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# An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Lived Experiences of Graduate-Level Peace Educators: Voices for Sustained Peace

Kwasi David Ansong

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An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Lived Experiences of Graduate-Level  
Peace Educators: Voices for Sustained Peace

by

Kwasi David Ansong

A Dissertation Presented to the  
Halmos College of Arts and Sciences of Nova Southeastern University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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**Nova Southeastern University  
Halmos College of Arts and Sciences**


This dissertation was submitted by Kwasi David Ansong under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the Halmos College of Arts and Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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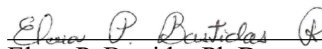


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### Dedication

This study is dedicated to Nana Adjeiwaa Dankwa II, the late queen mother of Kwahu Nkwatia, Eastern Region of Ghana, West Africa. Nana Dankwa II was born on 30 April 1949 at Kwahu Nkwatia. After completing elementary education at Nkwatia Seventh Day Adventists, she sacrificed her middle school and secondary education, 1961-1967, to care for her bedridden grandmother. With merely elementary education, she raised six children from four different marriages between 1968 and 1992. In 1994, she was enstooled as the queen mother of the mother of Kwahu Nkwatia.

Three years later in 1997, she moved to the United States with my younger sister and I and spent approximately 20 years in New York City, performing menial jobs to make ends meet and in support of our life aspirations. In 2017, she returned to Ghana to pursue her role as the queen mother of Kwahu Nkwatia and passed away on January 10, 2019 from the combined impact of diabetes and high blood pressure. Since then, her body has been refrigerated and continuously held at the mortuary facility in Ghana. All attempts to retrieve her corpse and provide a befitting burial have been fruitless due to ongoing disputes between critical factions backed by prominent and wealthy individuals with a vested interest in the stool lands or ancestral properties.

As this study wraps up, her corpse remains at the morgue with no end in sight. Per the Ghanaian constitution and customaries, the traditional council and regional house of chiefs adjudicate all chieftaincy-related disputes. When a Chief or a queen mother passes, their children have no power to decide on funeral arrangements. The ability to coordinate the burial service resides solely with the head of the tribe. So, our hands are tied as we grieve with reluctance to accept that we must move on without our lovely mother. Our

hearts are filled with sorrow and anger with a glimmer of hope and assurance in the possibility that her 4-year frozen body and soul will rest in perfect peace.

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To all the peace educators who sacrificed their precious time and resources to participate in the survey, returned the surveys, and granted me access to their homes for follow-up surveys, without whom I would have no content for my thesis.

To the outstanding professors at Nova Southeastern and George Mason University, you have my respect for supporting me and putting up with my stresses and moans within the past decade of study! I am also thankful and indebted to my sister Hannah O. Kissi for all her financial support through my secondary education journey of three years in residence at St. Peter's Secondary dormitory facility.

To all my friends and co-workers, sorry for being grumpier than usual during this study! You have all been amazing, and I will now clear all the papers in the printer and organizational drive to make way for work-related activities as promised.



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## Abstract

Peace education is arguably one of the underappreciated areas of study within the social sciences. Many lifelong, dedicated peace education professionals often feel undervalued by the military-industrial complex apparatus. Influential individuals and corporations that thrive in chaotic and conflicting environments every so often underestimate the relevance of peace educators. Educators find among academic and professional students an intensified urgency to learn the skills necessary to address real-world conflict; however, these courageous individuals are seemingly battling powerful forces with wealth and power. Although such happenings can be demoralizing, it is slowly galvanizing dedicated peace educators to evolve by altering their skill sets, remaining resilient, and growing from the ongoing challenges. In this dissertation, I sought to investigate the lived experiences of peace educators and explore, through their voices, the challenges they face as global conflicts spiral out of control. This study aims to share the peace educators' voices first-hand. From the findings, the study unveils some of the invisible structural and systemic issues that often undermine peace educators' efforts. Participants' storylines showed that the job is interdisciplinary, transformative, and holistic. Bringing forth the narratives and interpreting their stories were pivotal in unearthing peace educators' involvement in designing programs, developing conflict management strategies, and deepening their understanding of educational policies.

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This research study examines the lived experiences of graduate-level peace educators who have studied, advocated, researched, and taught beyond the bachelor's Degree. This study explores, describes, interprets, and situates the lived experiences of peace educators. The detailed works of literature and the information collected from these peace educators are critical in helping identify gaps that the central research question can address and help readers understand these lived experiences better.

Joseph and Duss (2009) argued that although the literature on peace education describes the history of the movement as well as curricular goals and models of practice, less is known about the lived practices of peace educators, particularly those who focus not only on conflict resolution but also on creating a culture of peace in their classrooms. This study helps readers understand how both concepts of peace and educators have several meanings due to different points of view and visions of the world. The study anticipates that most participants will likely see their identities on their terms and with peculiarities to the definition of a peace educator.

### **Background**

The vision of a sustained, peaceful global community seemingly hinges on each individual having a thorough understanding of the community and relentless devotion to observing mindfulness habits. Thich Nhat Hanh asserts that the problem is not necessarily to do a lot but to do the little things correctly; if the individual, does it correctly, he/she becomes kinder, more sociable, more understanding, and loving (Hanh, 2005). In a world of unprecedented interconnections, increasing democratization, technological advancement, and easy access to transportation, a thorough understanding

of the lived experiences of peace educators might be part of a much larger group of answers to promoting a sustained peaceful world. This research study elicits opinions or feelings of peace educators. It situates their peculiar positions on whether and to what extent their lived experiences contribute to a sustained, peaceful global community. The challenge is effectively analyzing, interpreting, and making sense of these lived experiences.

### **Problem Statement**

Peace educators see their profession as instilling nonviolence and values for empathy and personal and interpersonal well-being. The profession is interdisciplinary, transformative, and holistic. In higher education, performative metrics encourage professors to categorize their work as teaching, research, or engagement. This structural rigidity underappreciates the complexity of the peace education undertaken. Acknowledging and discussing the social and professional challenges peace educators face is a necessary addition to professors' preparation, support systems, and peace educator leadership decisions. There needs to be more literature when it comes to understanding peace educators' experiences, and as a result, they can be undervalued and misunderstood by the academy.

Peace activists such as Thich Nhat Hanh, Martin Luther King Junior, and Mahatma Gandhi have all said that being peaceful requires a thorough self-examination and an understanding of the immediate surroundings and physical factors within that individual's locale, and the acquisition of critical skills necessary to promote sustained peace. Thich Nhat Hanh (2005) asserts that being peaceful requires every person to thoroughly assess him/herself and cultivate the habit of mindfulness (Hanh, 2005). He



stresses that although groups may have a larger voice than solitary individuals, an awakened individual can galvanize a group to stand up and explore how to produce sustained peace better. Our ability to reflect regularly on and reflex benefits and impacts everyone around us.

On the other hand, Martin Luther King and Mohandas Gandhi saw through nonviolent philosophy the power of love in solving social problems and as a potent instrument for social and collective transformation. They believe the power of love stems from within and begins with the individual. Their stance on nonviolence, however, is often seen as central, for if we can limit the violence of those opposed to a change and use whatever strategies might weaken their resistance, the change may be more readily accepted (Schellenberg, 1996). King and Gandhi perceived nonviolent resistance philosophy as the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. Peace educators' ability to provide detailed accounts of their lived experiences could help readers understand their experiences and what sense they are making of what is happening to them.

Peace educators tend to see their profession as a duty and starting point for instilling nonviolence and critical values that increase empathy and personal and interpersonal well-being. During an interview with Dr. Katerina Standish, senior lecturer at the University of Otago and director of research at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Standish suggested that the issue of high unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, and higher mortality rate in most vulnerable communities could be mitigated through peace education programs. She defined peace education as a selection or a

conglomeration of techniques geared toward transforming kinds of violence, whether direct or structural, or cultural violence.

Dr. Standish's assertion and definition of peace education seemingly align with several other peace educators and activists in that they all believe peace education is about recognizing violence within societies and understanding that education can be an effective tool for the transformation of violence. Lessons learned after a careful review of various peer review articles reinforce the notion that a thorough examination of the lived experiences of peace educators is critical in helping readers understand what peace educators' experiences are like and how they make sense of what is happening to them and around them.

### **Purpose Statement and Significance of Study**

The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological analysis study is to understand the lived experiences of peace educators and the significance that these experiences hold for them. The study brings together homogenous participants to elicit their experiences, interpret their experiences, and analyze them to understand better their needs, challenges, and hopes of being a peace educator. The study also helps magnify societal awareness of their existence, profession, and community contributions. In doing so, the study helps explore their involvement in designing programs for peacebuilding, developing conflict management strategies, and deepening their understanding of educational policies.

The study is also invaluable to researchers and scholars because it provides a foundation for more research on the lived experiences of peace educators and peace activists. Furthermore, the study substantially contributes to the knowledge base,

especially of students who have benefited or continue to benefit from peace educators' lived experiences. In connection with the points mentioned above, this study also provides new knowledge on how peace educators have evolved in their quest to help students understand the dynamics of social conflict, conflict resolution, warfare, and the dynamics of peace.

The study uses Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research to understand other people's relationships with the world and their attempts to make meaning out of their activities and the things happening to them (Smith et al., 2009). The challenge, however, is how to effectively analyze, interpret, and make sense of these lived experiences. The following sections discuss research questions; literature reviews and theoretical foundations; research method; data collection and analysis; findings and summary; and conclusions and recommendations.

### **Research Question**

Defining the central research question is the most critical step in qualitative research and deserves greater attention. Corbin and Strauss (2008) define a research question in a qualitative study as a statement that identifies the topic area to be studied and tells the reader about this topic that interests the researcher. Creswell (2013) asserts that the single, overarching central question intends to help narrow the purpose to several questions that will be addressed in the research study. Regarding the IPA research study, the reader will try to make sense of the researcher making sense of research subjects making sense of their lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, peace educators must be able to understand the central question and reflect on potential subjectivities associated with their line of profession. The central question of this study is:

How do peace educators make sense of their profession?

This question has been developed in a manner that helps the researcher maintain focus on the research or study. It is not too broad or too narrow but concise, straight to the point, and achieves the intended purpose. It guides the researcher to streamline and obtain only the critical data necessary for the research. The following sub-questions aid the researcher in the analyses. They help obtain, describe, and understand significant objects of concern in peace educators' lived experiences and develop appropriate interpretative phenomenological explanations.

SQ1: What meanings and essences are identified with the lived experiences of peace educators?

SQ2: How do peace educators construct their lived world as academic professionals?

SQ3: What are some of the patterns and relationships displayed in peace educators' lived experiences?

The central research questions and sub-questions are open-ended and exploratory as opposed to close-ended and explanatory designed to achieve their intended purpose.

Smith et al., (2009) assert that in an IPA we are assuming that data, provided the participants permit us access to a reasonably prosperous and reflective level of personal account, gathered from these questions can tell us something about participants' involvement in and orientation towards the world, and about how they make sense of this (Smith et al., 2009). In our quest to explore real-life experiences of peace educators and make sense of their reflections, these questions unveil crucial experiences that are significant to participants and engage them in a considerable amount of reflecting, thinking, and feelings as they navigate what those experiences meant to them.

## **Theoretical Foundation for the Study**

A few theories are critical to helping readers understand the different facets of participants' lived experiences. This study utilizes three classic theories with credible instruments for social and collective transformation, such as Gandhi's nonviolence (1961), Mills' (1959) social imagination, and Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of human needs. Chapter 2 expands on these major theoretical propositions with a more detailed explanation relative to the study approach and research questions.

### **Nature of the study and definitions of key concepts or constructs**

This IPA research study solicits verbal and written data, refines, and fine-tunes the data to establish meaning and explanation (Saldana, 2015). The themes, patterns, and categories generated from the acquired data help describe and provide readers with a better understanding of the similar small group, 7 peace educators, their relationships with the world, and their attempts to make meaning out of their activities and the things happening to them (Smith et al., 2009).

The nature of this study demands a thorough examination of the participants in this category, how easily accessible they can be, and how their data can be interpreted. Additionally, it is equally important to examine and understand how these participants vary from one another and how much that variation can be contained within an analysis of this phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009).

The study describes participants' phenomena profoundly and comprehensively by analyzing and interpreting the language. This research approach is regarded by many within the conflict resolution field as an effective way to synthesize data and describe phenomena in a profound comprehensive manner. This study is not an attempt to define,

describe, or explain what peace education is but to explore the lived experiences of peace educators through a comprehensive process that considers participants' life journeys and accomplishments. However, it is critical to identify and define the following key concepts to provide readers with better clarity and understanding of the lived experiences of peace educators.

### **Definition of Peace**

A handful of definitions for peace come to mind; however, two good definitions are better suited for this study: one by the author of the dictionary of conflict resolution and the other by Deutsch et al., (2006) authors of the handbook for conflict resolution. Yarn (1999) defines peace as quiet, security, justice, and tranquility. On the other hand, Deutsch et al., (2006) define peace, whether intrapsychic, interpersonal, intragroup, or international, as a state of harmonious cooperation among entities involved.

The two definitions contain complementary languages that allow for the attainment of peace. Without security, justice, tranquility, or harmonious cooperation among the parties involved, achieving peace would not be easy. Peace is seen by many within the conflict resolution field as the beginning of justice, security, and harmonious cooperation, not an end. Therefore, enduring peace requires unyielding commitment/dedication of educators to successfully navigate political elements and encourage entities with vested, cultural, economic, and social interests to work together in a harmonious and cooperative environment.

### **Definition of Education**

Polat et al. (2016) defines an education as getting other individuals to adopt the necessary knowledge, attitude, skills, and behaviors for successful survival. In other words, an educator teaches others the concepts, information, attitudes, skills, and values to help them meet their life goals. Peace education is a field of scholarship and practice that utilizes teaching and learning to dismantle all forms of violence and create structures that build and sustain a just and equitable peace and world (Bajaj & Hantzopoulos, 2016). For nearly a century, the peace education field has increasingly emerged as a universal discipline of scholarship and practice. The general perspectives provide a present-day cross-section of scholarly research in this nascent field and draw from practitioner reflections on the challenges and possibilities of implementing peace education in their locations (Bajaj & Hantzopoulos, 2016). The peace education profession requires unconventional interactive teaching pedagogy to be effective due to the integral importance of field.

### **Definition of Peace Educator**

Ian Harris (1990) asserts that to teach peace well, a peaceful pedagogy must also be employed: key ingredients include cooperative learning, democratic community, moral sensitivity, critical analysis, conflict management, and resolution skills practice, and a continuous process questioning, challenging, acting, and reflecting upon behaviors conducive to peace (Harris & Morrison, 2003). In general, peace educators have confidence in the educational process through which the skills of empathy, respect, accepting individuals as who they are, and peace-making, which are necessary skills for living peacefully, are gained by individuals. This study provides readers with a

comprehensive understanding of how peace educators make sense of their profession and what influences their lifelong aspirations for inner peace and happiness and to remain relevant as advocates for peace.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

This qualitative study utilizes an IPA research approach to explore and provide readers with a better understanding of how peace educators make sense of their lived experiences. The study utilizes Smith et al., (2009) IPA research approach to explore, describe, interpret, and situate how peace educators make sense of lived experiences. The study follows Edmund Husserl's phenomenological philosophy, establishing the importance and relevance of focusing on experience and its perception (Smith et al., 2009). The study, however, acknowledges and adapts Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre's approaches and moves the researcher away from descriptive commitment and transcendental interests towards a more interpretative and worldly position with a focus on understanding the perspectival directedness of our involvement in the lived world (Smith et al., 2009).

In this study, the researcher and the participants assume central roles in interpreting the lived experiences. The rich, detailed first-hand experiential information is elicited from five peace educators' views of the phenomena being studied. Ultimately, the IPA narrative represents a dialogue between the participant and the researcher and will be reflected in the interweaving of the analytic commentary and raw extracts (Smith et al., 2009). Chapter one of this study introduces the research problems, describes the context and background of the problem, and discusses the study's problem statement, purpose statement, and significance.



This chapter also outlined central research questions, theoretical foundation, definitions of key concepts, study assumptions, scope, and delimitations. Chapter 2 is the theoretical foundations and literature review. This segment describes the existing theories and literature and highlights some of the pros and cons associated with the literature. Chapter 3 describes the methods and procedures used to perform the study. This chapter outlines how the researcher selects participants, describes participants, develops, and schedules interviews, and explains the analysis sequence. The fourth chapter analyzes, interprets, synthesis and presents the findings of the study based on the content and method as described in chapter three. This chapter discusses the primary themes that the study derives from the analysis of participants' narratives and reveals the meaning of the themes by including excerpts from the interview data and concluding that common themes emerged from comparing and integrating the data from subject participants. The fifth and final chapter discusses the study and concludes with recommendations for peace and conflict resolution professionals, peace and conflict program administration, legislators, and policymakers. The chapter unveils some necessary experiences significant to peace education professors and aspiring conflict resolution professors. Chapter five connects the literature and theories to participants' emergent themes to better portray how peace educators have evolved.

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 introduces readers to the study and provides an overview, background, problem statement, purpose statement, central research question, definitions, and theoretical foundation. The chapter discusses how the detailed works of literature collected from peace educators helped identify gaps that the main research question

addressed and how both concepts of peace and educators have several meanings due to different points of view and visions of the world. The chapter serves as the launching pad for the subsequent chapters and magnifies societal awareness of peace educators' existence, profession, and community contributions.

The next chapter provides conceptual connections between the various works of literature related to peace education and lived experiences of peace educators and identifies gaps and opportunities to describe peace educators' profession. Chapter 2 examines several peer-reviewed articles and theories to deepen readers' understanding of peace educators, their perspectives on the profession, education system designs, and how they design curricula activities to implement peace education programs effectively.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this IPA study is to understand the lived experiences of peace educators and the significance that their experiences hold for them. The study brings together homogenous participants and elicits their experiences, interprets their experiences, and analyzes them to help formulate systems that can assist conflict resolution practitioners and policymakers. This study also helps magnify societal awareness of their existence, profession, and societal contributions. In doing so, the study helps increase their involvement in designing peacebuilding and conflict management programs and deepening their understanding of educational policies.

The study is also invaluable to researchers and scholars because it provides a foundation for more research on the lived experiences of peace educators and peace activists. Furthermore, the study substantially contributes to the knowledge base, especially of students who have benefited or are continuing to benefit from peace educators' lived experiences worldwide. In connection with the points mentioned above, this study also introduces a new perspective for understanding the problems of peace educators.

### **Peace Education and Peace Educators**

This segment discusses various works of literature related to peace education and lived experiences of peace educators and identifies gaps and opportunities to describe peace educators' profession better. The segment examines several peer-reviewed articles and analyzes them to provide readers with a better understanding of the peace educators' profession, their perspectives on the profession, education system designs, and how peace educators design curricula activities to implement peace education programs effectively.

In the article, *Challenges and opportunities for peace educators: Lessons from a youth-led effort in Pakistan*, Bokhari and Ahmed (2020) discuss the sudden rise in Pakistan's public interest in countering violent extremism through peace education. Bokhari and Ahmed (2020) argue that in Pakistan, the focus has primarily been on Islamic seminaries, or madrassas, but nongovernmental organizations have also been working in public and private schools. They maintain that Pakistan's youth-led peace education interventions could have been more impactful. She uses a case study approach to analyze youth led nongovernmental peace education intervention in secondary schools. She argues for promoting more critical thinking skills among the students.

With most students retaining their knowledge gained, Bokhari and Ahmed (2020) suggest peace educators must be encouraged to share their lived experiences because peace education programs are seen as safe spaces to encourage the development of a social truth, meaning multiple narratives and perspectives of past and present conflicts. However, Bokhari and Ahmed (2020) assert that a one-size-fits-all approach only works in Pakistan's education system despite its diversity in curricula, pedagogies, and student socioeconomic background.

She concludes that having the skill set to dialogue on peace issues enables students to pass on the knowledge to others and does not negate the claim that change at a community level is paramount. Bokhari and Ahmed (2020) conclude that the government should prioritize a successful implementation of peace education. It requires radical changes, including national policy, to generate public awareness and consistently encourage peace educators to share their experiences and thoughts about their profession.

In their article *Anatomy of a peace educator: Her work and workplace*, Gursel-Bilgin and Flinders (2020) present a case study that investigates a peace educator's role at an independent, non-profit school in the mid-western United States. The study's context, methods, and data on the peace educator's background, teaching practices, and relationships with students, the school, and the local community are described. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach to peace education, Gursel-Bilgin and Flinders explore how the peace educator's background and the use of dialogue led to emergent themes, which they analyze through curriculum theory to highlight the integration of personal and political aspects in peace education. As a result, they propose an integrated peace education framework.

The authors emphasize that despite high expectations for peace education in classrooms, there is limited research on how peace educators become peace educators. They argue that peace education scholars must provide practical, emotional, and organizational support for teachers to critically reflect on their identities and teaching practices, addressing the challenges of peace education effectively. As peace educators often work in isolation, Gursel-Bilgin and Flinders suggest that conducting case studies to examine the lived experiences of these educators is crucial.

In the article, *The power and challenges of peace education with pre-service teachers*, Cook (2014) examined the peace and global education initiative for pre-service teacher candidates. She discusses the meanings of peace and global education embedded in conventional education programs and outcomes. The article explored the general understanding of peace education related to pre-service candidates through their own words and the teaching plans they produced.

Cook (2014) conducts research on the competencies typically developed by pre-service candidates during their curriculum design training. Drawing from her own experiences as a faculty member and coordinator of a peace education program, the author reflects on the subject. The article examines the key aspects of peace pedagogy and explores the difficulties core faculty members often face within this particular peace education program. The study's findings suggest that teacher candidates have limited comprehension of peace education when it comes to devising curriculum activities. Additionally, the author emphasizes the importance of assisting these candidates in acquiring the required knowledge base and teaching materials essential for navigating the intricate pedagogies of peace education successfully.

Doerrer's 2019 case study, *Impact, implementation, and insights of peace education: A Case study of the MA in peace studies and conflict transformation program at the University of Rwanda*, examines the Master of Arts degree in peace studies and conflict transformation program at the University of Rwanda. Doerrer argues that higher education plays a critical tool in healing and stabilization in post-conflict areas, highlighting the value of developing leaders who prioritize peace and have the required skillsets to help implement sustainable peace programs. The study argues that peace education could potentially transform post-conflict regions at all levels of education, tertiary, secondary, and primary; however, it emphasizes the need for rigorous analysis of the leadership decisions making process in executing and implementing peace education programs, especially in post-conflict settings uniquely challenging environments.

Doerrer (2019) uses a qualitative approach to examine the M.A. in Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation program at the University of Rwanda. The study utilizes

interviews and field notes to highlight lessons from the experiences and perspectives of education administrators, students, and peace educators. The key takeaway from the research questions suggests that a lack of financial resources significantly impacts the implementation of an effective peace education program.

An article published by Fitzduff and Jean (2011) entitled *Peace education: State of the field and lessons learned from United States Institute of Peace Grantmaking*, conveys an optimistic view regarding the future of peace education, suggesting peacebuilding has progressively formalized in many parts of the world. They claim that incremental progress has led to the development of academic programs, training, advocacy, and practice on peace and conflict issues worldwide. They attribute the evolution of peace education to input from numerous disciplines, forms of pedagogy, and underlying theories of conflict and change.

Interestingly, these inputs also pose challenges when it comes to defining their boundaries and evaluating their effects. To establish clearer terminology and objectives, Fitzduff and Jean (2011) propose several recommendations. They advocate for creating space and utilizing indigenous methods, demonstrating tangible results, integrating with other conflict resolution and peacebuilding tools, expanding successful interventions, providing expert support, and conducting rigorous assessments to translate theory into effective practice.

In another study titled "Guiding principles and practices of peace education followed in secondary schools of Mizoram," Mishra et al. (2020) explore the principles and practices of peace education in Mizoram secondary schools. The findings reveal that peace education is not taught as a separate subject but rather integrated into the existing

curriculum through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The authors argue that teachers should regularly reflect on their actions and encourage students to think critically, reason, raise awareness about societal issues, broaden their perspectives, focus on studies, and engage in various activities. They contend that an action-oriented, practical approach to peace education is more effective than the conventional classroom-based method, while still acknowledging the importance of the latter in the process.

Career educators have advocated for education policies with lesser punitive measures, accountability, and testing requirements for over a century. Special interest groups and career politicians worldwide continue to influence education policies to benefit the wealthy few and disenfranchised segments of a given population. Dr. Maria Montessori, Dr. Bell Hooks, Dr. Paulo Freire, and other prominent educators seemingly favor education strategies or techniques to transform violent environments; including physical, structural, or cultural violence.

Montessori (1992) maintains that rather than imposing on students, education policy should be designed to foster students' natural tendency toward harmony, allowing students to go through experiences and learn from them (Montessori, 1992). Montessori (1992) asserts that educators must ensure a conducive atmosphere for students to thrive and develop competency appropriate to their abilities. Creating a favorable learning environment in schools is a critical step in helping students to work cooperatively in groups with no intense competition against one another.

In her 2006 article entitled, *Teaching peace: a dialogue on the Montessori Method*, Dr. Cheryl Duckworth (2006) described Dr. Montessori's philosophy as



stimulating with a vision of providing an environment in which the student is free to follow their imagination and which the teacher is more of a facilitator than an instructor.

In 2006, Dr. Duckworth embraced Dr. Montessori's vision of an early education approach centered on the classroom, developmental, and holistic principles. The focus was on fostering emotional, ethical, and spiritual growth in students, rather than solely emphasizing academic development.

Dr. Duckworth conducted a study of five Montessori schools across the globe, examining their curriculum and policies. The findings indicated that all these schools explicitly prioritized cultivating international mindedness in their students, enabling them to engage in discussions about peace, diversity, values, and service. The teachers in these schools had the freedom to incorporate these themes into various assignments, including writing, art, drama, student-led reflective groups, and presentations. Each school had its unique ways of promoting peace, with ceremonies and assemblies being conducted, during which students and faculty collectively shared their thoughts on values and even prayed for peace. In their article *Training of undergraduate preschool teachers in Montessori education in Slovakia and the Czech Republic*, Slovacek and Minova (2021) described and compared Montessori's approach to undergraduate student teacher training and continuing education; echoing Dr. Duckworth's sentiments, portraying Montessori's education method as an attractive, unconventional, and innovative pedagogical direction with greater attention on the student's holistic, non-violent, humanistic, and natural development. Slovacek and Minova (2021) highlighted five basic frameworks, including practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, and culture, as the core pillars emphasizing Montessori's belief that students learn best through experience.

Kocabaş (2022) praised Montessori's approach and depicted it as a uniquely designed method that allows students to choose their work freely and construct their learning. Kocabaş (2022) maintains that Montessori's student-centered approach and deviation from conventional schooling and teaching format towards effective communication and collaboration between students and teachers provides a favorable atmosphere for learning to thrive. Despite its unlimited benefits, Kocabaş (2022) admitted that Montessori teachers often face a steep learning curve in their communication and collaboration with the students, which can be contradicting and counter-productive to Montessori philosophy.

Macià-Gual and Domingo-Peñafiel (2023) analyzed the principles of the Montessori Pedagogy and families and faculty involvement in early childhood education. They concluded that students are inclined to hold themselves accountable and collaborate better if they can freely participate in day-to-day activities and are given autonomy and independence. They asserted that although these characteristics tend to be stronger in schools with a higher commitment to Montessori Pedagogical principles, parents play crucial roles in fostering an environment and creating spaces that respond to students' needs. Macià-Gual and Domingo-Peñafiel (2023) argued that families must be receptive to the Montessori approach, identify schools that exclusively apply the Montessori pedagogy principles, and ensure a resilient connection between the school, family, and student.

In making sense of Montessori teacher identity, pedagogy, and educational policies in public schools, Heather Gerker (2023) alleges that although Montessori teachers in public schools strive to implement the method within a conventional school's

environment, they often have difficulties achieving their goals or maximizing the outcome.

According to Gerker (2023), the effort required to implement Montessori's pedagogy in public schools might not always be justified because district policymakers often deviate from the intended high-fidelity implementation. By employing Weick's sensemaking theory and drawing insights from literature on Montessori teacher identity, the study reveals that Montessori's pedagogy encompasses more than just materials. Unfortunately, district-wide requirements imposed by policymakers often clash with the principles of Montessori's pedagogy, leading to a lack of support for Montessori teachers in public schools. To make the investment in Montessori's pedagogy more worthwhile, there is a need for increased efforts to support and empower Montessori teachers in the public school system.

In his renowned *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Freire (2005) contends that education cannot be neutral and serves either as a means to assimilate new generations into the current system's logic, promoting conformity, or as a practice of freedom. In the latter case, it enables individuals to critically engage with reality and find ways to actively participate in transforming their world.

In the article entitled *Unlearning what is learned: Teaching Islam in America in light of Paulo Freire's pedagogy*, Sayilgan (2020) credited Paulo Freire for his success in teaching Islam in the United States, which is still seen as less favorable as a religious group. Sayilgan (2020) asserts his students come to class with a modicum of awareness of Islam and a preconceived notion that Islam is not a religion but rather a political ideology, an inherently violent religion. Therefore, his challenge is to help students

unlearn what they have learned and address these negative perceptions by adopting Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Sayilgan (2020) employs the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in the context of teaching Islam in America by critiquing the banking model in education and instead opting for a dialogical model in which the student is not regarded as an object but rather a subject and an active participant along with the teacher.

Sayilgan (2020) described Freire's dialogical education approach as key in critical thinking and used it to deconstruct his students' preconceived notions about Islam.

Sayilgan (2020) uses a four-step process to facilitate the integration of students into the practice of freedom to deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in transforming their world. Sayilgan's (2020) process involves creating a safe space for students to freely ask any question to foster a teaching environment based on dialogue, ensuring teaching is dialogical between the teacher and the student, making sure the students are actively engaged in conversation with each other, encouraging students' presentation on a prominent Muslim figure in the United States, exposing them to the diversity of Muslims, and taking students to a Muslim prayer service in a mosque to give them a chance to engage with members of the Muslim community. Given the current political climate and the mainstream media's overwhelmingly negative portrayal of Islam, Sayilgan finds it challenging but rewarding to see students unlearn.

In the article entitled *Translating Paulo Freire*, Lambelet (2020) delved into Paulo Freire's work and claimed unless one is reading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in the original Portuguese, one is only exposed to the translation of Freire's work. Lambelet (2020) critiques the translated work suggesting readers inevitably lose something in the process of translation and, therefore, we betray the original language, context, and

meaning. Lambelet (2020), however, admits there are some benefits gained from Freire's dialogical process of exchange that generates knowledge, and as a result, exchanges across differences of language, context, and conceptual worlds may be productive.

The article explained the disparities between what is learned in translating Freire's work into our contexts and what is lost in the translation process, especially on how he reflected publicly on translating the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to English. Lambelet (2020) mentioned that the translator collaborated closely with a maximum of professional precession and dedication and regularly consulted with a group of friends using Freire's teaching approach by acknowledging the contradictions and engaging in dialogue across those contradictions with the hope for the gift of friendship through solidarity.

Hooks (1994) contends education can provide epistemological grounding, informing how we know what we know, enabling professors and students to use such energy in a classroom setting to invigorate discussion and excite the critical imagination. In his 2020 New York Times article entitled *This is how Scandinavia got great*, David Brooks echoed Montessori's and Hook's sentiments, pointing to the Nordic nations' generations of phenomenal educational policy (Brooks, 2020). Brooks argues the Nordic elites realized they needed to make lifelong learning a part of the natural fabric of their society, while taking into consideration the complete moral, emotional, intellectual, and civic transformation of the person and instilling in each student a sense of connection to the nation.

Hantzopoulos (2016) echoes similar sentiments. She argues that while student behavior often contributes to disciplinary measures, studies have shown that the U.S. public schools' climate, culture, and policies unnecessarily increase suspension rates and

drive students out of school. Therefore, education administrators and policymakers must focus on strategies to restore students' dignity, scale down punitive measures, reduce endless accountability, and minimize testing requirements. Hantzopoulos (2016) contends traditional education systems must refrain from the perception that peace is something you learn and instead focus on strategies that instill in each student a sense of love and connection. In doing so, she advocates for an education curriculum with minimum theoretical requirements and focuses more on practicing reflective dialogue, active listening, work with civility, and bystander interventions.

Dr. Standish (2020) recounted using transformative learning models involving collaborative and cooperative games in class to get students out of the idea that learning goes into their heads. In doing so, she employs Freire's ideas to establish meaningful connections between what Freire describes as liberatory teaching and progressive educators often play in bringing about a more just and humane society. Dr. Standish (2020) linked Freire's pedagogical insights to creating moral, ethical and principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty.

### **Literature Review Findings and Summary**

The data from all the publications mentioned above suggest tremendous benefits to exploring the lived experiences of peace educators. While some authors express concerns about the need for more adequately trained personnel within the peace education field, the contributions from Dr. Montessori, Dr. Hooks, and Dr. Freire elevate critical pedagogy, classroom-centered, developmental, and holistic approaches to education approaches that facilitate student's emotional, ethical, and spiritual development rather than a conventional academic advancement. These dedicated

individuals have all played some role in elevating unconventional approaches to developing knowledge and skills necessary to prepare for the classroom and produce social transformation. They advocate teaching methods incorporating dialogue, collaboration, cooperation, and students' independence to exchange knowledge and transform society. Dr. Sérgio Haddad (2021) maintains that practical, critical, respectful dialogue was central to his pedagogical thinking. These individuals navigated their respective experiences by modifying their thinking to construct a better world, a more just and respectful nature. Although there needs to be more literature on understanding peace educators' experiences, lessons learned from these remarkable individuals reinforce the importance of this study.

The literature calls for peace education scholars to play significant roles in developing educators with practical, emotional, and organizational support skillsets to critically reflect on their identities and pedagogical practices to better address the challenges of peace education. The lack of adequate research and knowledge about lived experiences of peace educators and the profession have created a gap requiring accurate diagnosis, effective strategy, and realistic solutions to help influence attitudes and behaviors. This IPA study uses a semi-structured interview format to bring to light some of the hidden lived experiences of peace educators.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

A literature review highlights many challenging obstacles that need to be navigated to better help readers understand peace educators' experiences and how they make sense of what is happening to them and around them. In doing so, the study collects detailed and various works of literature critical to understanding and making sense of

peace educators' lived experiences. This study helps examine the theoretical foundation of the study of Peace Educators' lived experiences and the impact of their profession and establish what challenges can be brought towards some of the assumptions. From Gandhi's (1961) nonviolence, Mills' (1959) social imagination, and Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of human needs, there appears to be an existing theoretical basis for the interpretative phenomenological analysis of the lived experiences of peace educators that must be understood.

### **Theoretical Framework: Past and Present Applicable Theories**

This research study considers theories pertinent to comprehending the problems of peace educators. These theories are incredibly crucial, as they provide unique perspectives for understanding the problems of peace educators. They are also critical to helping readers, and conflict resolution practitioners understand the multidimensional nature of the lived experiences of peace educators. However, before delving into each theory in detail, a general awareness of what theory is, within the emerging and maturing field of conflict resolution, is critical in helping readers analyze and synthesize the lived experiences.

Cheldelin et al. (2008) provided a definition of theory, describing it as a conceptual model that outlines the actors and conditions involved, including intervention strategies, outcome conditions, and other factors that may influence the outcome. It postulates associations and causal relationships among these elements. In the field of conflict resolution, other experts view theory as practical when it generates reliable knowledge that can be combined with case-specific information to aid practitioners in strategizing and identifying the most effective interventions for desired outcomes.



As evident from the discussion above, theory can be interpreted in various ways. For most sociologists and conflict resolution researchers, theory serves as a framework for observing, analyzing, and comprehending what we observe and how we perceive it. It allows researchers to establish connections between abstract and concrete concepts, theoretical and empirical aspects, as well as statements based on thoughts and those grounded in observations.

Since humans tend to see things differently based on their philosophical upbringings and geographical locations, what they often see and how they see it may vary. Schellenberg (1996) uses myths, religious principles, individual security, and consent of the governed, to describe the underpinning of how western societies deal with peace and conflicts, explain facts or events, and help establish frameworks for observation and understanding of westerners' perspectives. In this and the subsequent sections, the study presents in detail some of the mechanisms to help readers understand peace educators' experiences using three key theories and delineate assumptions of similarities and help better categorize, predict, and integrate into this and other future studies.

Martin Luther King followed in the footsteps of Mohandas Gandhi. He saw through the nonviolent philosophy of Gandhi the power of love in solving social problems and as a potent instrument for social and collective transformation. The stance of nonviolence is often seen as central, for if we can limit the violence of those opposed to a change, and use whatever strategies might weaken their resistance, the change may be more readily accepted (Schellenberg, 1996). King perceived the nonviolent resistance philosophy as the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in

their struggle for freedom. Reinhold Niebuhr, in a critique of nonviolent resistance, believes the philosophy can only be successful if the group against whom resistance was taking place had some moral shortcomings, as was the case in Gandhi's struggle against the British (Lemert, 2010). Several others have also criticized the philosophy suggesting that mass movement of a militant quality that is not committed to nonviolence tends to generate conflict, which in turn defeats its purpose.

Although King acknowledged these critiques, he remained convinced that philosophy is the best tool for racial justice because it is practically morally sound, reconciles the opposites' truths, and avoids parties' extremes and immoralities. No individual or group is required to submit to wrongdoing. Peace educators' ability to share their lived experiences and provide a historical account of progress made through nonviolence enables productive management of violence and creates a peaceful environment.

In *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice*, Dr. Gerson, the acting director of the Peace Education Center at the Columbia University Teachers College, asserted she has increasingly emphasized the importance of strategies that promote nonviolence to help the student discover the indirect violence that is structured into our society (Ellen et al., 2000). Gerson suggests she employs experiential learning through dialogue and skills-based activities together with role-plays and theatre games, developed by Augusto Boal to express latent conflicts to encourage students and participants to collaborate and facilitate personal and group transformation (Deutsch et al., 2006). Gerson's ability to share these lived experiences and a historical account of progress made through nonviolence enable productive management of violence and

create a peaceful environment (Ellen et al., 2000). The nonviolent notion and its unwavering power of love in solving social problems, as a potent instrument for social and collective transformation, help make sense of the peace educators' experiences or how they call on nonviolence in their quest for sustained peace.

### **Theory of Social Imagination**

Mills (1959) believes humans can connect themselves and their society by employing critical thinking skills, such as using the sociological imagination. Sociological imagination is an awareness of the relationship between an individual and the wider society. Mills (1959) argues that an individual can understand his own experience and gauge his fate only by locating himself within his period so that he can know his chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances (Lemert, 2010). Understanding the experiences of peace educators enables that individual to contribute to shaping society and the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove (Lemert, 2010). Given that the individual lives are shaped by society at the same time as he contributes to and helps shape society, it is critical to synchronize the inner with the outer personalities to better understand the individual and society.

Deutsch et al., (2006) assert a successful cooperation hinge on the type of interdependence among the goals of the parties involved in each situation. This interdependence depends on the action taken by or embraced by the parties involved in the dispute. Deutsch et al. (2006) suggests that interdependence can be positive or negative, with the positive meaning that all sides can benefit, while the negative translates as unequal attainment of goals. Peace educators' adeptness in national systemic

structures and the ability to convey their perspectives and lived experiences through systemic lenses to students should enable effective management of violence.

### **Human Needs Theory**

Sandy et al. (2000) defines a need as a force in the brain region that organizes perception, thought, and action to change an existing unsatisfactory condition – environmental as well as internal processes can evoke it and vary in strength from person to person and from situation to situation. In his hierarchy of human needs, Abraham Maslow (1943) identified the primary human needs as psychological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. The first four needs are considered deficiency needs arising from a lack of essential elements (Sandy et al., 2000). According to Maslow (1943), humans are driven to fulfill specific needs, and certain needs take precedence over others.

The most fundamental need is physical survival, which typically serves as the initial motivator for our behavior. Once this survival level is met, the next level becomes the primary motivator. Based on this framework, Maslow (1943) proposed a hierarchy of needs, highlighting how human behavior and social interactions are influenced by the pursuit of fulfilling these needs. The striving for these human needs often leads to human conflicts, as per Maslow (1943), conflicts arise from the struggle to meet unmet needs. Maslow (1943) organized these needs in a hierarchical order of importance, viewing them as essential for achieving self-actualization. He asserted that safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization are universal requirements for all human beings and necessary for our continued existence. Applying this framework to peace educators, prioritization could begin with the survival of the educators and the sustainability of their

profession, followed by their sense of belongingness within their environment or community, and then focusing on self-esteem and self-actualization. For a peace educator to pursue higher needs, the lower ones in the hierarchy must first be adequately satisfied (Willis, 2007).

John Burton (1990) argues that conflict or dispute is not resolved constructively unless the parties' basic human needs are satisfied through a problem-solving approach by creating conditions that enable parties in dispute to express their real needs openly and honestly and then focus on a resolution that meets their basic human needs. The most salient needs to understanding peace educators are psychological safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. The psychological aspect involves the peace educators' daily struggles to provide necessities to their students and communities, such as quality education programs. The safety segment covers security for themselves, the profession, their students, and their communities. The need for safety is followed by the need to belong. Then the esteem and self-actualization, but the last three are equally crucial to peace educators, students, and communities in the quest for sustained peace.

Burton highlights the importance of mechanisms to help groups express their real needs openly and resolve them. The sharing of the lived experiences of peace educators would be pivotal to students' understanding of how critical it is to identify the appropriate needs to prevent violence. Failure to meet these needs may significantly impact the health and wellness of students and members of society.

The discipline of conflict resolution is like a tree with roots, stems, and leaves, equating to theory, research, and practice. Each part is separate but plays a significant role in the tree's long-term survival. Theories of conflict resolution help conflict resolvers

develop an understanding of the various mechanisms for conflict resolution. Thus far, this paper has provided an in-depth overview of the study, a central research question, and critical theoretical foundations for studying peace educators' lived experiences.

### **Summary**

This chapter discusses various works of literature, theoretical framework, past and present, and applicable theories pertinent to helping readers comprehend the problems peace educators face. In doing so, the chapter introduces readers to theoretical relations between the various works of literature related to peace education and lived experiences of peace educators and identifies gaps and opportunities to describe peace educators' profession. Chapter 2 examined several peer-reviewed articles and theories and analyzed them to deepen readers' understanding of peace educators, their perspectives on the profession, education system designs, and how they design curricula activities to implement peace education programs effectively.

The next chapter of the study discusses the research methodology with a detailed rationale for selecting and conducting Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, involving designing and conducting research, finding a homogenous sample and sample size, conducting an in-depth interview, and contextualizing and transcribing the interview of participants video narrative.

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### **Qualitative Research Method**

Corbin and Strauss (2008) assert that there are many reasons for doing qualitative research. However, the most important is the desire to step beyond the known and enter into the world of participants; to see the world from their perspective, and in doing so, make discoveries that will contribute to the development of empirical knowledge. The process of identifying the appropriate guidelines and describing the research method in sufficient depth so that other researchers can replicate the study can be very daunting, especially when it comes to contextual understanding, accepting multiple sources of influence, dealing with biases, developing procedures for recruitment, selecting research subjects or participants, collecting data, analyzing data, and considering ethical issues (Willis, 2008). These critical steps often help shape research questions and elicit relevant findings to give readers a clearer picture of the literature.

It is even more complicated when dealing with violence and poverty because those harmed by it are often suspected of digging into a hole that would be exceedingly difficult to escape. Violence and poverty flourish when people benefit from the status quo and preserve their sense of morality by keeping themselves uninformed about the breadth and depth of violence and poverty and avoid questions that would yield answers they would rather not know (Deutsch et al., 2006). Whether there are advantages of having an education system that integrates peaceful elements remains to be determined; however, themes and trends in the research questions might be a good starting point.

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to help identify themes and trends in the research questions. Cooper and Finley (2014) define the qualitative

approach as the study of people and phenomena in their natural setting and emphasize the meaning people find in their natural social life. The qualitative data-gathering method focuses on describing a phenomenon in a profound comprehensive manner by analyzing language such as conversations, magazine articles, media broadcasts, etc. Qualitative research methodology is seen by many as an effective way to conduct a systematic study of the ongoing structural and physical violence and effectively gather data that describes the phenomena in a profound, comprehensive manner.

This approach requires tremendous time and effort, especially when collecting and analyzing data and reporting findings. Corbin and Strauss (2008) maintain that the qualitative method allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture and to discover rather than test variables. Creswell (2013) highlights five distinct approaches to conducting qualitative research: narrative; phenomenology; grounded theory; ethnography; and case study. This research study, however, uses interpretative phenomenological analysis to describe some of the common meanings for peace educators of their lived experiences and their profession.

### **Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Research Approach (IPA)**

To provide readers with a better understanding of how peace educators represent and think of their profession, perceive national institutions, education systems, and concepts, theorize peace education, design peace education curriculum, and address violence and poverty, this study employs an interpretative phenomenological analysis to describe and make sense of peace educators' transition and how their experiences can be implemented to enhance peace education programs.



Smith et al. (2009) define IPA as a qualitative research approach examining how people sense their significant life experiences. IPA research involves exploring experiences of central significance to an individual and engaging that individual in a considerable amount of reflecting, thinking, and feelings as one navigates what the experiences mean to them. Smith et al. (2009) see IPA as a vehicle that allows research subjects to make sense of what is happening to them in an interpretive endeavor informed by hermeneutics, recognizing that access to experience is always dependent on what the research subjects share with the researcher, and the researcher's ability to interpret that account from the research subject; to understand the experience.

If properly executed, an IPA provides a tremendous opportunity to make sense of the participant trying to understand what is happening to them. It allows the IPA researcher to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context using a small number of participants to reveal something of the experience of each of those individuals.

Since the research subject oversees what is happening, they will be responsible for sharing their real-life experiences and data to help develop the *how* and *why* questions related to the ongoing phenomena to help investigate how peace educators create meaning of their profession. In this IPA research study, the research participant plays a central role in helping document, analyze, and describe the lived experiences of peace educators, their profession, and the impacts of peace education programs. This study focused on the detailed examination of the lived experience of peace educators. This study examines the profession in a manner that enables the research subjects to express their experiences in their terms rather than according to predefined category systems.

### **Designing and Conducting IPA Research**

Smith et al. (2009) maintain that IPA studies are conducted on relatively small sample sizes, and the aim is to find a reasonably homogenous sample of approximately three to 15 participants to examine convergence and divergence in some detail where the group bounds immediate claims studied can be considered through theoretical generalizability, where readers can access evidence relative to their existing professional and experiential knowledge. Key steps or components to navigate to conduct an IPA research study effectively include but are not limited to research design, data collection, data analysis, and writing a report (Smith et al., 2009).

The IPA research begins at the initial planning and designing phase, where the researcher plans and coordinates practical research questions, finding a sample, sample size, bolder designs, and ethical practice. As mentioned earlier, defining a research question is the most critical step in case study research and deserves greater attention. IPA research questions are developed in a manner that helps maintain focus on obtaining detailed experiential information from participants. The questions are grounded in an epistemological position with the assumption that data can tell us something about peace educators' and their involvement in and orientation toward sustained peace.

IPA questions are open-ended and exploratory as opposed to close-ended and explanatory; they are also designed to be neither broad nor too narrow but concise, straight to the point, and achieve the intended purpose. The questions are designed in two phases: an initial, primary question, and a subsequent or follow-up, secondary question.

### **Finding a Sample**

The participants are to be contacted through a referral from various kinds of gatekeepers' opportunities due to personal contacts with Nova Southeastern University and George Mason University professors and snowballing; which amounts to referrals by participants. This IPA study calls for a smaller total population size so the researcher can be more selective about the criteria. The inclusion criteria include graduate-level peace educators teaching at universities on the east coast of the United States. This decision-making process ensures that appropriate individuals with unique backgrounds are identified and contacted.

### **Sample Size**

There are no specific numbers when it comes to sampling size; however, Smith et al. (2009) suggests that sample size often depends on the degree of commitment to the level of analysis and reporting; the richness of the participants' experience; and the organizational constraints that the researcher and the participants are under study. Many IPA studies have used between three and 15 participants as a reasonable sample size to provide sufficient cases for the development of meaningful points of similarity and difference between research participants, minimize over-reliance on few participants to generate data, and prevent novice IPA researchers from being overwhelmed with too much data generated as is common to these methodologies (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). IPA studies are primarily designed to ensure researchers can obtain a detailed account of participants' rich experiences and effectively interpret the information to explore connections within research participants' accounts. Hence, making the sampling selection homogenous and inclusive of establishing boundaries for the study

and helping generate meaningful data (Smith et al., 2009). This research utilizes a sample size of 5 participants.

### **Researcher Stance**

Qualitative research rejects the idea that a researcher can be objective and neutral in research because the researcher's interest tends to bias their judgment (Willis, 2007).

As a Ph.D. student in the conflict resolution domain, I may share everyday social, cultural, and life experiences similar to the research subjects' life experiences. Although I occasionally drew upon these experiences for insight into the research participants' perspectives, I committed to not impose my experiences on the data. Instead, I remained mindful, reflex on and reflect on, of my biases and recognized them to enable better utilization of my experiences to bring up other possibilities of meaning.

The researcher's stance is critical to the research participants and the readers. qualitative researchers must be sensitive to their biases, assumptions, and personal history. Researchers must recognize their biases and values to the best of their ability and acknowledge them (Willis, 2007). In pursuing this IPA study, the researcher was in accord with Heidegger and Gadamer in that there is a phenomenon ready to shine forth, but detective work is necessary to facilitate coming forth, and then to make sense of it once it has happened (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher remained mindful of potential preconceived notions and strived to separate the personal self from the researcher-self to ensure an honest and upright representation. Smith (2009) insinuates that making sense of what is being said or written involves close interpretative engagement on the part of the listener or the reader; however, one will not necessarily be aware of all of one's preconceptions in advance of the reading, and so reflective practices and a pragmatic

approach to bracketing, are required. It is also essential to position the dynamics of preconceptions within a model of the hermeneutics circle of the research process where the researcher's ongoing biography and the encounter with the participant are part of the research project (Smith et al., 2009).

### **Recruitment of Participants**

The researcher coordinated with gatekeepers of research participants and identified himself as a doctoral student researching to understand how peace educators represent and think of their profession. The researcher emphasized that the study aims to explore, describe, interpret, and situate the lived experiences of peace educators. The mode of communication with all candidates that agreed to participate in the research was via telephone and email. Research participants were encouraged to reach out at any time if they had questions or concerns that needed to be addressed before electing to participate. Research participants were provided with a participant letter with full disclosure of the purpose and procedural approach of the study and asked to consent. The interviews were conducted via Microsoft Team and Zoom.

### **IPA Ethical Considerations**

There are always ethical concerns whenever a researcher attempts to gain access to potential research subjects. Some of these issues complicate the researcher's ability to gain informed consent, especially when the research subject is not completely clear about what they are contending with and the associated parameters. Informed consent involves obtaining written ethical approval from any collaborating organization involved in the research and asking the research subjects or participants to sign a consent form stating

that they have had the nature and purpose of the research explained and that they fully and freely consent to participate in the study (Miller & Bell, 2012).

This ethical consideration occurred at the initial stages of this IPA research project. This study ensured all research subjects or participants were fully aware of the research and their rights to refuse to participate or re-negotiate their consent to participate. For instance, before getting their consent to participate in an interview, the potential participants knew what the research was all about, why they needed to participate, how the researcher intended to use the data collected, what the participants will be doing, what they stand to gain, the dangers involved, the right to withdraw from participation, whether there is privacy and confidentiality and so on (Miller & Bell, 2012).

The researcher-participant relationship is critical and needs to maintain or improve before, during, and after the research. The relationship is often enhanced if the consent becomes habitual and allowed to be re-negotiated between the researcher and the researched; not just at the time of access but possibly as transcripts are analyzed, and findings are published (Miller & Bell, 2012). The research subjects were given the opportunity and flexibility to adjust agreements, especially in cases where they felt their safety and security were paramount.

### **Collecting IPA Data**

The second phase of the IPA research study involves collecting data using a suitable method, conducting in-depth interviews, constructing a schedule for a semi-structured interview, conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews, contextualizing the interview, and transcription. The researcher used semi-structured interviews and personal

observations approach to collect data for this IPA research. The semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to follow relevant paths in the discussion. Although many questions were generated and expanded on during the interview, allowing the researcher and the research subjects flexibility to delve into details as possible, the following were the initial questions:

1. Please explain how/why you decided to become a peace educator.
2. Can you share some of the processes or hurdles one needs to navigate to become graduate-level peace educator?
3. What do you think are some of the key factors that impact your peace education profession?
4. In some higher education institutions, you are expected to teach, do research, and do service. How do you balance your academic responsibilities as a peace educator? Can share some of the challenges you encounter or envision?
5. Can you explain how your teaching, research, or practice has impacted your professional and personal life?
6. As a professor, how do you impact the personal and professional lives of your students?
7. What practices, skills, and knowledge do you incorporate into your teaching as a peace educator?
8. As a peace educator, what are your significant contributions to society? Can you provide some examples?

### **Choosing a Suitable Method to Collect Data**

In IPA, as we have seen, the researcher aims to design data collection events that elicit detailed stories, thoughts, and feelings from the participant (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, an IPA researcher's ability to identify the proper method for collecting data is critical to mapping out the appropriate interview and rigorous analytical process to properly document and describe the fruitful, detailed, and first-person account of participants' experiences. Smith et al. (2009) maintains that a suitable data collection method provides an avenue for comprehensive, imaginative work, which tends to benefit from the engagement with research participants, from accessing different phenomenological perspectives, and from participants' creative and reflective efforts.

### **Conducting An In-depth Interview**

Creswell (2013) sees interviews as taxing, especially for inexperienced researchers engaged in studies that require extensive interviewing, such as phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. Although technological advancement and improved transportation allow for flexibility, navigating these technological tools to support an interview process can be daunting. Equipment issues continue to loom large as a problem in interviewing and recording and transcribing equipment need to be coordinated before the interview (Creswell, 2013). The researcher ensured all required items that were part and parcel of a virtual communication platform were tested before the interview date and time. Additionally, the researcher provided a cordial atmosphere to facilitate effective dialogue that provided information to the participant based on the researcher's agenda and led to the researcher's interpretations. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest more collaborative interviewing, where the researcher and the participant



approach equality in questioning, interpreting, and reporting to correct for power asymmetry. This approach enables the research participant, the interviewee, to articulate the forces that interrupt, suppress, or subjugate them.

### **Constructing a schedule for a semi-structured interview and conducting a semi-structured interview**

Developing a schedule for a semi-structured interview requires a coordinated effort between the researcher and the research participant. This process enables the researcher to prepare open and expansive questions encouraging the participant to move between sequences, be comfortable talking, and provide a more rational and evaluative response. When constructing a schedule for an adult, articulate participant semi-structured interview, Smith et al. (2009) suggests a schedule with between six and ten open questions, along with possible prompt questions, which occupied between 45 and 90 minutes of conversation, depending on the topic (Smith et al., 2009, p. 60). It is common for the researcher to come up with additional questions; however, it is essential to draft and redraft the schedule to streamline and eliminate less important questions. Once the schedule was finalized, it was equally essential to develop a sequence for producing the interview and ensured it was iterative and applicable to or adopted for all participants. Participants were informed beforehand of what to expect regarding time commitment, where the interview occurred, and the interview style. Smith et al. (2009) recommends that the researcher conducts pilot interviews with friends or colleagues a few times to validate the schedule.

## **Contextualizing and Transcribing the Interview**

Smith et al. (2009) asserts that IPA studies require a verbatim record of the data collection event. Since this study is an interaction conducted via a virtual online conference using the Zoom platform, the material is recorded and provided to the participant to consent to the making and use of the material.

### **IPA Data Analysis Plan**

The existing literature on analysis in IPA does not prescribe a single method for working the data; instead, it directs our analytic attention toward our participants' attempts to make sense of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, IPA analysis is often described as an iterative and inductive cycle, which this study ensues by drawing upon Smith et al.'s. (2009) recommended strategies. Navigating these strategies can be daunting, and although there is no straightforward right or wrong way forward, this study seeks to employ Smith et al's., (2009) step-by-step process to encourage a reflective engagement with the participant's account.

The analytic process began with a detailed examination of each case. However, the researcher cautiously moved to examine similarities and differences across the cases, producing a fine-grained account of patterns of meaning for participants' reflection upon shared experiences (Smith et al., 2009). In this study, the researcher focused on one participant's case. After reviewing, interpreting, and analyzing the first case, the researcher moved on and navigated the same in-depth analysis of each participant's cases, one by one (Smith et al., 2009).

Each case is analyzed using Heidegger's and Gadamer's description of the relationship between the fore-understanding and the new phenomenon being attended to

(Smith et al., 2009). As I attempted to get close to the participant's personal experience, I recognized that this inevitability became interpretative for both the participant and the researcher.

In making sense of what is being said or written, I was mindful of all my preconceptions before reading the texts, ensured a reflective practice, and employed a judicious approach to bracketing, as required. It is also essential to position the dynamics of preconceptions within a model of the hermeneutics circle of the research process where the researcher's ongoing biography and the encounter with the participant are part of the research project (Smith et al., 2009).

Since the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of graduate-level peace educators from the eastern United States, it required reading transcriptions and listening to audio recordings multiple times, practicing coding, and determining patterns and emerging themes (Creswell, 2013; Smith et al., 2009). Navigating these strategies was daunting, and although there were no straightforward right or wrong way forward, I employed Smith et al's., (2009) six-step process to analyzing IPA data.

**Figure 1***Six Steps to IPA Data Analysis*

*Note:* Bailey, S. (2021) 'The Meaning Making Journey of Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Leaders in HE,' *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, (S15), pp.55-69. DOI: 10.24384/wtmm-vf45

Step 1 for data analysis involves reading and re-reading. Immersion in some original data. In this stage, the researcher initiates by listening to the participant's interviews on the audiotapes at least twice. During the second listening, they follow along with the transcription simultaneously. Subsequently, the researcher meticulously reads and re-reads the transcription to gain a comprehensive grasp of the data related to the participant's case. To proceed to the next step, the researcher ensures sufficient time is dedicated to listening to the audiotapes and thoroughly reviewing the transcripts. This meticulous process equips the researcher with the foundational knowledge and comprehension of each case, enabling them to organize the data more effectively for further analysis (Smith et al., 2009)

Step 2 is initial noting. Examine semantic content and language use on a very exploratory level (emphasis on descriptive comments, linguistic comments, conceptual comments, deconstruction, and overview of writing initial notes). This phase involves noting how the participant describes his/her lived experience of the central phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009). In doing so, the researcher keeps track of the language used by the participant and how that language is used to interpret the participant's understanding of his or her lived experience. This step requires the researcher's attention to detail when taking notes on the data collected from the audiotapes and transcriptions. Additionally, the researcher begins to document, interpret, and analyze the data on a fundamental level to help identify specific language and content that assisted in developing emergent themes (Smith et al., 2009).

Step 3 involves developing emergent themes. Attempt to reduce the volume of details while maintaining complexity in mapping the interrelationships, connections, and patterns between exploratory notes. This step involves developing emergent themes and requires the researcher to reexamine the data and determine which information is pertinent to the study and which is of no value (Smith et al., 2009). To successfully navigate this task, the researcher focused on the transcriptions in step two and analyzed the language used to help develop emergent themes within the data. In developing emergent themes, Smith suggests the themes must provide a conceptual understanding of the participant's original thoughts, as interpreted and analyzed by the researcher (Smith et al., 2009).

Step 4 includes searching for connections across emergent themes. Specific ways of looking at patterns and connections, such as abstraction, subsumption, polarization,

contextualization, numeration, functions, bringing it together. Once the researcher develops a variety of chronological emergent themes while reexamining the data in step three, the researcher must examine the emergent themes and determine all connections between them (Smith et al., 2009). This process involves the researcher interpreting how the themes fit together to understand best the participant's lived experiences regarding the central phenomenon.

Step 5 involves moving to the next case. Moving to the next participant's transcripts and repeating the process. From steps one through four, the researcher interpreted and analyzed the first single case of one of the participants in the dissertation study. The researcher then repeats the steps for each participant in the study and maintains that each case was treated as its study (Smith et al., 2009).

Step 6 is looking for patterns across. Laying each on a table or figuring out on a table surface and looking across them. This phase requires interpreting and analyzing all the emergent themes within each case and determining patterns that occur (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher practiced coding during this step and identified which themes best represented the overall data collected. Smith et al. (2009) suggests there are at least three levels of interpretation consonant with IPA. The first involves the participant comparing themselves with others in the personal and professional spheres, referred to as social comparison. The second level of interpretation involves examining how participants use metaphors to indicate ways different things are similar. The third level of interpretation focuses on a detailed micro-analysis of the text. This study employs all three levels of interpretation consonant within each case and across the cases in analyzing the emergent themes.

## Summary

This chapter described the research methodology approach used to conduct this IPA study. The chapter described the study's philosophical epitome and the data collection and analysis procedures, according to which the researcher unearthed invaluable data to help create an in-depth understanding of peace educators lived experiences. This chapter provided a detailed approach to designing and conducting IPA research; finding a sample and sample size; recruiting participants; and ethical considerations. Finally, it describes the process through which the researcher collects IPA data; chooses a suitable method to collect data; conducts an in-depth interview; constructs a schedule for a semi-structured interview and conducting a semi-structured interview; contextualizes and transcribes the discussion; and analyzes data.

## Chapter 4: Research Findings

This IPA study examines the lived experiences of peace educators who often see their profession as instilling nonviolence and values for empathy and personal and interpersonal well-being. As mentioned earlier, the domain is interdisciplinary, transformative, and holistic. In higher education, performative metrics encourage professors to categorize their work as teaching, research, or engagements. This structural rigor underappreciates the complexity of the peace educational work being undertaken. Acknowledging and discussing peace educators' social and professional challenges is necessary for their preparation, support systems, and leadership decisions. There needs to be more literature when it comes to understanding peace educators' experiences and, as a result, can be undervalued and misunderstood by the academy.

This chapter identifies the primary themes that the study derives from the analysis of participants' narratives and reveals the meaning of the themes by including excerpts from the interview data and concludes that common themes emerged from the comparison and integration of the data from subject participants. In our quest to explore real-life experiences of peace educators and make sense of their reflections, the central research question and sub-question in chapter one help engage participants in a considerable amount of reflecting, thinking, and feelings as they navigated what those experiences meant to them. The questions helped unveil some of the necessary experiences significant to peace education professors and aspiring conflict resolution professors.



### **Analyzing and Discovering Experiences of Peace Educators**

This segment analyzes the elicited experiences to understand graduate-level peace educators' needs, challenges, and hopes of being peace educators. The chapter also analyzed participants' responses on how they make sense of their profession; what meanings and essences are identified with the lived experiences; how they construct their lived world; and what patterns and relationships are displayed in their lived experiences. Additionally, it explores some of the meanings and essences identified with peace education, processes or hurdles that need to be navigated to become a graduate-level peace educator, and critical factors impacting the profession. Finally, this chapter analyzes some of the significant contributions of peace education and the practices, skills, and knowledge that need to be incorporated into their teachings for an effective outcome.

This study uses pseudonyms to identify each participant in the categories below. Table 1 provides more details regarding their professions and locations. Again, the names listed are pseudonyms assigned to various participants to honor our confidentiality agreement.

**Table 1**

*Graduate-level Peace Educators Interviewed and their Respective Locations*

Pseudonyms	Profession	Location
John	University Professor/Author	Virginia, United States
Michael	University Professor/Author	Washington D.C., United States
Jane	University Professor/Author	Ontario, Canada
Teresa	University Professor/Author	Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Jackson	University Professor/Author	Jerusalem, Israel

As described in chapter 3, once the data had been collected, the study utilized a step-by-step process for data analysis for a reflective analysis by reading and re-reading and immersion in some original data (Smith et al., 2009). This process required listening to the audio tapes at least two times and simultaneously following along with the transcription. The researcher then re-read the transcription until the researcher was thoroughly familiarized with the data. This procedure gave the researcher fundamental knowledge and understanding of the text.

With knowledge and understanding of the participant and the data, the researcher began initial noting, which involved examining semantic content and language use on a very exploratory level, with emphasis on descriptive comments, linguistic comments, conceptual comments, deconstruction, and overview of writing initial notes, and started documenting, interpreting, and analyzing the data on a fundamental level.

Once the researcher started documenting, interpreting, and analyzing the data, emerging themes began to develop, requiring the researcher to re-examine the data and determine which information was pertinent to the study and which was of no value (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher then began analyzing the language used to develop the emerging themes within the data, searching for connections across emergent themes, moving from one interview transcript to the next case, and repeating the process. While looking for patterns across, the researcher laid each document on a table surface, interpreted and analyzed all the emergent themes within each case to determine the recurring patterns, and identified which themes best represented the overall data collected. Then, the researcher combined all these emergent themes and unearthed the six themes that are answers to the research questions for this IPA study:

- confronting physical and structural violence
- legitimizing peace and conflict resolution fields
- lack of diversity, access, and representation
- systemic adjustments
- developing sustained peace
- transforming violence

In the subsection below, the researcher presents each theme separately to demonstrate how each theme helped address the research questions. This does so by using excerpts from the interview transcript of each participant. Table 2 provides a glimpse of how the researcher selected the themes.

**Table 2**

*Interview Transcript Codes and Themes*

Codes and Subthemes	Themes
Resolve, disputes, violence, direct, violence, indirect violence, seeing violence, do something about it, community.	Confronting physical and structural violence
Recognize, struggle, acknowledge, challenge, legitimation, convincing people, ignorant, silly labels.	Legitimizing peace and conflict resolution fields
Must embrace, global perspective, different voices, other culture, peace pedagogical, feminist perspectives, critical theory, social theory.	Lack of diversity and representation
Institutional change, healing, repairing harm, restorative, framework, influence, policies, system, structural.	Systemic adjustments

Codes and Subthemes	Themes
Embody, nurturing, relate differently, safe spaces, force for good, connection, compassion, sustained peace.	Developing sustained peace
Human, rights, women, children, homelessness, policy, transformation, violence.	Transforming violence

### **Theme One: Confronting Physical and Structural Violence**

The theme of confronting physical and structural violence emerged after a thorough data analysis involving paying attention to participants' regular use of words and phrases, such as resolve, disputes, direct violence, indirect violence, seeing violence, doing something about it, community, and history. For example, John, a university professor and author from Virginia, United States, who believes that many experienced graduate-level peace educators have experienced some form of violence, used these words during our conversation. John insinuated that those who do peace work encounter some form of personal, interpersonal, structural, or physical violence that propels them into peace education or conflict resolution. These codes and subcodes appeared in John's account below.

I think a lot of us who do the work have either experienced direct or indirect forms of violence, and that could be on the personal or interpersonal level as well as the more societal level; you know, experiencing a war, structural, or direct physical conflict. And so, I think you know the reason for coming to peace educator is a commitment to understanding that there are other ways to resolve disputes beyond violence. There are many ways to resolve conflict and violence

that are often destructive, divisive, and damage relationships, so I wanted to be on that side of the conversation.

John continued reflecting and stating that,

I wanted to be somebody who contributed something positive and wholesome and healing and compassionate and loving to the world rather than, you know, continuing the cycles of violence. So, I think, again, a lot of us experience violence, various types of violence, and that is an impetus or reason, so, yeah, for me growing up and seeing much violence in society, violence in the home, it was necessary for me to do something about it. Moreover, I was at peace. Educated long before I knew I was a peace educator.

John briefly touched on his international experiences asserting,

I also experienced war-torn Nicaragua in the aftermath of the Sinista Contra Wars. I worked with people there as an English language teacher. I also heard their stories and recognized that the legacy of violence and Central America, particularly in Nicaragua, continued for generations, so hearing the stories of various people realized that there wasn't a specific field called peace education. Again, in early 2000, it was small. In the last two decades, the area has exploded. If that is a good word choice but exploded, and there are a lot of publication venues book. Book series, uh journals, et cetera, that focus on peace education, but that is 20 years later. Then I felt like I needed to be on the right side of history.

Similar codes and subthemes appeared in Michael's storyline while he described things that happened to him early in his career that attracted him to the field. Michael is a

university professor and author from the Washington, D.C. metro area. While reflecting on his early career experiences, the researcher noted regular use of words and phrases, such as resolve, disputes, direct violence, indirect violence, seeing violence, doing something about it, community, and history that pointed to the need to confront physical and structural violence.

I worked with a group of youth in Detroit in an after-school program, and we chose to explore social justice issues through photography. We wanted to provide them a space to interpret their reality through the perspective taking the photography could allow. A short version of a very long story is that this was one of my first experiences in teaching. I graduated from undergraduate with my undergraduate degree and stumbled along; it was a powerful learning experience, but we encountered a tragedy about two-thirds of the way through the semester, working with this group of students. One of the students happened to be a young mother in the wrong place at the wrong time and was shot and killed in the crossfire of gang violence.

Michael insinuated that students came to him and his co-teacher to try to make the meaning of this physically violent experience they were coping with, stating,

The trauma they were trying to understand fits into the bigger picture of what we were trying to explore collectively. I didn't know how to deal with structural violence, extreme violence, and trauma at the time, so it was a new experience for me. Indeed, it did not reflect my context or reality, so I was struggling in the same way. My students were working on trying to make meaning of what had happened. Ultimately, two things emerged from this experience. One was related

to education. The other was related to violence. So, the first part of it, related to education, came after my co-teacher and I were invited to this young student's funeral, later to her grandparents' house where she had been living and they raised her. The grandparents turned to us and said to give us appreciation because, for the first time in their granddaughter's life, through the experience that she had with our course that she felt inspired to go on in education to explore a university degree, something that she did not ever imagine would be part of her life, so part of that opened for me. I've been feeling dissatisfied with the purposes of education in general. How powerful meaning-making experiences through education can be profoundly transformative socially, politically, and otherwise. Michael concluded that the meaning-making experiences reinforced his decision to pursue and continue to think about the role of education. He stated,

I knew I could play a role in resolving direct or indirect violence or do something about it to transform the community. The second part of the question was related to the issues of violence and resolving disputes. Hence, there are many ways we can respond to situations of trauma like that. It may be the initial instinct at the time to lash out in anger and frustration and put all energy into blaming the perpetrator of this awful crime instead of reflecting on history and systemic structures.

I had a strong mentor who guided me through that process to understand the broader nature of systems of violence, cultures of violence, and physical and structural violence in ways I never perceived before to get a better picture and understanding of the problems we were facing. So, these kinds of inquiries for me

have come together, one related to the role and purpose of education and the second related to understanding the nature of violence and the nature of violence in the possibility of any peace and the kind of wedding. Those two together into a framework of peace education, which was not even a concept for me then, has been presented to me. It wasn't until ten years later, in graduate school, that I knew that there was a field. As such, that's what launched me along that path.

Jane, a university professor and author from Ontario, Canada, used similar codes and subthemes while reflecting on her experiences. As a child of the Vietnam war era, Jane portrayed her difficulties growing up in a physically abusive, violent home and the importance of recognizing the essence of being peaceful from early on in her life.

Throughout Janes' story, she regularly uses words and phrases such as resolve, disputes, direct violence, indirect violence, seeing violence, doing something about it, community, and history that led the researcher to the theme of confronting physical and structural violence.

Jane recollected her involvement in a United States political campaign for the peace candidate as an eleven-year-old. Jane asserted,

I remember getting involved as an 11-year-old in 1968, campaigning for the peace candidate in the United States elections. His name was Eugene McCarthy. It's hard to trace that too. I remember encountering Eugene McCarthy and his peace message on a billboard. It certainly wasn't something from my family, but of course, it resounded that this was what I wanted, so that's the motivation. And so, I began as a peace activist as I grew up into my youth and young adulthood, and



so on. And the peace education piece also came early, but again, it's hard to locate at a particular moment.

Jane also saw potential space for transformation in peace education and used it as her connection to enter the education field and start teaching. She stated,

The first thing I taught was swimming. I often taught people who were afraid of the water, and of course, I loved that because I was somewhat successful at helping people to deal with it. One feels very different when one overcomes fear and other things separate from various kinds of teaching experiences. When I was young, I was committed to something I had begun calling peace education by the time I went to college and had to design or choose to design it as an independent major at Oberlin.

Jane further shared,

My official major was sociology. Anthropology is interesting. Social conflict, social equity and diversity, and social change. And then, I could design an independent major because Oberlin didn't have an education program at that time, much less a peace education program. But there were a few individual professors who had an interest in that area, and I was able to work on the side. I began working with encountered the Quakers at the Society of Friends for the first time when I was in college. I became a Quaker after that and began working with the American Friends Service Committee in northeast Ohio on peace education through an initiative called alternatives to violence which was a mini course, twenty hours or so, it could be once a week or so for a semester, or it could be a

four-week intensive. Sometimes we did the whole thing on the weekend, Friday night, Saturday, Sunday.

Jane further hinted that the Quakers at the Society of Friends' Alternatives to Violence programs help mitigate structural and systemic violence. She stated:

The Quakers initiative enables participants to address what we have come to call structural or systemic violence, some of the direct or indirect harm, and the reasons that transformation is challenging right from the beginning. It differs from some individually oriented initiatives that locate the problem in the individual who needs to learn to resolve conflict and improve attitudes, values, or skills that are important but only sufficient if we consider our relationship. I feel about the larger society and the intersecting social institutions, status inequalities, resource conflicts, disputes, etc. Making peace is difficult and necessary. I could go on, but that's the beginning. I decided bit by bit to be interested in peace because violence was a problem, and I wanted to do something about it to improve the community and be a part of history. After all, while my effort wasn't going to solve the whole issue, it was one place out of which I could work to build peace.

For instance, Teresa, a university professor and author from Montreal, Canada, professed that peace education perfectly aligns with her Buddhist values deeply rooted in humanistic education and Tsunesaburō Makiguchi and Jose Toda's philosophies. She sees the Makiguchi and Toda as educators who created a lay organization for Nichiren Daishonin Buddhism and applied Buddhist principles to education. Teresa cherishes humanistic education as an avenue to mitigate physical and structural violence.

Theresa shared,

To be a peace educator means to tackle complex systemic issues that often lead to structural or physical violence, including homophobia, racism, and misogyny. It is all the isms, ageism, for another example. So, bringing up those sensitive topics brings out certain feelings and emotions in your students because you demand that they reflect on their unconscious biases. There is no getting around that and having those difficult conversations if I can use an example. In a class I was teaching on diversity, we analyzed the Quebec social studies curriculum and saw how ethnocentric it was and the sort of part of what I wanted to say. Aboriginal people were treated like extras in history, and we delved into it now. One young woman in the class was a real staunch nationalist, a separatist. She believed Quebec should be separate, so she wanted to avoid hearing that discussion. And so, she started being resistant, bad-mouthing the course in general, and that sentiment grew like cancer. I had to address what was going on systemically and have difficult conversations with the class so that we could do something about it, you know, talk about what we were feeling and what we were experiencing in this class and within the community. So, peace education is not for the faint of heart. It's not just about. Let's all get along. You know, it's delving deeper. It's about change resolving complicated issues.

Teresa asserts education should be learner-centered as opposed to following the notion that students are repositories to be filled. Moreover, she argues that learning is a collective process and that should be relevant and timely for the learners. As a result of education, each person should become a better human and that teaching is an opportunity to polish our lives and become better human beings, no matter the subject, Teresa claims.

She believes it is about looking at ourselves, our immediate environment, and the world and asking what it is, what the environment could be, and where we practice peace education. She referenced social and economic problems within inner cities.

So, peace education is not for the faint of heart. It's not just about let's just all get along. It demands that we all delve deeper. It's about change. It's about looking at the world, what it is, and what it could be. The environment has a significant impact on the practice and outcome of peace education. Consider putting forward the principles of peace education at an inner-city High school where most students perhaps are of lower social economic status, in a country with intractable conflict, a suburb of a well-to-do neighborhood, or a neighborhood with a high crime rate. How will these messages be received.

Teresa argues it certainly depends on where students come in and how they perceive peace.

For some, the notion that we are all responsible for peace is a foreign concept.

That's not the reality, so it all depends; as a peace educator, you need to do a needs assessment to see where people are, what they believe is possible and then go from there.

She emphasizes that:

Doing a needs assessment to see where people are regarding the causes of disputes, direct violence, indirect violence, racism, and all the isms. And what are their views on conflict management? What are their thoughts about racism and all the isms? And what are their ideas about peace? Is it possible? These two factors need to be kept in mind, 1) the environment where you're teaching and 2) and the

students' beliefs about peace and its possibilities; in terms of when they enter your classroom? Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory of socioecology looks at human development by moving from macro to micro systems. What impact does the society, local environment and the family have on the individual? What forces prevent or support their development? I used Bronfenbrenner's theory to examine the reintegration of formerly abducted young mothers in northern Uganda and the process of their social exclusion. Some parts of their community prevented them from being included as community members; the trauma they endured prevented them from seeking wellbeing or considering working towards peace and helping rebuild the community. So, every layer of the socio ecology contributed to their suffering and the breakdown of communities.

Jackson, a university professor and author from Jerusalem, Israel, has conducted extensive peace and conflict-related issues within ethnographic research for a decade and a half. His focus areas included bringing together Palestinians and Jews, and because of the relationships, he created through those studies. Additionally, Jackson explored populations in the Balkans, Northern Ireland, and eventually found himself exploring peace, conflict. Jackson suggested he has struggled to convince people to understand that if anybody thinks of himself as a peace educator, he must not know what peace or education might mean. Despite his impeccable experiences and institutional knowledge, Jackson claims the academy loves to create irrelevant fields of study, which should be the relevant category by which they name it, not the research itself. Despite his lifelong commitment to confronting physical and structural violence, Jackson does not see himself as a peace educator.

Jackson asserted,

I see violence every day between the Israelis and Palestinians' historical dispute and am tempted to do something about it, but I reject the idea that peace is something that could be taught because I believe that whatever becomes a subject of study does not yield a positive outcome and does not resolve violence habits from individual and the community. Considering the western communities' approach to learning in modernity based on content, the subject better belongs to disciplines where you cannot imagine anything more stupid. Uh, clearly, in the world, physics does not exist. Uh, mathematics does not exist. Uh, history does not exist that the administrative need of schools to categorize what is otherwise a combined knowledge that needs no specific subject better names to be dealt with is a problem of an administration that has little to do with Teaching and learning in a lot to do with organizing the world in specific ways that I do like. Peace is the same; it is not a thing that can be pointed at. Peace is a living project that includes physics, geometry, history, geography, economics, etc., so you need to understand that to understand peace. Peace research is funny, and I could barely stand it. They think that the problem of peace in the world is in the heads of people that immediately point to them as being basic western colonialists that care nothing whatsoever about how to change the structures of the world for people to suffer less physical or structural violence. Instead, they tell them peace is in people's heads and not in their bank accounts or the distribution of goods through politics in Africa, South America, etcetera.

## **Theme Two: Legitimizing Peace and Conflict Resolution Fields**

The theme of legitimizing peace education and conflict resolution emerged after reading and re-reading transcripts, listening to audio recordings several times, practicing coding, and determining patterns. This meticulous process enabled the researcher to identify participants' repeated words and phrases such as lack of recognition, struggle, acknowledge, challenge, legitimation, convincing people, ignorant, and silly labels. John, who has had direct experiences working with refugee populations, including Mung refugees from the American War in Vietnam, sees the lack of appetite for legitimizing peace education within the academy as a disservice to the profession and articulated that using words and phrases in the narrative below that are associated with lack of legitimization.

John shared,

In early 2000, when I was doing it when I started. I was an implicit and then very explicit peace educator. It needed to be recognized. Peace education is a legitimate subfield in education, and for 20 years, it has been a struggle to acknowledge it. The focus of study and effort in higher education is a challenge or even, and I will not call it a crisis. It is the challenge of legitimation. That was essential to convincing people on my dissertation committee that it was an important piece of education and that focus on my dissertation was important enough.

John continued to emphasize, stating:

I research peace education, and they will say, like, you know, peace and love are associated with hippies and smoking marijuana in different things like that, which

I just laughed at because I feel people are wholly ignorant about what the field is and what it is we do. Moreover, there are many stereotypes, particularly in the United States context. So, I laugh and say whatever, you know, you clearly do not understand. You know the seriousness of some topics we study in the courses and the learning processes, so that is okay.

Michael sang from the same song sheet as John on the issue of legitimizing peace education and conflict resolution fields within the academy. Although he insinuates that the peace education profession chose him and that he has engaged in and run several research projects and global initiatives that promoted and advanced peace theory and practice. His description and narrative of the profession contain words and phrases that can be themed as a lack of recognition.

Michael shared:

There are endless obstacles within the field of peace studies and peace education that are transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship that is often marginalized, which can be problematic. The second is the political nature of our field because it is, as you noted in your kind of introduction, the work of peace education in peace research is motivated by supporting and nurturing towards supporting and enabling personal, social, structural, cultural, and political transformation right, so in a straightforward way the work of our field challenges the status quo, increasing corporatization of educational spaces within universities.

Michael shared two anecdotes he considered obstacles to staying within the peace education field,



When I was the Peace Education Center director, we needed some funding issues. The university was always pleased to claim our successes and market our global reputation for our work. Still, the value of our academic work was utterly contingent upon our ability to raise funds, so I had this conversation with the department chair, who said to me that if you continue to raise money, you're happy to stay here, so there's that aspect of it. Another anecdote would be a graduate student who was working closely with our center for several years when we were at Teachers College had the opportunity to meet with the president of the college during his open office hours; when she went to meet with him and, she said she was pursuing her master's degree in peace education. He asked her why she would do that. That sounds like the missionary work when he was framing that in a negative light. That shows several different things of a limited scope of understanding of education's social and political purposes in general. The fact that this university president couldn't even recognize that education, as he had it in his mind, was a political project. His view was one of education that was also missionary in nature. Still, with different political goals and social values, than we were pursuing, these examples stand out for me.

Michael continued elaborating, stating,

Another thing that comes up is a connection with those same themes and all the different places I've found myself working in various universities in the United States and worldwide. There's always a struggle to sustain this work, and I'm sure you're picking up in your research right now that a lot of peace studies programs are on the chopping block. Uh, along with many other disciplines like the

humanities and social sciences and others. I was searching for certain professions with degrees that lead to occupations that universities don't see as economically viable. For example, there's a kind of this whole general theme around it that I think stands out.

In making sense of Jane's story, the study interpreted and analyzed all the emergent themes in her narrative and identified themes that are best represented. Jane compared her peace education profession with the others and used metaphors to indicate ways different things within social sciences are similar in analyzing the emergent themes. Jane, who supposes that people will be more peaceful if taught about values, skills, and attitudes substantively, also had concerns about legitimization. She described her profession using words and phrases that can be themed as a lack of legitimization.

Jane shared,

I have never chosen to work in a program that calls itself peace education. It's my work, but I have not wanted to segregate myself from other peacebuilding and justice work. Peace educators can be normative in their work; if I teach these people my values, skills, attitudes, and some degree of knowledge, they will be more peaceful. I don't have that ego. I don't have the answer, and I don't think peace is constructed and learned through teaching values mainly, so those challenges make it sound not good. It's a challenge, but it's a good one. It's that I've been able to do the work. I've done this because I did my homework to locate myself in the field of education, to work as a teacher in schools to do teacher education, to do graduate work in education, and join my doctoral program onward.

Jane claimed that the peace education profession is relegated to the back burner and sidelined as irrelevant: She stated,

Although others consider my profession as somewhat marginal and irrelevant, there is also the field of comparative international and development education to learn with people from around the world whose underlying understandings of conflict, how to handle it, and what we need to teach and learn in peace and education are not the same. There are exciting overlaps, but they're not the same. You mentioned that you'd seen my CV, so you know that much of my work starts from the premise that is, for instance, looking for teachers doing dialogue, dialogic pedagogy about conflictual questions and concerns of various kinds and then looking at their purposes and the student's learning experiences and so forth, finding the peace ingredients already hatching in schools.

Jane asserts, despite the profession being somewhat marginalized, there is always an opportunity to collaborate with dedicated people worldwide to place the peace education field on a pedestal. She stated,

Looking at young people living in disproportionately violent communities and what they already understand about conflict and possibilities for peace and themselves concerning their teachers. The need for recognition and acknowledgment is a challenge. And I often right from the early days of my master's program, if not before, so since the 80s, I've been equally interested in education for democracy, democratization, and democratic citizenship because democracy encompasses some of the processes for making and building peace for me. It is difficult to convince people who find these silly labels. So, in that

project, for instance, I asked teachers what they were already teaching and how across their various subject areas and interactions with the children about citizenship and or peace at the same time. I asked the young people; it was a separate focus group session, but I asked them about peace and conflicts, and they were often ignored or needed more basic knowledge. Many, but not all, are physically violent, and many are systemically damaging. However, the ones that resonated with them, that they were experiencing in their lives, and then the citizenship peace was what did they think they, their parents, their neighbors, their peers, what anybody could do about these problems? I learned early on that I needed to ask them about what they thought were authorities relevant to that concern as well.

Teresa acknowledges being a lowly part-time instructor and working as a non-tenure-track professor. However, she devotes most of her time to teaching and practicing peace but expresses concerns about the lack of acknowledgment and legitimization of peace and conflict resolution fields.

I wrote a paper about the lack of recognition of peace education and alternatives to violence and peace education. We live in a scientific world where numbers must prove everything. So, you can get numbers to prove the efficacy of the Guide to the Expression of Uncertainty in Measurement (GUM) teaching methods. So, you have an after-school program because you want to keep kids in high school, and after the after-school program, when they reach grade 12, you count how many of the after-school program kids completed high school, right? So, it's all about numbers. The challenge is how do you evaluate peace education?

How do you assess and convince people who have already branded the field with silly labels? People and students influenced by peace education go on to be advocates for the environment. They go on to be advocates for human rights. Are you going to follow them for 20 years? So, peace education is challenging to measure. And that's why there's that whole issue of legitimization by ignorant folks within the academic realm. In this article, I talk about the importance of having concrete, measurable objectives, even within the context of peace education, so that you can provide those impact statements based on the achieved learning objectives.

Jackson considers himself a critic of psychologies and the cyclization of education. He proudly claims to be one of the voices attacking the misunderstanding of all cultures and identities as the main analytic categories because that's what he writes about. Jackson comes from a tradition where humans are truly equal and claims it saddens him that societies do not represent that tradition. He asserts that legitimizing peace education and conflict resolution fields will make no difference. For instance, Jackson believes that a carpenter is no less intelligent than himself and that carpenters go through different paths and do other things in life. He believes there should be no difference regarding humanity and life appreciation.

Jackson asserted,

Now, we might even disagree, which is okay, but not agreeing with me doesn't mean the other is an idiot. It just means that there are different people with different views. I will fight to the death, not the carpenter, but the Nazis; they had a different view. I hate them, and I will fight them. This basic idea that humans

are equal and navigate similar struggles has disappeared from the social sciences. It isn't charming; it isn't very comfortable. For some stupid reason, people believe a Ph.D. is better than anything, and they think the blacks are stupid or primitive, the Palestinians are stupid primitive, or women are more stupid and private than men. However, things should not be the stuff they should not be allowed to. They are just silly labels propagated by ignorant people and an insult to humanity.

Jackson continued,

The geographers are very good. Some historians are also great, but so much of the social sciences is unempirical that I wonder why it is legitimized and allowed at universities. Although peace is an activity that needs to be recognized and practiced in life, it's also a rhetorical practice that would mean never being platonic or sarcastic. It's practicing equality, something you do, is not something you think, and if you go to equality, don't expect the quality to exist. It would be best if you made equality an abstraction to achieve equality. If you make peace and obstruction, be thought okay; you will never get peace. Note that this is easy to say and challenging to acknowledge and implement. That's why when I'm asked as a teacher, I answer with my deeds to convince people. And I'm happy to say that many students hated me because they said they never understood me; they never wrote something terrible about me as a human being in their evaluations.

### **Theme Three: Lack of Diversity and Representation**

The third theme of lack of diversity and representation cropped up after reading, re-reading, and listening to the original data, examining the semantic content and

language use on a very exploratory level, and keeping track of the language used by the participant and how that language is used to interpret the participant's understanding of their lived experience. The study documented, interpreted, and analyzed the data on a fundamental level to help bring to light codes and subthemes such as must embrace, global perspectives, different voices, other cultures, peace pedagogy, feminist perspectives, critical theory, and social theory that assisted in developing the emergent theme of lack of diversity and representation. This theme provided a conceptual understanding of participants' original thoughts as interpreted and analyzed in their voices. John balances his peace teaching, research, and practice work by integrating the three, emphasizing treating individuals with dignity and respect. He used codes and subthemes with patterns portraying a lack of diversity and representation in his narrative.

John shares,

Diversity, access, and representation in our education are very problematic in that service work; what we do for service work matters and must be embraced because you can focus on issues of gender equality or racial equity. You can concentrate on bringing indigenous voices into the institution, some thinking about first-generation college experiences, et cetera. So, it's not that I'm not teaching a course on peace education when I'm doing that service work. Still, I am doing peace work, meaning I am working on issues of cultural and structural racial violence, gender violence, et cetera, when I align what I am doing for service at the institution with my peace work. Umm, so for me, it hasn't. In more recent years, it has felt like all those rivers merged. All those streams joined to meet the river and met the ocean eventually.

John maintained that teaching courses, integrating peace education content, and doing research in the context of peace education work reflect his values of diversity, equity inclusion, and combating cultural and structural violence. He claimed,

It seems more manageable as I grow into the peace education field to align my interests, facilitate global perspectives, and encourage different voices. There have been times earlier in my career that I felt like, oh my gosh, I must teach this, do service over here, and do my peace practice work over here. And that cannot be easy because I feel like earlier in my career, I had moments, you know, a span of three years, whatever, four years, five years, whatever that I wasn't doing, the depth of peace, education work that I wanted to be doing. But now, in my current position, things are aligning, and I can do the job. However, I must be selective and incorporate other cultures, peace pedagogy, feminist perspectives, critical theory, and social theory. I can only do some of it. When it comes to service, it must be aligned with issues of equity and justice. And it and making a difference to individuals or institutions. As I age, I get more pragmatic about institutions and bring more joy from working directly with people. Institutional change is a slow beast that happens slowly and sometimes not at all.

John believes institutional change can be achieved by focusing on the grassroots level asserting,

If I can work directly with students, that seems meaningful because I know that working with them can create positive change. What do we do when the energy or potential conflict comes at us? Do we do so incorporate full-body movement into my teaching as well? So, you can't separate, and my students become discussion



leaders at a certain point in class. I show them how to do it. Then they take over, and then the questions they create from the threaded online discussions each week embrace a peace pedagogical approach where it's not just teaching but teaching with caution in a context of learning and managing classroom dynamics in a way that's healthy and productive.

Like John, Michael's story included recurring or similar words and phrases with emergent patterns showing a theme of lack of diversity and representation. These words and phrases in the paragraphs below helped the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of how Michael makes sense of his experiences that are not accessible to him through the quantitative methodology.

Michael shared,

There are several things that make the peace education profession difficult. Peace education nurtures and encourages critical and reflective thinking on the nature of self, our roles, and society. If done well through various peace and transformative pedagogies, it can support students in deconstructing and reconstructing their global perspective, understanding other cultures of the world, and their role within it. So, one of the most fundamental challenges to this work is the political resistance that arises because we work within university systems which are well-established institutions with various social and cultural norms and expectations about what education is and should be.

Michael expressed concerns that the lack of university system support for the field and their expectations about what education is and should be are negatively impacting the profession. He said,

Internal political resistance within university systems pushes the boundaries and prevents some faculties and students from fully embracing the field or integrating feminist perspectives, critical theory, and social theory. The profession threatens the status quo somehow, so that's one of the primary obstacles. It is overcoming that sort of normative epistemic violence embedded in the traditional kind of educational practices we deal with. There are other patterns, too, there. It all fits together into a broader puzzle. Students have come to the university with the mindset that the primary purpose of education is to get a job. Of course, we need to sustain ourselves to make a living and support families and things of that nature. But if the only outcome you see is professional advancement over time and monetary consequences, then you lose the general value of learning in and of itself.

Michael continued,

That process is political, so the whole nature of education is structured in and around that purpose to prepare students to participate in and navigate the world as it is. What peace education does is provide us with skills, capacities, and ways of seeing and helps us navigate the world as it is critically, but also to be able to construct a world that is more preferred, more social, more peaceful right and so even when students find their way into these programs or courses of study, they need help understanding how it will meet their general understanding of what a university education should be. So, I spend a lot of time with the undergrads I work with now at Georgetown, helping them hear different voices and see viable paths for what they can do with a degree in peace. There are only a few jobs out

there that are labeled peace studies and peace education. You see few job listings for peace educators and schools, for example, amongst other things, so that's one of the obstacles we're up against. I hope that's a helpful response; I don't know if it is.

Jane recounted her dilemma of searching for peace and finding a social and intellectual home for learning that contributes to peace education. She frequently used words and phrases throughout her description, including embracing global perspectives, different voices, other cultures, peace pedagogy, feminist perspectives, critical theory, and social theory. These codes and subthemes have emergent patterns associated with a theme of lack of diversity and representation. They also provided a clearer picture of how Jane makes sense of incidents that are not easily detected through other quantitative research methods.

Jane shared,

I was at peace finding a social and intellectual home for learning that contributes to peace education, and of course, as you know, there are some now, but my own. My biography is different from that. There are huge differences between what peace educators are about and what that means. It's been a community that I have been part of it all these decades, and embracing it, but I feel marginal. For instance, I have spent more time and energy working in fields allied ground for peace, but there are others besides me doing peace work, and that's an obstacle. However, in this postmodern world, we're part of with mass, one can find community through horizontal and vertical communication, so I wouldn't say that's been a terrible problem.

Jane mentioned she never wanted to work in a private school. She preferred working in the public school system because of the flexibility and opportunity to fit into multiple niches often and developed in various ways. Jane asserted that:

We get to peace through conflict, not conflict in the sense of fighting, but conflict in the sense of finding the contrasts and the problems, working to understand them together, and doing something about it. I did that better by studying broader questions of development and social change in the relationship of education, both negative and positive. And so, by the time I finished my Ph.D., this peculiar profile worked to my advantage because I never did the academic thing of specializing as narrowly as many people do. I had skills as a social studies educator with broader global perspectives on issues, which I incorporated. Then I had this international development, more of foundations of education somewhat policy-oriented and systemic, so it wasn't just every school that wanted, especially how budgets have been very tight.

Jane suggested that there is potential for a broader impact through public school education. She advocated for more resources for public schools, stating,

Public education is unsupported. I would never want to work in a private school because I would likely miss out on embracing different voices and cultures. I've always wanted to work in the public system to fit into multiple niches and be hired often. The search committees would have people wanting the more systemic policy, international comparative thing, and others wishing our teacher's teaching. Then I could do a bit of each, which got me into peace pedagogy and social theory. I've done the work since my Ph.D. and developed myself in various ways.

Peacebuilding is central to what I do. I'm not opposed to that label and the people inside. I'm not just in the peace research field but peace education. I sometimes see myself as a peace educator because I am studying conflict studies as much as peace studies, and not surprising in a way that many people who get involved in peace work don't like conflict, don't trust conflict, and don't want to be involved in a conflict.

Jane continued emphasizing that peacebuilding remains the most effective tool for mitigating violence stating,

My personal and professional view of peacebuilding is that there's no way but through peace education. We must have peaceful intentions as best we can, but we can also interpret those as justice intentions, democracy intentions, and or conflict transformation intentions. On the one hand, I reject that narrow view of peace education and embrace the broader aspect that incorporates feminist perspectives and critical theory. I'll give you an example. Have you ever seen the work of Mark Howard Ross? He could be better known, but something in his work speaks to me and helps put this into words. We're working on the meaning that he published some books in the 80s, maybe 1983, two at the same time, or less. I recall one of them is called *The Management of Conflict*, but he calls himself a political scientist; however, he was using anthropology.

Teresa claims she is not inclined to add research to her teaching and practicing endeavors; however, she aired concerns about the need for more diversity and representation in peace and conflict resolution. She asserted,

The only thing I can think of is recent, I gave a talk to a Buddhist educators group about an experience I had applying the principles of peace education to the course I taught last fall, and that was in the fundamentals of instructional design the lessons that I've taught before were diversity in the classroom. That lends itself to peace education. Then I thought of education in a Pluricultural society, then comparative education. Again, the principles of peace education. It's effortless to integrate the fundamentals of instructional design. That's very technical; that is about teaching. The Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate (ADDIE) model fits well and has withstood the test of time. It helps think through a peace education course's design, so when I taught this course, I realized that I had to become a peace educator, and it didn't matter the subject matter that I had to deal with or whether it was legitimate or not. So, what I did, and again it goes back to a peace educator to incorporate relevant material into their classroom.

Teresa believes being marginalized means being invisible to the mainstream or being pushed to the periphery. She believes there is a lot of good work being done where those underrepresented groups, be it women or children, people of a particular ethnicity, or people of a specific demographic or sexual orientation, and given the platform to address the marginalization of groups. She underscored the integration of peace education programs into the mainstream education curriculum as one of the possible ways to ensure all voices are heard, especially the underrepresented groups.

Theresa shared,

I took a risk because I integrated much of my instructional designer experience.

It's a risk because you leave yourself open and vulnerable when sharing your

personal experiences and listening with profound interest. In my personal life, I'm the type of person that encourages global perspectives, feminist perspectives, critical theory, and social theory. I believe in the infinite potential of human beings. I embrace and engage people in conversations all the time. I'm very social, but it's not just being social; it's about encouraging different voices and other cultures on peace pedagogy, not just my children or close friends. It's wanting to lift people as much as possible, and I'm Pollyanna. Somebody's complaining or disgruntled about something, and I'll say this didn't happen, and it's a Pollyanna attitude. It's also about deep listening, which involves acting profoundly with others and listening with your whole life. This is something that I practice because if I become a happy, fulfilled individual and promote peace within my little bubble, my little world, and my community, then that will grow like water rings, and that's how peace happens. It starts with everyone. I see peace as my responsibility.

Jackson insinuates that most people enroll at the university for the purpose of getting credentials, so he tends to lowball his contribution to the field and how he is impacting his students. He claims he aspires to bring joy to his workplace, make people laugh, and develop a more profound dialogue to help people to stop thinking of each other as students and teachers and instead become people that share in exchange. Jackson believes there are differing perspectives on understanding diversity and equal representation but seems unconvinced about how his students will regard him.

Jackson shared,

I believe I'm fair. Hopefully, my students see it that way and don't think I'm unjust. I tried to ensure they succeeded and embraced different voices. I don't remember failing students, not because they didn't deserve it, but because I don't think the university deserves that. They should be remembered; in any case, they'll get the credentials at some other university, if not at my university. So, I have little expectation regarding impacting others and their cultures. I hope they appreciate my honesty in my peace pedagogy. I hope they realize I don't care about impersonation because copying is essential to learning. I expect them to copy good things and be open about another perspective, including feminist and critical theory.

Jackson advocated and fostered diversity and equal representation through self-exemplary measures and being a good role model for students and professors alike. He recalls using his office as a safe space for helping teeners and cleaning workers at the university and making sure they were getting all their voices heard. Jackson recounted,

So, we had an office in my office in which my daughter and I received and taught cleaning service workers, primarily women, and most Palestinians, of course, coming in at certain hours. They knew I was doing that, and I hope they appreciated that. What else can you do other than teach through example and have an appreciation for global perspectives? Teaching through words is ridiculous. Most people lie, so why should anybody believe my words? It is better to show my deeds, and not everybody bases attention on you, but hopefully, they do, and at least one or two of them stayed every year, persisted for many years, friends,



and our friends still to date. And we talk about how we care about each other and, hopefully, we care about others. We're just one human right, and that's the only sense of individuality I can understand. There is a limit to what I can do with two hands, but I tried to do it with a few people in the best way I could. Some things happened in Israel, such as the army, which is usually ludicrous and creates an ethos that is interesting sociologically in Israel. I don't support it, but I'm part of it. So, when you have special units to survive, you must be tremendously smart, not intelligent, or have a Ph.D. It's just going out to survive. Then you learn to survive, and if you move to a higher rank in the army, you're outstanding now.

Jackson argued that today's military leaders grab headlines for all the wrong reasons. After all, they are pressured to produce troops to win a war, which is fortunately unsuitable because they create it. He picked Israel's military as an example, Israel is an example as bad as or as good as any other example of any other western country. Though it is like saying that South Korea is a great country in terms of education because it's high in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) ranking, it has the highest amount of suicide okay of young items, so who needs their ranking, come on. By the way, the only achievements of Israel are unbelievably low. This makes no difference because nobody needs the success of the masses. Nobody wants that. You need a cast of friendly rich people with a good education that goes into Stanford and Harvard Ivy League and brings back the knowledge, and that's it.

#### **Theme Four: Systemic Adjustments**

The systemic adjustment theme surfaced after another iteration of reading, re-reading, and listening to the original data, examining the semantic content and language use on a very exploratory level, and keeping track of the language used by the participant and how that language is used to interpret the participant's understanding of their lived experience.

In theme four, the study documented, interpreted, and analyzed the data to isolate codes and subthemes such as institutional change, healing, repairing harm, justice, restorative, framework, influence, policies, systemic, and structural alterations to facilitate a conceptual understanding of each participant's original thoughts, as interpreted and analyzed in their voices. John, who employs contemplative, quiet centering, mindful journaling, and compassionate listening practices in his courses, admitted that,

When working with educational leaders, it starts with us. The way we solve the conflict, resolve violent situations, heal, or look to repair harm more peacefully, you know, not punitive justice but a restorative justice framework, is essential. So how do you develop a healthy attitude in a related condition of structural violence? It's challenging, but it's still possible. And then, how do you chip away at structural change? How do you create or influence policies, systemic designs, and practices propagating cultural, structural, and indirect violence? Right. You can do it. So, what are the policies inhibiting everybody's access and success ability to live with dignity and be free? How can you work at the policy level on budgets and become a leader? Where do you spend your money, or where are your money and values?

John believes it is critical to use sensible methods to achieve incremental systemic changes. He asserted that leaders must question or critique the status quo,

Whether there is money where your values are, whether they are aligned? There are a lot of different ways to think about it. And how are you as a civil society after? How are you participating in your government or the civic institutions in the context of your country? And what does that look like in terms of voting or advocacy for the rights of women and children or people experiencing homelessness or people who, according to John Rawl's theory of justice, make the conditions of the least well off the best they can be? Are we on that side? Are we in that fight? So, I asked my students to think about all those questions directly in my courses. How do you influence change in your role as a teacher or educational leader? What does that look like, and where is your power to make a difference? So, becoming more crystal clear as to how the individual and the collective entities, the communities they belong to, advocate for change in terms of budget, spending money changing, change in terms of policy, change in terms of representation, access, and opportunity are some of the ways that I think it's embedded in the courses that I teach in the examples that I give in class.

Michael, who has been working with and teaching graduate and undergraduate students in the Washington, D.C. metro area, finds the justice and peace studies program attractive because he sees an opportunity to support worldview formation and expose students to different perspectives taking on issues. In our discussion, Michael stated,

I'm helping them to think critically to engage in perspective-taking as we explore issues, anything from the problems of justice from the local scale up into matters

of war and the global scale. I'm helping them to connect those experiences, their issues, and their personal lives to understand how they benefit from those systems of injustice because of their privilege or how those various issues we're exploring impact them now or in the future. Amongst other things, I focus on getting the perspective and reflecting on what's general.

Michael devotes most of his time to working and collaborating with like-minded professors outside his university, including international professors and students within peace education, doing things to help people better understand the role of pedagogy and sustained peace transformation. Michael stated,

I work outside the university, and the projects I continue to manage and direct include international student peace education and the global campaign for peace education. I do things there that bring a lot of energy: one is related to trying to articulate and explore to understand better the role of pedagogy and supporting social, personal, and cultural transformation. So, getting those who will become practitioners, as educators and in formal or nonformal contexts, getting them to become more deeply aware of the relationship between how we teach them, what we teach, and how that is so important to understand how we try to nurture those outcomes that we've been talking about. So, I spend a lot of energy there, and the other thing I put a lot of effort into is helping create communities of practice.

When asked to provide critical hurdles a peace education professor must navigate to integrate into the conventional education system successfully, Michael responded,

There is a shortage or a severe lack of teacher training opportunities in the field, so we must recognize a need for more institutional responsiveness to meet this

need for various reasons. We find ways to educate ourselves, and our most significant contribution to the field has been creating this kind of nonformal learning space, mainly through international students and peace education. And that has been instrumental in helping academic communities worldwide to push and expand the field in theory and practice.

Michael continued, stating,

When we think of practice in the context of conflict work, we generally refer to engaging in various conflict methods and tools to support and foster change. Still, practice without reflection does not bring peace education work to more profound personal and social learning aspects. That practice will only take you so far; hence, it would help if you saw them as fitting together into a bigger picture. One of the ways I've often framed peace education in the context of conflict work is peacebuilding work. Most people believe peacebuilding and peace education is a sub-field or a subcomponent of a broader framework of complete transformation.

Michael expressed concerns about the lack of prioritization, claiming an urgent need to turn things the other way around,

If we think of the work of peace and conflict transformation, we are working on getting into and addressing the root causes of conflict and creating spaces where the culture of peace can work, and it can exist and emerge. And we begin to understand that conflict is rooted in the system, for the most part, both cultural and worldview misunderstandings of constructive aspects of our world that guide our frames of reference for how we interact with that world. Ultimately, challenging and transforming those worldviews is a process of learning right. It

involves deep reflection and introspection to challenge our assumptions about how we think the world is. That that to me, I mean, I don't. I'm also against putting these things into some ranking or hierarchy in the broader fields of peace knowledge, where we have aspects of research studies, education, and action. We can learn much from each puzzle piece, but practice without reflection is rarely sustainable.

On the emergent theme of systemic adjustment, Jane emphasized that people in peace education and social justice must pragmatically examine issues and refrain from blaming existing systems and institutions because it gives an excuse to do nothing. She suggested that individuals must instead look for spaces within institutions and mechanisms through which they can make a difference. In her narratives, Jane also utilized words and phrases such as institutional change, healing, repairing harm, justice, restorative, framework, influence, policies, systemic, and structural alterations to conceptualize her original thoughts, as interpreted and analyzed in her voice.

Jane stated,

My personal and professional view is that we must have healing and repairing of harm intentions as best we can, but we can also interpret those as justice intentions, democracy intentions, structural alterations intention, and conflict transformation intentions. Again, I'll use the work of Mark Howard Ross as an example. He could be better known, but something in his work speaks to me and helps put this into words. In a discussion meta-analysis of anthropology research, Mark Ross compares disproportionately peaceful societies with disproportionately violent institutions across cultures to try to address this fundamental question. Is

the problem mainly systemic violence, or is the problem especially what some would call cultural violence? Mark Ross didn't use those terms, but at the end of those books, he said he found a draw, of course; it's not one or the other; it's both. I'm pretty distant from him, and I'm not reading everything he wrote, however, in terms of what he contributed to my learning, he's been a spokesperson for structural alterations and political peace, which sometimes gets ignored in some peace education.

Jane claims that many well-researched and documented peacebuilding efforts that promote systemic and structural adjustment often need to be revised. Jane promised to follow up with examples of such work.

I'll send you over reference because it's a chapter that takes a lot of work to find. They gave him the role, as you know the handbook is on peace education and he was a political scientist. So, he imagined having this kind of confidence and the political science view of peace education. He was dismissive because he felt peace education, especially transnational, is associated with international development work. Peace education needs to be more mature in systemic peacebuilding and politics, from individual and institutional change to the system, so even though some of what he says about peace educators is unwarranted and unfair, a beautiful, critical analysis there speaks to me about the necessity for educating for peacebuilding, what you and I call peacebuilding transformation.

Jane stressed that peace in the real world must deal with social differences, social power, political systems, and civil society. She stated,

I don't just mean capital politics; I mean politics in the broadest sense of how energy circulates, and that is a weakness in my view in the area of peace education, and I don't know whether I've been able to do anything about that because, again, as I say, some don't see me as a peace educator when I go off having workshops with young children about conflicts because I'm not studying a prescriptive program, not precisely what John Paul Lederach calls eliciting either, but even Lederach says we don't work in that extreme, it's a way of thinking about. However, it's much closer to eliciting in the sense of being grounded in the concerns, but also the language and understanding to handle those concerns of the local communities and cultures I work with, including contrasts. I'm pleased because we don't need another study about peace educators who are sure that that's their identity, and it's all like this. You'll learn and teach the field more by complicating that. What does it mean to try to transform education by creating a framework that influences policies as one of the contributions to peacebuilding? By the way, Lederach is an American professor of international peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame and at the same time as a distinguished scholar at Eastern Mennonite University.

Teresa cares deeply about developing relationships with her students, faculty, and the community to encourage structural and systemic alterations. So, she was very clear about strategies to promote changes,

I incorporate several professional skills for institutional change. I'm not too fond of soft skills, but professional skills, such as underlining the importance of relationship building and repairing harm within an organization. Humanistic



education is woven through all my courses, including justice and restorative. So, most of my courses have been for undergraduates, graduate students, and in-service teachers. So, when I teach in have the opportunity to teach in-service teachers and then every class, there has been some, then the notion that each learner has infinite potential, and how we see the learner is how they will react to us. Getting back to those punitive policies, if you believe that all learners are looking for the path of least resistance and don't care about their education, that's what you'll get back. Another concept that I weaved throughout is I thought of the point I was trying to make in all my courses. They're highly interactive and use adult learning principles, which means that students are actively engaged in their learning, so they'll read or watch lectures or videos beforehand. They come to class and are very active in discussions. So, one of the principles of peace education is the importance of being guided on the side as opposed to a sage on and again trying to model that kind of behavior.

Teresa recounted her participation in several peace education conferences to raise awareness. She stated,

I want to get the message out there and promote peace education. I've spoken at 23 conferences, and about half of those talks involved different aspects of peace education. The Comparative International Education Society has over 5000 participants from all different aspects of education. Educators will come to my sessions who are curious about peace education. I did an excellent workshop one year with Doctor Ayaz Naseem, *Peace Education: A Primer*. So, we had a seminar for three hours and worked with teachers from all disciplines to implement peace

education in their classrooms. I have nine publications, two or three related to peace education. People curious about the peace education framework and how it influences policies and facilitates structural alterations will come. They were all teachers implementing peace education in their classrooms.

Jackson has a profound affinity for structural and systemic alterations. He was unapologetic and clear about society's dereliction of its duty to focus on policies and habits promoting positive changes for sustained peace. Jackson claims,

When the point of education sticks to the idea that children need to be introduced to something, nothing can work. It would be best to focus on creating institutional change contexts where certain things resonate and echo or mirror the required activities. If you introduce mindfulness to the Black community, forgive me for using the word Black, but what are you trying to accomplish? What do Americans like to see in an Afro-American poor school? First, they don't need mindfulness; they need not be poor, and if they were to have options to develop themselves as individuals and as a community, they would be more peaceful than today. Calling them to the conflict show is an insult, okay, and the abuse is putting the problem under individuality. I don't consider such a move as healing, repairing harm, or restoring justice. I don't know any individual situation, so all this talk about caring for people through education sounds ridiculous. It sounds to me evil because the framework blinds everybody. The problems are not the people; it's the systems they inhabit, and if we are not attentive to the design and their struggles, we cannot influence change. Yes, so I want you to be careful in this sort of compensation.

Jackson encourages critical thinking and wants every student to be critical because he sees a practical approach to pinpointing all the necessary systemic and structural adjustments. He asserted,

I need those critiques. I need those views because we tend to underestimate systemic issues and policies that prevent us from seeing the context of modern Western education. It is built at all levels to prevent seeing a broader context. You first avoid catching a wider context by creating compartmentalized disciplines. Ask any good physician. He'll tell you we know what we're talking about. Medicine is the only school you have a subject that is always within a context, so if you want a good guide, doubt for peace education and education in general. Teach students what they need to know to understand better what they already sense is justice in the world. Tell them that the problem is not people's heads but their bank accounts. Show them who does the work, who gets the money, and what structural alterations are needed. Okay, where do they produce this thing from? Where do the items made come from, and the money earned from their sales end up in which bank? It would help if you had plenty of knowledge to read physics. Most kids think they need help to do good in mathematics. Why do women have a problem in their minds, or did black people fail in school? Why? Because they have a problem in their minds, the chick comes off the bed. There is a limit to how corrupt the system can be.

### **Theme Five: Developing Sustained Peace**

The fifth theme of developing sustained peace emerged after a thorough data analysis involving paying attention to participants' regular use of codes and subthemes,

such as embody, nurturing, relate differently, safe spaces, a force for good, connection, compassion, and sustained peace. The study utilized these codes and subthemes to facilitate a theoretical understanding of participants' original points of view, as interpreted and analyzed in their voices. John elaborated on the incremental progress he continues to make in his quest to help develop sustained peace, stating,

I'm not going to make any claims that I'm changing the world through the work that I do or not. You know that I'm not stopping wars or violent revolutions that are unjust or whatever. It's modest work that I've chosen to embody. As a realist, you know, the significant contribution to society is that, hey, there are people out there called peace educators and peace researchers, people who are trying to understand ways to transform violence into something much different that calls upon the finer aspects of human nature like nurturing, love, truth, beauty, kindness, compassion, and empathy.

John maintained that those working as peace education professionals in colleges must believe they can be a positive force for sustained peace. He recounted that,

Some legitimately work as professors in a college of education, publishing work, and outlets that value knowledge and the coproduction of knowledge around issues of peace and justice, access and opportunity, inclusion, and diversity. That alone says there's a place for others like me who believe in those things and think we can be a force for good. As a human species, as people living potentially in harmony and relative peace, we can learn to relate differently. So, the significant contribution is letting our lives be our message to the world; this is what Gandhi said. Is this who we are?

John described his peace education profession as a journey with multiplier effects on students, colleagues, and the community writ large. He shared,

Again, I work with teachers, educational leaders who become building principals, superintendents, and in some cases, policymakers at the state level, the people that influence K through 12 education; they influence higher education; they influence in some cases what is taught, how it's taught, and where it's taught. What's not taught, how learning takes place, etcetera. And so, through the multiplier effect, through education systems, and individuals who have burning desires for something different than violent realities, we can experience connection, compassion, and sustained peace, particularly in the United States with violence, school shootings, bullying, and cyberbullying. You know, racist aggression, sexist facts, and people experiencing poverty. I feel for transgender students trying to live with dignity as they transition through various stages of life.

John also sees peace education as an avenue for advocating for minorities and the vulnerable within our communities, especially on human rights issues. He emphasized the essence of creating safe spaces for gender and sexual identities and for other minorities to live and be okay with who they are. He stated he believes he is making progress and doesn't need to know the significant contributions he is making, stating:

I see the light; the eyes light up in my students, and I see them embrace peace education content and want to create a curriculum around it in their classrooms and multiple disciplines in schools. Uhm, I see them surprised that they've never learned that it was a field. They didn't know there was a focus, or an area called peace education. They're amazed, and then they get excited when they study

issues of sustainable peace and education for sustainability. When they get introduced to antiracist education or critical feminist perspectives, or critical social theory, they start to question how they've been taught, what they have been teaching, and what they want schooling systems to look like moving forward to create a peaceful, injustice society. I'm making a significant enough contribution, and that doesn't stop me from continuing to do the work. It's not about that. It's about doing the right thing; it's about how I want to be remembered, how I can use peace education as a force for good, as a force for connection, a force for love, and compassion rather than as a force for dividing people.

John envisions the conventional education system reexamined and adjusted to integrate elements of inner peace, love, and compassion. He asserted that,

It can be used as a force for indoctrinating students into thinking in a certain way, as opposed to using it as a force for creating allegiance to blind authority like a nation-state, so that one is motivated to kill other people because I'm an American and they're not like us. That makes no sense to me. So, it's a battle, but it's not a macho battle with armor behind tanks or with weapons and grenades. It's a quiet battle of conscience and commitment to principles of love, connection, compassion, justice, and peace. Yeah, it's quieter than a bomb, and it's a bomb; a bomb tears things apart, and this work tries to pick them up and put them back together, and that's all I have to say.

Michael spent his first 10-15 years in the teaching field. However, in his story, he emphasized that he did teaching as part of the work, but it wasn't the central part. He saw his engagement in activism as one of his critical milestones in advancing the peace

education field. With that scholarship, Michael claimed he had a lot of freedom and worked in an academic research center instead of having a traditional professor appointment. He contended,

I've always continued to work in the international institute on peace education and the global campaign for peace education. We started and continue to direct these two projects on the side, so that's the service work I embody daily. That's always sustained me and is primarily done as a volunteer labor of love. It gave me spaces to fall back on and relate differently should I not find an academic appointment that meets my personal and professional needs. So, I only had to depend upon academic work to exist partially. I could always raise funds for these projects to keep myself going if needed. That said, I can also be limited and pickier, such as in my current appointment as a teaching professor. With my current position, I don't have that expectation of commitment to research; nonetheless, I'm still balancing my full-time teaching with the ongoing service work and the nurturing that I do in the world.

Michael claims he occasionally drifts away from his regular university work into more collaborative work with other professors because he believes he learns most from outside his university work. He revealed that he constantly reminds himself to avoid completely veering toward one. Michael shared,

I need to maintain work in both those spaces because it is through the kind of peaceful action work, I do outside the university that I learned the most from. It informs my day-to-day teaching that shapes and serves as a force for good. I want to investigate research independently, and then the other side, I like to think of

these things as fitting together holistically. Hence, the teaching to me is a way of recharging my batteries. So, I get a lot of energy from supporting the learning of others and in the process of teaching. It puts me in a place where I'm profoundly learning myself and outside of the teaching space where I'm working, not in the more activist roles I've played. Uh, I am deeply connected to various communities of practitioners who have worked through similar kinds of challenges and struggles. Through that community of practice, we can explore those everyday struggles together to support each other and make our way through them. If I didn't have that community of support outside of the university, I don't know if I could sustain myself, which would be one piece of advice I would give to anyone emerging in the field, academically or otherwise, to find that community of practice and support, not just for those personal benefits but also to create those spaces of mutual learning and co-learning, be compassion, and focus on a sustained peace. We can test the ideas and theories we develop in conversation with our peers.

On the other hand, Jane maintains that the challenge is finding a place to do peace work and promote sustained peace. She sees a collaborative peace education program as an add-on, research starting point, and a program where faculties and students can stay active, up-to-date, and engaged in developing sustained peace. Like John and Michael's narrative, Jane used identical words and phrases that emerged as creating sustained peace.

Jane shared,

I realized I had more to learn. Once I got to Iowa, it was even more apparent that not only peace education in the schools, but social peace education and peace



activist discourse recognize that the United States relates differently to the rest of the world. The United States can be a force for good; however, it has had violent impacts on the world and is often without deep reflection. It's almost as if we slip from the United States. The bringing of peaceful democracy to the world into everything is the United States fault, and that's just as egotistical. And so, I went to study education in what they then called the so-called third world to try to embody what other people understood peace education could do, how it was colonial and a mechanism for reproducing inequalities and violence and, on the other hand, where there were safer spaces for nurturing and transformation.

Jane acknowledged there are more scholarly journals and meetings to attend. She referenced the theory of Homi Bhabha and equated that to a peace education space where cultural borders open to each other and the establishment of a new mix of cultures that coalesces their features and compensates for their differences. Jane shared,

I straddle worlds and create that third space for peace education out of the in-between. It's been worth it to me. It's been enriching as I developed connections and compassion for sustained peace. I get to continue being a student in some ways, but you see how different that would be from someone in a professional space called peace education, where that's your job, and you work out of that job. There's been considerable work intensification in the academy over the last generation. Indeed, it escalates what's expected of us, and that's not all bad. It's already a very privileged place to be. Sometimes, we only need to accept some of that privilege and do the work for more basic places where the work is wanted, and people need it to happen.

Jane insinuated that promoting peace education in countries with relatively small populations, limited budgets, sponsorships, or academic scholarships is challenging. She mentions,

Living in a country with a relatively small population and a relatively small budget is very much dependent and subordinate to the United States. We need the infrastructure of research foundations like what you have in the United States. Most of our money comes through the federal government, the social sciences, and the Humanities Research Council of Canada. There are exceptions, but that's a lot of it, and so getting the money for work that I see as relevant requires review committees and so forth, but more of that happened after they asked you to be on the committee after you get a grant or too. I have been able to get funding to do it slowly because my time is highly strained and limited, but to do research that I consider relevant to peacebuilding and education because I'm an immigrant to Canada from 1995.

Teresa pointed to her habitual adherence to Buddhist principles as a potential avenue for sustained peace. She contended that Buddhism aligns well with her values and enables her to cultivate the habit of mindfulness and humanistic education. She acknowledged,

My most significant contribution is again going back to Buddhism, and the type of Buddhism I practiced called Nichiren Buddhism; we have a beautiful center in Caledon, Ontario, and so every year, every weekend, a different group of 60 people meets. We'll talk about various aspects of Buddhism that embody compassion and allow participants to relate differently. It could be a women's

division meeting or a regular meeting serving as a force for good. When I was pregnant, I thought, why isn't a family conference connecting us? And so, I had to work hard with the executive of SGI Canada to get a family conference and create these safe spaces. I was finally successful. And in the family conference was all about parents having nurturing attitudes, developing, and deepening their bond with their children.

Teresa saw that bond with children was an effective way to contribute to community peace. She continued,

So, it was a three-day conference, and we had people from all over Canada. I led this conference for seven years, and it ran for ten years and was one of the most successful out of all the Caledon conferences. Some families have two kids and two parents, and they flew from Vancouver for the weekend, and all of them had a meaningful time and experience with their kids. There were activities just for the kids. There were activities just for the parents. There were activities for the kids and parents involving music, dance, culture, and much fun. It was a lot of fun. Yeah. Yeah. So, that was a contribution in the way of ensuring sustained peace. I'm going to make another contribution and suggestion. I must think about that because of my mission. In life, I believe to contribute is to improve the welfare of marginalized women and youth contribute to improving the welfare of marginalized women and youth, and I'm hoping to direct my career in the next phase of my career. Direct it in that direction so I can practice more as a peace educator for sustained peace.

Jackson's soundbite is monkey see, monkey does. He repeatedly asserted,

If you want people to be peaceful, be peaceful and be seen as a force for good. Some are threatened, but in schools, their main aim is to sort out the population into those that will serve the rich and those that will be rich; how do you expect to do anything peaceful in a violent system like that? Look at your schools in America, where people relate differently; kids come in and kill people every day or every week. There is no nurturing and compassion. It is just sickening if we reflect on the contexts we build for our children with no safe spaces. So, if we live and create for them of violent context in which the economy is violent, in which the individualism is violent, in which everything is violent, look at your presidents. I speak about yours because you don't want me to talk about my own, which I hate even more, so I'd speak of America.

Jackson describes himself as having such an easy life and nothing to balance. He stated,

We barely worked compared to real people. I do research for institutions, so they don't expect me to do anything for society. God, forbid I must publish papers to make them happy. I took the game to say that they are among the best universities in the world. And nobody cares about how I teach them. They need me to publish good impact-factor journals and books. Now I might have political commitments and connections outside of the university. I hope to be an excellent teacher to students. Most of them hate me, but one or two stay around, so then we can stop teaching them, and we can learn to gather. Instead of being teachers and masters and students, we become colleagues in studying because we care. So, I only have a little more to say about balancing for sustained peace.

Jackson reiterated being fortunate and able to work as a tenure university professor. He shared,

I try not to lie to myself and call it an important job. It's a good job, but it's optional. I did what I had to; they were happy and kept me on. Then you get tenure so they can do nothing about it, and then you'll retire with a good retirement. I always made sure that part of my grants was invested in paying teachers to participate in research projects in which they were partners. I was always trying to treat them properly and always found ways to share with them some of the money I got for the research.

### **Theme Six: Transforming Violence**

The sixth and final theme of transforming violence materialized after the last reiteration cycle of reading, re-reading, and listening to the audio and original data, examining the semantic content and language, and keeping track of the language used by the participants. The study interpreted and analyzed the data by paying closer attention to participants' regular use of codes and subthemes such as human rights, women, children, homelessness, policy, transformation, and violence to uncover the emergent theme of lack of transforming violence. This theme also provided a theoretical understanding of participants' original views, as inferred, and analyzed in their voices. John, in his voice, avowed,

So again, we use contemplative practices in my courses. We use quiet centering. We've used mindful journaling, compassionate listening, and some leadership skills you can teach directly. When working with educational leaders, it starts

with us right the way that we solve the conflict. How we resolve violent situations and heal or repair harm more peacefully.

John insisted on encouraging students and their communities to care for themselves when experiencing structural violence. John claimed that being in peace starts with the individual, caring for his physiological and emotional well-being and avoiding excessive workload that leads to unnecessary burnout, which is fundamental in people in peace and conflict studies. He shared,

I see it all the time. People are angry, and they're burnt out. How do you create a desire for a peaceful world when you're mad and burnt out yourself or hateful because of all the world's woes? I have to practice skills, knowledge, critical thinking, and writing. I'm a former language arts teacher and English as a second language teacher, so expressing yourself clearly in oral and written form is very important, and so is learning how to write well, learning how to speak well, and being an advocate for humanity, rights, equity, justice, and peace is essential. And so doing, I teach direct skills like how to write a paper, how to craft an argument, where you fold the opposite side of the discussion, and all the gray areas in between for transformation. That's like critical thinking, analytical thinking, and writing skills that could drive improvement and better living standard for women, children, and homeless people.

John sees himself as a contemplative practitioner who cares deeply about inner peace. However, he fears that peace education professionals often neglect or underestimate topics that foster building internal peace in their curriculum. John stated,

I teach reflective practices directly in all my courses. We start class with quiet centering. Uh, we do circle practices as part of the class. We also try peace as context, not only as text but as context and subtext. And this is stuff I've written on in some of my published work. So, think about it not just as a text you read about but how you embody it in your own life and how to do you through contemplative practices. So, we do quiet centering, et cetera. I want to do workshops in peace education. I also incorporate martial arts. I'm a martial artist. I've studied all different types of martial arts, from Tai Chi Chuang to Taekwondo, to jujitsu, to American freestyle karate, et cetera. And so, we do light martial arts to understand conflict.

Michael pointed out that much of the work peace educators do need to be covered in the job description. He cited that the ongoing mentorship of current and former students, guiding their journeys, and responding to random inquiries from various peace educators worldwide often go on undetected. For example, if someone asks what peace education should look like in a particular country, it will take more work to provide a definitive response. Still, a peace educator can connect that individual with people working in a similar context that one might learn from. Michael admitted that,

There's this kind of fine line that I think we walk in the work of peace education and peace studies between the social, political, and cultural transformative goals of the field and then how we educate and prepare our students to be able to do that work to live in that world to construct that world and that fine line is one that kind of dances around pedagogy. And so, it's vital to approach this work so we avoid indoctrinating students to become peace activists. That's not what it's about. The

idea is to pedagogically, through various tools like reflection, contemplation, and critical thinking, help students develop inner moral and ethical resources. It also becomes the foundation and the basis for advocating for humanity, rights, women, children, homelessness, policy, transformation, and violence taking external political action so that I might provide experiences in my classroom; they can test out different ways of being, but I never expect that to happen.

Michael advocated that a student must have a way to make independent choices away from what universities and professors offer. He re-emphasized,

My work is about preparing students with a fundamental and new policy and foundational stuff of conflict resolution conflict transformation, which is more skill-based. But then there are also those capacities for self-reflection, critical thinking, and others for navigating and being the world if you have that foundation. I am developing an inner sense of myself and trying to live with that consistently in your values framework. That the personal ultimately becomes political.

Jane also insinuated that students who choose to do peace work at the graduate level and do their thesis work at her department or with her research team are almost always from other parts of the world and rarely spend time in North America. Jane used subthemes with similar patterns that emerged into a theme of developing sustained peace that best represented the overall data collected. Jane shared,

Our professional and personal identity and scholarly profile is a place they want to be, and I love that, but even in teaching courses, so are the other kinds of teaching. My work attracts people who know little about peacebuilding or conflict



resolution. Still, they know they've had negative experiences with conflict, violence, exclusion, and injustice. When I can, I help them get through some of that and find different paths to help each of them find a way where they feel. They need to be more confident that they are close to learning but confident enough to have a place to stand to do their work and contribute to effective policy and transformation. That doesn't automatically imply overwork on my part, but it is. I'm getting older. I've just passed 65, and I could retire. I do need to slow down a bit and refocus.

Jane considers time as the enemy. She prefers having more time for practitioner-based inquiry with teachers and young people. However, she maintained that it is challenging to integrate nonacademic stuff into a conventional academic schedule, especially if one is aiming to do some work abroad and not only locally. Jane acknowledged she is still figuring that one out. Jane shared,

I'm still figuring out how to fit all my anticipated nonacademic activities into my peace education work. I'm not apologizing, but I have put much less energy into nurturing my personal life and nonacademic, nonwork relationships than I should have. I need to shift that to go on with real life. I remember how my feminism very influenced my first alternatives to violence course. In those days especially, I was very clear on one point: because peace education is a male-dominated field, it may have emphasized non-aggression and refusal to violate others. Still, transformative justice-centered peacebuilding also must include a refusal to be violated. I tried to do that work, but then I went home and allowed myself to answer the 24/7 e-mails and to work with students who need a better academic

background to be easy to work with, and you know their hearts are in the right place. They want to change the world. But they need help to do that work. Those are the people I often work with, and it is extremely labor intensive, and I tend to sacrifice my life balance and boundaries for that. It's impacting the personal and professional life of your students and your community.

Jane asserted that in First Nations Indigenous communities, alarming suicide rates seem to be related to the broken relationship between the individual and the system, and the system's systemic violence, that those young people endure. She claimed her work could be better, but it's constantly being attentive to the trauma many people have endured and the violence that needs to be stopped. She referenced her experience in Chile stating,

I was doing some work in Chile, and I was able to go when we could travel again, both in Mexico, in a particular part of Central Mexico, not the non-exclusively, and in Chile. When I got to Chile, the first thing all my colleagues wanted to tell me was a profoundly traumatic situation that happened in which many of the things that schools do, even though they don't do it as well as we wish to help young people learn to connect healthily with others and adults. The public school is one of the first places a young person encounters those different kinds of relationships. Then in the pandemic, most of those young people were denied schooling because they didn't have the online equipment, and online education didn't do what you might call social and emotional citizenship work intentionally or consistently. So, they all wanted to tell me how somebody in junior secondary,

an Intermediate School young boy in grade 9, went into the patio in the middle of recess and shot himself to death. So, we need to talk about violence.

Jane admitted there are no simple answers and insisted,

They knew I would care because my work is around peacebuilding and advocating for humanity, rights, women, and children. Still, I don't know that my work is that practical because there is apparent individual healing of that youngster before that happened, of his family, classmates, teachers, and community that also needs to happen; other fields are allied with peacebuilding and education maybe you have more expertise people will go again to counseling or mediation trauma sensitive. How community development work, you know, also has something to do with ensuring justness and preventing homelessness. Still, we can't blithely go ahead and teach peace without a sign we're on the right track, and yet a horrible one that people can air some of their deepest pains, fears, and experiences of violence and acknowledge that there are no quick fixes.

Teresa reminisced about how she became a peace educator. It didn't matter what she had to face, cope, or deal with. She admitted to taking risks in integrating instructional designs for violence transformation. However, she acknowledges potential risks in venturing into unknown or unfamiliar territory. Theresa shared,

Now it's a risk because you leave yourself open and vulnerable when sharing your personal experiences. However, I did it to stress a point and to transform a violent environment. And an example that's very clear in my mind that I used in class was back in 2008; we had a 51-day bus strike in Ottawa, the longest bus strike in the history of Canada. And so, I was a consultant at the time. I was asked to lead a

conflict management course regarding the city's bus workers' rights policy. The strike had been resolved a few days earlier. It was like Wednesday or Thursday, and they would face the public on Monday morning, so they needed tools to deal with disgruntled customers. So, I started the class, and I explained what the course was about. One guy got up, went to the back of the room, turned around, headed for the door, turned around, looked at me, and said that's bullshit.

Teresa acknowledged pausing and asking participants difficult questions, Ok, what will you do? What are you going to do? He's walking out. What are you going to do? One student said, well, I just let him walk. Another student said, well, I would call a break, you know, cut the situation short. Another student said I would talk to him. More importantly, I listened to him. So, when he said that, I said you're right. It is bullshit; why don't we talk about it? Still, he can't. He returned, and the bus drivers talked about how they were vilified in the media for the next three hours. The city of Ottawa. Threw them under the bus. They were the reason it was all over the media. They were the reason why we had this horrible commute. They were so angry and hurt. So, at one point, I asked them, ok, well, what do you need after they vented, I took notes, I took notes, and I promised I would give it to the city of Ottawa and made sure that they listened, which I did. So, then we broke up for lunch. We returned, and I said, ok, you'll still face the public on Monday. What are you going to do? And one guy said, well, I've just ignored them the way I always do, and another guy said, how's that working for you, Ed?

After garnering the class's support and listening to their views, Teresa claimed success that day because she eventually plowed on with conflict management. She concluded,

There is no boundary between being a peace educator and a human being. In my personal life, I'm very encouraging, and I believe in the infinite potential of human beings, especially women and children. I engage people in conversations all the time. I'm very social, but it's not just being social; it's about encouraging every person I meet. And it's not just my child, my children, or very close friends. I want to lift people as much as possible and do away with homelessness. Somebody's complaining or disgruntled about something, and I'll say this didn't happen. And it's a Pollyanna attitude, but it's also about deep listening, which involves enacting profoundly with other people and listening with your whole life. And this is something that I try to practice right because I see that if I become happy, fulfilled individual and promote peace within my little bubble, my little world, my community, then that will grow like water rings, and that's how peace happens.

Jackson reminisced his transformation from an anthropologist to a sustained peace and conflict resolution advocate. He underscored that,

Teaching is a doing, and it only works when the doing resonates with honesty, is easily mimicked by children, and understood by women. Otherwise, it doesn't. You have children. Do you practice with them, or do you practice with their love, or do you tell them you love them? Seeing as believing, so I know that regardless of what I tell them, it is about what they see of me. What you do to gather with

them, with your wife, with your brother, with your students, with the people you work with, of course, children are frightening because they read with tremendous ease the gaps between the rhetoric and the practice. What do I know about Africa and human rights? So, I'll tell you my two rules about change. If anybody comes telling me he has a solution that will change the world fast. I immediately leave. Change is not easy, and it's never fast. Even if it happens quickly, it won't be easy and will kill many people and increase homelessness. Both micro and macro levels change. The second change requires policy alterations. I will never change a thing.

Jackson views change as something that should be done slowly and near one's immediate existence. This philosophical view is the cradle of his argument that peace education must be transformational. He affirmed,

So, I tried to change the world, do away with violence, and raise my daughters the way they have been submitted. I'm not saying I'm successful; I'm sick of trying. Raising my students through my practices is the immediacy of my life with them, and that's the way change works. Any other changes are usually false. Good human beings, fortunately, unfortunately, don't direct the world. I have plenty of good friends, and you have plenty of good friends, too. That is, you may be egalitarian, and that's why they are your friends, but I don't go to the peace educator. I call them good humans' connections.

This chapter of the study interpreted, analyzed, and synthesized the various works of literature and connected them to the theories and the elicited data from the research subjects to develop a comprehensive understanding of graduate-level peace educators'

needs, challenges, and hopes of being peace educators. While searching for connections across the emergent themes within the interview transcripts, the researcher used table 3 below to chart or map out how the themes fit together effectively.

This began with the first interview transcript, followed by moving to the next participants and repeating the process. Smith et al. (2009) suggest it is essential to treat each case independently, to do justice to its individuality. This allowed for the bracketing of ideas to emerge from the analysis of each interview transcript while navigating the subsequent transcripts. This procedure also paves the way for the researcher to look for patterns across the transcripts, laying the transcripts on the table and looking for connections across the cases. The results of this process enabled the researcher to show relationships not only among all five transcripts but also portray direct the association between the various works of literature, theories, and the data from the transcripts, as explained in Appendix A.

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 interprets and analyzes the regularly used words and phrases, codes and sub-themes, for patterns across and gives voice to peace educators. The researcher laid printed copies of the transcripts on a table surface and looked across them. This phase required intense interpreting and analyzing all the sub-themes and the emergent themes within each case to identify the recurring patterns. These activities helped untangle the detailed lived experiences of each academic professional and depicted how and why they chose the profession. In doing so, the study unveils aspiring peace educators' critical needs, challenges, hopes, and potentials.

The next chapter discusses and interprets the findings and concludes the study with recommendations. This chapter describes ways the results are confirmed, disconfirmed, or expanded on the knowledge in the discipline by comparing what was discovered in the literature review described in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 also analyzes and interprets the findings in the context of the theoretical and conceptual framework, ensuring the interpretations are accurate and within scope. The chapter wraps up with recommendations for further research substantiated by the strengths and limitations of the study and the literary works.



## Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study explored the lived experiences of graduate-level peace education professors who usually see their profession as implanting nonviolence and values for empathy and personal and interpersonal well-being. Chapter 4 of this study navigated the data analysis process by closely examining each case, looking at similarities and differences, getting closer to participants' personal experiences, and recognizing the interpretative aspect of IPA involving participant and researcher. Peace education and conflict resolution are interdisciplinary, transformative, and holistic. In higher education, performance metrics inspire professors to categorize their work as teaching, research, and service. Sometimes, this structural rigidity underappreciates the complexity of the peace educational work being undertaken. This chapter addresses the research questions through the interpretation and analysis of their stories and provides valuable recommendations for further research.

### **Discussing the Findings**

This segment utilizes Bloomberg and Volpe's (2008) guidelines for analyzing and interpreting findings to synthesize and present the study's conclusion and recommendations based on the content and participants' narratives through Chapter 4. (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). First and foremost, the findings from the analysis demonstrate that peace educators see their profession as instilling nonviolence and values for empathy and personal and interpersonal well-being. Secondly, the findings strengthen the notion that humans often connect themselves and their society using the sociological imagination in that an individual understands his own experiences and gauges his fate

only by locating himself within his period so that he can know his chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances (Lemert, 2010).

Finally, the findings reinforce that human prioritize their psychological safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization as the most salient and are motivated to achieve specific needs (Sandy et al., 2000). These findings reflect the conclusions from the various works of literature in Chapter 2. The emergent themes of confronting physical and structural violence; legitimizing peace and conflict resolution fields; diversifying and representing; systemic adjustments; developing sustained peace; and transforming violence echoed throughout Chapters 2 and 4 as the study navigates the language used in the various works of literature, theories, and the participants' responses.

### **Connecting the Context of Nonviolence Theory to the Literature and Participants' Narratives**

In following Mohandas Gandhi's nonviolent principle, Martin Luther King imagined that love conquers all and that the power of unconditional love is the most potent instrument for resolving social problems and for a collective transformation. Nonviolence believers see the philosophy as the most morally and practically sound method to withstand oppressors' unfounded intimidation and inhumane treatment of people experiencing poverty, children, and the vulnerable. Although critics of nonviolence question its effectiveness and the potential for violent groups to infiltrate, Gandhi and King were adamant that the movement remains the best tool for racial justice because it is practically morally sound and avoids parties with extreme immoralities.

In their 2011 article, Fitzduff and Jean (2011) painted an optimistic view of the future of peace education, implying peacebuilding has progressively formalized in many

parts of the world owing to the integration of nonviolent elements such as resolving disputes peacefully and addressing physical and structural violence. They claimed that incremental progress has led to the development of academic programs, training, advocacy, and practice on peace and conflict issues worldwide. They attribute the evolution of peace education to input from numerous disciplines, forms of pedagogy, and underlying theories of conflict and change. Fitzduff and Jean (2011) recommended ensuring space for and capitalizing on indigenous and nonviolent methods, demonstrating tangible impact, complementing other tools of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, scaling up and replicating successful interventions, and providing expert assistance and conducting rigorous assessments essential to translating theory into effective practice.

All five research participants, John, Michael, Jane, Teresa, and Jackson emphasized the need to introduce nonviolent elements in peace education curriculum design to help students understand and progressively institutionalize it within the academic space. John, for instance, believes that many experienced graduate-level peace educators have undergone some form of violence and that those who do peace work encounter some form of personal, interpersonal, structural, or physical violence that propels them to utilize nonviolent principles or conflict resolution mechanisms as a way of promoting sustained peace. John asserted,

I think many of us who do the work have experienced direct or indirect forms of violence, which could be on the personal or interpersonal level as well as the more societal level --you know, experiencing a war, structural, or direct physical conflict. And so, I think you know the reason for coming to peace educator is a commitment to understanding that there are other ways to resolve disputes beyond

violence. There are many ways to resolve conflict and violence that are often destructive, divisive, and damage relationships, so I wanted to be on that side of the conversation.

John continued reflecting and stating that,

I wanted to be somebody who contributed something positive and wholesome and healing and compassionate and loving to the world rather than, you know, continuing the cycles of violence. So, I think, again, a lot of us experience violence, various types of violence, and that is an impetus or reason, so, yeah, for me growing up and seeing much violence in society, violence in the home, it was necessary for me to do something about it. Moreover, I was at peace. Educated long before I knew I was a peace educator.

In his early career experiences working with Detroit youth in an after-school program, Michael explored social justice issues where students came to him and his co-teacher to try to make the meaning of the violent experiences they were coping with. He asserted,

The trauma the students were trying to understand fits into the bigger picture of what we were trying to explore collectively. I didn't know how to resolve disputes or deal with extreme violence. However, I knew I could play a role in resolving violence or do something about it to transform the community. It may be the initial instinct for victims to lash out in anger and frustration and put all energy into blaming and revenge against the perpetrators instead of reflecting on history, employing nonviolent principles, and examining systemic structures. I had a strong mentor who guided me through these processes to understand the broader

nature of systems of violence, cultures of violence, and physical and structural violence in ways I never perceived before to get a better picture and understanding of the problems we were facing.

Jane recounted her experiences with the Quakers at the Society of Friends' Alternatives to Violence program that helps mitigate structural and systemic violence. She stated,

The Quakers initiative enables participants to address what we have come to call structural or systemic violence. Some of the direct or indirect harm, and the reasons that transformation is challenging right from the beginning is because it differs from some individually oriented initiatives that locate the problem in the individual who needs to learn to resolve conflict and improve attitudes, values, or skills that are important but only sufficient if we consider our relationship. I feel about the larger society and the intersecting social institutions, status inequalities, resource conflicts, disputes, etc. Making peace is difficult and necessary but requires commitment and unconditional love for that collective transformation. I could go on, but that's the beginning. I decided bit by bit to be interested in peace because violence was a problem, and I wanted to do something about it to improve the community and be a part of history.

Teresa believes fostering nonviolent ideology is about looking within ourselves, our immediate environment, and the world and asking what it is, what the environment could be, and where we practice peace education. She referenced social and economic problems within inner cities United States,

So, let's say you're at an inner-City High school where most students perhaps are of lower financial status. There is increased physical and structural violence compared to other areas. It certainly depends on where students come in and how they look at peace educators as they come in. Some people believe the idea that we are all responsible for peace. That's not the reality, so it all depends. As a peace educator, you need to do a needs assessment to see where people regard the causes of the violence, direct or indirect, racism, and all the isms. And what are their ideas about peace? Is it possible, and do they see that they are responsible for peace? That would be the number one influence, well, two things: the environment where you're teaching and where students are in terms of when they enter your classroom and how they see and resolve violence in the community. I used Bronfenbrenner's theory to examine the reintegration of formerly abducted young mothers in northern Uganda and the process of their social exclusion. Some parts of their community prevented them from being included as community members; the trauma they endured prevented them from seeking wellbeing or considering working towards peace and helping rebuild the community. So, every layer of the socio ecology contributed to their suffering and the breakdown of communities.

Jackson insinuates that peace is not a thing that can be pointed at. He believes being peaceful requires a nonviolent approach and can hardly stand any notion suggesting peace must be taught. Jackson emphasized that nonviolence should not be taught implanted in people's heads; instead, he claims it should reflect in their bank accounts or the distribution of goods through politics. He asserted,

I see violence every day between the Israelis and Palestinians' historical disputes. I am tempted to do something about it, but I reject the idea that peace could be taught because he believes that whatever becomes a subject of study does not yield a positive outcome. Considering the Western communities' approach to learning in modernity based on content, the subject better belongs to disciplines where you cannot imagine anything more stupid. Uh, clearly, in the world, physics does not exist. Uh, mathematics does not exist. Uh, history does not exist that the administrative need of schools to categorize what is otherwise a combined knowledge that needs no specific subject better names to be dealt with is a problem of an administration that has little to do with teaching and learning in a lot to do with organizing the world in specific ways that I do like.

### **Connecting the Context of Social Imagination Theory to the Literature and Participants' Narratives**

In his social imagination theory, Mills (1959) hypothesized that humans connect themselves and their society by employing critical thinking skills to understand better the relationship between an individual and the wider community. Mill's argument supports the view that peace educators' experiences and teaching of critical thinking skills should enable students to enhance themselves and contribute to humanizing society.

Three of the five research participants, Jackson, John, and Michael emphasized the need to introduce critical thinking as part of the curriculum design to help students understand and connect to their environment better. The participants insinuated that we could only influence change by being attentive to systems, school curriculum designs, and students' struggles. Jackson, for instance, encouraged critical thinking and wanted

every student to be critical because he saw a practical approach as a way of pinpointing all the necessary systemic and structural adjustments. He asserted,

I need those critiques. I need those views because we tend to underestimate systemic issues and policies that prevent us from seeing the context of modern western education. It is built at all levels to stop seeing a broader context. You first avoid catching a wider context by creating compartmentalized disciplines.

Ask any good physician. He'll tell you we know what we're talking about.

Medicine is the only school you have a subject that is always within a context, so if you want a good guide, doubt for peace education and education in general.

Teach students what they need to know to understand better what they already sense is justice in the world. Tell them the problem is not people's heads but their bank accounts. Show them who does the work, who gets the money, and what structural alterations are needed. Okay, where do they produce this thing from?

Where do the items made come from, and the money earned from their sales end up in which bank? It would help if you had plenty of knowledge to read physics.

Most kids think they need help to do good in mathematics. Why do women have a problem in their minds, or did black people fail in school? Why? Because they have a problem in their minds, the chick comes off the bed. There is a limit to how corrupt the system can be.

On the other hand, John insisted on encouraging critical thinking in schools to help students and their communities better connect and care for themselves. John asserted such a situation starts with the educator inspiring the individual to care for his physiological and emotional well-being and avoiding excessive workload that leads to



unnecessary burnout, which is fundamental in people in peace and conflict studies. John proclaimed,

I see it all the time. People are angry, and they're burnt out. How do you create a desire for a peaceful world when you're mad and burnt out yourself or hateful because of all the world's woes? I must practice skills, knowledge, critical thinking, and writing. I'm a former language arts teacher and English as a second language teacher, so expressing yourself clearly in oral and written form is very important, and so is learning how to write well, learning how to speak well, and being an advocate for humanity, rights, equity, justice, and peace is essential. And so doing, I teach direct skills like how to write a paper, how to craft an argument, where you fold the opposite side of the discussion, and all the gray areas in between. That's like critical thinking, analytical thinking, and writing skills that could drive the need for women, children, homelessness, and societal transformation.

Michael also pointed out that the ongoing mentorship of current and former students, guiding their journeys, and responding to random inquiries from various peace educators worldwide often go on undetected. He contended that a peace educator could connect individuals with people working in a similar context and maintained that,

There's this kind of fine line that I think we walk in the work of peace education and peace studies between the social, political, and cultural transformative goals of the field and then how we educate and prepare our students to be able to do that work to live in that world to construct that world and that fine line is one that kind of dances around pedagogy. And so, it's vital to approach this work so we avoid

indoctrinating students to become peace activists. That's not what it's about. The idea is to pedagogically, through various tools like reflection, contemplation, and critical thinking, help students develop inner moral and ethical resources. It also becomes the foundation and the basis for advocating for humanity, rights, women, children, homelessness, policy, transformation, and violence taking external political action so that I might provide experiences in my classroom; they can test out different ways of being, but I never expect that to happen.

### **Connecting the Context of Hierarchy of Needs Theory to the Literature and Participants' Narratives**

In his hierarchy of human needs, Abraham Maslow (1943) prioritized psychological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization as the most salient needs of humans, with the first four being regarded as deficiency needs stemming from a lack of what is needed. Maslow (1943) argues that these needs are placed in a hierarchical order by their importance and considers them necessary to achieve self-actualization. Although opponents like John Burton (1990) argue disputes are not resolved constructively unless parties' basic human needs are satisfied through a problem-solving approach by creating conditions that enable parties in dispute to express their real needs openly and honestly, the various works of literature and participants narratives aligned with Maslow's (1943) conclusion that peace educators' most salient needs include but not limited to safety, security, and the need to belong and legitimize.

In the article *Anatomy of a peace educator: Her work and workplace*, Gursel-Bilgin and Flinders (2020) presented data on a peace educator's background and development, teaching practices, and relationships with her students, school, and local

community. Gursel-Bilgin and Flinders (2020) concluded that peace educators' can effectively dialogue and integrate their personal and political dimensions into their work if their basic human needs are met. Flinders examined the development of a peace educator. They determined there are high expectations for classroom teachers. They argued that peace education scholars must develop practical, emotional, and organizational support for critical reflection on their identities and pedagogical practices to better address the challenges of peace education. These teachers are often left alone in their work, so Gursel-Bilgin and Flinders (2020) insinuate that meeting their hierarchy of needs is paramount to their success.

All five research participants, John, Michael, Jane, Teresa, and Jackson suggested that the process of developing sustained peace requires action to change an existing unsatisfactory condition or environment and involves internal processes from person to person and from situation to situation (Sandy et al., 2000). The participants mentioned elements associated with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, such as prioritizing psychological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization as salient students' needs if peace educators could influence change. Participants affirmed that people are trying to understand ways to transform violence into something much different that calls upon the finer aspects of human nature like nurturing, love, truth, beauty, kindness, compassion, and empathy. Without a sense of emotional safety and belongingness, attaining the finer aspects of human nature can be challenging.

John, for instance, maintained that those working as peace education professionals in colleges must believe they are a positive force for sustained peace and place their personal needs in order by importance and pursue them. John shared,

Some legitimately work as professors in a college of education, publishing work, and outlets that value knowledge and the coproduction of knowledge around issues of peace and justice, access and opportunity, inclusion, and diversity. That alone says there's a place for others like me who believe in those things and think we can be a force for good. As a human species, as people living potentially in harmony and relative peace, we can learn to relate differently if given the necessary tools. So, the significant contribution is letting our lives be our message to the world; this is what Gandhi said. Is this who we are?

John described his line of business as a journey with multiplier effects on students, colleagues, and the community writ large; therefore, his mental state, sense of safety, and belongingness are critical to building the necessary confidence to meet the relentless demand the profession requires. Since peace educators aim to help groups express their real needs openly and resolve them. The sharing of peace educators' lived experiences is pivotal to students' understanding of how critical it is to identify the appropriate conditions to prevent violence. John continued,

Again, I work with teachers, educational leaders who become building principals, superintendents, and in some cases, policymakers at the State level, the people that influence K through 12 educations; they influence higher education; they influence in some cases what is taught, how it's taught, and where it's taught. What's not taught, how learning takes place, etcetera. And so, through the multiplier effect, through education systems, and individuals who have burning desires for something different than violent realities, we can experience connection, compassion, and sustained peace, particularly in the United States

with violence, school shootings, bullying, and cyberbullying. You know, racist aggression, sexist facts, and people experiencing poverty. As a peace educator, I feel for minority students and their struggles to live with dignity as they transition through various stages of life.

Michael sees his engagement in activism as one of his critical milestones in advancing peace education. With that scholarship, Michael claims he has had a lot of freedom and worked in an academic research center instead of having a traditional professor appointment. He asserted that this flexibility comes with experience and knowledge. You already have the foundation to do the work without worrying about veering off track. Michael shared,

I need to maintain work in both those spaces because it is through the kind of peaceful action work, I do outside the university that I learned the most from. It informs my day-to-day teaching that shapes and serves as a force for good. I want to investigate research independently, and then on the other side, I like to think of these things as fitting together holistically. Hence, the teaching, to me is a way of recharging my batteries. So, I get a lot of energy from supporting the learning of others and in the process of teaching. It puts me in a place where I'm profoundly learning myself and outside of the teaching space where I'm working, not in the more activist roles I've played. Uh, I am deeply connected to various communities of practitioners who have worked through similar kinds of challenges and struggles. Through that community of practice, we can explore those everyday struggles together to support each other and make our way through them. Suppose I only had that community of support in the university. In that case, I don't know

if I could sustain myself, which would be one piece of advice I would give to anyone emerging in the field, academically or otherwise, to find that community of practice and support that comes with experience, not just for those personal benefits but also to create those spaces of mutual learning and co-learning, be compassion, and focus on a sustained peace. We can test our ideas and theories in conversation with our peers.

Jane also sees a collaborative peace education program as an add-on, research starting point, and program that allow faculties and students to stay active, up-to-date, and engaged in developing sustained peace. Like John and Michael, Jane classifies herself as a peace activist who believes the United States can be a force for good if individuals' necessities are met and can reflect and reflex on their behaviors. Jane shared,

It's almost as if we slip from the United States. The bringing of peaceful democracy to the world into everything is the United States' fault, and that's just as egotistical. And so, I went to study education in what they then called the so-called third world to try to embody what other people understood peace education could do, how it was colonial and a mechanism for reproducing inequalities and violence and, on the other hand, where there were safer spaces for nurturing and transformation. I straddle worlds and create that third space for peace education out of the in-between. It's been worth it to me. It's been enriching as I developed confidence, connections, and compassion for sustained peace. I get to continue being a student in some ways, but you see how different that would be from someone in a professional space called peace education, where that's your job, and you work out of that job. There's been considerable work intensification in

the academy over the last generation. Indeed, it escalates what's expected of us, and that's not all bad. It's already a very privileged place to be. Sometimes, we only need to accept some of that privilege, admit our needs are being met, and do the work for more basic places where the work is wanted, and people need it to happen.

Teresa referenced her habitual adherence to Buddhist principles as a potential avenue for sustained peace because it allows the individual to develop a sense of satisfaction without worrying about their other unmet needs. She contended that Buddhism aligns well with her values and enables her to become a better person. She acknowledged,

My most significant contribution is again going back to Buddhism, and the type of Buddhism I practiced called Nichiren Buddhism; we have a beautiful center in Caledon, Ontario, and so every year, every weekend, a different group of 60 people meets. We'll talk about various aspects of Buddhism that embody compassion and allow participants to relate differently. It could be a women's division meeting or a regular meeting serving as a force for good. I led conferences for seven years, and it ran for ten years and was one of the most successful out of all the Caledon conferences. Some families have two kids and two parents, and they flew from Vancouver for the weekend, and all of them had a meaningful time and experience with their kids. There were activities just for the kids. There were activities just for the parents. There were activities for the kids and parents involving music, dance, culture, and much fun. It was a lot of fun. So, that was a contributive way of ensuring sustained peace and meeting our

basic needs. I'm going to make another contribution and suggestion. I must think about that because of my mission. In life, I believe that improving the welfare of marginalized women and youth contributes to improving the welfare of marginalized women and children. I plan to direct my career in the next phase of my career.

Jackson asserted that to be peaceful, one must be peaceful and a force for good. He alleges that nurturing and compassion cannot be attained without basic human needs. He stated,

It is just sickening if we reflect on the contexts we build for our children with no safe spaces. So, if we live and create for them of violent context in which the economy is violent, in which the individualism is violent, in which everything is violent, look at your presidents. I speak about yours because you don't want me to talk about my own, which I hate even more, so I'd say of America.

This chapter interpreted, analyzed, and connected the literature to the theories and the elicited experiences to develop a comprehensive understanding of graduate-level peace educators' needs, challenges, and hopes of being peace educators. The chapter explored some of the meanings and essences identified with peace education, processes, and hurdles that need to navigate to become an effective graduate-level peace educator.

This research study is profoundly driven by the notion of being peaceful and the vision of creating a sustained peaceful environment by eliciting stories of peace educators and examining the lived experiences through an independent lens. The study helps establish participants' peculiar positions on whether and to what extent their lived experiences contribute to a sustained, peaceful global community.



Although the various works of literature describe the history of peace education initiatives, ongoing global activities, and practice models, there needs to be more emphasis on the lived experiences of peace educators who see their profession as instilling nonviolence and values for empathy, and personal, and interpersonal well-being. Participants' responses to the interview questions showed that the job is interdisciplinary, transformative, and holistic. In higher education, performance metrics encourage peace education professors to categorize their work as teaching, research, or engagement. This structural rigidity underappreciates the complexity of the peace educational work being undertaken.

Acknowledging and discussing peace educators' social and professional challenges were necessary to build trust and aid their preparation, support systems, and academic work. Their openness to sharing helped identify potential gaps in the literature regarding understanding peace educators' experiences and valuing their misunderstood and underappreciated work. Teresa captured it best in arguing that,

to be a peace educator means to tackle complex subjects like homophobia, racism, ableism, misogyny, and others, including all the isms. Bringing up those sensitive topics brings certain feelings and emotions to the surface in students and within the communities. Tackling these difficult issues harmoniously and in conversation compels individuals and society to reflect on their unconscious biases. There is no getting around those powerful emotions that are elicited as a result of these discussions. Peace educators are considered change makers. Their relentless pursuit of systemic adjustments and elevating unconventional approaches to developing knowledge and skills necessary for classroom and teaching methods

enable the integration of dialogue, collaboration, cooperation, and activities, promoting students' independence in exchanging expertise in education curriculum and thereby transforming society. These adjustments discourage a top-down education approach and encourage listening to and defining a problem and exploring potential solutions for strategic decision-making for the benefit of humanity.

As the study has illustrated, very few works of literature on peace educators' lived experiences exist. Hence, this study is the foundation for an initial conversation and further research to potentially unearth new knowledge on how peace educators have evolved and help students understand the dynamics of social conflict, conflict resolution, warfare, and peace dynamics. Communities must reflect on their identities and pedagogical practices to better address the challenges of education and how it can be used as a tool for accurate diagnosis, effective strategy, and realistic solutions to help influence attitudes and behaviors and, most importantly, address how peace educators make sense of their profession.

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### **Conclusion**

The study's findings shed light on some of the hidden structural and systemic issues that can undermine the efforts of peace educators. The participants' narratives revealed that their role in peace education is interdisciplinary, transformative, and holistic. Montessori (2007) emphasizes that peace can only be achieved through mutual agreement, and accomplishing this unity requires immediate conflict resolution efforts without resorting to violence and long-term endeavors to establish lasting peace among individuals and communities. Peace education, according to Montessori (2007), focuses on establishing peace rather than merely preventing conflicts, making it a crucial component of achieving sustained peace with a universal and cooperative approach.

One of the main motivations for participants to pursue peace education was their dedication to seeking alternative ways to resolve conflicts beyond violence. They aimed to contribute positively to the world, fostering healing, compassion, and love instead of perpetuating cycles of violence. Their experiences in various settings, such as classrooms, refugee populations, and economically disadvantaged communities, significantly

influenced their societal awareness and inspired their students to adopt a broader global perspective.

By bringing together these five homogenous participants, the study allows aspiring peace educators and conflict resolution practitioners to gain valuable insights into potential challenges, opportunities, and the prestige of being a peace educator. The participants shared common characteristics as graduate-level professors, educators of graduate-level peace programs, authors of academic journals or books on peace education or conflict resolution, affiliated with Western democratic educational institutions, aged above forty, and fluent in the English language. The participants' stories not only increase societal awareness of the existence and profession of peace educators but also serve as a foundation for further research studies in this field.

The research provides essential understanding of the needs, challenges, and aspirations of peace educators, emphasizing their role in program design, conflict management strategies, and educational policy understanding. Through a thorough and context-specific analysis of participants' experiences, the study allows readers to assess the applicability of these insights to similar contexts (Smith et al., 2009). By adding to the existing knowledge, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the evolution of peace educators' responsibilities in helping students comprehend social conflict, conflict resolution, warfare, and the dynamics of peace.

The participants' perception that systemic issues and structures are the root problems, rather than individuals themselves, highlights the importance of understanding and addressing broader societal contexts. Societies tend to overlook these systemic issues due to the compartmentalization of disciplines in modern Western education. Peace

educators play a critical role in teaching students about justice and fostering peace, but to achieve peaceful societies, we must embody peace ourselves. Recognizing systemic and structural aspects as the starting point is crucial, even though potential changes may occur slowly and within the immediate socio-economic and political environments. To promote peace effectively, societies must embrace systemic assessments and actively work towards change while being mindful of the complexity and interconnectedness of these challenges.

### **Recommendations**

This study offers recommendations based on literature, theories, findings, and data analysis to various stakeholders in the peace and conflict resolution domain: peace and conflict resolution professionals, peace and conflict program administrators, and legislators and policymakers. The study underscores the need for further research to understand peace educators' experiences and recognizes that change occurs gradually and within our immediate surroundings.

Participants are committed to incorporating indigenous perspectives into institutions and addressing cultural and racial violence issues. They acknowledge that institutional change can be slow or non-existent. Encouraging students to care for themselves when facing structural violence is essential, as burnout is common among peace educators and those in peace and conflict studies. Managing anger and burnout is crucial to fostering a desire for a peaceful world amid global challenges. Participants believe that incremental changes are achievable by advocating for budget, policy, and representation changes in individual and collective entities and communities.

The study emphasizes raising awareness about peace educators and peace researchers who strive to transform violence into a more humane form, relying on attributes like love, truth, beauty, kindness, compassion, and empathy. Supporting publishers that promote peace education articles, such as the *Journal of Peace Education*, can help amplify the field's significance. Peace education professors at accredited universities should continue publishing works that value knowledge and co-production of knowledge in areas like peace, justice, diversity, and inclusion to improve students and their communities.

The multiplier effect of peace education involves collaboration with teachers, educational leaders, superintendents, and policymakers to influence K through 12 education positively. By fostering a burning desire for a different, non-violent reality, peace education can help individuals and education systems navigate the world critically and construct a more peaceful society. However, there are challenges related to corporatization of universities, limited understanding of education's social and political purposes, and misconceptions about the nature of peace education.

Participants suggest that peace education should nurture critical and reflective thinking about self, society, and roles. Transformative pedagogies can help students deconstruct and reconstruct their worldview and understanding of the world. Overcoming political resistance within established university systems remains a significant challenge for peace education.

Establishing connections with like-minded practitioners and forming a community of support outside the university is vital for sustaining peace education efforts. These

communities of practice facilitate mutual learning and co-learning, strengthening the impact of peace educators.

Peace education should not aim to indoctrinate students as peace activists but should focus on helping them develop inner moral and ethical resources. Students should have the freedom to make independent choices and be equipped with conflict resolution and transformation skills, critical thinking abilities, and self-reflection capacities.

There is a need for more teacher training opportunities in peace education to enhance institutional responsiveness. The study calls for recognizing the shortcomings of the Western approach to learning, urging educators to explore broader topics that resonate with peace, including physics, geometry, history, geography, and economics.

To achieve sustainable peace, policymakers should avoid top-down approaches and instead enact legislation and policies that address systemic and structural violence, promote diversity, expand access and representation, and commit to transforming violence. Emphasizing economic opportunities for disadvantaged segments within societies can contribute to a more peaceful world.

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## Appendix A: Master Table of Themes for the Interview Participants

Themes	Codes and Subthemes
<b>1. Confronting physical and structural violence</b>	Resolve
John: I think many of us who do the work have experienced <b>direct or indirect forms of violence</b> , which could be on the personal or interpersonal level as well as the more societal level --you know, experiencing a war, structural, or direct physical conflict. And so, I think you know the reason for coming to peace educator is a commitment to understanding that there are other ways to <b>resolve disputes beyond violence</b> . There are many ways to <b>resolve conflict and violence</b> that are often destructive, divisive, and damage relationships, so I wanted to be on that side of the conversation. I wanted to <b>contribute something positive</b> , wholesome, healing, <b>compassionate</b> , and loving to the world rather than continuing the cycles of violence. So, I think, again, a lot of us experience violence, various types of violence, and that is an impetus or reason, so, yeah, for me <b>growing up and seeing much violence in the community</b> , violence in the home, it was necessary for me to do something about it.	Disputes Violence Direct violence Indirect violence Seeing violence Do something about it Community
Michael: I didn't know how to deal with <b>structural violence, extreme violence, and trauma</b> , so it was a new experience. Indeed, it did not reflect my context or reality, so I was struggling in the same way. I knew I could play a role in resolving <b>direct or indirect violence or do something about it to transform the community</b> . The second part of the question was related to the issues of <b>violence and resolving disputes</b> . I had a strong mentor who guided me through that process to understand the broader nature of systems of <b>violence, cultures of violence, and physical and structural violence</b> in ways I never perceived before to get a better picture and understanding of the problems we were facing.	
Jane: The Quakers initiative enables participants to address what we have come to <b>call structural or systemic violence, some of the direct or indirect harm</b> , and the reasons that transformation is challenging right from the beginning. It differs from some individually oriented initiatives that locate the problem in the individual who needs to learn to <b>resolve conflict and improve attitudes</b> , values, or skills that are important but only sufficient if we consider our relationship. I feel about the larger society and the <b>intersecting social institutions, status inequalities, resource conflicts, disputes</b> , etc. Making peace is difficult and necessary. I could go on, but that's the beginning. I decided bit by bit to be interested in peace because <b>violence was a problem, and I wanted to do something about it to improve the community and be a part of history</b> .	
Teresa: To be a peace educator means to tackle complex <b>systemic</b> issues that often lead to <b>structural or physical violence</b> , including homophobia, racism, and misogyny. That's not the reality, so it all depends; as a peace educator, you need to do a needs assessment to	

Themes	Codes and Subthemes
<p>see where people regard the causes of <b>disputes, direct violence, indirect violence</b>, racism, and all the isms. I had to address what was going on <b>systemically</b> and have difficult conversations with the class so that we could <b>do something about it</b>, you know, talk about what we were feeling and what we were experiencing in this class and within the <b>community</b>. That would be the number one influence, well, two things: the environment where you're teaching and where students are in terms of when they enter your classroom and how they <b>see and resolve violence in the community</b>.</p> <p>Jackson: I <b>see violence</b> every day between the Israelis and Palestinians' historical <b>disputes</b>. I am tempted <b>to do something about it</b>, but I reject the idea that peace could be taught because I believe that whatever becomes a subject of study does not yield a positive outcome.</p> <p>It does not <b>resolve violent</b> habits from an individual and the <b>community</b>. Peace researchers think that the problem of peace in the world is in the heads of people that immediately point to them as being basic Western colonialists that care nothing whatsoever about how to change the structures of the world. Hence, people suffer less <b>physical or structural violence</b>.</p>	
<p><b>2. Legitimizing peace and conflict resolution fields</b></p> <p>John: I was an implicit and then very explicit peace educator and advocated that the profession <b>needed to be recognized</b>. Peace education is a legitimate subfield in education, and for 20 years, it has been a <b>struggle to acknowledge it</b>. The focus of study and effort in higher education is a <b>challenge</b> or even, and I will not call it a crisis. It is the <b>challenge of legitimation</b>. That was essential to <b>convincing people</b> on my dissertation committee that it was an important piece of education and that focus on my dissertation was important enough. I research peace education, and they will say, like, you know, peace and love are <b>associated with hippies and smoking marijuana</b> in different things like that, which I just laughed at because I feel people are wholly <b>ignorant</b> about what the field is and what it is we do. Moreover, there are many stereotypes, particularly in the United States context.</p> <p>Michael: There are endless obstacles within the field of peace studies and peace education that are transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship that is <b>often marginalized</b>, which can be problematic. The second is the political nature of our field and the <b>need for acknowledgment</b>. The work of peace education in peace research is motivated by supporting, <b>nurturing</b>, and enabling personal, social, structural, cultural, and political transformation. So, straightforwardly, the work of our field <b>challenges the status quo</b>, increasing corporatization of educational spaces within universities.</p> <p>Another anecdote would be a graduate student who was working closely with our center for several years when we were at Teachers</p>	<p>Recognize</p> <p>Struggle</p> <p>Acknowledge</p> <p>Challenge</p> <p>Legitimation</p> <p>Convincing people</p> <p>Ignorant</p> <p>Silly labels</p>

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College had the opportunity to meet with the president of the college during his open office hours; when she went to meet with him and, she said she was pursuing her master's degree in peace education. He asked her why she would do that. That **sounds like the missionary work (Silly labels)** when he was framing that in a negative light. The fact that this university president couldn't even **recognize** that education, as he had it in his mind, was a political project. There's always a **struggle to sustain** this work, and I'm sure you're picking up in your research right now that a lot of peace studies programs are on the chopping block.

Jane: I don't have the answer, and I don't think peace is constructed and learned through teaching values mainly, so **those challenges** make it sound not good. **It's a challenge**, but it's a good one.

Although others consider my profession as somewhat **marginal and irrelevant**, there is also the field of comparative international and development education to learn with people from around the world whose underlying understandings of conflict, how to handle it, and what we need to teach and learn in peace and education are not the same. Looking at young people living in disproportionately violent communities and what they already understand about conflict and possibilities for peace and themselves concerning their teachers. The **need for recognition and acknowledgment is a challenge**. It is difficult to **convince people who find these silly labels**.

Teresa: I wrote a paper about the **lack of recognition of** peace education and alternatives to violence and peace education. We live in a scientific world where numbers **must prove everything**. The **challenge is how do** you evaluate peace education? How do you assess and **convince people** who have already branded the field with **silly labels**? So, peace education is **challenging to measure**, and that's why there's that whole issue of **legitimization by ignorant** folks within the academic realm.

Jackson: This basic idea that humans are equal and navigate similar **struggles** has disappeared from the social sciences. They are just **silly labels** propagated by **ignorant people** and an insult to humanity. The geographers are very good. Some historians are also great, but so much of the social sciences is unempirical that I wonder why it is **legitimized** and allowed at universities. Although peace is an activity that needs to be **recognized** and practiced in life, it's also a rhetorical practice that would mean never being platonic or sarcastic.

Note that this is easy to say and **challenging to acknowledge** and implement. That's why I answer with my deeds to **convince people** when asked as a teacher.

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Themes	Codes and Subthemes
<p><b>3. Lack of diversity and representation</b></p> <p>John: Diversity, access, and representation in our education are very problematic in that service work; what we do for service work matters and <b>must be embraced</b> because you can focus on issues of gender equality or racial equity. It seems more manageable as I grow into the peace education field to align my interests, facilitate global <b>perspectives</b>, and encourage <b>different voices</b>. But now, in my current position, things are aligning, and I can do the job. However, I must be selective and incorporate <b>other cultures, peace pedagogy, feminist perspectives, critical theory, and social theory</b>.</p> <p>Then they take over, and then the questions they create from the weekly threaded online discussions <b>embrace a peaceful pedagogical</b> approach where it's not just teaching but teaching with caution in a context of learning and managing classroom dynamics healthily and productively.</p> <p>Michael: If done well through various peace and transformative <b>pedagogies</b>, it can support students in deconstructing and reconstructing their <b>global perspective</b>, understanding <b>other cultures</b> of the world, and their role within it. Internal political resistance within university <b>systems</b> pushes the boundaries and prevents some faculties and students from fully embracing the field or integrating <b>feminist perspectives, critical theory, and social theory</b>. So, I spend a lot of time with the undergrads I work with now at Georgetown, helping them hear <b>different voices</b> and see viable paths for what they can do with a degree in peace.</p> <p>Jane: I had skills as a social studies educator with broader <b>global perspectives</b> on issues, which I incorporated. I would never want to work in a private school because I would likely miss out on embracing <b>different voices</b> and cultures. Then I could do a bit of each, which got me into <b>peace pedagogy</b> and <b>social theory</b>. My <b>personal and professional view</b> of peacebuilding is that there's no way but through peace education. On the one hand, I reject that narrow <b>view</b> of peace education and <b>embrace</b> the broader aspect that incorporates <b>feminist perspectives</b> and <b>critical theory</b>.</p> <p>Teresa: I took a risk because I integrated much of my instructional designer experience. It's a risk because you leave yourself open and vulnerable when sharing your personal experiences and listening with profound interest. In my personal life, I'm the type of person that encourages <b>global perspectives, feminist perspectives, critical theory, and social theory</b>. I believe in the infinite potential of human beings. I <b>embrace</b> and engage people in conversations all the time. I'm very sociable, but it's not just being social; it's about encouraging</p>	<p>Must embrace</p> <p>Global perspective</p> <p>Different voices</p> <p>Other culture</p> <p>Peace pedagogical</p> <p>Feminist perspectives</p> <p>Critical theory</p> <p>Social theory</p>

Themes	Codes and Subthemes
<p><b>different voices</b> and <b>other cultures</b> on <b>peace pedagogy</b>, not just my children or close friends.</p> <p>Jackson: I tried to ensure they succeeded and <b>embraced different voices</b>. I hope they appreciate my honesty in my <b>peace pedagogy</b>. I expect them to copy good things and be open about another <b>perspective</b>, including <b>feminist and critical theory</b>. What else can you do other than teach through example and have an appreciation for <b>global perspectives</b>?</p>	
<p><b>4. Systemic adjustments</b></p> <p>John: When working with educational leaders, it starts with us. The way we solve the conflict, resolve violent situations, <b>heal</b>, or look to <b>repair harm</b> more peacefully, you know, not punitive justice but a <b>restorative justice framework</b>, is essential. So how do you develop a healthy attitude in a related condition of <b>structural</b> violence? And then, how do you chip away at <b>structural change</b>? How do you create or <b>influence policies</b>, <b>systemic</b> designs, and practices propagating cultural, <b>structural</b>, and indirect violence? So, what are the <b>policies inhibiting</b> everybody's access and success ability to live with dignity and be free? How can you work at the <b>policy level</b> on budgets and become a leader? How do you <b>influence change</b> in your role as a teacher or educational leader? So, becoming more crystal clear as to how the individual and the collective entities, the communities they belong to, <b>advocate for change</b> in terms of budget, spending money changing, <b>change in terms of policy</b>, <b>change</b> in terms of representation, access, and opportunity are some of the ways that I think it's embedded in the courses that I teach in the examples that I give in class.</p>	<p>Institutional change</p> <p>Healing</p> <p>Repairing harm</p> <p>Restorative</p> <p>Framework</p> <p>Influence</p> <p>Policies</p> <p>System</p> <p>Structural</p>
<p>Michael: I'm helping them to connect those experiences, their issues, and their personal lives to understand how they benefit from those <b>systems of injustice</b> because of their privilege or how those various issues we're exploring impact them now or in the future. When asked to provide critical hurdles a peace education professor must navigate to integrate into the conventional <b>education system</b> successfully, when we think of practice in the context of conflict work, we generally refer to engaging in various conflict methods and tools to support and <b>foster change</b>. One of the ways I've often <b>framed peace education in the context</b> of conflict work is peacebuilding work. Most people believe peacebuilding and peace education is a subfield or a subcomponent of a <b>broader framework</b> of complete transformation. If we think of the work of peace and conflict transformation, we are working on getting into and addressing the root causes of conflict and <b>creating spaces</b> where the culture of peace can work, and it can exist and emerge. And we begin to understand that conflict is rooted in the <b>system</b>, for the most part, both cultural and worldview misunderstandings of constructive aspects of our world that guide our <b>frames of reference</b> for how we interact with that world.</p>	

Jane: I believe that we must have **healing and repair of harmful** intentions as best we can. Still, we can also interpret those as justice intentions, democracy intentions, **structural** alterations intentions, and conflict transformation intentions. Is the problem mainly **systemic** violence, or is the problem especially what some would call cultural violence? I'm distant from him, and I'm not reading everything he wrote; however, in terms of what he contributed to my learning, he's been a spokesperson for **structural** alterations and political peace, which sometimes gets ignored in some peace education.

Peace education needs to be more mature in **systemic** peacebuilding and politics, from individual and **institutional change** to the **system**, so even though some of what he says about peace educators is unwarranted and unfair, a beautiful, critical analysis there speaks to me about the necessity for educating for peacebuilding, what you and I call peacebuilding transformation. What does it mean to try to transform education by creating a **framework** that **influences policies** as one of the contributions to peacebuilding?

Teresa: I incorporate several professional skills for **institutional change**. I'm not too fond of soft skills, but professional skills, such as underlining the importance of relationship building and **repairing harm** within an organization. Humanistic education is woven through all my courses, including **justice and restorative**. Getting back to those **punitive policies**, if you believe that all learners are looking for the path of least resistance and don't care about their education, that's what you'll get back. I've spoken at 23 conferences, and about half of those talks involved different aspects of peace education, so I'm getting the message out there; it's not just preaching to the converted; a lot of people that come like the big conference I go to is the comparative International Education society. And so, you have over 5000 participants from all different aspects of education. And so, people curious about the **peace education framework** and how it **influences policies** and facilitates **structural** alterations will come.

Jackson: It would be best to focus on creating **institutional change** contexts where certain things resonate and echo or mirror the required activities.

I don't consider such a move as **healing, repairing harm, or restoring justice**. It sounds to me evil because the **framework blinds everybody**. The problems are not the people; it's the **systems** they inhabit, and if we are not attentive to the design and their struggles, we cannot **influence change**. I need those views because we tend to underestimate **systemic issues and policies** that prevent us from seeing the context of modern Western education. Show them who does the work, who gets the money, and what **structural** alterations are needed. Okay, where do they produce this thing from? Where do the items made come from, and the money earned from their sales end up in which bank? It would help if you had plenty of knowledge to read physics. Most kids think they need help to do good in mathematics. Why do women have a problem in their minds, or did black people fail in school? Why? Because they have a problem in

Themes	Codes and Subthemes
<p>their minds, the chick comes off the bed. There is a limit to how corrupt the <b>system</b> can be.</p>	
<p><b>5. Developing sustained peace</b></p>	<p>Embody</p>
	<p>Nurturing</p>
<p>John: It's modest work that I've chosen to <b>embody</b>. As a realist, the significant contribution to society is that, hey, there are people out there called peace educators and peace researchers, people who are trying to understand ways to transform violence into something much different that calls upon the finer aspects of human nature like <b>nurturing</b>, love, truth, beauty, kindness, <b>compassion</b>, and empathy.</p>	<p>Relate differently</p> <p>Safe spaces</p> <p>Force for good</p>
<p>That alone says there's a place for others like me who believe in those things and think we can be a <b>force for good</b>. As a human species, as people living potentially in harmony and relative peace, we can learn to <b>relate differently</b>. And so, through the multiplier effect, through education systems, and individuals who have burning desires for something different than violent realities, we can experience <b>connection</b>, <b>compassion</b>, and <b>sustained peace</b>, particularly in the United States with violence, school shootings, bullying, and cyberbullying.</p>	<p>Connection</p> <p>Compassion</p> <p>Sustained peace</p>
<p>He emphasized the essence of creating <b>safe spaces</b> for gender and sexual identities and for other minorities to live and be okay with who they are.</p>	
<p>It's about doing the right thing; it's about how I want to be remembered, how I can use peace education as a <b>force for good</b>, as a <b>force for connection</b>, a force for love, and <b>compassion</b> rather than as a force for dividing people. So, it's a battle, but it's not a macho battle with armor behind tanks or with weapons and grenades. It's a quiet battle of conscience and commitment to principles of love, <b>connection</b>, <b>compassion</b>, justice, and peace.</p>	
<p>Michael: We started and continue to direct these two projects on the side, so that's the service work I <b>embody</b> daily. That's always sustained me and is primarily done as a volunteer labor of love. It <b>gave me spaces</b> to fall back on and <b>relate differently</b> should I not find an academic appointment that meets my personal and professional needs. That said, I can also be limited and pickier, such as in my current appointment as a teaching professor. With my current position, I don't have that expectation of commitment to research; nonetheless, I'm still balancing my full-time teaching with the ongoing service work and the <b>nurturing</b> that I do in the world. I need to maintain work in both <b>those spaces</b> because it is through the kind of peaceful action work, I do outside the university that I learned the most from. It informs my day-to-day teaching that shapes and serves as a <b>force for good</b>.</p>	
<p>It puts me in a place where I'm profoundly learning myself and outside of the <b>teaching space</b> where I'm working, not in the more activist roles I've played. Uh, I am deeply <b>connected</b> to various</p>	

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communities of practitioners who have worked through similar kinds of challenges and struggles. If I didn't have that community of support outside of the university, I don't know if I could sustain myself, which would be one piece of advice I would give to anyone emerging in the field, academically or otherwise, to find that community of practice and support, not just for those personal benefits but also to create those **spaces of mutual** learning and co-learning, be **compassion**, and focus on a **sustained peace**.

Jane: Once I got to Iowa, it was even more apparent that not only peace education in the schools, but social peace education and peace activist discourse recognize that the United States **relates differently** to the rest of the world. The United States can be a **force for good**; however, it has had violent impacts on the world and is often without deep reflection. So, I went to study education in what they then called the so-called third world to try to **embody** what other people understood peace education could do, how it was colonial and a mechanism for reproducing inequalities and violence and, on the other hand, where there were **safer spaces** for **nurturing** and transformation. I straddle worlds and create that third **space for peace education** out of the in-between. It's been enriching as I **developed connections and compassion** for **sustained peace**.

I get to continue being a student in some ways, but you see how different that would be from someone in a **professional space called peace education**, where that's your job, and you work out of that job.

Teresa: We'll talk about various aspects of Buddhism that **embody compassion** and allow participants to **relate differently**. It could be a women's division meeting or a regular meeting serving as a **force for good**. When I was pregnant, I thought, why isn't a family conference **connecting** us? I had to work hard with the executive of SGI Canada to get a family conference and create these **safe spaces**. I was finally successful, and in the family conference, it was all about parents having **nurturing** attitudes and developing and deepening their bond with their children. So, that was a contribution in the way of ensuring **sustained peace**.

Direct it in that direction so I can practice more as a peace educator for **sustained peace**.

Jackson: If you want people to be peaceful, be peaceful and be seen as a **force for good**.

Look at your schools in America, where people **relate differently**; kids come in and kill people every day or every week. There is no **nurturing** and **compassion**. It is just sickening if we reflect on the contexts we build for our children with no **safe spaces**. Now I might have political commitments and **connections** outside of the university. So, I only have a little more to say about balancing for **sustained peace**.

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Themes	Codes and Subthemes
<p><b>6. Transforming violence</b></p>	Human
	Rights
<p>John: I'm a former language arts teacher and English as a second language teacher, so expressing yourself clearly in oral and written form is very important, and so is learning how to write well, learning how to speak well, and being an advocate for <b>human rights</b>, equity, justice, and peace is essential to reducing violence. And so doing, I teach direct skills like how to write a paper, how to craft an argument, where you fold the opposite side of the discussion, and all the gray areas in between for <b>transformation</b>. That's like critical thinking, analytical thinking, and writing skills that could drive improvement and better living standards for <b>women, children, and homeless people</b>.</p>	Women Children Homelessness Policy Transformation Violence
<p>Michael: It also becomes the foundation and the basis for advocating for <b>human rights, women, children, homelessness, and policy transformation</b>. My work prepares students with a fundamental and new <b>policy</b> and foundational stuff of conflict resolution conflict transformation, which is more skill-based. They need to be more confident that they are close to learning but confident enough to have a place to stand to do their work and contribute to effective <b>policy and transformation</b>. That doesn't automatically imply overwork on my part, but it is. My work prepares students with a fundamental and new <b>policy</b> and foundational stuff of conflict resolution <b>conflict transformation</b>, which is more skill-based. But then there are also those capacities for self-reflection, critical thinking, and others for navigating and being the world if you have that foundation.</p>	
<p>Jane: When I got to Chile, the first thing all my colleagues wanted to tell me was a profoundly traumatic, <b>violent</b> situation that happened in which many of the things that schools do, even though they don't do it as well as we wish to help young people learn to connect healthily with others and adults.</p>	
<p>They knew I would care because my work is around peacebuilding and advocating for <b>women's and children's rights</b>. How community development work also has something to do with enhancing <b>humanity and rights</b> and preventing <b>homelessness</b>.</p>	
<p>Teresa: I was asked to lead a conflict management course regarding the city's bus workers' <b>rights policy</b>. There is no boundary between being a peace educator and a <b>human being</b>. I'm very encouraging in</p>	

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Themes	Codes and Subthemes
<p>my personal life, and I believe in the infinite potential of <b>human beings</b>, especially <b>women and children</b>. And it's not just my child, my <b>children</b>, or very close friends. I want to lift people as much as possible and do away with <b>homelessness</b>.</p>	
<p>Jackson: Teaching is a doing, and it only works when the doing resonates with honesty, is easily mimicked by <b>children</b>, and is understood by <b>women</b>. You have <b>children</b>. Do you practice with them, or do you practice with their love, or do you tell them you love them? What you do to gather with them, with your wife, with your brother, with your students, with the people you work with, of course, <b>children</b> are frightening because they read with tremendous ease the gaps between the rhetoric and the practice. What do I know about Africa and <b>human rights</b>? Even if it happens quickly, it won't be easy and will kill many people and increase <b>homelessness</b>. The second change requires <b>policy</b> alterations. I call them good <b>human connections</b>.</p>	

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## Appendix B: Participant Transcripts

### John – Participant I

I think a lot of us who do the work have either experienced direct or indirect forms of violence, and that could be on the personal or interpersonal level as well as the more societal level. You know, experiencing war or direct physical conflict. And so, I think you know the reason for coming to peace educator is a commitment to understanding that there are other ways to resolve disputes beyond violence. And there are many, many, many ways to resolve conflict and violence, often as destructive. It's divisive. It can end relationships rather than enliven relationships. And so, I wanted to be on that side of that conversation.

I wanted to be somebody who contributed something positive and wholesome and healing and compassionate and loving to the world rather than, you know, continuing the cycles of violence. So, I think, again, a lot of us experience violence, various types of violence, and that is an impetus or reason, so, yeah, for me growing up and seeing a lot of violence in society, violence in the home, it was necessary for me to do something about it. And I was at peace. Educated long before I knew I was a peace educator.

I became a peace educator explicitly in the aftermath of 9/11 when I saw the United States reacting in a way to the bombings of the twin towers in a way that I just really couldn't believe what we were doing as a country. I think you know. Our response needed to be more appropriate. We recognize that we would need peace educators for decades to work through that particular violent conflict and the many previous conflicts in various places worldwide.



I have had direct experience with a lot of refugee populations, including Mung refugees from the American War in Vietnam and heard their stories and how they had to flee their homelands in the aftermath of the US pulling out of Vietnam. And so that was a personal experience. I also experienced war-torn Nicaragua in the aftermath of the Sinista Contra Wars. I worked with people there as an English language teacher. I also heard their stories and recognized that the legacy of violence and Central America, particularly in Nicaragua, continued for generations, so hearing the stories of various people realized that there wasn't a specific field called peace education. Again, in early 2000, it was a little small. In the last two decades the area has exploded. If that's a good word choice but exploded, and there are a lot of publication venues book series, uh journals, et cetera, that focus on peace education. But you know that's 20 years later. Then I felt like I needed to be on the right side of history.

Suppose you ask me to share some of the processes or hurdles that need to be navigated to become a peace educator. In that case, the challenge of legitimation is peace and war and conflict a legitimate field of study within the Academy. In early 2000 when I was doing it when I started. I was an implicit and then very explicit peace educator. It needed to be recognized. Peace education is a legitimate subfield in education, and for 20 years, it's been a struggle to acknowledge it.

The focus of study and effort in higher education is a challenge or even, and I won't call it, a crisis. It's the challenge of legitimation. That was essential to

convincing people on my dissertation committee that it was an important piece of education and that focus on my dissertation was important enough.

When the Academy didn't have many dissertations on peace education, particularly the institution I attended, I was the second Ph.D. student in history to do a dissertation on peace education in the Big Ten school where I got my Ph.D. This is a mainstream Big 10 school.

And so, in 1992, another person did it in our College of Education, and then in 2005 when I graduated, I was the 2nd dissertation in the history of the School of Education to focus on the topic. There were other programs like Columbia University Peace Education Center there, but that has its history. It's tighter than one would think and not as tight as one thinks. And so where do you look? So where do you look for high-quality education in this field? How do you legitimate it? Legitimation has been the career struggle that people take me seriously tinted even today; I have colleagues who, you know, say, you know, what do you study?

I do research on peace education, and they'll say, like, you know, peace and love and refer to hippies and smoking marijuana in different things like that, which I just laughed at because I feel people are wholly ignorant about what the field is and what it is we do. And there are a lot of stereotypes, particularly in the US context. So, I laugh and say whatever, you know, you clearly don't understand. You know the seriousness of some topics we study in the courses and the learning processes, so that's OK.

It's just narrow-mindedness because peace education is essential. You know, I was educated in the US mainstream education system. As I said, I went to a Big Ten school. I've taught at many public and private institutions that are in tune with the field of peace education, so frustrated it's just a narrow focus because in other regions of the world, Northern Europe, like you said, Israel, Palestine.

And in other indigenous traditions, the idea of war and peace and harmony, or peace and harmony, are powerful concepts, and they're rooted within the longstanding cultural tradition. So, is it frustrating? Yeah, but understanding that, unfortunately, there's a history of peace education in the United States connected to pacifism, communism, anti-capitalism, etcetera. There's a whole bunch of historically rooted associations that can be negative on, you know, hippie marijuana smoking, etcetera.

Some of these silly labels are put on people who work in peace and education. They do it too, you know, make fun or joke around and delegitimize the seriousness of looking at education and eliminating or alleviating violence. As a core to the educational project, what we do in schools and education K through 12 or higher education. So yeah, it's frustrating, but it's just narrow-mindedness and not embracing a whole global perspective. Again, peace education is understood very differently in Japan. Umm, and that means something very different in Japan. In relationship to, you know, Inner City, Saint Louis, or, you know, rural North Carolina, for example. You know, violence is manifest

differently in people. Again, we'll delegitimize things. So, it's frustrating. Yeah, but it is what it is. It is to keep doing the work.

Ah, the critical factor for me, it's mentors. As I said, I contacted Ian Harris and Betty Reardon when learning about the field. And both gave me excellent reading lists, resources, and connections, and the list serves to be part of so that I could be self-educated about the field. So, when the critical factor is networks, the other key factor is support.

I'm on the legitimization topic, the support of publishers who publish the work in peace education, and the Journal of Peace Education. It was a massive thing in the field in 2004 when the International Peace Research Association launched the Journal of Peace Education, which became, you know, one of the goes to journals for the field of peace education. That level of legitimacy helped with the journal. It was a tailor in France as a reputable publisher, you know, reputable publisher. And so that helped. Getting published in that and reading articles from that or referencing articles from that was helpful and again validating the importance of our work so mentors and the opportunity to publish in esteemed, you know, research avenues or publication avenues, yeah.

So, it's a difficult question. I need help understanding the question. The next question about balancing research service and teaching is how do you balance your responsibilities so that one makes sense? Balancing it for me is that I teach at the College of Education, so I'm a teacher, educator, and educational leadership preparation person. I can balance my peace education work by doing it as the focus of my research. I teach it in my courses as mostly subtopics, but in

some instances, as fold-like direct topics, so I integrate it and weave it into some of my teachings. And then in terms of service, I think honestly implicitly a lot of what we do in the Academy, there's so much structural violence within the context of the Academy, mainly how we treat one another and research students. Diversity, access, and representation in our education are very problematic in that service work; what we do for service work matters because you can focus on issues of gender equality or racial equity. You can concentrate on bringing indigenous voices into the institution, some thinking about first-generation college experiences, et cetera. So, it's not that I'm not teaching a course on peace education when I'm doing that service work. Still, I am doing peace work, meaning I am working on issues of cultural and structural racial violence, gender violence and et cetera, when I align what I am doing for service at the institution with my peace work. Umm, so for me, it hasn't. In more recent years, it has felt like all those rivers merged. All those streams joined to meet the river to meet the ocean eventually, teaching courses, integrating peace education content, and doing my research in the context of peace education topics in doing service work that reflects my values of diversity, equity inclusion, and combating cultural and structural violence. It seems more manageable as I get older in the field to align my interests. There have been times earlier in my career that I felt like, oh my gosh, I must teach this. I do service over here, and I must do. Uh, my, you know, my peace education work over here. And that can be not easy because I feel like earlier in my career, I had moments, you know, you know, a span of three years, whatever, four years, five years, whatever that I wasn't doing, the depth of peace,

education work that I wanted to be doing. But now, in my current position, things are aligning, and I can do the job. But I must be selective. I can only do some of it. When it comes to service, it must be aligned with issues of equity and justice. And it and making a difference to individuals or institutions. Though I also UM as I age, I get more pragmatic about institutions and bring more joy from working directly with people.

Institutional change is a slow beast that happens very, very, very slowly and sometimes not at all. But if I can work directly with students, that seems meaningful because I know that working with them can create positive change. I have to practice skills, knowledge, critical thinking, and writing. I'm a former language arts teacher and English as a second language teacher, so expressing yourself clearly in oral and written form is very important, and so is learning how to write well, learning how to speak well, and being an advocate for diversity, equity, justice, and peace is essential. And in so doing, I teach direct skills like how to write a paper, how to craft an argument, where you fold the opposite side of the discussion, and all the gray areas in between. That's like critical thinking, analytical thinking, and writing skills. Umm, I also have my practices in specific. I'm a contemplative practitioner, so inner peace is an often-neglected topic in peace education. I teach directly in all my courses, reflective practices. We start class with quiet centering. Uh, we do circle practices as part of the class. We try peace as context as well, not only peace as text but peace as context and subtext. And this is stuff I've written on in some of my published work. So, think about it

not just as a text you read about but how you embody it in your own life and how to do you through contemplative practices. So, we do quiet centering, et cetera.

I want to do workshops in peace education. I also incorporate martial arts. I'm a martial artist. I've studied all different types of martial arts, from Tai Chi Chuang to Taekwondo, to jujitsu, to American freestyle karate, et cetera. And so, we do light martial arts to understand conflict. What do we do when the energy or potential conflict comes at us? Do we do so incorporate full-body movement into my teaching as well? So, you can't separate, and my students become discussion leaders at a certain point in class. I show them how to do it. Then they take over, and then the questions they create from the threaded online discussions each week embrace a peace pedagogical approach where it's not just teaching but teaching with caution in a context of learning and managing classroom dynamics in a way that's healthy and productive. So, there are a lot of different things, a lot of different ways to answer that question. Yeah. Well, it's hard to practice. So again, we use contemplative practices in my courses. We use quiet centering. We've used mindful journaling, compassionate listening, and some leadership skills you can teach directly. When working with educational leaders, it starts with us right the way that we solve the conflict. The way we resolve violent situations, the way we heal or look to repair harm more peacefully, you know, not a punitive justice but a restorative justice framework, is essential.

Encouraging students to care for themselves when experiencing structural violence and burnout is fundamental in many peace educators and people in peace and conflict studies. I see it all the time. People are angry, and they're burnt out.

How do you create a desire for a peaceful world when you're mad and burnt out yourself or hateful because of all the world's woes? So how do you develop a healthy attitude in a related condition of structural violence? It's challenging, but it's still possible. And then, how do you chip away at structural change? How do you create or influence policies, systemic designs, and practices that propagate cultural, structural, and indirect violence? Right. You can do it. So, what are the policies inhibiting everybody's access and success ability to live with dignity and be free? Right. How can you work at the policy level on budgets and become a leader where you spend your money or your values, where your money is? Is there money where your values are? Sorry, are they aligned? There are a lot of different ways to think about it. And how are you as a civil society after? How are you participating in your government or the civic institutions in the context of your country? And what does that look like in terms of voting or advocacy for the rights of women and children or people experiencing homelessness or people who, according to John Rawl's theory of justice, make the conditions of the least well off the best they can be? Are we on that side? Are we in that fight? So, I asked my students to think about all those questions directly in my courses. How do you influence change in your role as a teacher or educational leader? What does that look like, and where is your power to make a difference? Right? So, becoming more crystal clear as to how the individual and the collective entities, the communities they belong to, advocate for change in terms of budget, spending money changing, change in terms of policy, change in terms of representation, access, and opportunity are some of the ways that I think it's embedded in the



courses that I teach in the examples that I give in class. Well, I won't say I'm a humble person. So, it's a tricky question. To answer, I'm not going to make any claims that I'm changing the world through the work that I do or not. You know that I'm not stopping wars or violent revolutions that are unjust or whatever.

I think it's modest work, and as a realist, you know the significant contributions to society is that, hey, there are people out there called peace educators and peace researchers, people who are trying to understand ways to transform violence into something much different that calls upon the finer aspects of human nature like love, truth, beauty, kindness, compassion, and empathy. Some legitimately work as professors in a college of education, publishing work, and outlets that value knowledge and the coproduction of knowledge around issues of peace and justice, access and opportunity, inclusion, and diversity. That alone says there's a place for others like me who believe in those things and think we can improve. As a human species, as people living potentially in harmony and relative peace, we can learn to relate differently. So, the significant contribution is letting our lives be our message to the world; this is what Gandhi said. Is this who we are? The work that I do specifically as a peace educator is premised on the multiplier effect. Again, I work with teachers, educational leaders who become building principals, superintendents, and in some cases, policymakers at the State level, the people that influence K through 12 educations; they influence higher education; they influence in some cases what is taught, how it's taught, and where it's taught.

What's not taught, how learning takes place, etcetera. And so, through the multiplier effect through education systems and individuals who have a burning desire for something different than about violent realities that we currently experience, particularly in the US violence, school shootings, bullying, and cyberbullying. You know, racist aggression, sexist facts, and people experiencing poverty. I feel for transgender students trying to live with dignity as they transition through various.

So, gender, sexual identities, and how do we create safe spaces for these people to live and be OK with who they are? So, I'm not too fond of the question, to be honest with you, because I feel that I don't know. I don't need to know the significant contributions I am making, and honestly, I see the light; the eyes light up in my students. I see them embrace peace education content and want to create a curriculum around it in their classrooms and multiple disciplines in the case through 12 schools. Ohm, I see them surprised that they've never learned that it was a field. They didn't know there was a focus, or an area called peace education. They're amazed, and then they get excited when they study issues of sustainable peace and education for sustainability. When they get introduced to antiracist education or critical feminist perspectives, or critical social theory, they start to question how they've been taught, what they have been teaching, and what they want schooling systems to look like moving forward to create a peaceful, injustice society. I'm making a significant enough contribution, and that doesn't stop me from continuing to do the work. It's not about that. It's about doing the right thing; it's about how I want to be remembered, how I can use peace education as a force

for good, as a force for connection, a force for love and compassion rather than as a force for dividing people. It can be used as a force for indoctrinating students into thinking in a certain way, as opposed to using it as a force for creating allegiance to blind authority like a nation-state so that one is motivated to kill other people because I'm an American and they're not like us. That makes no sense to me. So, it's a battle, but it's not a macho battle with armor behind tanks or with weapons and grenades. It's a quiet battle of conscience and commitment to principles of love, connection, compassion, justice, and peace. Yeah. It's quieter than a bomb, and it's a bomb; a bomb tears thing apart. And this work tries to pick them up and put, put them back together, and that's all I have to say.

Yeah, there are a lot of teachers out there that I've introduced peace education to and educational leaders that are angry about that. They're like, why is it so late in my teaching? Peace education should be from early childhood education onward. It should begin to get it throughout. And then we'll have a different type of society. And so, let's see some of your expert recommendations going forward. So, I'm still waiting to get with you. This will be the foundation for me to reach out to you as a mentor and for guidance in the future. All right, good stuff, and it is good to meet you.

### **Michael – Participant II**

A couple of things happened to me early on in my education experience as an undergraduate in particular. There were a couple of things that were happening in my world. One of the questions is a concern that I had. I don't know if a kind of tacit awareness was a dissatisfaction with the meaning and value of education in

general. And so, I was trying to find a way to pursue some undergraduate studies that would help me make sense of that and ended up stumbling into a course. And yeah, that applied the different messages of conflict transformation and peace education work, mainly through the lens of Apollo.

This particular course had an applied learning component to it. So, we were also taking what we were learning, finding ways to apply that, and working with different youth populations. Youth come from various disadvantaged contexts, so I worked with a group of youth in Detroit in an after-school program. And we chose to explore issues of social justice through the medium of photography. We wanted them to. We want to provide them a space to interpret their reality through the perspective taking the photography could allow.

A short version of a very long story is that this was one of my first experiences in teaching. I graduated from undergraduate with my undergraduate degree and stumbled along; it was a powerful learning experience, but we encountered a tragedy. About two-thirds of the way through the semester, working with this group of students, one of the students happened to be a young mother who was in the wrong place at the wrong time and was shot and killed in the crossfire of gang violence.

So, students came to me and my co-teacher to try to make the meaning of this experience that they were coping with--the trauma and trying to understand it was an issue—that fits into the bigger picture of what we were trying to explore together collectively. Extreme violence and trauma are something I didn't know how to deal with at the time, so it was a new experience for me. Certainly, did not

reflect my context, my reality. And so, I was struggling in the same way; my students were working on trying to make meaning of what had happened.

Ultimately, two things emerged from this experience. One was related to education. The other was related to violence. So, the first part of it, related to education, came after my co-teacher and I were invited to this young student's funeral, later to her grandparents' house where she had been living and they raised her. The grandparents turned to us and said to give us appreciation because, for the first time in their granddaughter's life, through the experience that she had with our course that she felt inspired to go on in education to explore a university degree, something that she did not ever imagine would be part of her life, so part of that opened up for me. Again, at this, and dove in and supported this question. I've been feeling dissatisfied with the purposes of education in general. How powerful meaning-making experiences through education can be profoundly transformative socially, politically, and otherwise. Umm, and so that kind of really wanted me to push me to pursue and continue to think about the role of education and how I could play a role and challenging that transforming it as it typically plays out, and then the second part of the question was related to the issues of violence. Hence, there are many ways we can respond to situations of trauma like that.

It may be the initial instinct at the time to lash out in anger and frustration and put all energy into blaming the perpetrator of this awful crime. I had a strong mentor who guided me through that process to understand the broader nature of systems of violence, cultures of violence, and structural violence in ways I never

perceived before to get a better picture and understanding of the problems we were facing. So, these kinds of inquiries for me have come together, one related to the role and purpose of education and the second related to understanding the nature of violence and the nature of violence in the possibility of any peace and the kind of wedding. Those two together into a framework of Peace Education, which was not even a concept for me then. That has been presented to me. It wasn't until ten years later, in Graduate School, that I knew that there was a field. As such, that's what launched me along that path.

I was not particularly motivated to be a professor as such. It may be more a profession that chose me over time for several reasons, but my motivation was more or less tied to the challenge of making these experiences commonplace. After I received my master's degree in peace education. My teachers' college at Columbia University, I spent almost ten years continuing to work there through the Peace Education Center, which was mainly the sponsor of the work of Dr Betty Reardon, but I grew through my work in the center as co-director there. I engaged in and ran several research projects and global initiatives that promote and advance peace education and theory and practice. And I was utterly content in being in that space. I chose to pursue a Ph.D. for the benefit of my work, less than for personal or professional advancement. It would open the doors to have a seat at the table in a way that a master's degree couldn't afford me. There are endless obstacles within the field of peace studies and peace education that are transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship that is often marginalized, which can be problematic.

The second is the political nature of our field because it is, as you noted in your kind of introduction, the work of peace education in peace research is motivated by supporting and nurturing towards supporting and enabling personal, social, structural, cultural, and political transformation right, so in a straightforward way the work of our field challenges the status quo -- increasing corporatization of educational spaces within universities. That obviously can be an obstacle to staying at work; amongst other things, to illustrate this, I'll share two anecdotes. One when I was the director of the Peace Education Center, we needed some funding issues. The university was always pleased to claim our successes and market our global reputation for our work. Still, the value of our academic work was utterly contingent upon our ability to raise funds, so I had this conversation with the department chair who said to me that as long as you continue to raise money, you're happy to stay here, so there's that aspect of it. It captures another aspect of it. Another anecdote would be a graduate student who was working closely with our center for several years when we were at Teachers College had the opportunity to meet with the president of the college during his open office hours; when she went to meet with him and, she said she was pursuing her master's degree in peace education. He asked her why she would do that. That sounds like missionary work when he was framing that in a negative light. That shows several different things of a limited scope of understanding of education's social and political purposes in general. The fact that this university president couldn't even recognize that education, as he had it in his mind, was a political project. His view was actually one of education that was also missionary

in nature, but obviously with different political goals and different social values than what we were pursuing, so I mean, I think these would be a couple of examples of things that I think stand out for me.

Uh, other stuff that comes up is a connection with those same themes and all the different places I've found myself working in various universities in the US and worldwide. There's always a struggle to sustain this work, and I'm sure you're picking up in your research right now that a lot of peace studies programs are on the chopping block. Uh, along with many other disciplines like the humanities and social sciences and others. I was searching for certain professions with degrees that lead to occupations that universities don't see as economically viable. For example, there's a kind of this whole general theme around that I think stands out. As I said a moment ago, several things make the work particularly difficult. One of the things that peace education does is try to nurture and encourage critical and reflective thinking on the nature of self, our roles, and society. If done well through various transformative pedagogies, it can support students in deconstructing and reconstructing their worldview, understanding of the world, and role within it. So, one of the most fundamental challenges to this work is the political resistance that arises from that because we work within university systems which are well-established institutions with various social and cultural norms and expectations about what education is and should be. And this pushes the boundaries of that, right? It represents a threat to that status quo in some ways, so that's one of the primary obstacles. It is overcoming that sort of normative epistemic violence that is embedded in the traditional kind of educational



practices that we deal with. There are other patterns, too, there. It all fits together into a broader puzzle.

Students have come to the university with the mindset that the primary purpose of education, in this day and age, is to be able to get a job and, of course, we need to sustain ourselves to make a living and support families and things of that nature. But if the only outcome you see is one of professional advancement over time and monetary outcomes, then you lose the general value of learning in and of itself. That process is political, and so the whole nature of education is structured in and around that purpose to prepare students to be able to participate in and navigate the *world as it is*. What peace education does is provide us with skills, capacities, and ways of seeing and helps us navigate the world as it is critically, but also to be able to construct the world that is more preferred, more socially, more peaceful right and so even when students find their way into these programs or courses of study they need help understanding how it will meet their general understanding of what a university education should be. So, I spend a lot of time, for example, with the undergrads I work with now at Georgetown, I'm helping them see the viable paths for what they can do with a degree in peace. There are only a few jobs out there that are labeled peace studies are peace education. You don't see many job listings for peace educators and schools, for example, amongst other things, so that's one of the obstacles we're up against. I hope that's a helpful response; I don't know if it is.

Yeah, no, that's a good question. I've had an unusual professional path; as I said, the professor position wasn't really one I pursued. For the first 10 or 15

years of my career, teaching was something that I did as part of the work, but it wasn't the central part of the work. It was more activism and advancing the field. With that scholarship, I had a lot of freedom and worked in an academic Research Center instead of having a traditional professor appointment. That was the initial 10 or 12 years of work I did at a teachers' college at Columbia, and why we left. When I left Columbia, we shut down the center. And then, I took those projects that we had initiated there. I continue coordinating them, so although I maintain them, I've had different academic appointments. And particular over that period, I've always continued to do the work in particular of the international institute on peace education and the global campaign for peace education, two projects that we started there, so it continued to direct those on the side, so that's the service work that I do in a day-to-day basis. That's always sustained me and is primarily done as a volunteer labor of love, but it provided me with a space to fall back on should I not find an academic appointment that meets my personal and professional needs. So, I only had to depend upon academic work to exist partially. I could always raise funds for these projects to keep myself going, if need be, but that being said, I can also be allowed to be limited and pickier, such as my current appointment as a teaching professor. With my appointment at Georgetown, I don't have that expectation of commitment to research; nonetheless, I'm still balancing my full-time teaching with the ongoing service work I do in the world.

I need to maintain work in both those spaces because it is through the kind of peace action work, I do outside the university that I learned the most from. It

informs my day-to-day teaching that shapes. I want to investigate research independently, and then the other side, I like to think of these things as fitting together holistically. Hence, the teaching to me is a way of recharging my batteries. So, I get a lot of energy from supporting the learning of others and in the process of teaching. It puts me in a place where I'm profoundly learning myself and outside of the teaching space where I'm working, not in the more activist roles I've played. Uh, I am deeply connected to various communities of practitioners who have worked through similar kinds of challenges and struggles. Through that community of practice, we can explore those everyday struggles together to support each other and make our way through them. If I didn't have that community of support outside of the university, I don't know if I could sustain myself, which would be one piece of advice. I would give to anyone emerging in the field, academically or otherwise, to find that community of practice and support, not just for those personal benefits but also to create those spaces of mutual learning and co-learning. We have the opportunity to test out the ideas and theories we're developing in conversation with our peers. That's interesting. Yeah, to me practice of itself is kind of a bit of too much of a limited frame. When we think of practice in the context of conflict work; we're generally referring to engaging in various and using various conflict methods and tools to support and foster change, but I think practice without reflection, which brings in the deeper personal and social learning aspects of the peace education work. That practice will only take you so far; hence, it would help if you saw them as fitting together into a bigger picture. If that makes sense, I don't know enough the context of your

mentor here to understand why he would use those words, but one of the ways I've often framed peace education and in the context of conflict work is peace-building work. Most people believe peace-building and peace education are a sub-field or a subcomponent of a broader framework of complete transformation. But ultimately, I see it the other way around. If we think of the work of peace and conflict transformation, we are working on getting into and addressing the root causes of conflict and creating spaces where the culture of peace can work, and it can exist and emerge.

And we begin to understand that conflict, in particular, is rooted in, for the most part, both cultural and worldview misunderstandings of constructive aspects of our world that guide our frames of reference for how we interact with that world, then ultimately to be able to challenge those kinds of worldviews and transform those worldviews is a process of learning right. It involves deep reflection and introspection to challenge our assumptions about how we think the world is. That that to me, I mean, I don't. I'm also against putting these things into some ranking or hierarchy in the broader fields of peace knowledge, where we have aspects of research studies, education, and action. We can learn much from each puzzle piece, but practice without reflection is rarely sustainable.

That's a good question. Yeah, I don't know that I have a 100% balance between my personal and professional life, but I have a very supportive family that knows how important this work is. It is also unique, and those two things can't be separated. So ultimately, there is a struggle sometimes to find that balance. When you're when your 7-year-old daughter says to you, you overhear

your son, your daughter talks to your grandparents that Daddy is working on the weekend again up in his office. You're working too much. So yeah, I don't know how to answer that one exactly, but I also kind of hope that in the space of my personal life, we can have those conversations with my family with my daughter around peace and justice and what it means we do have those kinds of discussions as it is. And sometimes, one of the things I've learned over the years is to compartmentalize a little bit. , some days and some weeks when I'm dealing with really challenging work, I set limits as 6:00 pm rolls around and I'm done working for the day, and I kind of turn that side of me off as best I can, or try to cover the spaces on the weekend where I can dedicate myself to family. This is as important as the other part of the commitment.

Yeah. That question again to see how you impact your students' personal and professional lives. How I approach thinking about. There's this kind of fine line that I think we walk in the work of peace education and peace studies between the social, political, and cultural transformative goals of the field and then how we educate and prepare our students to be able to do that work to live in that world to construct that world and that fine line is one that kind of dances around pedagogy right and so. It's vital to approach this work in a way in which we avoid indoctrinating students to become peace activists. That's not what it's about. The idea is to pedagogically, through various tools like reflection, contemplation, and critical thinking to help students develop the inner moral and ethical resources become the foundation and the basis for taking external political

action. so that I might provide experiences in my classroom; they can test out different ways of being, but I never expect that to happen.

Students must have a way to make that choice independently of what I offer. So, what my work is fundamentally about is preparing them with fundamental capacities and foundational stuff of conflict resolution conflict transformation, which is a bit more skill based. But then there are also those capacities for self-reflection, critical thinking, and others for navigating and being the world if you have that foundation. Developing a sort of inner sense of who you are and trying to live with that in your own framework of values consistently. That the personal ultimately becomes political. I wonder if I'm explaining this well and clearly, but if you're interested, I've read a few pieces about this kind of personal political relationship. I could share those with you to give you an idea of how I understand those relationships in the classroom.

Yeah, it depends on the audience I'm working with and the context in which I'm teaching. My current day-to-day teaching at Georgetown is in teaching undergraduate students. The Justice and Peace Studies program is attractive because, honestly, before I started, Before I moved to DC 6 years ago, I primarily worked with graduate students....and so with undergraduates it's been an exciting journey because we have an opportunity to support some worldview formation around justice and peace studies there. The ideas are new to them, right, and so there is this beauty of exposing them to different perspectives taking on issues. Umm, so currently, I would say right now, the particular practices and skills and knowledge that I bring into the class are those that I was talking about before it's

just helping them to think critically to engage in perspective-taking as we explore issues, anything from the problems of justice from the local scale all the way up into matters of war and the global scale.

I'm helping them to connect those experiences, their issues, and their personal lives to understand how they benefit from those systems of injustice because of their privilege or how those various issues we're exploring impact them now or in the future. Amongst other things, I focus on getting the perspective and reflecting on what's general. I work outside the university, and the projects I continue to manage and direct again. The international student piece education. The Global Campaign for peace education. I do two things there that bring a lot of energy: one is related to trying to articulate and explore to understand better the role of pedagogy and supporting social, personal, and cultural transformation.

So really getting for those who will become practitioners. As educators and in formal or nonformal contexts, getting them to become more deeply aware of the relationship between how we teach them, what we teach, and how that is so important to understand how we try to nurture those outcomes that we've been talking about. So, I spend a lot of energy there, and the other thing that I put a lot of effort into is helping create communities of practice. This is due to many of the things we discussed early in this interview, including the various obstacles to integrating peace education. There is a shortage or a severe lack of teacher training opportunities in the field, so we must recognize a need for more institutional responsiveness to meet this need for various reasons.

We find ways to educate ourselves, and our most significant contribution to the field has been creating this kind of nonformal learning space, mainly through international students and peace education. And that has been instrumental in helping academic communities worldwide to push and expand the field in theory and practice. For example, the institute celebrated its 40th anniversary this past March with a special event where we gathered participants worldwide to share their stories and experiences. I can share a link to that with you because the various testimonies that come out from that event represent the kind of outcome I'm describing here. So much of the work we do is not covered in the job description. It is the ongoing mentorship that we provide to former students. Helping them in their journeys, I spend 10 hours a week responding to random inquiries from various peace educators worldwide who come to us with questions through the global campaign for peace education.

I appreciate you. I wasn't 100% articulate today. I was actually up half the night with a sick dog. So, my brain is not at total capacity. I hope that something articulate came out that you can use if you have. If you want to follow up on anything, please do reach out. I'll try in the next 24 hours or so 24 or 48 hours to respond and send you some articles on links and other things that you might find helpful for your research.

### **Jane – Participant III**

I am a child of the Vietnam War era. And so, I learned from the political culture at that time. Also, I grew up in a physically abusive, violent home—both of these showed me the importance of peace from early in my life. I remember getting a



bit involved as an 11-year-old in 1968, campaigning for the peace candidate in the US elections. His name was Eugene McCarthy.

It's hard to trace how that became possible. I remember encountering New Eugene McCarthy's peace message on a billboard. It certainly wasn't something from my family (they were not politically involved), but of course, the message resonated for me. And so, I began as a peace activist as I grew up into my youth and young adulthood, and so on. My interest in the education piece also came early, but again, it's hard to locate at a particular moment.

How can I say this? Education was a space for possible transformation, and I started teaching early. The first thing I taught was swimming. I often taught people who were afraid of the water, and I loved that because I was somewhat successful at helping people to get past their fear and learn to swim.

I had various kinds of teaching experiences. When I was young, I was committed to something I had begun calling peace education by the time I went to college at Oberlin. Education, never mind peace education, did not exist as an explicit area of study there, so I had to design it as an independent major.

My other major was sociology-anthropology. This was an interesting place to learn about social conflict, social equity and diversity, and social change. But there were a few individual professors who had interests related to peace and education, and I was able to work on peace education that way. I also encountered the Quakers at the Society of Friends for the first time when I was in college. I became a Quaker after that and began working with the American Friends Service Committee in northeast Ohio on peace education through an initiative called

Alternatives to Violence. This was a mini course I developed with others, twenty hours or so (so it could be offered once a week for a semester, or in a four-week intensive, or sometimes we did the whole course in a weekend: Friday night, Saturday, Sunday. For youth and adults. Umm. This course addressed what we have come to call institutional or systemic violence, some of the roots of harm, and the reasons that transformation is challenging right from the beginning. This differs from some individually oriented peace education initiatives that locate the problem in the individual who needs to learn. Conflict resolution attitudes, values, or skills are important, but only sufficient if we also consider our relationships, — the larger society and the intersecting social institutions, status inequalities, resource conflicts, etc.

Making peace is difficult and necessary. I could go on, but that's the beginning. I decided bit by bit to be interested in peace education because violence was a problem and to be interested in education. After all, while it wasn't going to solve the whole issue, education was one place out of which I could work to contribute to building peace.

You said something in your draft questions, you discussed the graduate level, so I need to get to that. There are different pieces that I've already alluded to. There is sometimes no precise location because peace education is an interdisciplinary and transformative-oriented field and because there are few of us (doing peace education work). At Oberlin and in my master's and doctoral programs, I was not in a field called peace education or anything quite like that. I

was finding a social and intellectual home for learning that contributes to peace education. Of course, as you know, there are some peace education programs now, but my own biography is different from that. There are huge differences among what various peace educators are about and what that means. It has been a community that I have been part of, all these decades, but generally feel marginal to it, for instance because I generally focus on regular teachers and schools rather than on special peace education programs imported to the school. I have spent more time and energy working in fields allied around justice and peace. There are others besides me doing peace work in education, and in this postmodern world that we're part of.

I have never chosen to work in a program that calls itself peace education. It's my work, but I have not wanted to segregate myself from other peacebuilding, and justice work. Peace educators can be rather normative in their work, maybe if I teach these people my values, skills, and attitudes and some degree of knowledge, then they will be more peaceful. I don't have that sense that I have the answer, and I don't think peace is constructed and learned mainly through teaching values. It's a challenge, but it's a good one. It's that I've been able to do the work. I've done this because I did my homework, to locate myself in the field of education, to work as a teacher in schools, to do teacher education, to do graduate work in education, and to join my doctoral program, onward.

Although I am somewhat marginal to it, also, there is also the field of comparative international and development education — to learn with people from around the world whose underlying understandings of conflict and how to

handle it and, therefore of what we need to teach and learn in peace and education, are not the same. There are exciting overlaps, but they're not the same. You mentioned that you'd seen my CV, so you know that much of my work starts from the premise that researchers can, for instance, look for teachers who already are doing dialogic pedagogy about conflictual questions and concerns of various kinds, and then look at their purposes and the students' learning experiences, and so forth, finding the peace ingredients already hatching in the schools. More recently, my research was looking at young people living in disproportionately violent communities, what they already understand about conflict and about possibilities for acting for just peace, and their concerns and suggestions their teachers.

Right from the early days of my master's program, if not before (so since the 80s), I've been equally interested in education for democracy, democratization, and democratic citizenship, because democracy encompasses some of the processes for making and building peace. So, in that project, for instance, I asked teachers what they were already teaching and how so, across their various subject areas and interactions with the children about citizenship and or peace. And at the same time, I asked the young people, in a separate focus group session, about conflicts.

Many of the images I used to prompt students' discussion, but not all, involved physical violence, and many involved systemically damage. But they young people focused on the types of conflict and violence that resonated with them, that they were experiencing in their lives. And then the citizenship piece

was: what did they think they, their parents, their neighbors, their peers, what anybody could DO about these problems? I learned early on that I needed to ask them about what they thought authorities could do or were doing, relevant to that concern, as well.

What they thought those authorities could do was fascinating, although discouraging. That link between the individual —and a sense of agency in— the social world, to deal with big problems, is fragile. So, I don't think I got back to graduate level peace education. Except, I went to grad school after teaching for several years the alternatives to violence course I co-developed, because, at the time, I had already begun teaching teachers, and I didn't have the proper certification. Somebody at the University of Akron OH would create a space for me to a summer course on alternatives to violence. And then, I was working with practicing teachers, and I liked that a lot. I realized I had more to learn. And once I got to the University of Iowa (master's program), it was even more clear that (not only peace education in the schools, but) social peace, education, and peace activist discourse does recognize that the United States has had violent impacts on the world, but often without deep reflection. It's almost as if we slip from assuming the US was bringing peaceful democracy to the world into assuming everything is the US's fault, and that's just as ethnocentric, egotistical. And so, I went to graduate school to study education in what they then called the Third World, to try to understand through other people's experiences what education could do, how it was colonial and a mechanism for reproducing inequalities and violence — and, on the other hand, where the spaces were for transformation.

I had an excellent experience in Iowa. Originally, I went there to get that master's degree and learn a little more, and thought I'd just go back and teach the next version of alternatives to violence. Instead, I discovered to my enormous surprise my academic interests and skills and the depth of my ignorance. So, I attended an international development education program to keep studying and have classmates from everywhere. I mean, I'm one of those people too. I'm not saying that's bad, but it's a small slice of the world, and I didn't need to have the same views reinforced for me. We get to peace through conflict: not conflict in the sense of fighting, but conflict in the sense of finding the contrasts and the problems, working to understand them together, and doing something about it. I did that better by studying broader questions of development and social change in their relationship to education, both negative and positive. And so, by the time I finished my Ph.D., this peculiar profile worked to my advantage because I never specialized as narrowly as many academics do. I had skills as a social studies educator, which I incorporated into democracy and peace education but only sometimes by that name. Then I had this education in international development, more the social foundations of education, somewhat policy-oriented and systemic.

I would never want to work in a private school. I've always wanted to work in the public system, to fit into multiple niches often. When I was applying for academic jobs, the search committees would have people wanting the more systemic policy, international comparative expertise, and others wanting the social studies and classroom teaching. I could do a bit of each, which got me opportunities. Since my Ph.D., I have developed myself in various ways. I wanted

to share something with you. I was interviewing one of my professors, and he mentioned that he doesn't see himself as a peace educator, which rattled me a bit, so I asked him why; he said his focus is on sustained peace and for us to pursue sustained peace we must do more practicing and advocating for a complete reduction in the teaching and education. He said we should do more to identify those things that would help mitigate structural violence, especially violence along the lines of what you've just mentioned impacting the community. This study investigates peace educators' lived experiences, but that may need to be more accurate. Suppose peace educators aim for a sense of sustained peace. Perhaps looking into systemic and structural issues and how to mitigate that with our international community might be the right approach. I was putting that across to let you know I could not be happier to hear similar views or perspectives.

Peacebuilding is central to what I do. I'm not opposed to that label. I'm not just in the peace research field but in peace education. I sometimes see myself as a peace educator because I am studying conflict studies as much as peace studies. It's not surprising, in a way, that many people who get involved in peace work don't like conflict, don't trust conflict, and don't want to be involved in conflict. My personal and professional view of peacebuilding is that there's no way to just peace but through conflict and education. We may have peaceful intentions, as best we can, but we can also interpret those as justice intentions, democracy intentions, and/ or conflict transformation intentions. On the one hand, I reject that narrow view of peace education. I'll give you an example: Have you ever seen the work of Marc Howard Ross? He could be better known, but

something in his work speaks to me and helps put this into words. He published some books in 1993, two at the same time, more or less. I recall one of them is called *The Culture of Conflict* and one *The Management of Conflict*, but he is a political scientist. But in these books, he was using meta-analysis of anthropology research to compare disproportionately peaceful societies with disproportionately violent societies, across cultures, to try to address this fundamental question. Is the problem mainly systemic violence (social structures), or is the problem mainly what some would call cultural violence (biases and beliefs)? And at the end of those books, he said it's not one or the other; it's both. In my reading, in terms of what he contributed to my learning, he's been a spokesperson for the structural and political dimension of conflict, which sometimes gets ignored in some peace education. So, I'll send you over reference because it's a chapter that takes a lot of work to find (Ross, Marc Howard. (2010). *Peace education and political science*. In Gavriel Salomon & Ed Cairns (Eds.), *Handbook of Peace Education* (pp. 121-133). NY: Psychology Press/ Taylor & Francis). As you know, the handbook is on peace education, and he articulated his political science view of peace education. He felt that peace education, especially what's embedded in transnational development work for armed conflict zones, needs to be more mature in addressing systemic peacebuilding and political interest factors, from the individual to the system. So, even though some of what he says there about peace educators is, I feel, unfair, it's a beautiful, critical analysis that speaks to me about the necessity of attending to social-structural and resource distribution elements in education for peacebuilding transformation.



So, peace in the real world must deal with social differences, social power, political systems, and civil society. I don't just mean capital-p (formal government) politics; I mean politics in the broadest sense of how power circulates through civil societies and institutions. And that is a weakness, in my view, in the area of peace education. I don't know whether I've been able to do anything about that because, again as I say, some don't see me as a peace educator when I go off having workshops with young children about conflicts because I'm not studying or recommending a prescriptive peace education program. It's not precisely what (John Paul) Lederach called elective peace education, either, but that's a way of thinking about peacebuilding education differently. It's elective in the sense of being grounded in the concerns, but also the language and understanding to handle those concerns, of the local communities and cultures I work with, including contrasts among them. Honestly, we don't need another study about peace educators who are certain that it's all like this. You'll learn and teach the field more by complicating that. What does it mean to try to transform education as one of the contributions to peacebuilding? Yeah, that's the link. It's that intersection of peace, praxis, and practice within the (existing structurally violent) system. And that's why I am equally interested in studying democratic citizenship education. Again, the ones who problematize the relationship between individuals and their society and look for spaces, institutions, and mechanisms through which people can make a difference. Democracy, even at its worst, is an attempt at—a set of ways for— handling conflict peacefully. Umm. The reason for pausing to think is, again, if there's a

single profession. I can talk about myself as a professional or my impressions of other colleagues, but speaking first about what I know best, which is my biography. One challenge I've already mentioned is finding a place to stand and be a member of, in which I can do peace education work. So, for instance, I work in a program of critical studies in curriculum and pedagogy. And I work in what's called a collaborative program, which is a euphemism for unfunded. It's a research center and a program in which graduate students can add international development education into their other University of Toronto degree study. And professors from various programs, similarly, can add an affiliation with this collaborative program by including in their course(s) scholarship linked to the vast and contested field of international and comparative education. I've been the director of each of those programs, to take my turn, and thankfully got finished. I'm not very oriented toward that kind of administrative work, but within each field, I need to stay active, up-to-date, and engaged with these plural places of peacebuilding.

Both fields are interested in young people and education, which differ from place to place. And so, it's more work. There are more scholarly journals that I need to read, and so forth. I need to attend more meetings because, as Homi Babha put it, I straddle worlds and create that third space for peace education out of the in-between. It's been worth it to me. It's very enriching. I get to continue being a student, in some ways. But you see how different that would be from someone in a professional space called peace education: where that's your job, and you work out of that job.

You mentioned this in the question that you sent me. Question 4 is the intersections of teaching, research, and service, so that might be an excellent tangible way of getting at some of this. Yeah, there's been a considerable work intensification in the Academy over the last generation. Indeed, it escalates what's expected of us, and that's not all bad. It's already a very privileged place to be. Sometimes, we only need to accept some of that privilege and do the work for more basic change, in places where the work is wanted, and people need it to happen.

I live in Canada, a country with a relatively small population and a relatively small budget that is very much dependent and subordinate to the United States. We don't have the infrastructure of research funders and foundations you have in the United States. Most of our money comes through the federal government, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. There are exceptions, but that's a lot of it. And so, getting the money for work that I see as relevant. Again, doing the institutional work, being on those review committees and so forth. So, I have been able to get funding to do it slowly, because my time is extremely strained and limited, but to do research that I consider relevant to peacebuilding and education. Because I'm an immigrant to Canada (since 1995), some of the first work I needed to do 20 years ago was to learn the Canadian system and not assume that it was just like the US system, which of course, it isn't. This learning was quite good for me in lots of ways. And again, to learn what the concerns are in other places. For instance, you mentioned

the suicide issues in South Korea, among other places with enormous suicide challenges.

In First Nations Indigenous communities, terrifying suicide rates seem to be related to the broken relationship between the individual and the system, and the system's systemic violence, that those young people endure. My work could be better, but it's always attentive to the trauma many people have endured and the violence we need to stop. And another example is I was doing some work in Chile. I was able to go to Mexico and to Chile when we could travel again in April. When I got to Chile, the first thing all of my colleagues wanted to tell me was a profoundly traumatic situation that had happened in a school, soon after the young people had come back from the quarantine. We realized how many things that schools (when they are open) do, even though they don't do it as well as we wish, to help young people learn to connect healthily with others and adults.

The public school is one of the first places a young person encounters those different kinds of relationships. Then, in the pandemic, most of those young people were denied schooling because they didn't have the online equipment, and anyhow online education didn't do what you might call social and emotional citizenship work intentionally or consistently. So, they all wanted to tell me how a young boy in junior secondary (intermediate) school had gone into the patio in the middle of recess and shot himself to death. So, we need to talk about violence — direct physical violence as well as systemic violence.

There are no simple answers. My colleagues in Chile knew I would care because my work is around peace. Still, I don't know that my work is that

practical because there is apparent individual healing needed for that youngster before that happened, and for his family, classmates, teachers, and community that also needs to happen. Other fields allied with peacebuilding and education maybe have more expertise for counseling or mediation that's trauma sensitive. How community development work, you know, also has something to do to prevent and heal such problems. Still, we can't blithely go ahead and teach peace without a sign we're on the right track. And yet people can air some of their deepest pains, fears, and experiences of violence and acknowledge that there's no quick fix.

I wouldn't say I've done that very well. That is, I work too much. I fulfill the same values in my personal life, but I got into that long narrative about encounters with violence out of this question about teaching, research, and service, and just to cycle back briefly. The people who choose to become my advisees in graduate school and do their thesis work with me and work on my research teams and so forth, are almost always from other parts of the world. I rarely get a North American — occasionally, but not too often, because people from outside the privileged global North get it, understand the need for education to build possibilities for democracy and peacebuilding.

My work attracts people who may know little about peacebuilding or conflict resolution. Still, they know they've had negative experiences with conflict, violence, exclusion, and injustice. So, when I can, I help them get through some of that and to find different paths, to help each of them find a way where they feel confident enough that they have a place to stand to do their work

and to contribute well. That doesn't automatically imply overwork on my part, but it is. I'm getting older. I've just passed 65, and I could retire. I do need to slow down a bit and refocus. I want more time to do more practitioner-based inquiry with teachers and young people. That is hard to fit into an academic schedule, especially if you want to do some of it abroad, not only locally.

I'm still figuring that one out. I'm not apologizing for that, but I know I have put a lot less energy into nurturing my personal life and nonacademic, nonwork relationships than I should have. I need to shift that, to go on with real life. I remember how my first alternatives to violence course was very influenced by my feminism. In those days especially, I was very clear on one point, that because peace education is a male-dominated field, so maybe it emphasized non-aggression, refusal to violate other people, but transformative justice-centered peacebuilding also must include a refusal to be violated. I try to do that work, but then I went home and allowed myself to answer the 24/7 e-mails and to work with students who need a better academic background to be easy to work with, and you know their hearts are in the right place. They want to change the world. But they need help to do that work. Those are the people I often work with, and it is extremely labor intensive, and I tend to sacrifice my life balance and boundaries for that. It's impacting the personal and professional life of your students and your community. Sure, it differs from student to student, but I'm so proud of my students because they do make a difference! For instance, yesterday, it was announced that one of my doctoral grad students got a significant award from the Comparative International Education Society of Canada for her doctoral study:

one of the adjudicators said it is the best dissertation they have ever read. That thesis writer is from Iran and managed to do her research in Iran, looking at peacebuilding and education in a non-democratic setting.

The one who got the doctoral thesis award the year before was also my doctoral student. He was from Colombia. He worked in a city further from the armed conflict there, and in a city surrounded by the armed conflict. The drug trade sometimes seemed to some of those young people as the only viable way of living they can make. So, some of my students can do work I could never have done myself. I am honored to help and to work alongside my students. They're not all doctoral; Some are masters as well. Our thesis group gatherings are meeting on Zoom because I'm away this year (and before that because of the pandemic). Some of these grad students are in Croatia and in Colombia: they can join because they're on Zoom. Anyway, one of my newer students is beginning to clarify what she wants to study and could study: now she understands that she defines peacebuilding education as decolonial, anti-colonial, that's the focus, the backbone that anchors her inquiry and her future work.

I didn't tell her to do that. She came to it, but she came to it through resources that I was able to help her cobble together, including my courses. I hear back from former students; some have remained teachers and are doing this work in all kinds of ways. One of my master's students finished recently, the first in her family to do university, never mind grad school. She teaches the kind of so-called special education students identified as having so-called behavioral problems. I must put in lots of so-called, because the words are damaging. So, she works with

kids at severe risk who have even more than the average need to learn how to communicate about conflict, to share their wants, concerns, and feelings, and to listen to others nonviolently. She's doing peacebuilding education in her work. She is beginning to work with other teachers to show how that can be done. Essentially, it's more about teaching the adults to listen to the young people and to include carefully structured conflict as a learning opportunity, not only handling conflicts post-incident. You know the teachable moments after things arise. It would be best if you did that too. But, for instance, doing carefully structured small group dialogue about issues the young people don't feel so passionate about that they must jump down each other's throats. But where can they practice?

Having strong opinions and persuading and considering the perspectives of others, and that kind of thing. I have lots of those kinds of wonderful students. Another one was a high school principal when he finished his doctorate with me and has moved up the hierarchy in his school board and is infusing restorative justice work.

And other former doctoral students are also doing this work in different ways. So, the one I just mentioned, one of the ways that people do what they call restorative justice (or sometimes they take out justice, unfortunately, and call it restorative practices) is post-incident circles for dealing with conflicts after harm has been done. That is important. But it's one thing. I have another close friend and colleague, who finished her doctorate with me 14 years ago, whose work, like mine, is more about infusing peacebuilding, including therapeutic dialogue,



learning opportunities, and inclusive ones, right into the regular business of what goes on in classrooms.

So, teacher professional development, interviews, and focus groups with children, lots of circle processes, but you see less about top-down education, more about listening and defining a problem, exploring potential solutions, and the pros and cons and effects on different people making decisions. That's basic to what educated people can do, and everybody deserves a chance to do that. Yeah, I've contributed directly, but more through my students than in any published work (that maybe about three academics might read).

I'm going to be brief on this. It's lovely to get to know you, and I hope we can continue in another way, but I have another meeting soon. One thing I already mentioned is the importance of democratic engagement, broadly understood. So, alongside or outside the system and social movements, as well as through the system: in other words, to work through social mechanisms of conflict transformation and problem-solving, including not only liberty but equity. That are not just wishing for international human rights but trying to figure out what's violating those rights and what on Earth to do about it. And so, there's a core there, but across all the practice, the skills and knowledge, is for me, peacebuilding education is conflict education, in the sense of facing the problems we're trying to solve. It's critical but open-minded analysis. Critical and reflexive, dialogic.

I could give it a more excellent word and say inclusive transdisciplinary but it's all imperfect. Those are the things I tried to help people see in

understanding the conflicts that mainly concern them. What do they look like and feel like, in the various perspectives of people involved? What are their causes, and what can you contribute toward the solution? And sometimes, they do it through education. Most of my students are in international development education, and some are interested in social movement education more than working in schools for instance, and that's all good. I could go on and on and on. You're talking about my favorite subject, but another time.

#### **Teresa – Participant IV**

Peace education has aligned with my values. Since 1981, I have been practicing Buddhism, and the Buddhism I practice has its roots in humanistic education. Tsunesaburō Makiguchi and Jose Toda were both educators who created a lay organization for Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and applied Buddhist principles to education. So, for many years, I knew about humanistic education. I started my Ph.D. and had the good fortune of having Doctor Ayaz Naseem as my supervisor, an expert in peace education. And I was immediately drawn to peace education because, again, it was aligned with my values as an educator and as a human being.

Education should be learner-centered as opposed to following the notion that students are repositories to be filled. Moreover, learning is a collective process. Learning should be learner centered. Learning should be relevant and timely for the learners. As a result of education, each person should become a better human. Teaching is an opportunity to polish our lives and become better human beings, no matter the subject.

To be a peace educator means to tackle complex subjects like homophobia, racism, ableism, and misogyny. It is including all the isms. So, bringing up those sensitive topics brings out certain feelings and emotions in our students because such conversations demand that they reflect on their unconscious biases. There is no getting around those powerful emotions that are elicited because of these discussions.

In a class I was teaching on diversity, we analyzed the Quebec social studies curriculum and saw how ethnocentric it was. Aboriginal people were treated like extras in history. As a class, we critiqued each unit of this curriculum. There was one young woman in the class, who was both a nationalist and separatist. She became very resistant to what I was trying to teach. She began bad-mouthing the course in general, and that kind of sentiment grew like a cancer. I had to address what was going on and have another difficult conversation with the class to better understand what they were feeling and experiencing in this class. So, peace education is not for the faint of heart. It's not just about let's just all get along. It demands that we all delve deeper. It's about change. It's about looking at the world, what it is, and what it could be.

The environment has a significant impact on the practice and outcome of peace education. Consider putting forward the principles of peace education at an inner-city High school where most students perhaps are of lower SES, in a country with intractable conflict, a suburb of a well-to-do neighborhood, or a neighborhood with a high crime rate. How will these messages be received. It certainly depends on where students come in and how they perceive peace. For

some, the notion that we are all responsible for peace is a foreign concept. That's not the reality, so it all depends; as a peace educator, you need to do a needs assessment to see where people are, what they believe is possible and then go from there. And what are their views on conflict management? What are their thoughts about racism and all the isms? And what are their ideas about peace? Is it possible? These two factors need to be kept in mind, 1) the environment where you're teaching and 2) and the students' beliefs about peace and its possibilities are at in terms of when they enter your classroom?

Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory of socioecology looks at human development by moving from macro to micro systems. What impact does the society, local environment, family etc. have on the individual? What forces prevent or support their development?

I used Bronfenbrenner's theory to examine the reintegration of formally abducted young mothers in northern Uganda and the process of their social exclusion. Some parts of their community prevented them from being included as community members; the trauma they endured prevented them from seeking wellbeing or considering working towards peace and helping rebuild the community. So, every layer of the socio ecology contributed to their suffering and the breakdown of communities.

I'm not a tenure-track professor. I am a part-time instructor who is very grateful every time I'm given a course to teach. So, how do I balance teaching, research, and practice? That may not apply to me right now. Nothing is driving me to do research, so I've put that on pause. Regarding service, I believe I have

advanced peace education. I gave a talk to a Buddhist educators group about an experience I had applying the principles of peace education to the course I taught last fall—*The Fundamentals of Instructional Design*. In the past, I've taught courses where it was obvious how to integrate peace education. For example, I taught, *Diversity in the classroom. Education in Pluri cultural society*, and *Comparative Education*. These lend themselves very well to integrating peace education. The fundamentals course is very technical. I realized then rather than teaching *about* peace education, I had to become a peace educator. What does that mean? It means to become a guide on the side versus sage on the stage and acknowledge the unlimited potential of learners and model compassion. It means that in the classroom, topics are relevant to learners, anchored in real life and real issues. It is learner centred.

Given this, to teach the model for instructional design, the concepts, principles, and facts were taught before each class through readings and videos. That, in effect, left the classroom for discussion. When I would introduce the topic, I would draw on my own real-life experience as an instructional designer, weaving in the attributes of peace education. This meant opening up, and leaving myself vulnerable because these were personal experiences. As an example, I used the experience I had as a consultant in 2008. That was the year that there was a 51-day bus strike in Ottawa. I got a contract to deliver training on how to deal with disgruntled customers for the bus drivers, a few days before they were to go back to work.

During the bus strike, the bus drivers were completely villainized in the media. They were the cause of our hellish commute to and from work. They were greedy and unwilling to cooperate to end the strike. In other words, the City of Ottawa threw them under the bus. So, I started the training session with these bus drivers hoping to give them effective conflict management techniques. After about 20 minutes, one of the bus drivers got up, went to the back of the room and said, that's bullshit and started to leave. So, I would give this example to my students and ask, ok, what would you do in this situation? They suggested, let him go. Call a break. Then one student said, talk to him. I said, yes, but I think it's more important to listen to him. What I did was to say to the driver was, you're right, it is bullshit. Let's all talk about that.

For the next three hours, the bus drivers vented. They were so hurt and angry. They then told me what they needed which I promised to present to the City of Ottawa, which I later did. After lunch, I said, you are still going to have to face the public on Monday. What are you going to do when confronted by an angry member of the public? I then delivered the last three hours to an engaged audience. With this example, I'm able to show the importance of listening, delivering topics that are of relevance to learners, and the roll of compassion in the classroom.

There is no boundary between being a peace educator and a human being. In my personal life, I'm the type of person that's very encouraging, and I believe in the infinite potential of human beings. I engage people in conversations all the time. I'm very social, but it's not just being social; it's about encouraging every

person I meet. And it's not just my children, or very close friends. It's wanting to lift people as much as possible, and It's a Pollyanna attitude, but it's also about listening. And that's connected to the philosopher you mentioned. He is the same one who talked about deep listening, which involves interacting profoundly with people and listening with your whole life. And this is something that I try to practice right because I see that if I become a happy, fulfilled individual and promote peace within my little bubble, my little world, my community, then that will grow like water rings, and that's how peace happens. It starts with each individual's commitment to peace. I see peace as my responsibility.

Well, I mainly think about this last class; there is a very poignant example. One of my challenges was that the course was already developed, which was the core of a master's program in Educational Technology. This was a mandatory course, so there were policies associated with it, very authoritarian policies. It included provisions such as if you submit your assignment in PDF, you get a score of 0 because this doesn't allow the instructor to provide feedback. There were severe penalties for late work or if the student didn't attend all three workshopping classes. Those classes were dedicated to getting feedback from their peers. So, for example, when students did their design plan, a week later, they would get feedback from their peers. They could then apply the feedback before submitting their assignment. If they didn't attend that workshop, they would get zero; if they were late, they would get zero too. Oh, my goodness, it was so punitive and based on the idea that students will only be motivated through corrective measures. That's the only way they'll get anything done on time. I think

it's important to have high expectations of students, building trusting relationships, motivating them through caring. They will in turn try to meet those expectations.

I was very clear about the policies and told students that I didn't agree with these policies. But what could I do? I was a mere part-time instructor but had to implement these policies. I pleaded with them and asked them to complete their work on time so that I wouldn't have to implement these policies. In the end, only one student submitted late, and that student was already struggling. So, as a result, boom, she lost 35%, so I had a conversation with her. This was not through e-mail. We talked face to face, and I explained where she was at. She told me that she was struggling. She had a very demanding full-time job. Plus, this course was demanding. I then learned that she could drop the course quite late in the term without getting anything on her transcript. So, I suggested to her, why don't you keep attending? Submit the assignments or not but drop the course before this date so you don't get an F on your transcript, and that's what she did. She didn't submit any more assignments but came to every class and thanked me. So that's a result of relationship building. And as another example, this just happened a few days ago. I went to a retirement party. The Chair of the Department of Education told me that one of my Fall students, sang your praises. She said that my course was the best she's ever taken and how much she learned about being a humanistic educator. The Chair was impressed and committed to sending me the list of teaching opportunities for the fall.



I incorporate several types of professional skills. I'm not too fond of soft skills, but professional skills, such as underlining the importance of relationship building within an organization: your community and being an active and deep listener. Well, humanistic education is woven through all the courses that I teach. I have taught undergraduates, graduate students, and or in-service teachers.

Each learner has infinite potential, and how we see the learner is how they will react to us. Getting back to those punitive policies, if you believe that all learners are looking for the path of least resistance and don't care about their education, then that's what you'll get back. I try to make my courses highly interactive and use adult learning principles, which means that students are actively engaged in their learning. They are tasked to read or watch lectures or videos beforehand. I then expect them to come to class and participate actively in discussions. One of the principles of peace education is the importance of being a guide on the side as opposed to a sage on the stage.

I want to get the message out there and promote peace education. I've spoken at 23 conferences, and about half of those talks involved different aspects of peace education. The Comparative International Education Society has over 5000 participants from all different aspects of education. Educators will come to my sessions who are curious about peace education. I did an excellent workshop one year with Doctor Ayaz Naseem, *Peace Education: A Primer*. So, we had a seminar for three hours and worked with teachers to from all disciplines to implement peace education in their classrooms. I have nine publications, two or three related to peace education.

I guess my most significant contribution is related to my work as a Buddhist. Soka Gakkai Canada has a beautiful center in Caledon, ON. In the summer, every weekend, there's a different group of 60 people who meet there. Groups talk about various aspects of Buddhism. It could be a women's division meeting, Educators Group, young men's division but I started to wonder why there was no weekend allocated to a family conference? And so, I had to work hard with the executive of SGI Canada to get a family conference going. It was very successful. As a result of the conference, families would develop deeper bonds, they would think about how to contribute to better inclusive communities, a safer environment, action to protect the planet etc. So, it was a three-day conference, and we had people from all over Canada. I led this conference for seven years, and it ran for ten years and was one of the most successful conferences at Caledon. There were activities just for kids and some for the parent. These activities involved music, dance, culture. It was a lot of fun. Yeah. So, that was a contribution. I'm not sure what my next contribution will be, but I know that my personal mission is to contribute to improving the welfare of marginalized women and youth and I am aligning my career path to support my mission.

I wrote a paper, *An alternative to violence in education*. We live in a scientific world, right, where everything has to be proven by numbers. So, you can get numbers to prove the efficacy of certain teaching methods. For example, there is research to support that after school programs increase the likelihood that youth finish high school. So, you simply have to count those that attend and after

school program and finish high and compare it to the number of students who do not attend and note their high school completion rate. So, it's all about numbers. How do you evaluate peace education? How do you assess that? People and students influenced by peace education go on to be advocates for the environment. Go on to be advocates for human rights. Are you going to follow them for 20 years? So, peace education is challenging to measure. And that's why there's that whole issue of legitimizing. But in this article, I mentioned, I talk about the importance of having concrete, measurable objectives, even within the context of peace education, so that educators can provide those impact statements based on the achieved learning objectives.

On my mission regarding the marginalization of youth and women, well, to be marginalized means either you're invisible to the mainstream or pushed to the periphery, right? All kinds of assumptions are held by the mainstream about the periphery. These assumptions are based on prejudice and simply not knowing anything about the group. Have you seen that movie, the Green Book? It takes place in the 1950s. It's about a New Yorker who's a racist, who he's a driver, and who gets a job driving an exceptional concert pianist to different gigs all through the Southern United States. The pianist is Black and knows full well that this driver will also need to protect them, which he does. At the beginning the driver is a racist but then by getting to know the pianist, they end up as friends and driver goes on to defend him. My point is that by providing opportunities for dialogue between groups, the fear of the unknown is lifted.

One activity I like to do in my class, when it's appropriate, is asking students to write down the names of five people who they are close to who are not family members. I then ask them to fill out a grid where they need to write the ethnicity of a person, the sexual orientation of the person, the age of the person, and so on. And what students will see is the people closest to them, look just like them. They may have more diverse friends at the periphery but at the center is another story. This is a great opening for a conversation about unconscious bias.

### **Jackson – Participant V**

I've done plenty of peace research and other issues, yet for some years, and mainly because I thought it could be of interest, and I found the budget to support what is usually costly ethnographic research, so I studied for approximately fourteen years the bilingual by national schools in Jerusalem in Israel. The ones that bring together Palestinians and Jews, and because of the relationships I created through those studies, I also looked at populations in the Balkans, Northern Ireland, etcetera. However, I have yet to define it. I found myself exploring a sight that considers itself doing something related to peace, conflict, etc. My struggle in the field has been to convince people to understand that if anybody thinks of himself as a peace educator, he must not know what peace or education might mean. I've never succeeded in this because people that need jobs and need areas of influence within the academy loves to create irrelevant fields of study, which should be relevant category by which they name it, not the research itself. Hence, I always needed to understand this creation of a peace educator. I

never understood peace as something that could be taught because what usually becomes a subject of study has failed from the beginning.

Considering the Western approach to learning in modernity based on content, the subject better belongs to disciplines where you cannot imagine anything more stupid. Uh, clearly, in the world, physics does not exist. Uh, mathematics does not exist. Uh, history does not exist that the administrative need of schools to compartmentalized what is otherwise a combined knowledge that needs no specific subject better names to be dealt with is a problem of an administration that has little what to do with teaching and learning in a lot to do with organizing the world in specific ways that I do like. Peace is the same; it is not a thing that can be pointed at. Peace is a living project that includes physics, geometry, history, geography, economics, etc., so you need to understand that to understand peace. Peace research is funny, and I barely stand it. They think that the problem of peace in the world is in the heads of people that immediately point to them as being basic Western colonializes that care nothing whatsoever about how to change the structures of the world. Hence, people suffer less, and instead of that, they tell them that the problem of pieces and people's heads and not in their bank accounts or the distribution of goods through politics in Africa, South America, etcetera.

When the point of education sticks to the idea that children need to be introduced to something. Nothing can work. It would be best to create contexts where certain things resonate and echo the activity of all. If you introduce mindfulness to the Black community, forgive me for using the word Black. What

do Americans like to see are in an Afro-American poor school? First, they don't need mindfulness; they need not be poor, and if they were, they have options to develop themselves as individuals and as a community, they will be more peaceful than today. Calling them to the conflict show is an insult, okay, and the abuse is putting the problem under individuality. I don't know any individual situation, so all this talk about is taking care through education sounds to me ridiculous. It sounds to me evil because it blinds everybody. The fact is that the problems are not the people; it's the systems they inhabit and if we are not attentive to the design and struggle to change it, individuals don't. Yes, so in this sort of compensation, I want you to be careful. I want you to be critical. I need those critiques. I need those views because we tend to underestimate systemic issues and structure to prevent us from seeing the context of modern Western education. It is built at all levels to prevent seeing a broader context. You first avoid catching a wider context by creating compartmentalized disciplines. Ask any good physician. He'll tell you we know what we're talking about. Medicine is the only school you have a subject that is always within a context, so if you want a good guide, doubt for peace education and education in general.

Teach students what they need to know to understand better what they already sense is justice in the world. Tell them that the problem is not people's heads, that people's bank accounts are. Show them who does the work and who gets the money. Okay, where do they produce this thing from? Where do the items made come from, and the money earned from their sales end up in which bank? It would help if you had plenty of knowledge to read physics. Most kids

think they need help to do good in mathematics. Why do women have a problem in their minds, or did black people fail in school? Why? Because they have a problem in their minds, the chick comes off the bed. There is a limit to how corrupt the system can be. I just thought that I could never understand that. If you want people to be peaceful, be peaceful. Some are threatened, but in schools, their main aim is to sort out the population into those that will serve the rich and those that will be rich; how do you expect to do anything peaceful in a violent system like that? As most school systems look at your schools in America, kids coming in and killing people every day or every week is just sickening. We reflect the contexts we build for our children. So, if we live and create for them of violent context in which the economy is violent, in which the individualism is violent, in which everything is violent, look at your presidents. I speak about yours because you don't want me to talk about my own, which I hate even more, so I'd speak of America. I'll give you another example. These are the two most embarrassing categories of the social sciences. One ends up being racist, and the other is relevant because it became solipsistic above the individual. What do you want me to do with that, so I'm beginning to help my friends get better? Of course, they don't believe me; they think they're right; I think I'm right; and I don't create a conflict with them.

We have such an easy life and nothing to balance. We barely worked compared to real people. I do research for institutions, so they don't expect me to do anything for society. God, forbid I have to publish papers to make them happy. I took the game to say that they are among the best universities in the world. And

nobody cares about how I teach them. They need me to publish with a good impact factor in journals and publish books. Now I might have commitments outside of the university, which are political. I hope to be an excellent teacher to students ready to bear with me. Most of them hate me, but one or two a year stays around, so then we can stop teaching them, and we can learn to gather. Instead of being teachers and masters and students, we become colleagues in studying because we care. So, I only have a little more to say about balancing.

I just got lucky, and this is the type of job that I managed to get; I try not to lie to myself and call it an important job. It's a good job, but it's optional. I did what I had to do; they were happy and kept me on. Then you get tenure so they can do nothing about it, and then you'll retire with a good retirement, that said I. Sorry, I have been. I don't know what else to say. I always made sure that part of my grants was invested in paying teachers to participate in research projects in which they were partners, so I was always trying right to treat them properly as those allowed to enter the world and did research so. I always found ways to share with them some of the money I got for the research. And I thought that the least body that as myself was so thankful to them for letting you go in and see what they do can and my research is very invasive I mean I'm inside classrooms they had a camera and recording interviewing. It's crazy. So at least, I was trying to ensure they knew they were exploited but less than usual.

A different approach to peace focuses on systemic issues and systemic authority. An example of such a profession, I'm not saying the order, yet I want to have somebody in mind. Look, one of those professors is a good friend with



whom I publish the book. He's younger than me, but we were excellent friends. We published a lot together. For many years we were together, so I have a great appreciation for him in the sense that we shared a lot of the things I'm sharing with you. As colleagues our perspectives were not too far away. He has a little more confidence in education than I have, but it's okay.

Most people come to university to get credentials, and that's part of the game, so I assume I don't impact my students. Hopefully, I will make them laugh. And every year, I have one or two students with whom I can develop a more profound dialogue; a more serious one that allows us to stop thinking of each other as students and teachers, and we become people that share in exchange. There are perspectives to try to understand the world better, and I'm tremendously happy. Hopefully, towards all students, I'm fair. Hopefully, they don't think that I'm tremendously unjust. I tried to succeed them, but I don't remember myself failing, and he stood in my life not because they didn't deserve it, but because I don't think the university deserves that outside of failing, being will they pay enough. They should be remembered, and in any case, they'll get the credentials at some other university, if not at my university. So, I have very little expectation in terms of impact. I hope they appreciate my honesty. I hope they realize I don't care about the copy because copying is essential to learning. I expect them to copy good things.

My office became the office in which we helped the teeners and cleaning workers of the university to make sure they were getting all their rights, so we had an office in my office in which my daughter and I used to receive this cleaning

primarily from women and most Palestinians, of course, coming in at certain hours. They knew I was doing that, and I hope they appreciated that. What else can you do other than teach through example? Teaching through words is ridiculous. Most people lie, so why should anybody believe my words? It is better to show my deeds right, and not everybody bases attention on you, but hopefully, they do, and at least one or two of them stayed every year, persisted for many years friends, and our friends still to date. And we talk about how we care about each other and hopefully we care about others. We're just one human right, and that's the only sense of individuality I can understand. There is a limit to what I can do with two hands, but I tried to do it with a few people in the best way I could.

Now I don't know how much you know about Israel, but what you heard from him the Alibaba CEO is bullshit. Of course, some things happened in Israel, such as the army, which is usually shit creates an ethos that is interesting sociologically in Israel. I don't support it, but I'm part of it. So, when you have special units in which to survive, you have just to be tremendously smart, which is not the intelligent or Ph.D. It's just going out to survive. Then you learn to survive, and if you move to a higher rank in the army, you're outstanding now. Until today military leaders grab headlines for all the wrong reasons. They think they need to produce troops to win a war, which is fortunately not suitable because they create the war or also so forget Israel is an example as bad as or good as any other example of any other Western country. Okay. Though it is like saying that South Korea is a great country in terms of education because it's high

in the OECD ranking, it has the highest amount of suicide okay of young items, so who needs their ranking, come on. By the way, the only achievements of Israel are unbelievably low. This makes no difference because nobody needs the success of the masses. Nobody wants that. You need a cast of friendly rich people with a good education that goes into Stanford and Harvard Ivy League and brings back the knowledge, and that's it.

I have contributed nothing to society by shame. I can die, and nobody will ever have a sense I existed which is true for most people by the wind. Though I'm against myself, I think Hubert Larsumas left an impression in the world or evil most of them, not all of them, the boss of the arrival. I have contributed to the academic field. I've been one of the voices attacking the psychologies and the cyclization of education. I've been one of the voices attacking the misunderstanding of all the culture and identity as main analytic categories because that's what I've been writing about. That's an enormous contribution to society doing good in the world. I have yet to see too many accent emissions doing good to the world other than to themselves, but if they are in the actual sciences, which are different from social sciences and humanities. Social sciences have not been able to contribute much to work.

I come from a tradition where humans are truly equal, and the society does not represent that tradition for the bomb sport? An appreciation that humans are some watches can be scaled from stupid to intelligent, from knowledgeable to not knowledge of old, et cetera et cetera. I don't buy them fixed; I think the carpenter who comes and takes care of something in my house is as intelligent as I am;

we've done different things in life, and that's why we have different types of knowledge, but in the basics, we have a very similar appreciation of life. Now we might even disagree, which is okay, but not agreeing with me doesn't mean the other is an idiot. It just means that there are different people with different views. Okay, like some, I will fight to the death; by the way, not the carpenter, but the Nazis, okay, they had a different view. I hate them, and I will fight them, and again, that did it. But this basic idea is that humans are equal. It has disappeared from the social sciences. It isn't very pleasant; it isn't very comfortable.

For some stupid reason, people believe a Ph.D. is better than anything, and they think the blacks are stupid or primitive, the Palestinians are stupid primitive, or women are more stupid and private than men though things should not be the stuff that they should not be allowed to. They are just an insult to humanity. Yeah. Okay, the social sizes have built so much without any empirical basis that that isn't very comfortable to science how they dear call what they do not all of them okay I think interpolates one of the most practical, but that's parts of sociology burst the psychology history.

The geographers are very good. Some historians, of course, are also great, but so much of the social sciences is unempirical that I wonder why it is allowed at the university. Yeah. So how can we bring back the notion humans are into because humans are equal? For me, well is not a notion to be brought into people's heads. It's an activity to be practiced in life. Equality is a practice. Sometimes it's a rhetorical practice that would mean never being platonic or sarcastic because they are the worst occasion. It's practicing equality, something

you do, is not something you think, and if you go to equality, don't expect the quality to exist. It would be best if you made equality an abstraction to achieve equality. If you make peace and obstruction, be thought okay, you will never get peace. No, this is easy to say and very difficult to implement. That's why when I mask as a teacher something, I answer with my deeds. And I'm happy to say that many students hated me because they said they never understood me; they never wrote in their evaluations something terrible about me as a human being. By the way, teaching is a doing, and it only works when the doing resonates with honesty; otherwise, it doesn't. You have children, right? Do you practice with them, or do you practice with their love, or do you tell them you love them? Seeing as believing, so I know that regardless of what I tell them, is about what they see of me. What you do to gather with them, with your wife, with your brother, with your students, with the people you work with, of course, children are frightening because they read with tremendous ease the gaps between the rhetoric and the practice.

What do I know about Africa? So, I'll tell you my two rules about change. If everybody comes to telling me, he has a solution that will change the world fast. I immediately leave. Okay, the difference is not easy, and it's never fast. Even if it happens quickly, it won't be easy and will kill many people. Okay. The second change that starts. At the macro level. I will never change a thing. When it changes the politeness at the marker level, it ends up being the same shifts it wanted to change.

Change is something that is done very slowly and in the proximity of your immediate existence. So, I tried to change the world. Raise my daughters the way they have been raised. I'm not saying I'm successful; I'm sick of trying. Raising my students through my practices is the immediacy of my life with them, and that's the way change works. Any other changes are usually false. Good human beings, fortunately, unfortunately, don't direct the world. I have plenty of good friends, and you have plenty of good friends, too. That is, you may be egalitarian, and that's why they are your friends, but I don't go to the peace educator. I call them good humans' connections.

## Appendix C: Participant Letter for Anonymous Surveys



**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**  
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**Participant Letter for Anonymous Surveys**  
**NSU Consent to be in a Research Study Entitled**  
*An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Lived Experiences of Graduate-Level Peace Educators from the East Coast of the United States: Voices for Sustainable Peace*

**Who is doing this research study?**

This person doing this study is Kwasi D. Ansong with Halmos College of Arts and Sciences of Nova Southeastern University. They will be helped by Dissertation Committee Chair Dr. Elena P. Bastidas and Dissertation Committee Members Dr. Cheryl Lynn Duckworth and Dr. Ismael James Muvingi.

**Why are you asking me to be in this research study?**

You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are an experienced graduate-level peace educator and reside along the East Coast of the United States with substantial information to help students understand the dynamics of social conflict, conflict resolution, warfare, and the dynamics of peace.

**Why is this research being done?**

The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experiences of peace educators, and the significance that these experiences hold for them. The study brings together homogenous participants from the East Coast of the United States, elicits their experiences, interprets their experiences, and analyzes them to assist conflict resolution practitioners and policymakers formulate effective structural and systems solutions. This also helps magnify societal awareness of their existence, their profession, and their contributions to communities. In doing so, the study helps increase their involvement in designing programs for peacebuilding, developing conflict management strategies, and deepening their understanding of educational policies.

**What will I be doing if I agree to be in this research study?**

You will be taking a one-time, anonymous survey via Zoom software application. The survey will take approximately 45 to 90 minutes to complete.

**Are there possible risks and discomforts to me?**

This research study involves minimal risk to you. To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would have in everyday life.

**What happens if I do not want to be in this research study?**

You can decide not to participate in this research and it will not be held against you. You can exit the survey at any time.

**Will it cost me anything? Will I get paid for being in the study?**

There is no cost for participation in this study. Participation is voluntary and no payment will be provided.

**How will you keep my information private?**

Your responses are anonymous. Information we learn about you in this research study will be handled in a confidential manner, within the limits of the law. All Personally Identified Information will be password protected and encrypted. This data will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution, and any granting agencies (if applicable). All confidential data will be kept securely a private computer and in a keyed-locked-box or safe box. All data will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study and destroyed after that time by completely deleting or wiping them from the computer.

**Who can I talk to about the study?**

If you have questions, you can contact any of the following:

Dissertation Committee Chair  
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If you have questions about the study but want to talk to someone else who is not a part of the study, you can call the Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (954) 262-5369 or toll free at 1-866-499-0790 or email at [IRB@nova.edu](mailto:IRB@nova.edu).

**Do you understand and do you want to be in the study?**

If you have read the above information and voluntarily wish to participate in this research study, please respond to me directly via email at: [ka539@mynsu.nova.edu](mailto:ka539@mynsu.nova.edu).