance work – in and of itself – as an act of peacebuilding.

While I have written – in other capacities – on FLATFOOT's urban and rural dance programs,⁹ the rest of the chapter turns to offer an interrogated narrative of our most recent dance program set up in 2021, working with female youth of refugee communities (from Barundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)) living in Durban, South Africa. This dance program is particularly germane to this chapter as the current escalation of both personal and political (often – and arguably – state sanctioned) violence against African foreign nations living in South Africa has escalated and renders African refugee communities' spaces of fear, violence and terror.

Facing Xenophobia in Durban – Narrating the Context of Our Program

Foreigners and migrants make up roughly 2.8% of South Africa's population.¹⁰ After the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa's economy had a period of steady growth. Job opportunities and relative political stability offered South Africa an attractive country for many African immigrants fleeing war, conflict, poverty or political turmoil. There is a lot of historical and cultural/activist information on South Africa's history of violent xenophobic attacks¹¹ – attacks starting as early as 2009. These attacks have provoked violent, nation-wide campaigns against foreigners and refugees, displacing, injuring and killing thousands. Many of the xenophobic attacks in South

Africa specifically targeted black African foreigners, often stereotyping them as criminals, drug dealers and generally as the unsavory, untrustworthy ‘other’. Reasons for the attacks differ,¹² with some blaming the contestation for scarce resources, others attribute it to South Africa’s violent past, inadequate service delivery in townships and poor and rural areas and also the belief by local residents that claim foreigners take jobs opportunities away from local South Africans as they accept lower wages (foreign nationals do not generally participate in the struggle for better wages and working conditions).

Into this environment of violence, distrust, fear and displacement, in 2019 FLATFOOT is approached by Peter,¹³ a refugee from the DRC who has been living – with his family – in South Africa for over 12 years. He cannot go back to the DRC as he has the status of a political refugee. Some of his children are born in South Africa. This is now his home despite the daily everyday experiences of exclusion. He is a deeply community-minded man and has linked up with the KwaZulu-Natal branch of the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) (funded by Gender Links and Mental Health and Gender Links). He asks us if we wish to join his after-school program aimed at giving youth from refugee families in Durban somewhere safe to go and experience community and do homework. The SADAG has been doing amazing work with these youth, and so FLATFOOT make tentative forays into setting up a dance program. Our biggest hurdle is finding a space to work in as the community spaces being used are too small for a dance program. Because of different living conditions and situations, not all these refugee youth live in one area of the city and so transport to a central dance-appropriate space thus becomes a further hurdle. COVID-19 hits in early 2020 and we are left having to abandon not just pushing this forward, but all our FLATFOOT community-based dance intervention programs.

Changing the Narrative and Telling Different Embodied Stories

In 2021, as some of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions ease in South Africa, Peter and SADAG find funds to support transporting the dancers to FLATFOOT’s studio based on the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College campus). There is enough funding for 16 sessions (roughly four months of once-a-week classes). As SADAG has a strong gender focus, the decision is made to offer this dance space to the girls and young women in the refugee community and to also focus on this as a project of gender empowerment. FLATFOOT accepts the challenge and in setting up our own process, we decide to assign two of the more senior dancers and dance educators to this program; Jabu Siphika and Sifiso Khumalo. Both have a long history with FLATFOOT and a record of more than 12 years (each) of

delivering FLATFOOT's community-based dance work in both townships and rural areas. They understand – in their own embodied cells, marrow and bone – the methodologies of FLATFOOT and are skilled enough to be able to adapt to new environments. We are mindful that there is both a male and female teacher and set out to make sure workloads are shared, and that the gendered behavior we display and perform in our teaching and program offers a vision of equality in action. For example, we make sure that warm-ups are not only taken by Jabu and then choreography by Sifiso as the implicit (and questionable) hierarchy of what is 'important' work (always seen as the choreography) does not fall to the male teacher only. These 'every day' negotiations about who does what in a session are significant as they become visceral/embodied microcosms for the other 'living democracy' teaching and learning we set out to offer.

We also set up the program so that the final session is a small public (friend and family!) performance concert so that there is, for the girls and young women participating, a clear end goal for them and for us as teachers and facilitators. While we do not hold the agenda that the final performance is the goal to strive for in terms of perfection and practice, the idea of the concert is used to bracket commitment and focus in the sessions. It is also a chance to invite the community back into witnessing the work we and the dancers do so that there is a strong connection fostered between the dancer and their immediate community – we often get comments on how they did not imagine 'their daughter/friend/sister' could do this. It allows the young dancer participating to be seen differently but her community and to give her space – in a small everyday act of support – to quite literally take center stage in her own life. In this moment she is not just young, female, black, refugee, poor, foreign, 'other' (etc.) – she is a dancer moving in connection to other dancers who rely on her being present, awake and aware. This is the deeply personal embodied social repair and peace work we do. In 2021, Asanda¹⁴ (the oldest dancer in the group at 18 years old) said to me after performing that "being in the concert was the first time I felt like I belonged here". This almost throwaway comment, said after the euphoria of stepping off the stage, was a deeply felt sense of community and finally, for her, a moment of belonging. Asanda, as a child of refugee parents, has been living in South Africa for over ten years.

In setting up the program we also opted, as FLATFOOT, not to overtly name this dance intervention as being about offering a space to finding a sense of home and belonging, or indeed asking the girls to confront any explicit issues. They live deeply issued lives and so we felt that this should be seen to be a space of fun and community. We asked them to simply join a dance project. This was also done as many of them had had prior opportunity to come and watch the company perform in Durban – we were counting on the imagined desire to also 'do what we do' to bring them into the classes.

We began the project with 23 girls and young women (ages 11–18 years), and one of the key measures of a positive outcome was that not one of the girls missed even one of the sessions. (In fact, we did have only one absentee for one session due to illness). What has not been spoken about, up until now, is the *what* of each session – what did the dance work we do look like? While, the emphasis is not on sharing a curriculum, what is offered below are some of my (and FLATFOOT’s) autoethnographic narrative moments of what occurred and how it engaged the bigger peacebuilding project that engaged the politics of the ‘every day’.

Moving in the Dance Studio

For the first month of sessions, we opted to run basic adult beginner contemporary dance technique classes as a way of getting the young girls and women used to the idea of what dance training is all about – what a dance class might look (and importantly) feel like. As FLATFOOT is an African contemporary dance company where we have been evolving our own African release technique that has fed in from all manners of modern training systems (Graham, Hawkins, Skinner Release, Axis Syllabus, etc.), we hoped to offer these young girls and embodied sense of how we work and how we train. Also, one of the unspoken agendas of choosing this approach was to allow the girls and young women to – as a community – face this new dance challenge together. As none of them had ever done any contemporary dance before, they all stepped into the studio with the same sense of excitement and concern. We also firmly believed in the structure of a dance class as a useful frame to hold the concern and instability – of the new and unfamiliar – the girls and young women might have been feeling in stepping into this project. Each week we built on the familiarity of the last week – asking more of them each session – and thus allowing bodies to settle into new (and embodied) patterns of being in this community. In this way we saw a steady sense of owning the dance space and by session 4, the girls and young women would come in and begin to warm-up on their own – they had taken ownership of the space as if they belonged and had found a common – and safe – process for their bodies to engage this work.

Also relevant to our choosing to start this program with some basic dance technique training is the self-learning around communal space that requires listening, stillness and being quiet and then space to offer voice and input. We taught in a manner that allowed errors to be made in a spirit of humor and fun. It took a while for the girls and young women to realize that there would be no recriminations (so reminiscent of banking systems of education) if something was done differently to what have been demonstrated. Slowly, through each session, we started to allow these young bodies to destress and to find a communal sense of embodied belonging outside of

their daily experience of trauma. For us as facilitators this was most evident session. Noting that in the first session, the young dancers, had very little ability to be still or to listen, to watch and do the work demonstrated, they appeared distracted often falling back into humor and mockery of each other – clear signs for us of not just busy adolescent identities, but of deeper insecurities and fears around possible exposure. Bearing in mind that many of these children of refugee parents spent most of their daily lives attempting to blend in and not appear ‘foreign’ in their school environment. We made sure, when offering notes and corrections, that nobody was isolated and that notes were given communally in a spirit of growing our dancing selves.

As this program developed beyond these initial technique classes, we began to introduce small choreographic and creative movement assignments each week, asking the young dancers to take ownership of the actual making of the stories our bodies were telling. In the beginning we often got back what we had already been teaching – the young dancers still felt the weight of banking systems and the idea of getting it ‘right’. With enough encouragement and seeing each week some of them taking the chance to let their bodies move in new ways, we began to see not only a freeing of restraint, but a deeply reverent support of each other beginning to emerge. The laughing and mockery slowly disappeared (also often a devise young girls learn in patriarchal spaces to protect themselves) and we started to see the girls helping and holding each other accountable for the bigger dance work being created. At this point we began to add in contact work and lifts – knowing that now they were ready to literally hold and catch each other.

The final performance for friends and family ended the 2021 program as we watched these 23 girls and young women step onto the stage in an act of personal and communal courage. The final dance performance generated from them and the two FLATFOOT facilitators, Jabu and Sifiso, was a serious dance drama that offer all sorts of complex patterning that required them to weave in and out of each other, watching and listening for entrances and exits – in short to find another way to imagine themselves – in this moment – as a community of young girls and women who had purpose and belonging. I echo – again – the insights of Pruitt and Jeffrey (2020: 3), who significantly locate dance as medium for peacebuilding when they state,

Bodies are targets of violence, but they are malleable, so they can also resist and produce different political possibilities and identities, and in the process generate new social configurations.

There is always a journey to continue in this work and already the dance program is fully subscribed for the August–November 2022 sessions. What remains also significant – in the rush to be part of the 2022 upcoming program – is that none of these 23 girls and young women have expressed any

desire to take dance up as a career path. While we always hope that some will consider this (and many others do in our township programs), we are also aware that we are training audiences, and, significantly, we are reminded that their involvement has offered an embodied space of community and physical safety. In the end, while we use dance and make dance – and this is in and of itself a valuable process and product – we are also deeply aware of the power of this dance practice to teach peace in the everyday action of being in a dance class, doing a dance class and participating in a choreographic process. These are, for FLATFOOT, all acts of Living Democracy and how we create (and open) personal spaces of self-realization and belonging that allows for disenfranchised youth to have their humanity – even momentarily in these dance programs – fully realised. While our dance work offers everyday peace interventions, the work is – in and of itself – peacebuilding.

Some Concluding Thoughts That Open up More Discussion

Finally, in the context of the above autoethnographic and narrative enquiry, what remains is to heighten how our embodied dance peace intervention work, some of which is critically narrated above, allows – in this instance – for a communal sharing of evolving experience and knowledge that may be useful for other students, scholars and teachers who also engage in applied dance processes. As research, the hope is that this chapter has opened up ideas of self-enquiry and autoethnography into embodied artistic practice as both a valuable arena of study, and, secondly, as peace intervention. As collective case study, the hope is that some of the narrated processes, philosophies and daily working methods detailed above, offer a starting point for other similar – though contextually different – dance peace intervention programs that could congruently begin to add to a growing dance and peacebuilding practice that honors facilitators and participants in an embodied experience of human rights, and of finding belonging in small every day (danced) acts of personal and social repair. This is where FLATFOOT and I engage in a continuous process of re-imagining. And perhaps potentially to pick up the provocation by Sara Ahmed “to express hope for another kind of world, one that is unimaginable at present, is a political action, and it remains so even in the face of exhaustion and despair” (2014, 186).

Notes

- 1 https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/31425.Ben_Okri (accessed 19 March 2022).
- 2 FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY is a professional dance company based in Durban, South Africa and works in the evolving genre of African contemporary dance. I am the founder, artistic director and one of the resident choreographers for the company. The company began in 1994 – the same year that saw the birth

- of Nelson Mandela's democracy and the first year of his presidency. For more on the company go to: <http://flatfootdancecompany.webs.com/>
- 3 See for example, <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/peace> (accessed 18 March 2022).
 - 4 See for example, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov> (accessed 9 January 2023).
 - 5 See for example, <https://e-journal.uum.edu.my/index.php/pr/article/view/13233> (accessed 9 January 2023).
 - 6 See: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=10334> (accessed 10 March 2022).
 - 7 Loots, L. 2022. Personal communication with the FLATFOOT dancers.
 - 8 Loots, L. 2022. Personal communication with the FLATFOOT dancers.
 - 9 See, for example: Loots (1995), Loots (2006) and Loots (2010).
 - 10 Statistics form: *Laframboise, N. 2019*. <https://borgenproject.org/5-facts-about-xenophobia-in-south-africa/> (accessed 4 April 2022).
 - 11 See for example: <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2015/XenophobiaSouthAfrica/index.html> (accessed 4 April 2022).
 - 12 See for example: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/xenophobic-violence-democratic-south-africa> (accessed 4 April 2022).
 - 13 Not his real name.
 - 14 Not her real name, and taken from (Loots, L. 2021). Personal communication with the dancers.

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15 Fostering the Hope of Distressed African-Americans in the USA

Culture, Arts, and Youth Development Strategies

Sheryl Evans Davis

Introduction

One Friday night in January 2015, four young African American men were shot and killed as they sat in an idling car in their San Francisco neighborhood. The quadruple homicide galvanized a community to address the disparities and challenges facing youth, especially youth of color. African American and Latinx youth are disproportionately impacted by joblessness, poverty, and violence (Berube & Holmes, 2016; Broyles, 2019; Sawhill & Pulliam, 2019). This disparity contributes to a disconnection from opportunities and a lack of access to quality mentorship (Symonds et al., 2011). In response to increasing gun violence and its impact on low-income youth of color, community stakeholders organized a myriad of activities and initiatives to decrease violence.

Through a series of observations, interviews, focus groups, surveys, and case studies, this chapter features collaborative efforts to decrease violence and advance peace through curriculum and programming focused on social justice. This study observed and engaged stakeholders from a San Francisco Human Rights Commission program focused on advancing social justice. The program partnered with schools and community-based organizations to provide a variety of activities for youth. The program's intent is to share history and culture in educational and social justice activities with youth. Special attention is given to youth from low-income communities as well as African American youth. This study engages youth to define programming's success. Previous research focused on crime data and represented a gap in community, specifically youth's perceptions of what makes a program successful, interesting, or engaging (Modestino, 2018; Sasser Modestino & Paulsen, 2018).

The decision to center African Americans in peace education and violence prevention strategies is based on the pervasive racial disparities in the criminal justice system, in addition to the effects of racial violence on Black people (Pollock, 2021; HEALTH EQUITY RESOLUTION, 2020; SF Department

of Public Health BAAHI, 2018). In the project city, according to the African American Achievement and Leadership Initiative – AAALI (2020), African American youth make up nearly 8% of the public school system, but another report notes African American youth represent more than 60% of youth in the juvenile detention center (Cuevas & Mckee, 2021). Similarly, based on the US Census less than 6% of San Francisco’s population is African American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021), but the San Francisco District Attorney’s office identified nearly 50% of those in county jail identify as Black (Yep et al., 2020). Also, African Americans represent a disproportionate number of people utilizing behavioral health beds in mental health facilities (San Francisco Department of Public Health, 2020). The negative impact of poverty, violence, poor health, and other experiences contribute to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which can perpetuate violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). African American youth are disproportionately represented among youth with ACEs (Bunts & Tawa, 2019).

This chapter shares curriculum and best practices centering youth development, art, and culture as tools to advance peace. The selected examples are from a study of activities used to support youth leadership and growth as a violence prevention strategy (De La Rue, 2017; Henfield et al., 2015). Many of the strategies address risk factors and advance best practices to prevent ACEs as outlined by the CDC. Strategies include connecting youth to caring adults, teaching them skills, and strengthening support for families.

Methods

The study used a mixed-methods approach to collect multiple forms of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Surveys and documents from ongoing research were reviewed in addition to interviews and focus groups. Maximum variation sampling allowed the researcher to sample across diverse perspectives (Johnson & Christenen, 2014). Viewpoints included in the feedback come from youth, law enforcement, service providers, and community stakeholders. The mixed-methods approach supported the multiple data collection methods and triangulation and increased the credibility of the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Applying a participatory action framework, youth and community help shape the research (Johnson & Christenen, 2014), including developing surveys, leading focus groups, and conducting interviews. Building on Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model and the need to transfer power gradually to the young person, youth are included in developing and facilitating the process to serve as not just observers but to be actively involved in the activity, to center community and youth voices in determining what success looks like and including them in the gathering and analysis of information.

Additionally, maximum variation sampling allows the researcher to sample a wide array of groups (Johnson & Christenen, 2014). The groups were done in schools and community centers. School groups happened during the school year, and community engagement was year-round. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posited using a collaborative approach and multiple investigators to build in data comparison and cross-checking helps increase validity. Surveys were distributed on paper and online, and all focus groups were in person. Focus group notes were coded and grouped to inform findings. Survey and focus group notes were shared back with youth groups for review, feedback, and input.

Data Sources

Data sources include program and activity evaluations, surveys, observations, focus groups, interviews with community members, summary reports, and past presentations. Through data analysis, the study aimed to explore the impact of hope on violence prevention and peace education strategies.

Observations. Over several years, multiple groups were observed in different settings. Groups being observed include in-school groups and out-of-school time programming. Notes from observations used for program evaluation informed the information shared in this chapter.

Focus Groups. Participants in school groups and community-based programs engaged in conversations and shared feedback in focus groups. The data were used for program evaluation and are shared in this chapter. As shown in Table 15.1, focus groups ranged from small groups to large-scale engagement with 100+ youth. Focus groups and discussions with youth over the age of 18 were conducted with an independent researcher who recorded comments anonymously. The research was part of a program evaluation and summary report. In the spirit of participatory research, youth were actively involved in the review and sharing of findings.

Interviews. The interviews included are with program staff from the community-based organization. The interviews were informal and unstructured.

Table 15.1 Participants in focus groups

<i>Focus Groups</i>	<i>No. of Students</i>
Middle School A	15
Middle School B	6
High School	17
Community Program 2011–2018	40
Summer Program 2020	67
Summer 2021	182
Total number of participants	327

Surveys. Surveys were distributed to participants over the age of 18; the questions were reviewed and approved through the Internal Review Board (IRB) process as part of the author's dissertation research.

Document Analysis. Group activity documents, program brochures, past survey responses, and other relevant materials were used in this study.

Participants

This study engaged stakeholders across strategies. Focus groups and observations were done with three schools (two middle schools and one high school) and three community-based programs serving youth between 12 and 24 years of age. All 17 students in the high school program were Black and ranged between 14 and 17 years of age. Middle School A had 15 students, and all participants identified as African American. Middle School B was the smallest and most diverse group, with six participants, two African American students and one who identified as biracial, one student of Middle Eastern heritage, and two White youth. The community-based program partners were 90% African American. In 2020, the community-based program surveyed 67 youth over the age of 18, and in 2021, the organization emailed the survey to 419 program participants, and 182 participants (43%) completed the survey. Nearly 30% of the organization's program participants were 18 and older. Eighteen- and 19-year-old youth represent the most participants aged 18 and older. From 2011 to 2018, youth participating in a community-based program were surveyed. The survey respondents also represent diverse racial and ethnic groups. Interview participants include the community-based organization director and the teen staff coordinator. The director identifies as an African American male in his sixties. The director grew up in the community and feels obligated to give back to the community and help youth avoid the bad choices he made as a youth. The teen staff coordinator is a biracial Black and Latino male in his twenties.

Education

Education can be used to advance peace and increase hope, but it has also been used as a tool to oppress and cause trauma, contributing to despair and violence (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Throughout history, Black leaders have advocated for education. In the decades following the Civil War, education was used to attack hope. The education system fostered a caste system of sorts and forced African American students into lower-paying and menial jobs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). This inability to pursue education created a sense of hopelessness for many young African Americans (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Although W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington had differing opinions about what empowering education

looked like, they both believed in the power of education (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Du Bois believed education could help guide Black leaders to build strong communities, and Washington believed learning a trade and becoming necessary for the country's economic success could eliminate racism and was the best path to advance racial equality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Their efforts and ideologies supported system changes, created opportunities, ushered in hope, and represented the potential of education to advance social justice.

In one survey, youth were asked what they needed to do to secure their dream job. Of the 69% who responded to that question, an overwhelming majority indicated their need for education to achieve what they identified as their dream job. Of the youth identifying a need for education, nearly 40% noted they needed support in the area of people skills and communication. Respondents shared a desire to improve their written and oral communication skills as well as build their capacity for teamwork and learn how to work with others, and some noted they would need to develop their confidence, increase motivation, and be passionate about the work. Other educational needs identified were technical skills, including organization, financial literacy, critical thinking, and the ability to perform analysis. Respondents also noted a need for social-emotional learning, with 25% of the youth using words like patient, passionate, confident, and mentally prepared to describe what they needed for their future careers. In a follow-up question, some noted a need to find support to develop these skills outside of the classroom and looked for community programs to help them. Figure 15.1 quantifies their responses.

Q: What do you need for your dream job?

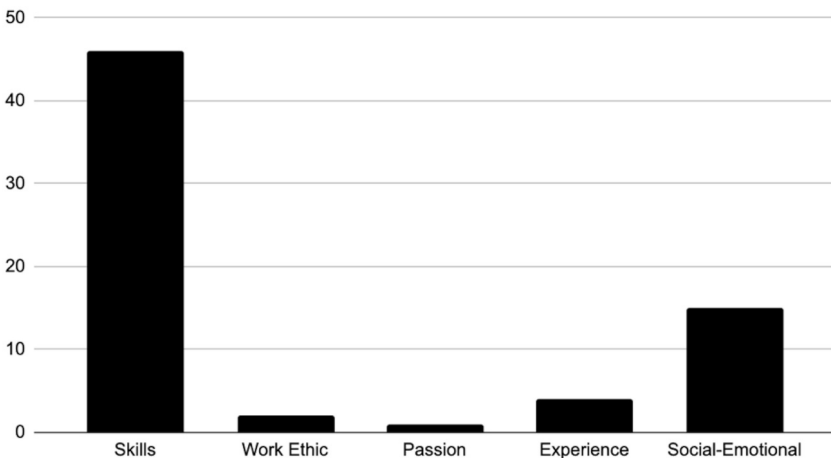


Figure 15.1 Survey responses about dream job.

Religion has played a prominent role in Black communities, including education, advocating for social justice, building solidarity, and social capital (Mohamed et al., 2021; Pratt et al., 1933). During slavery, some anti-literacy laws went so far as to ban slaves from gathering for religious services in fear that religious/church services were being used to plot escapes or read about abolition movements (Tolley, 2016). Through teaching spirituals and their varied messages of escape or expression of emotions or passing down of history, music became a tool to foster hope (Cox, n.d.), and as one theologian explained, spirituals are a tool of resistance, a demonstration of defiance for a group of people to be human in a society that seeks to destroy them (Thurman, 1975). Benjamin Mays, the mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., suggested spirituals were a tool of hope, the hope that things will be better, if not in this lifetime, then in the next one (Cone, 1972; King, 1963; Pratt et al., 1933). Each of these theologians believed that hope could transform lives and communities and sustain people in times of despair. Tapping into hope to get through difficult moments and using song to teach about history and peace or to manage emotions like anger and cope with stress were two methods. Mays believed there was a “Genius of the Negro Church” (Pratt et al., 1933, p. 278), and the soul of the church was unique in its ability to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the community.

Delgado (2005) discusses the concept of spirituality and suggests that spirituality is not limited to cultural and religious boundaries. Delgado identifies four characteristics essential for spirituality and notes that they are insufficient when taken independently. The four characteristics include a belief system, a personal search for purpose, connection to others, and self-transcendence. Although focused on spirituality as a resource for nurses to advance holistic care, the benefit of experiencing what Delgado describes as “holding and realizing certain values and goals, and experiencing positive and satisfying behaviors and emotions in life” (Delgado, 2005, p. 161), spirituality is also useful in advancing education and peace.

Numerous studies and reports suggest that hope and spirituality can help increase learning and contribute to life satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, coping skills, self-transcendence, and connectedness to others (Delgado, 2005; Piedmont & Friedman, 2012; Lauzon, 2020; Yaghoobzadeh et al., 2018). A study of Chilean students found that spiritual experiences had an “indirect effect on subjective wellbeing through hope” (Wnuk, 2021, p. 7). In Appendices A, B, C and D, are examples of the tools, resources and activities used to engage youth and foster conversations and contemplation around peace.¹ Activities like the one found in Appendix C invite youth to review a poem, a song, a speech, or writing, and they consider what thoughts or emotions the contemplation invokes. Selecting works that represent overcoming a difficult situation can demonstrate strategies to advance peace and alternatives to violence when experiencing anger and frustration. As a follow-up activity, youth

are encouraged to write strategies to deal with frustration and develop practices for peaceful and thoughtful responses.

Hope is believed to be shaped by spirituality and connected to maintaining behaviors needed to reach a goal (Wnuk, 2021). Applying practices connected to spiritual experiences can help maintain hope and improve outcomes like wellbeing, coping ability, and life satisfaction (Piedmont & Friedman, 2012). Spiritual experiences include developing significant relationships, meditation and contemplation, implementing activities that promote respect and acceptance of others, and awareness of the world and of self (Delgado, 2005; Piedmont & Friedman, 2012; Wnuk, 2021). In some of the sessions, youth seemed to struggle with self-acceptance and love, as they often felt unwelcome in spaces. In one activity, youth are encouraged to draw and write what they love about themselves. Youth often struggled with writing something good about themselves and sharing it publicly. Many of the youth were internalizing their frustration with their treatment in their schools and needed a mechanism to cope with the isolation they felt.

James Cone (2018a) described frustration with how silent academic institutions and professors had been on racism and segregation. The Civil Rights Movement would leverage communities, churches, and college students to advance peace (Farmer, 1998; Gates, 2021; King, 1964; Pratt et al., 1933). James Lawson was an educator; he taught the methods of nonviolence not for credit in universities but often in churches (Farmer, 1998). Attendees adopted the strategy not for a moment in time but for a lifetime (SNCC Legacy Project, n.d.).

Du Bois argued for Black-centered education and suggested that civic engagement opportunities and providing space for Black leadership to develop and learn policy and advocacy could change the status quo. Education plays several roles in advancing peace: one in addressing economic security and building self-sufficiency (World Health Organization, 2019) and another in teaching about self-determination and building pride in heritage and culture to improve outcomes (Davies, 2017). The World Health Organization (2019) recommends using culturally relevant, curriculum-based activities to advance peace to prevent violence. Carter G. Woodson, Du Bois, Benjamin Mays, and many others advocated for a culturally relevant curriculum as a tool to foster hope, create a sense of worth, and build strong communities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Davies, 2017; Rothstein, 2013). Over the years, community leaders have expressed concerns about the role of educational systems in fostering self-hatred in Black communities.

Research suggests spirituality is connected to hope, and hope fosters self-sufficiency (Hong et al., 2015). If hope can increase the attainment of goals and avoidance of unfavorable outcomes and behavior, can hope advance peace? Activists like Harriet Tubman represent spirituality and demonstrate the impact of education, words, and song in the pursuit of peace, justice,

and freedom. Tubman and other religious leaders channeled their frustrations and anger into activism (Ashley, 2014). Tubman's close relationship and conversations with God are credited for her ability to lead hundreds to freedom without violence (Ngunjiri et al., 2012). Harriet Tubman used spirituality, her faith, the gift of song, and culture to educate others and to foster hope for those who dared to journey with her as well as the ones who stayed behind.

Celebrated theologian and professor James Cone wanted to offer hope in spirituality and make seen the spirit of Blackness (Cone, 2018a). Cone was committed to affirming Black humanity and Black power and their connection to the Gospel (Cone, 2018a). Cone describes the invisible mask he wore from childhood to graduate school as a disguise to protect himself and avoid offending White people. Cone shares that he erupted and lashed out in a graduate class, tired of wearing his mask and accepting racism as a common way of life. He describes removing his mask as an explosion. He explains a need to give voice to the feelings of rage in the Black community and in himself. Cone expressed a sense of hopelessness in a religion that accepted and even promoted White supremacy as a practice. Cone shares how his frustration and rage emerged and how he needed to express his emotions. Providing tools for young people to express their frustration informed the creation of activities and images that encourage youth to think about what they can do to address a challenging situation or to identify how they feel and find peaceful ways to address their anger.

In interviews, some elders in the Black community blame violence on a lack of knowledge of culture and history. In the book *We Gon' Be Alright*, Jeff Chang (2016) asks, "How can important cultural knowledge survive?" He explains how other countries have established mechanisms to support the production of culture. Chang argues that, to be a more just society, we need culture to help recognize each other's full humanity. In interviews and focus groups, community stakeholders suggested that cultural knowledge or education can also help young people see their own humanity (Bremond, 2016; Davis, 2020). In workshops where youth learn about their own cultural history, their responses suggest they also develop a feeling of pride and hope in possibilities (Henfield et al., 2015). In the shared examples, strategies for peace include workshops focused on social justice education and promoting and centering cultural knowledge. When asked what type of support they needed to be successful, respondents to the 2018 community-based program survey highlighted academic support, but also called out faith and hope.

In his book *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, Cone (2018b) explains the power of speaking and writing to fight for justice. African Americans have used their words to encourage action, teach peace, and work to decrease violence (West & Buschendorf, 2014). Activities in the programs, as previously mentioned, include listening to music, meditating on the words, and connecting the

songs to spiritual practices, civic engagement, and community service to create safe spaces.

Practices that promote equity in learning encourage youth to formulate new questions and seek answers in different ways (i.e., excellence through education). The ability to rethink solutions and consider a new way to address a problem could help increase peaceful engagements and prevent violence. Sharing and exposing youth to established literature or key historical events is considered a best practice for increasing learning (Ferguson, 2020; Howard, 2020; Knott-Dawson, 2019). Helping youth connect their current experiences to the past might impact how they solve problems. In a series of focus groups, youth shared what they learned from the workshops and highlighted the fight for freedom as a motivating factor. Youth were able to describe a connection between historical atrocities and current issues (De La Rue, 2017). One youth shared, “we like [were] killed and shut down for trying to get freedom, and now we’re killed and shut down for living our free life.” Another young person shared,

“They don’t realize that. They don’t put their self in our shoes. They don’t feel what we feel ’cause they never, they like, I feel like white people haven’t really struggled how the way we did.” [Another Female Speaker: “At all.”]. And it’s like we work so hard just to get to where we are now, and it’s barely paying off. Because, just like how it was at slavery, that’s how it is now.

There are benefits to providing space to link learning to youth interest; it fosters hope and is engaging. When asked about the program, one person shared, “It was a fun interactive way to learn about social justice.” Many researchers and educators have called for more culturally responsive, engaging, and relevant ways to engage youth around social justice (Howard, 2020; Katsarou et al., 2010; Knott-Dawson, 2019).

One study recommends using curriculum-based activities to resolve conflicts in peaceful and nonviolent ways (World Health Organization, 2019) as a best practice. The strategies include teaching about safe behavior as well as developing life and communication skills. The World Health Organization (2019) offers education as a strategy with the potential to positively impact the behaviors and attitudes of young people and recommends starting earlier for greater impact. Key topics identified for violence prevention curriculum include problem solving, showing compassion, and preparing youth for social and academic success. Other suggestions include group discussions, role play, and lessons in managing emotions, coping with stress, and developing empathy (World Health Organization, 2019). Many of the activities used in the examined program apply the recommended strategies. Figure 15.2 categorizes their thoughts about the support they need to be successful.

Q8: What type(s) of support do you think you need to be successful? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 2 Skipped: 0

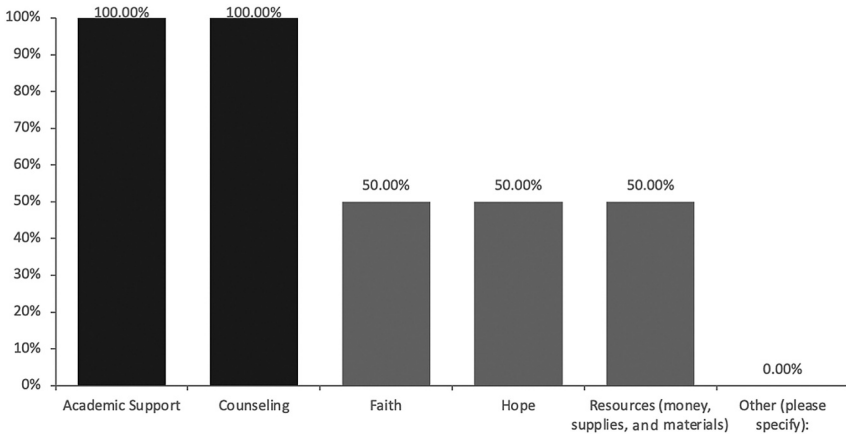


Figure 15.2 Support needed responses.

Six elements of social justice (Picower, 2012). The Six Elements of Social Justice Framework was developed by Bree Picower and adapted for use in the curriculum of the studied program. The six elements document outlines core components to teach young people to build their capacity and understanding for social justice. Much of the framework aligns with the best practices identified by the World Health Organization, focused on developing life skills, addressing risk factors, and challenging social norms. The six elements include self-love and knowledge, respect for others, social movements and social change, issues of social injustice, awareness raising, and social action. Curriculum activities in Appendix A describe what the youth in this study experienced, including a journey map, quote of the day, acrostic poetry, and dream cloud.

The group discussions and curriculum engagement foster conversations that identify challenging and sometimes traumatic exchanges and provide space to explore strategies to cope with stress and other difficult situations.

Often, the activities display the hurt, trauma, and pain of youth, hidden by what many perceived as bad attitudes but that could best be described as ACEs. In one workshop, a cohort of African American youth completed the dream cloud, and 68% of the youth expressed a desire to build community on the school campus. Sixty-two percent of the youth wrote about the need for the school administration to change the culture in the school and develop solutions to address the tension between Black students and the teachers, while over 50% of the papers noted a need to hire more Black

staff/teachers and to create a more welcoming space for Black youth. The responses prompted discussions focused on what the youth could do to address the identified problems. Many of the youth acknowledged they were angry and acting in threatening ways toward other students and even the teachers. The cloud promoted conversations that helped the youth to organize and advocate for changes in the school. Ultimately, the group organized school events, met with the school and school district administration, and successfully lobbied for substantial changes in the school. The students described feeling seen and empowered in a way they had not felt when engaging in intimidating behavior.

Youth Development

Self-sufficiency, coupled with cultural competence, can be powerful and help overcome challenges (Hong et al., 2020, 2021; Hong et al., 2015). African American culture is rich in art, spirituality, and unity; over the years, these tools have been used to encourage nonviolence and promote peace. The highlighted program leverages youth development strategies to train peer mentors and adults to support youth and prepare them for work, with the intention of decreasing violence. The Search Institute and Research in Action (RIA), how mentors, lessons, and opportunities, as well as rich art and cultural tools, can be used to develop hope and resilience (Brown, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Davies, 2017; RIA, 2007; Search Institute, 2023).

Hope through resilience can help advance peace (RIA, 2007; King, 1963). An oft-used cultural strategy is to combine education, art, and spirituality through song to fuel hope and support peace. Negro spirituals were used to send secret messages during the days of slavery and to encourage youth during the Civil Rights Movement (Cone, 1972; Gates, 2021; Library of Congress, n.d.); Pratt et al., 1933). Historical examples document the power of education, youth development, art, and culture to advance peace (Moore, 1971). Fannie Lou Hamer is noted for singing “This Little Light of Mine” and “Sweet Honey in the Rock,” which turned Ella Baker’s words, “We who believe in freedom cannot rest,” into a song.

James Cone describes the importance of song in what he called the “struggle for black survival” (Cone, 1972). In his book *Spirituals and the Blues*, Cone shares that, where he grew up in Arkansas, music, specifically Black music, is critical for forming identity and surviving (Cone, 1972). Cone argued that music helps to address emotions and frustration (Cone, 1972). The songs that defined the Civil Rights Movement, and the role they played during that era, demonstrate the importance of faith. The songs encompassed not only a call to justice but also a core of spirituality, a belief that despite the sufferings endured by people, righteousness and justice would prevail.

Some studies suggest spirituality coupled with hope has the potential to outweigh discouragement, encourage positive behaviors, and develop resilience (Brown, 2010; Salvatore, 2008). Spirituality as a cognitive behavioral therapy can help address unproductive thoughts and circumstances (Hong et al., 2015). Engaging youth to advance and lead change can support youth development and build a sense of hope for the youth and community at large.

In some of the workshops and conversations, youth expressed a similar sense of hopelessness based on feeling invisible, erased, and without value. Cone uses research and writing to tell the story of Black humanity, to express himself, and find peace (Cone 2018b). Today, artists like Amanda Gorman, J. Cole, Chance the Rapper, and others use their talent and art to call out the pain, recognize humanity, and usher in storytelling to humanize struggle and increase peace. Some assert that music and song were fundamental for the Civil Rights Movement, serving as an inspiration when leaders needed guidance and a means to raise money or provide a sense of Being safe and secure when they were in the middle of challenging and dangerous moments (Gates, 2021).

The songs, movements, and historical experiences highlight the need to believe, have faith, and persevere. Young people and marginalized communities need hope and need to believe great things can be achieved regardless of the barriers they might encounter (Salvatore, 2008; Search Institute, 2023). Appendix B is a tool that has been used with youth to explore belief systems. Youth are given the opportunity to review different symbols and images associated with different movements and beliefs. The process allows youth to engage in a conversation, consider their own beliefs and begin to identify ways that others channeled their frustrations and the impact of their decisions. The ability to discuss and explore provides an opportunity for the participants to see how people and movements have effected change. Youth use the images to fuel their own ideas and make posters to share to effect change. This is the role of the peace educator: to believe great things can happen and to instill that hope and belief in others. Art, music, and culture are tools for instilling hope (Potvin & Argue, 2014). In one school, students created posters to battle bullying on campus.

The need to connect art, music, and culture for impact was demonstrated in one workshop for youth. Music was offered as a conflict resolution tool to a group of youth who had been involved in verbal altercations. Worried words would escalate to a physical altercation, program staff coordinated a session with musicians from a local college. Program staff hoped the music would ease tension and foster conversation between the youth. Program staff expected the exchange to build community, similar to how James Farmer described the interaction between the Freedom Riders and others in jail. The guest musicians selected the music. While in college, the teen staff

coordinator practiced ethnography and often took detailed notes on what happened in the groups; during this particular session, he shared his thoughts on the disconnect between the musicians and the youth:

As the presentation went deeper into information about Beethoven and what he did (for classical music), the group was rapidly losing interest. [Youth] were speaking during the presentation, turning around and talking to who was behind them and slumping in their chairs.

Though educational and historically accurate, the speakers were not engaging with the group of students. Topics ... were not being presented in a way that was applicable to [the youth] and effectively lost their attention. The students need to know how this history is related to their everyday lives. This is how you engage effectively.

The notes demonstrate the need to connect spirituality to music to change behaviors. The youth did not seem interested in the music, so the opportunity to move beyond themselves and build relationships was lost. The session, in many ways, had the opposite of the intended effect. The youth were restless, frustrated, and irritated. They were not interested or engaged and were not prepared to have peaceful conversations with each other.

In another session, the dream cloud activity sheet in Appendix D and Langston Hughes' poem *Harlem (A Dream Deferred)* were used to incorporate art and culture into youth development activities. In addition to the engagement and ACEs prevention strategies, the program also worked to include mentoring, leadership, and skill development opportunities for youth. Many activities apply youth development principles that have existed culturally and historically in many communities as a strategy to advance peace, justice, and equity but specifically in the African American community. Responses to the cloud are coded and used to highlight shared feelings the students expressed, as illustrated in Figure 15.3.

Several of the core tenets associated with peace education have been identified as necessary for successful youth development (Search Institute, 2022). Formal efforts to advance youth development as a guiding principle emerged in the 1990s (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). As programming and practices expand and increase, characteristics for effective youth development begin to emerge. Many youth development principles are also embedded in the African American psyche. A few common requirements for positive youth development are leadership development, opportunities for recognition, supportive relationships with adults, and skill building. A visit to a Black church, a review of poetry, or a conversation with an elder will quickly demonstrate how youth development principles intersect with the Black experience. Maya Angelou and Langston Hughes describe supportive relationships in their work. In *Mother to Son*, Langston Hughes describes a

Name:	Ladder' comments	Cloud' comments	Themes:									
			% of students who expressed:	68.75	62.5	56.25	37.5	31.25	31.25	25	18.75	

Figure 15.3 Students' feelings that they expressed.

mother encouraging her son to keep going, and in *Still I Rise*, Maya Angelou reminds the reader of the gifts she received and now shares from her ancestors. Attend a church service, and you are likely to see young people being recognized for reading a speech, singing a song, or helping someone and displaying leadership. The commitment to celebrating, supporting, encouraging, and developing Black youth leadership has been highlighted from slavery to the present day (Cone, 2018a, 2018b; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Gates, 2021).

The conversations that ensued after the various activities were described by youth and adults as meaningful, charged, and focused on building community and creating safe spaces. The music sessions fostered the desired conversations. In an interview, one staff member noted, “We are making a connection to the past, using the same techniques as people like Harriet Tubman.” The program director described how if the young people can “listen and grasp” the power of storytelling and song, they can take the lead and transform the community. The program director felt the college students had stepped up and were teaching the younger students about history and modeling how to build peaceful communities.

From the Black Panthers to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, African Americans have developed mentor-rich environments, which can have a positive impact on youth and their communities (Freedman, 1999; Mcquillin & Mcdaniel, 2017). The persistence of caring adults makes the difference in academics and aids in decreasing youth participation in risky behaviors like violence (Freedman, 1999). Whether it is the colloquial reference to the “OG” or the evolution of hip hop with a sampling of old school music or the role of the Black church in America, the ideas of mentoring, integration of youth interest, culture, and voice are part of the African American Cultural Framework (Coates, 2008; Farmer, 1998; Gates, 2021; Jarrett et al., 2005; Pratt et al., 1933). Table 15.2 shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents to one of the 2018 community-based

Table 15.2 Community program survey responses

<i>Answers choices</i>	<i>Responses</i>	
Get to know people I wouldn't have known otherwise	91.67%	22
Learn about art and science	37.50%	9
Learn more about things to do in and around San Francisco	83.33%	20
Be physically active	54.17%	13
Learn how to work with other youth as part of a team	70.83%	17
Try new foods	37.50%	9
Try new sports and games	25.00%	6
Feel more confident about going to school	79.17%	19
Total Respondents: 24		

program surveys noted the program and projects helped them connect with people they would not have otherwise met.

Youth are often at the forefront of advancing change, and many people refer to young people as the future or as representing hope for the future (Farmer, 1985; Pratt et al., 1933). Recent events have again centered youth leadership and voices as agents of change (Zaveri, 2020). Across the USA, in response to issues ranging from environmental justice to police brutality, young people organized marches, hosted rallies, and demanded change (Sawhill & Pulliam, 2019; Zaveri, 2020). The Children's March of 1963 and the protests of 2020 represent the power and impact of youth leadership and demonstrate how these peaceful movements support hope and advance change (Bort & Aleah, 2020; Levingston, 2018).

Building on youth development principles focused on mutual respect was critical to advancing equity and building trust with youth. Providing space for youth voices to be included and valued is important and relevant to youth development. Creating a sense of belonging helps foster pride and develops leadership (Freedman, 1999; Hamilton et al., n.d.; Mcquillin & Mcdaniel, 2017).

Some of the activities used to support youth leadership and strengthen economic support also serve as violence prevention strategies (CDC, 2016; Sasser Modestino & Paulsen, 2018). The activities build on best practices and strategies outlined by the 40 developmental assets for youth development, the World Health Organization, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The practices include involving community members in planned activities; bringing together key sectors to coordinate activities; partnering with community members to deliver activities and create caring neighborhoods; developing partnerships that foster positive self-images for youth through group discussions, public education campaigns, family relationship approaches, social-emotional learning, and mentoring; and connecting youth with caring adults and intervention.

The activities are built on the strategies defined as best practices. The Search Institute asserts that youth who experience more of the 40 developmental assets are less likely to be involved in negative behavior and violence (Search Institute, n.d.). There are 20 internal and 20 external assets. Many of the youth report finding the program engaging and enjoy learning about their culture and history, as well as strategies to manage their emotions, cope with stress, and foster hope. One participant noted, "The [program] influenced me by gaining experience on how to create team projects and collaborate with fellow interns on those projects. I think the [program] improved my teamwork and people skills." Another student shared, "This [program] has given me the opportunity to learn new skills. It was challenging at times, but this experience taught me that perseverance is key to success." Through programming,

youth earn money, build relationships, feel valued in community, and experience many other assets that can prevent violence.

In one activity, students were asked to consider ways to use music to de-escalate a challenging situation or help someone having a hard time. The students had to

1. Think of a song that could be used to address challenges or engage in conversation
2. Pick lyrics that can help facilitate a discussion or address a challenge
3. Be able to explain how/why the song could be used

Students recommended songs they believed could “serve as encouragement” and help someone “during difficult or challenging times.” Each participant identified a song and shared a strategy for using the song.

In one workshop, many of the youth in attendance believed their school counselors did not have faith in their success. When the group of more than 125 youth was asked if their school counselors had faith in them, two students raised their hands to demonstrate they believed that their counselor had faith in them (Bremond, 2016). Almost all the students in the room felt that their counselors did not have faith in them. This suggests there is little positive engagement between the school counselors and Black and brown students in the related community. In interviews with program staff, they suggested counselors are failing the youth, and “the school system needs to change that” (Bremond, 2016). Changing school systems and the education system is a long quest for the Black community. It was a crime to teach Black people to read during slavery (Span, 2005); separate but equal was not equal (Rothstein, 2013); and integration did not improve outcomes (Casey & Hardy, 2018). From Frederick Douglass to Marian Wright Edelman and throughout the ages, education, including peace education, has been used to battle poverty and advance social justice and nonviolence, often outside of formal institutions.

Instructional Strategies

Providing work-based learning opportunities for youth supports violence prevention strategies like constructive use of time, strengthening economic supports, and developing life skills identified in several documents (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019; Search Institute, n.d.; World Health Organization, 2019). Work-based learning activities might offer increased earnings for youth and decrease their participation in negative activities like violent crime (Sasser Modestino & Paulsen, 2018). Studies suggest that including spiritual practices and civic engagement in training

and activities could increase self-sufficiency, community, and personal safety (Hong et al., 2015; Hong et al., 2020; Sasser Modestino & Paulsen, 2018).

The programs focused on providing economic security also incorporated art and culture. One project launched specifically to engage youth and young adults to address public safety developed workshops using the poetry of Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou in conversations between police and community. The initiative was designed to provide support and resources to youth of color from communities with high rates of violence. The program offered youth an opportunity to earn money while developing strategies to prevent violence. Researchers from Stanford evaluated the program (Stanford SPARQ Lab, 2017) and reported,

The Initiative is promising as a model for positive youth development and local investment in the community. The pilot study evaluation results suggest that youth benefitted from the program personally, socially, and academically. The program also helped prepare them for future success in college and career.

Generally, participants and community stakeholders felt the program helped to decrease violence and, in many ways, developed peace ambassadors. Stanford described responses from students indicating the program supported “sustained academic, social-emotional, and community engagement, and a sense of investment in their own academic and social wellbeing” (ibid). Table 15.3 lists some of the approaches and where they connect.

Additional efforts focus on developing peer and adult mentors to support youth and prepare them for work with the intention of decreasing violence. Training for program participants, mentors, and program staff was hands-on and interactive. In preparation for working with youth, staff and mentors are expected to go through the same activities as the youth. Like many of the youth, mentors and staff find the process educational and beneficial to help them develop a better understanding of how the strategies that promote self-control celebrate the individual’s worth through story. One participant noted, “Music was incorporated into the presentation. History is trapped inside our music and poems. There is a story or message behind every song, drawing, story.” There is a sense that using the historical, cultural, and artistic approach offers new strategies; another survey respondent shared about the training, “This was very interesting and knowledgeable, very enjoyable and at the same time touched on a lot of issues not touched on very often.”

Beyond the work-based learning programming, school groups offer an opportunity for youth to develop assets and prevent ACEs and violence. One school group was comprised of students who had been involved in threats of violence. The group watched a Kendrick Lamar music video.

Table 15.3 Youth development approaches

	<i>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019)</i>	<i>World Health Organization (2019)</i>	<i>Search Institute Youth Development Principles (2022)</i>
Paid work-based learning activities	Strengthen economic supports	Developing life skills	Constructive use of time, empowerment
Partnership with CORO	Connect youth to caring adults and activities	Partner with community organizations	Support, constructive use of time
Mentor Series	Connect youth to caring adults and activities	Life Skills: building relationships	Support, boundaries, and expectations
Beyond the Dream Workshops	Teach skills, social-emotional learning	Use of group discussions, written work	Positive values, social competencies
Dream cloud activity sheet	Teach skills, social-emotional learning	Critical thinking, decision making	Social competencies
Poetry discussions: <i>Still, I Rise, The Negro Speaks of Rivers, Mother to Son</i>	Teach skills, social-emotional learning	Self-awareness, anger management, coping with stress	Commitment to learning
Watching and discussing videos	Teach skills, social-emotional learning	Groups discussions, short films	Positive identity, positive values
Poster campaign	Involve community	Public Education Campaign	Commitment to learning, constructive use of time

The youth discussed the images in the video and talked about the symbols of community pride as well as the depression they saw in the video. One student shared she recognized the look of depression because it was the look her mother had when she came home at night. The group discussion created space for youth to develop social competencies and positive identity. The participants were demonstrating honesty and caring. They were also serving as a resource by offering suggestions on how to deal with trauma. This session served as both an intervention and prevention strategy for violence.

Conclusion

As the cries to address police brutality and reform the justice system become more commonplace, the need to access violence prevention and intervention strategies increases. Building on the recommendations for youth development, as well as centering best practices rooted in historical and cultural traditions,

could foster hope in youth and have a significant impact on behaviors and outcomes. Findings suggest strategies that include education, culture, economic security, and wellbeing have shown promise in reducing violence. Incorporating music, song, and poetry as tools to educate youth about the past and the power of hope has the ability to advance peace. Teaching youth the basic principles of spirituality and sharing historical stories about success can help them feel seen, learn to manage their emotions, and develop strategies for dealing with their frustrations without violence. The appendices feature tools, strategies, and resources to educate youth, inspire hope, and advance peace.

Note

- 1 View the appendix for this chapter online at <https://edpeace.peacecollege.org>

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Appendix

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16 Conclusion

Candice C. Carter and Raj Kumar Dhungana

Teachers, researchers, school administrators, and policy makers worldwide can be instrumental in countering violence and inculcating peace in society through education. The educator's power to counter violence and promote peacefulness especially needs support. Through their instruction, research, writing, and other cocurricular activities, educators have been instrumental in healing from harms along with avoiding violence and its escalation. They have recognized the prospects for advancing peace through and during learning that begins in the home and continues across communities as well as in formal education.

There are many possibilities for countering violence in sites of learning. These opportunities have increased when educators, ranging from parents to school personnel and community members, act upon their motivation for advancing peace during learning occasions. Information about their actions inspires and stimulates new as well as similar initiatives in education for sustaining as well as bringing about peace. Research on actions in and responsive designs of quality and relevant education offers insights to policy makers, school administrators, and instructors about how they can support opportunities for learning and living without violence. The contributors to this book recognized, analyzed, and then shared through their writing actions done and possibilities for informal as well as formal instruction that counter violence. Along with their analyses of proactive educational efforts, they identified the theoretical underpinnings of such curriculum and instruction.

Ideologies applied in learning contexts that have supported the pursuit of peace have been adopted or adapted for their pedagogical use across world regions. Local indigenous conceptions of peace and how it occurs have informed the design of curriculum and instruction in formal as well as informal contexts.¹ Restoration after harm, for example, has been adapted from indigenous peace norms as a violence-prevention curriculum in the restorative practices of schools (Carter, 2012). We realize that there is scope of exploring more local/indigenous pedagogical practices that are effective in countering violence and promoting sustainable peace.

The chapters of this book present the critical foundations of initiatives for countering violence through purposeful instruction and curriculum design. Peace education has been pursued in various ways throughout the world with similar goals for healing from, understanding, and preventing violence. It incorporates local as well as adopted ideologies that, ideally, speak to the current and future needs of learners to live and learn without violence. When it is organically designed and provided, it can prevent colonization and recolonization in education, that happens when a conflicting goal and model from elsewhere are mandated as its curriculum (Rivera-Clonch, 2018). Human rights ideology has supported education that counters violence, as found in the resources of the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (n.d.). Critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 2014), as well as critical peace education (Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011; Huaman, 2011), uphold the value of educator and student analyses of conflict's causes and agency to address identified needs. In the applications of those theories, learners analyze power imbalances that underlie exploitation, for example, and decide how to address the resulting conflicts. Engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1986) emphasizes learner's deep connection with and trust of their educators, who are aware of students' specific needs. The applications in the education of Galtung's approaches to conflict transformation demonstrate their value across disciplines and age levels in education (Carter, 2010b; Galtung, 2004). Similarly, the notion of comprehensive citizenship (Carter, 2021a) holds that learners can not only learn conflict transformation across disciplines but can also use the knowledge and skills in the pursuit of peace throughout the contexts of their lives, everywhere. Transformative pedagogy of hope expresses a vision of changing curriculum and instruction that prepares learners for improving their lives and community. A goal of that pedagogy is enabling learners' perspective flexibility and analysis skills, which comprise a foundation for understanding and actions (Mezirow, 2000). Caring and empathy are components of compassionate knowing (Constantinides, 2019) as well as compassionate communication (Rosenberg, 2003) predicated on the theory that education must cultivate those skills, for more than avoidance of violence (Noddings, 2015). To counter violence, empathetic caring can be taught before students attend school. Theories of partnership in education view schools, families, and community members as agents of education, with demonstration of collective caring (Epstein, 2019). The concepts of intergenerational and bidirectional communication between learners and adults support the development of knowledge and dispositions as well as their relationships, which can counter harm in the present and future (Kuczynski & De Mol, n.d.). The theory of hope-building in education identifies the crucial role of that disposition for overcoming obstacles (Bozalek et al., 2014; Nuñez & Goulah, 2021). Stories from family, community members, and in the curricula about those processes, especially by peace pursuers, build learner's own capacities for countering violence.

Table 16.1 Described strategies in Education for countering violence

<i>Pedagogy of countering violence</i>	<i>Chapter authors with examples</i>
Analyze conflicts of different types	Fry et al.
Self-work and mindfulness	Jin Jr Shi, Krabbe
Imagine nonviolence in all relations	Krabbe
Build transformative hope	Loots
Emotional literacy	Castaño & Bettney
Restore and connect with arts	Bailey & Kingston, Barrios et al., Loots, Seward & Akce
Ludopedagogy	Barrios et al.
Storytelling	Loots
Engage community and its resources	Bailey & Kingston, Cubides, Davis
Support family communication	Torremorell et al.
Increase diversity knowledge	Gordon
Incorporate local cultures, languages, and wisdom	Barrios et al., Castaño & Bettney
Include cross-cultural dialogue in the curriculum	Ilfandra & Saripudin
Embrace spiritualities and common aims across cultures	Masiga, Seward & Akce
Wisdom-in-practice	Davis, Maisiga
Youth development	Jin Jr Shi
Enacted agency, praxis	Davis
Make transformative connections	Jin Jr Shi, Castaño
Critical dialogue and democratic classrooms	Barrios et al., Krabbe
	Davis, Loots

Table 16.1 lists several of the violence-countering methods that the contributors to this book describe. It lists a sample of ways throughout the world that such curriculum and instruction have been provided. There is no hierarchy in the table's listing of methods.

Through reflection on the instructional methods and provision of curricula that were described in this book, it is natural to think about the antecedents of the practices for countering violence in education. In support of curriculum and instruction that counter violence, answer these questions:

How do strategies for countering violence in curriculum and instruction become available to learners?

Where are they available to learn in teacher education, school administration, and family education?

What support do the government, NGOs, and accreditation organizations provide?

The identification of these pathways for the provision of such learning and harm-healing opportunities in homes, schools, and their communities can reveal the overlooked and under-supported contexts for countering violence.

Initial teacher education typically lacks, for example, instruction about violence through education (Carter, 2022). Classroom management and diversity courses in teacher preparation programs include a few of the strategies that have been identified as helpful for countering violence. We recommend that providers of teacher preparation include across their entire programs, opportunities for teacher learning about the design and modification of curriculum and instruction, along with self-awareness and transformation, that will counter violence in the lives of the learners, educators, community, and world (Carter, 2015a). Teachers should know the importance of nurturing the community that actively engages in countering violence and building peace in and around schools. They need to develop their own skills for facilitating sustainable peace with themselves, their schools, community, and nature (Carter, 2010a). The Voluntary Standards for Peace Education, which was created by educational researchers from many conflict regions, is a resource that supports teachers, school administrators, and teacher educators (Carter, 2008, 2015b, 2021b). Policy makers and accreditation organizations can use the research on curriculum and instruction that counters violence. To effectively counter violence, they should especially identify as a foundation for policy the local and culturally inclusive practices in their region that address the needs of all learners and their educators. Community members as well as researchers can inform the education decision-makers about practices that counter violence in schools and sites of informal learning. Communication is the key to awareness and the facilitation of changes that portend peace.

Note

- 1 There is a need for greater inclusion in education literature of indigenous/local pedagogical practices that counter violence and promote sustainable peace.

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