

# MASTER'S DEGREE FINAL DISSERTATION

## Exploring U.S. Discourses in Education and Peace in Santa Cruz, California

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**Keywords:** Education, peace, culture, holistic, sustainability, partnership, discourse.

**Abstract:** This thesis delves into the way the United States education system has been constructed and reconstructed through discourses that are not capable of fostering cultural peace. In order to achieve this end, Alternative and Novel Discourses about the development of education and peace have been shaped over decades, and today occupy various levels of validity and acknowledgment in U.S. society. Through a case study in Santa Cruz, CA, the author seeks to gain insight into the challenges and potential inroads for peace discourse and practice to become more prominent in normalized rhetoric about education in the U.S.

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# Introduction

## *The Destruction of Our Planet, Integrity, Future, and the Education that Ensures It*

Evidence is abundant that our modern way of life in the United States, born from the age of colonial conquest and ongoing imperialist agendas, is radically unsustainable. Touching on examples of such evidence, we can point at the mounting devastation of our environmentally degrading practices; the global warming which foreshadows sea levels rising and wiping out entire cities and even nations, mass species extinction, and a multibillion dollar energy industry with billions invested in *not* “leaving it in the ground.” Interrelated with these issues, we have centuries of brewing social strife erupting in the streets highlighted by unsanctioned police executions and a Black Lives Matter movement which many in the U.S. still fail to understand. Two U.S. monoliths, the prison industrial complex and the military industrial complex, can be characterized as unparalleled forces for oppression at home and abroad. Meanwhile, one of the most violently and outrageously ignorant figureheads to gain political traction has been leading one of our two political parties in the race for the presidency. This is a man who explicitly spreads hatred, condones violence and dictatorship, brags about a sexual assault, and demonizes immigrants and refugees - in the middle of one of the largest and most tragic refugee crises we’ve seen in our time. It has been clear for a long time that the world is in trouble, and the U.S. is exempt neither from its responsibility nor the consequences. However, few citizens seem to have even basic knowledge of these serious issues.

My thesis explores ways in which education is capable of supporting peace and how that can be integrated into the foundation of the education experience in U.S. schools. My passion has

led me to explore how we can support development toward cultural peace in the United States through education, so that nationally we can become more realistic about our footprint and become more positive collaborators for global peace.

This thesis became primarily a discourse analysis, comparing three levels of discourse related to education and peace in the U.S. These discourses, or interpretative repertoires, include first the older, traditional beliefs and discourses which shaped and continue to constrain the U.S. education system, which is becoming outmoded and challenged by an Alternative Discourse which seems to be gaining traction. I will refer to this discourse as the First, or Outmoded Discourse, or Discourse One. This discourse has become so contentious that most discussion *about* it is actually negative; most dialogue concerning Discourse One is actually to discredit it. The Second or Alternative Discourse (Discourse Two) within the field of education comes out of this highly critical view of the First, and is highlighted by a growing recognition of the need to utilize an alternative set of foundational principles to build an education that better serves the needs and potentials of students. Lastly, the Third and “Novel” Discourse (Discourse Three) are narratives embedded in peace theory and education for peace. A significant portion of my analysis shows that the Second, traction gaining discourse, is highly compatible with and not far from reaching the level of peace education discourse. However, while I argue that the Third/Novel Discourse is the one that most direly needs to become normalized, there are narratives surrounding and blocking this from taking place.

I was able to narrow the scope significantly by focusing on discourses, but at the same time chose to allow for some broad strokes in my research to provide an overview of the understanding I’ve gained about what an education for peace must consider. I realize the field of

peace education has a long, rich, diverse history, which I was barely able to touch on, due to my focus on U.S. discourse about education as an inroad for transformation. I still have much to learn on the subject.

Chapter one of this dissertation is a literature review, focused on laying out the three discourses I've pinpointed by analysing the educational claims of some current scholars. During this analysis, I gathered data about the principles suggested by Discourse Two advocates, and combined with my education in and research of PE (Peace Education), I examined the group of principles for Discourse Three in Chapter II<sup>1</sup>. These reflect the tools students may need for their own inner and interpersonal peace, and the knowledge and skills they will need to grow into conscientious, creative global citizens who stand a chance of transforming some of our most dire global circumstances. This goal necessitates that we continue building upon our capacity to provide holistic education. Necessary considerations include reimagining our standard curriculum, as well as in depth ongoing education on the social, environmental, cultural, and economic issues that threaten our future, and the role we U.S. citizens play in those issues.

As for inner peace, children need and deserve education to help them develop healthy relationships with themselves and others, and the fostering of inner tools for reflection, worth, and nurturance, all of which they will need if they are to live in awareness and engage successfully with the difficult global and local realities confronting them.

My final chapter presents my analysis of the interviews I've conducted with many Santa Cruz professionals in the field of education. Santa Cruz is my microcosmic case study, operating

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<sup>1</sup> As stated in Chapter II, my lay out of principles is not exhaustive. Rather, it is an attempt at bringing all the reviewed components together and giving a brief analysis. Some were left out in sources reviewed, and I attempted to find other sources. As a result, some elements are less discussed than others, though they are no less important.



as what one of my participants called “Anywhere, U.S.A.” However, there is also a common discourse within Santa Cruz about its unique nature and excessively liberal and progressive culture. There is likely truth in both discourses about Santa Cruz. Regardless, there are enough progressive as well as traditional projects happening here that it made it easy for me to spark conversations capable of providing examples into all three levels of discourse I uncovered in my literature review, and to bring significant insights into how the Novel Discourse of peace in education may grow in a particular U.S. locality.

### *Situating My Self in My Research*

The following reflection of my story relates to who I am today as a researcher, not only because we are all shaped in many ways through our childhood and teenage experiences, but because the trajectory of my life has increased my devotion to the care and education of children. The personal nature with which I situate myself as a researcher comes from a long term journey of self-reflection which has resulted in an understanding of the larger picture. My hope is that by sharing some of what I’ve come to comprehend about myself and my family’s roots, without judgement but with compassion and gratitude, it may serve as an interpretive example of how values can be inadvertently passed through generations.

I recall being very young when I initially began having deep emotional reactions to the suffering of the world at large. I believe my empathy came largely from being raised by parents who believed in justice and kindness, and who cared deeply about the world and others, yet suffered themselves with a lack of knowledge of how to cope with their own struggles and feelings. Instead of healthy coping mechanisms to deal with their own lives, they had inherited and passed on to me dysfunctional ways of dealing with feelings and relationships. My initial

relationship with living was one of emotional and spiritual pain; a sense of emptiness, loneliness, and inadequacy. These two things—pain and empathy— largely shaped me and my future.

I resonate strongly with Riane Eisler's theory of cultural domination and partnership, and her use of a spectrum on which societies hold values falling somewhere between the two. I can see in the example of my family how dominator principles are passed down generationally, through familial structures and also school structures. My parents learned from their parents that children are to be controlled with the hallmarks of domination; fear, intimidation, and even in some cases acts of violence. Being treated this way as children led them to internalize a type of violent self oppression and repression, as well as escapism. They unconsciously and unintentionally employed these tactics in raising me. Though they loved me and wanted me to thrive and had their own innate sense of fairness and kindness, their cultural and familial programming led them to chronically revert to what they had been taught as children.

School had a correlating, yet less obvious impact on my upbringing. U.S. children spend on average between six and seven hours a day in school, five days a week. As I will discuss later in segment 1.3, the U.S. public school system is descended from a time when children were viewed as empty vessels, that needed to be filled up with specific information as if they were on an assembly line in a factory. The factory model of education is where we get the large class sizes of students sitting in rows of desks, facing the front of the room, memorizing information a teacher dictates. Silence, impersonalization, and punishment (which in the past could be corporal, but in some cases today still involves humiliation) are some of the methods used to maintain a model which is not actually conducive to how children best learn and naturally function.

My experience in school was not bad. In fact, I excelled in all my years of public schooling as an A student. I operated on fear of punishment and disapproval, which were scary and uncomfortable experiences at home. I was very much in need of positive treatment, and also, I *enjoyed* and *felt good* at learning. This joy for learning diminished over the years largely in part to the structure of school which is shown to diminish innate motivation (Lillard, 2005: 152-191), as well as the personal problems that went unaddressed year after year. I was lucky to end up with several teachers early on who employed unique and untraditional methods and subjects, such as signing, theater, multiple modes of art and creative work, opportunities for self-direction and exploration, and could make their students feel cared for and comfortable. However, due to the structure of large classes and impersonalization combined with what I imagine were overworked and underpaid staff, I managed to remain significantly anonymous. There was little opportunity for children who had troubles at home to be recognized without first severely acting out. My experience was that as a good and well behaved student, and without the capacity to recognize problems at home for what they were or knowledge that adults at school may have been available to help me if I had reached out, I slipped deeper into depression while skating under the radar. Succinctly put: the burden of recognizing a need for help is all too often placed upon the children themselves.

My perspective as a researcher is influenced by many other aspects of my position as well, which manifested early in my childhood. As a young white person in a liberal environment, I was taught about the atrocities of racism, colonization, and imperialism and continued to pursue these studies as a teen and adult as I felt impassioned to fight against such injustice. At the same time, I internalized a sense of shame and guilt for my whiteness, its historical roots and

privileges, and the violence and hate I feared it connected me to. I believe it is partially fear of such feelings that leads many young people to jump on bandwagons that further separate them from others—turning to blame, anger, and prejudice to stave off such feelings of shame. Talking about such issues and feelings deeply and openly in our classrooms could help foster acceptance for self and others and enable more highly informed intercultural allies.

Still my position is privileged as a white, middle class American, and part of that privilege is the luxury of blindness; I know that my viewpoint is limited no matter how much I seek understanding from different perspectives. I know that the education I've received from professors and peers of different cultures has aided me enormously in both recognizing my privileges and opening my mind beyond prior limitations. I've been deeply honored to have such amazing educators, and I staunchly believe that such education must become the norm. Early education on the tough subjects that my privileged position might otherwise shield me from led me to dedicate myself to social justice. The proliferation of early education, and support for the real human feelings that can arise with it, may prolifically strengthen our social justice movements.

The insidious discourses running U.S. society of patriarchy and white supremacy have shaped my position in other underhanded ways: rarely acknowledged, tabooed, implied, invisibilized, or normalized, I've been shaped by constraints of objectification externally and internally. As a woman and girl, I've experienced sexual harassment, assault, and many other demeaning experiences, all the while sifting through the ceaseless messages of not being skinny/pretty/sexy/pleasing *enough*, never enough—messages on billboards, in magazines, amongst peers and even in textbooks, effectively making the abuses seem “normal.” There are

obviously many missed opportunities for us to address such issues in our schools, as skyrocketing statistics of teen rape and pregnancy, along with blatant culturally ingrained insensitivities and misunderstandings like “blaming the victim” exhibit.

Coming from the manufactured ignorance of privilege, and now being able to recognize it in my community, at times coming from some of the most caring and intelligent individuals I know, has made me realize how critical it is that we work toward deeper understanding in the whole of our society of privilege and the insidious interlocking and overlapping webs of oppression that have been our “normal” for centuries. It has been a privilege for me to gain a college and now masters education that helps me to deconstruct the internalization of all these strands of oppression, of which privilege is part. Such an education cannot continue to be a privilege, but must be recognized as a necessity.

All my abusive experiences in high school were linked with the traumas in my family. I was particularly vulnerable to such messages and abuses due to my conditioning.<sup>2</sup> Children raised in households where their voice is empowered learn to make healthy decisions for themselves and build normal levels of self-esteem through present and conscientious positive adult reinforcement. They may find it easier to deflect or refuse to internalize negative messages in the media or from peers. It is also likely that they are less likely to be targeted by abusive peer behavior, since predatory figures often target those primed for victim-like reactions. Learning about the roots, effects, causes, and recovery from violence is a topic I pursued independently, yet is possibly one of the most vital things students could be taught in schools in order to break

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<sup>2</sup> Eisler (2000) and Harris (2002) both make reference to the adulthood effects of domination experienced by children. Here, I elaborate on my own thoughts on the subject, based upon personal research as well as experience.

cycles of violence in their own lives, and thus have deeper understanding and empathy for those around them. It was indeed most vital for me.

Had my parents learned healthier coping mechanisms, either from their own parents or later in their lives, or if there had been training in more caring approaches in my schools, it is possible I might have been able to learn to care for the suffering in the world and in myself in a way that didn't create a sense of despair and hopelessness. Instead I took up the coping mechanisms at my disposal. I became addicted to alcohol at the age of fourteen, and quickly expanded to using other drugs. I remember one night drinking with my friends and trying to express my outrage at the bombings the United States had begun in Iraq following a war I believed was being waged more for power and profit over oil than about the attacks of September 11th. My friends asked me to drop the subject, telling me I was a "buzzkill." Already, by the age of sixteen, substances were becoming insufficient to numb the pain I felt not only in my personal life but the anguish I felt for the world. That night was not the first time I practiced self-mutilation, but due to my intoxication it was the most severe. I didn't realize until later that I was bleeding through my shirt sleeves. The sting of the self-inflicted cuts I felt through the veil of cheap beer gave me a sense of outlet for the emotional and spiritual pain that I had no way of processing, and that I felt I had no one to help me with.

It was perhaps my experiences of silencing, dismissing, and demeaning treatment as a child both at home and in school that deepened my innate sense of injustice and core inability to accept any form of oppression against anyone or any living thing. Being raised in a liberal environment, I was exposed to what some would call radical teaching as early as high school, including reading A People's History of The United States by Howard Zinn, or being taught

about the violations of organizations like the Schools of the Americas and their training South American dictators in the use of torture during a summer school course. When I *was* “told the truth” in school - or, when teachers taught about the horrific injustices that have shaped our past and present, and likely our future - they did not simultaneously have any knowledge to share on how to cope with such painful realities. Perhaps they did not expect their young pupils to empathize. Perhaps the goal was to shock us into feeling *something*. Perhaps they felt such emotional coaching to be outside the scope of their job descriptions. However, some of the greatest and most overwhelming pain I felt as a youth was in coming to terms with the suffering in the world, and how I may be connected to and beneficiary of it. This sense of hopelessness intensified my depression.

United States citizens need to be confronted with reality on much larger and more normalized scales. Our society enables us to mask and completely ignore the hidden costs of our lives on other peoples and the environment. It is a damaging way to live for our psyches and spirits, and it is unjust to other peoples and creatures in the world, as to our own future descendents. Yet, to educate our children about the limitless forms of strife and enormity of devastation inflicted by humanity without instilling hope and empowerment for change such as Eisler advocates, could be considered a form of psychological violence. Extending the false idea that academia must be objective, and therefore dismissing the reality of human emotions, subjectivity, and connection to the subject matter, is unfair and counterproductive. Such violence can effectively diminish children’s sense of wonder and inspiration; which may be the very wellsprings of creativity needed in order to solve the threats that face us.

As I barely survived highschool, to this day I remain amazed that throughout the years of my adolescence when I battled first with depression, and in the last three years when I self-medicated with alcohol and drugs, that not a single teacher or school employee stepped forward to try to connect with me as a human being, and see if they could decipher what was driving me toward self-destruction. Instead, what I encountered was judgement, dismissal, and punishment for what we are coming to understand as a mental health issue. My parents employed similar strategies with me, but eventually it was my father's shift toward *caring* concern, and my own desire to turn my life around, that helped me to survive and learn how to live productively and treat my ailments.

I was in enough pain resulting from my dysfunctional life-ways that I was willing to accept help at seventeen, and recover from my drug addiction. That began my journey in coming to learn that there are communities of people all over the world that are learning how to embrace positive ways of living and to cope with and heal from trauma. First I found this in the twelve step recovery programs that saved my life and introduced me to the knowledge and power that we live our lives based on a set of principles. The harmful principles and/or coping mechanisms I had been utilizing in my affairs (dishonesty, self-abuse, avoidance and denial etc.) were not in line with who I wanted to be. The "spiritual principles" I learned through recovery, common amongst most spiritual traditions and healthful lifeways, included simple things like honesty, open-mindedness, willingness, community service, connection, and humility.

This was the first time in my life that I experienced belonging to a community in which there were numerous adults and young people available to offer me care, kindness, and guidance in pursuing my goals. Without the support from a multitude of people in recovery, some offering



small contributions to my growth and others enormous amounts of time and energy, I would not have come to be the person I now am. This was my first hand experience of the saying “it takes a village to raise a child.” I developed an understanding of the value of service, which not only fulfills me personally, but which communities need in order to blossom and thrive. Going through a complete transformation of my life, inner world, and the pain I’d always sought to escape, was such an incredible gift that it altered my path and filled me with gratitude and passion.

While I first learned the power of storytelling in recovery, that power was reinforced in my academic experiences. I went on to pursue a degree in American Indian Studies from San Francisco State University. This was another life-altering experience. Again, I was given stunning examples of people who had suffered incalculable tragedy, and yet were striving to transform their ancestral wisdoms with their stories of strife to build a vibrant future. It was a profound opportunity for me to be exposed to cultures different from mine, which I believe is an unfortunately rare experience for many U.S. Americans. At last I had an example of cultures that used foundational principles that I could understand and believe in. The principles of greed, self-centeredness, and materialism I had been subjected to in American culture had always resonated as inherently against what I believed to be right and logical. As I came to better understand the worldview of indigenous cultures from indigenous professors, I realized how desperately we need to learn from one another—not to silence and dominate one another. It became painfully clear that Western cultures direly need to humble ourselves to the wisdom of brethren cultures and seek balance in our value system.

I was also introduced to the field of peace studies, which eventually led me to the International Masters in Global Peace, Conflict, and Development Studies at UJI. Again, my experience with transformation and healing and striving for peace was expanded enormously and my life was changed. My intercultural immersion evolved and enriched my heart and mind. I was also further confronted with the seemingly infinite forms of oppression and violence being suffered in the struggle over power and resources, or, domination.

The project of the MA thesis ultimately has lead me back to my self, and the question of who I am at the deepest levels, and what I want to offer the world to further the growth of peace. My answer came back to children and education. Because of my experience as a child, I care deeply about children having adequate care and guidance as they struggle to grow up in a complex world with strife everywhere from the level of the family to the level of globalization. My love for learning continues to flourish, and my dedication to the ultimate need to develop understanding of societal principles and shift them toward peace becomes more steadfast. My sense of urgency that we address destruction in the world leads me to work for the support, guidance, and tools our children will need to confront the issues that a dominating worldview has perpetuated, without succumbing to the despair that such realities can produce.

I do not mean to place blame for my early struggles on the schools I attended or other adults in my life. In fact, *most* of the adults around me were very caring individuals; working in a world where they didn't have the time or resources, internal or external, to catch my fall. If I analyse my societal and cultural upbringing with Cultural Transformation Theory (CTT), I recognize gaps in our systems that if amended toward partnership rather than domination, could greatly benefit our children and world as a whole. The U.S. system of education tends to be

terribly underfunded, under-organized in terms of the most beneficial strategies, and impersonal. One of the educators I interviewed for this thesis mentioned that after our young men sit and virtually kill one another on computer screens for hours on end, to then put them in a huge school where they are made to feel invisible, is simply asking for trouble.

I still do not have a full understanding of how the public education system functions, however all of these issues can be explained by discussion of underlying principles or values that guide our systems. My perspective as developed throughout this thesis is to assess in terms of partnership, peace, or spiritual principles on the one hand, and the values of domination, violence, and objectification on the other.

It is clear that socially, there is an ever growing taboo against adults making personal connections with children and youth. Instead, adults are positioned as impersonal enemies or prison guards, doling out punishments without the working knowledge and methods that could instead inspire children and build empowerment. Many young people also struggle as I did with a sense of hopelessness and despair about the suffering and destruction of our planet. They are often not supplied with the caring guidance to cope with these feelings, and the sense of empowerment that they as individuals and groups can make things better. This could be a huge contributor to the numbing out habits we are witnessing, the materialistic and consumerist obsessions, and the appearance of apathy and lethargy so often ascribed to young generations.

It is not a viable answer to “protect” our children from reality by not confronting them with hard truths about our world and situation. Yes, children need and deserve to play and have fun, and be prepared to excel in their own personal future lives. However, our children are not blind to the issues of the world. The proliferation of internet media has made it impossible to

shield our children from the reality they live in and will inherit. Even if we could do this, it would be unethical and unjust, not only because the ways we live in the “first” world directly impact the lives of those in the “third” and the planet’s ecosystems. It is unethical to continue perpetuating a culture where we pretend not to know this. It is also a betrayal to our own children, because by the time they are adults, and don’t know how to employ the tools of peace and do not feel empowered to do so, they may wake up to a staggering reality that the world as they know it is on the verge of collapse and the viability of their own children’s lives are in question.

Spreading fear of the ‘other’ as so well documented in peace studies as a tactic of war will not fix our problems, it will only exacerbate them. Keeping children silent and memorizing near meaningless facts about civil war battles and math without context will not serve them in their own fulfillment or in making the world a better place. I want more children to have the opportunity for the fulfillment I have found, that I believe I could have been exposed to much earlier through caring involvement and an education for partnership, for a whole human being, for a whole world.

My research is based upon what I believe is needed in the U.S. education system, and how we can achieve it. As I have studied peace, conflict, development, oppression, colonization, interculturality, and personal and communal transformation and healing for many years, I have come to believe that children will thrive most from a holistic education that encompasses all aspects of life on this planet - to its fullest realistic extent. My theory is that this can only be done by addressing the foundational principles guiding the cultures and operations of schools; these foundational principles must be in line with the principles of peace, partnership or ‘spiritual’

principles. In creating such focus, as the best theories I've found demonstrate, children learn not simply about specific topics, but they learn a framework for analysing and understanding any topic in terms of building peace. Such a foundation will allow for all students and faculty to be nurtured to their full potential. It would include courses that engage knowledge of human experience and relationship, so that children will have healthy tools for navigating their personal inner and outer worlds, and will have their internal support mechanisms developed so that they can tap into inner reserves of strength that will empower them as self-reliant adults. It will also include education regarding the ways domination causes damage and diminishment of life and joy throughout the world and history; how gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, culture, and the environment, have been targeted by violence to create hierarchies of subservience and domination. And just as importantly, how we can continue the work of many past and present peace builders to rectify injustices and build partnerships that honor and support all life.

This research shows that an Alternative Discourse recognizing the majority of these principles is taking root and gaining traction in the U.S. This Alternative Discourse is the stepping stone into a true education for peace in the U.S. However, the Old Discourse of education continues to dominate the realities of our schools. This thesis is my contribution to the strengthening of the Alternative Discourse, and to *illuminate its hidden potential as the fundamental link* to a more peaceful and sustainable future.

My experience has been that many, if not *most* people I've known in the United States have experienced a deficiency in their childhoods, leading to minor or major dysfunctions as adults. I conjecture that school life is much more capable of providing safety nets, and even thriving support structures, than what our current system allows. If I had received information

about the challenges actually confronting me—courses designed to help me understand that children facing issues at home as I was can suffer self-esteem issues, that abused children can be more susceptible to abuse as adults, that the media was feeding my psychic wounds in order to turn me into a loyal consumer—I believe such an education might have given me the ability to seek help and turn my life around before it got out of hand.

I do not regret the path I've walked, nor would I ever change it. However, not all young people are as lucky as I was when it comes to surviving the strife of addiction, abuse, depression and anxiety. Some of the teenagers I used drugs with are now dead, and thousands like me won't make it. This is also for them. So that we may build systems that are better equipped to serve them, and so that they don't have to rely on luck.

We live in a globalized and interdependent landscape, and therefore changes in the cultural values of the United States would inevitably have impacts throughout the world. While we can't know that every impact of such shifting practices would be positive, I believe that developing a peaceful and sustainable culture in the U.S. would ultimately be a large step toward the potential peace and sustainability for our world.

For this research I've engaged with many community members in order to analyse how the discourses I've identified are being expressed locally. Throughout my research, I found many alternative theories stemming from a long past of educational thought and still gaining traction today, that do promote inner and outer peace in our education system - but without always realizing it. This finding is a symptom of what I argue we need to overcome: a culture with significant denial or lack of perspective about how important peace and sustainability really are.

We must work with adults in the field of education, and allow this to motivate us to give the next generation a more realistic worldview.

### *Research Hypothesis*

The guiding foundational principles of the U.S. public education system do not produce a system of education that can adequately provide our children with the capacities to build inner or outer peace. In order to create such a system, we must understand the underlying principles of our existing model, and the principles that must be applied in order to shift toward a school system able to foster cultural peace.

### Research Questions:

What are the narratives in the U.S. that are de/constructing our current broken system?

What narratives are helping to shape and strengthen a new and more beneficial school model?

How are these narratives operating in Santa Cruz education? Where has the Novel Discourse of PE taken root, and what discursive obstacles against its flourishing exist?

### *Methodologies*

Discourse analysis is central to this work. In a very significant way, the core of this dissertation is an examination of the different discourses on education and especially narratives about how peace “can be,” “needs to be,” or “isn’t realistic/desirable” as a foundational pedagogy and ontology of schools. The inherent goals of my work are to contribute to the

strengthening and normalizing of more legitimate and positive discourses on peace education. As

Talja explains,

There are simultaneously several more-or-less conflicting discourses existing in a particular field of knowledge...at a certain point in time, because novel or alternative interpretations emerge as corrections to prior discourses...Changes in social experiences and possibilities slowly render historically strong discourses less valid and accurate. These discourses seem to misinterpret some of the essential features or the “true nature” of the discussed phenomenon. (Talja, 1999: 468).

As I will show, some of the most pervasive discourses on peace, peacebuilding, and peace education in U.S. culture are shallow, misinformed, well-meaning but insufficient, or simply harmful. It is through analysing these discourses, shedding light upon them, and presenting alternative discourses which better serve the community’s interest that this work has potential for transformative steps forward.

I have also brought together strands from several methodologies to create a unique research project. Literature review has been a significant element of my research and dominates most of the first two chapters. There are also aspects of content analysis and constructivism—the latter influencing the level to which I chose to personally situate myself—to help examine current literature on the ideologies of education in the United States as they relate to the realities we are producing and reproducing. Cultural Transformation Theory (CTT) has also had a significant impact on my framework of analysis.

To further my research agenda, the content and discourse analysis of my literature review resulted in the framework I’ve compiled in Chapter II, and the both the first two chapters informed the analysis for Chapter III.

I also want to highlight my use of two seemingly incongruent approaches; realist and envisionist. “Realism asserts that there are real underlying causes, structures, processes, and



entities that give rise to the observations we make of the world, natural and social.” (Little, 2014)

A recurrent irony for peace studies is the misconception that it is an exercise of utopian ideas and idyllic fancies, when in reality peace studies and peace work is largely about taking responsibility for the condition of human relationships and activity. The underlying current of my work is always this; first, that the United States is involved in a destructive and unsustainable culture, and it our responsibility as U.S. citizens to amend our cultural norms and practices in order for the possibility of a viable future to remain open to us and others. Second, because education is one of the main vehicles through which our culture is replicated generationally, it is one of the most vital entry points for this cultural shift to take place.

The practice of envisioning is far less common in research; however, it is not so far from a realist approach as might be perceived by initial judgement, and is a tool that needs to be applied far more robustly. If we can use research to decipher the real mechanisms which bring about specific outcomes, then we can use our understanding of causality to create more desirable intentional future outcomes.

I found myself challenged to undertake an exercise in envisioning following my interview with Dr. Don Saposnek for the final chapter of this research. It also made sense, given the amount of content I was reviewing, to create an imagined scenario of how it may actually all fit together in a school or classroom, and beyond.

In the end, the seeming paradox of these two methods are what I want to be the take-away of my work. Saposnek and I spoke about human tendencies for denial of traumatic realities. Dugan elegantly describes here:

Our tendency to shy away from imaginative engagement with the future is problematic when we find ourselves in conflict. The difficulty is magnified when the conflict is complex, painful, and intractable. Conflict is in the present and has its roots and origins in the past. But

if we're going to find our way out of it, we need to move toward a future different from the past and present. Grappling with intractable conflict requires us to create a path to a future so different from the present that it is hard to imagine.

How we go about defining that future is the business of envisioning. (Dugan, 2003)

The complex, painful, and intractable conflict I am addressing by this work is the long standing menagerie of issues plaguing the education system in the United States, and the destruction of potential future sustainability resulting from the cultural practices that system is failing to interrupt—and directly contributing to. So it is realistic that we address these severe and complex issues head on, as many, *many* are striving to do both in Santa Cruz and throughout the world. It is also realistic that we need to continue imagining very different futures than what we've been trained to accept as inevitable, which seem to always be either; business as usual ad infinitum, or complete and utter decimation. The first is simply impossible, the latter undesirable. So if we are to create a future exceptionally different from what we have come to accept as status quo, we need to first work to come up with a vision of what we desire to create.

One very profuse strain of discourse running through this dissertation happens to center around designing education based upon how children operate and naturally learn. I'll use this moment to drive home my testament that we must abandon our discourse that peace education on a large and systematic scale in the US is impossible, improbable, undesirable, or unnecessary. As we catch on to the fact that we need to shape education for the needs of the child, we could be invited to realize that one of the traits we most treasure in our children is their vibrant imaginations. It is time to realize how much we adults have to learn from our young counterparts, and start using our imaginations constructively.

*The Setting: Santa Cruz, a Springboard for Peace Education Research*

On Monday, July 27, 2015, a 15 year old boy was accused of the previous day's kidnapping, rape, and murder of an 8 year old Maddy Middletown in Santa Cruz, Ca. (Baxter, 2015: 1). The community is shocked and enraged, hundreds of hatred fueled social media comments being hurled at the young boy allegedly responsible. Many blame the parents for leaving the children unattended. Many simply accuse the boy of being a sociopath. Discussion is being raised about Adrian Jerry Gonzalez's (the accused) background, to find some kind of reason for such a heinous crime, or simply to cast racist condemnation over an ethnic group.

Unfortunately, Santa Cruz is not a stranger to crime and the devastation that accompanies it. Even as a medium sized city, the rates of both violent and property crime are some of the highest in the nation, worse than big cities, and statistically it is one of the least safe in all of California (Neighborhoodscout.com, 2016). The website Neighborhoodscout.com, a search engine developed by Location Inc. a high standards data company, found FBI statistics showing the likelihood of becoming victim to a violent crime in Santa Cruz was 1/112, with the chance of property crime 1/18 (Neighborhoodscout.com, 2016). In 2013, two police officers were shot and killed in the line of duty. It is possible a large contributor to these issues is prevalent drug and alcohol abuse, with rates also surpassing most of the rest of the state. One in three self-reporting 11th grade students in Santa Cruz admitted to binge drinking regularly, with 30% also reporting marijuana use. These numbers compare to one in five and twenty percent statewide (Baxter, 2014). Gangs are also an issue, though not the only cause of the high youth homicide rates in California, also concentrating heavily in the Bay Area. Monterey County, adjoining Santa Cruz on its southern border, has ranked highest in the state for youth homicides for multiple years,

with another neighbor, San Francisco, ranking second (O'Brian, 2014). This is one area in which Santa Cruz County does fare slightly better, coming in just below the statewide average and ranking 15th out of fifty-eight (O'Brian, 2014). African American and hispanic males are at significantly higher risk than other ethnic groups, and guns are the primary weapons used in these murders (Langley and Sugarman, 2015: 1-2, 4, 6).

All of these statistics may come as revelations to some Santa Cruz locals, myself included. Growing up in the area, I've witnessed violence, drug abuse, theft, and more; however my daily experience has tended to be one of beauty and contentment. I would not have guessed Santa Cruz is as troubled as these findings have shown, and others whom I've discussed these statistics with have been shocked. The other side of life in Santa Cruz is a nature lover's dream and playground. The natural landscape is awe inspiring, with dozens of beaches lining the coast, and ancient, protected redwood and oak groves settled around our mountainous borders. Santa Cruz is perhaps most well known as a beach and surf town. Nestled atop the famous Monterey Bay marine sanctuary with its kelp forest and deep water canyon, it teems with sea and shore life. Between a surfing community and other marine enthusiasts, there is a robust culture of ocean preservation and environmental protection. Littering is not condoned and it is not uncommon to hear a local shout "pack your trash," or see stickers or signs with the same motto.

The city of Santa Cruz is a vibrant community of around 62,000, seated within the larger county of Santa Cruz with a population of nearly 270,000. Santa Cruz is known for certain well-known traits; you will routinely see phrases in descriptions, magazine stories, and self-advertisements like "funky beach town vibe", "quaint coastal get-away", "summer vacation hotspot" and more. Tourism is a huge aspect of the Santa Cruz economy. However, another

aspect of catchphrases equally common to the area pertain to the “bubble” of uniquely and extremely liberal culture and atmosphere.

Santa Cruz county is highly liberal, with up to 80% of voters democrat in 2008. However, this attribute goes well beyond presidential elections. The city in particular is well known as a place where alternative lifestyle takes center stage. Organic food, permaculture, local dining as well as vegetarian, vegan, and more ethically bound trends are strong and growing in terms of food culture. Art, intercultural events, community dance, and artisan coffee house hangouts are everyday lifestyle inclusions, as well as a proliferation of yoga and meditation centers scattered throughout the town. Santa Cruz also tends to be a great hub for celebration of diversity, with many organizations and events dedicated accordingly. The University of California, Santa Cruz, is a significant influence of liberal culture. With a reputation as a ‘hippie’ school, the student population is a substantial piece of the demographic, and the culture of the school tends to have heavy strands of social justice, environmental studies, as well as science, sociology and psychology as top majors.

Another identifying trait setting Santa Cruz apart is its soaring property values and appreciations. With

“a median house value of \$861,847, Santa Cruz house prices are not only among the most expensive in California, Santa Cruz real estate is also some of the most expensive in all of America...Santa Cruz appreciation rates continue to be among the highest in America, at 12.29%, which is higher than appreciation rates in 94.14% of the cities and towns in the nation...Santa Cruz's latest annual appreciation rate is higher than 70% of the other cities and towns in California.” (NeighborhoodScout.com, 2016).

The same website reports that since 1990, the total appreciation rate for Santa Cruz homes has risen 174.45%, with rates spiking tremendously just in the last few years (NeighborhoodScout.com, 2016).

These statistics have an even more fascinating impact when contrasted against the crime statistics just described. Apparently, crime can't overshadow the popularity of natural beauty and proximity to the thriving Silicon Valley workplace. Unfortunately for those who don't hold prestigious tech-industry jobs, the ghastly inflation of the rental market throughout the Bay Area is driving costs of living to beyond what many can afford, and there is a turf war and ongoing profiteering bringing tension to many long term residents, a trend throughout the surrounding region. The displacement of communities is likely most harshly felt by minorities, and while all the alternative lifestyle aspects may be seen and touted as "conscious" and "earth friendly," they are also often signifiers of privilege.

Within this setting, these are some of the reasons I felt local research would be beneficial. On one hand, Santa Cruz is home to a long standing and vibrant culture of social progress and environmental consciousness, reflected in the wide spectrum of private and public alternative schools and educational programs in the region. On the other hand, social strife and economic pressures are significant weights on the county and its youth. To a degree, Santa Cruz represents in the extreme some of the best and worst of California culture. My hope is that my research and work with youth in the region will ultimately lead to the strengthening development of the positive elements at work in Santa Cruz schools, and perhaps contribute to transformation of the negatives. Long term, if these goals are met, perhaps the lessons learned here can be utilized by other communities.

### *Where to Begin*

By utilizing Riane Eisler's Cultural Transformation Theory (CTT), the horrific death of Maddy Middleton described above can be viewed through a broader lens, a lens which

underscores patterns created by the values of a society. By using a framework contrasting domination versus partnership cultural systems, I believe we have a better chance of addressing the roots of such senseless acts of violence. We may never be able to understand such acts as these and countless others which rock families and communities the world over; however, in the pursuit of a more peaceful world, research and strategies such as Eisler's have the potential to aid in a tremendous shift in that direction.

In beginning this thesis work, I wished to explore and discover ways and means with which the United States might imbue future generations with the knowledge I've gained in Peace Studies. I envisioned students learning about the suffering that has been caused for thousands of years through violence and the pursuit of dominion over humanity and nature, while at the same time not falling victim to the sense of hopelessness and despair that I have personally struggled with and have witnessed in other students, young and old people, countless times. I imagined that one day, if our education system started early, teaching children the things I've learned that aid me in not only experiencing inner peace, but also make me more adept at participating in the building of outer peace; skills such as meditation, qualities such as the spiritual principles of compassion, empathy, inner awareness, forgiveness, flexibility, and so much more; that these future generations will be significantly more competent at my age than I am now. And that this is something our world desperately needs. Whole nations of expert peacebuilders.

I've come to learn through my studies at both San Francisco State University in the American Indian Studies department and at the Universitat Jaume I in the Masters in International Studies in Peace, Conflict, and Development program for which I now write, that the pursuit of global peace rests on far more than nations simply putting down their weapons and

abstaining from war. The pursuit of meaningful peace must include understanding and respect for infinite diversity in culture and the natural environment. Violence on all levels must be addressed, not just direct violence but also the structural and cultural forms of violence described by Galtung. The fractures of history written and imposed by the conqueror, which silences those who have been conquered, must be rectified. Shadows must be embraced. And solutions to the dire consequences of generations of violence upon each other and the earth must be creatively and cooperatively explored with patience, delicacy, and cooperative commitment. Questions of wounded souls and spirits, of intergenerational trauma, and of cultural norms that keep us repeating the same mistakes over and over must be seriously considered. The link between inner peace and outer peace seems more and more significant as systems theories and quantum physics begin to prove to us how interconnected we really are. So, what about our physical health? Our experiential connection with the natural environment? How is the destruction of the earth and its species going to inhibit our ability to practice sanity as a species - or, perhaps, has it been insanity all along to do such great harm to what we are now coming to discover, as indigenous groups and ancient cultures have told us all along, is connected to our very selves?

Building peace is a topic much more broad and complex than can be resolved through any paper or thesis. Even looking at the idea of educating children in the United States to understand these issues and develop peace building skills is an enormous topic, given my dedication to the idea of 'peace education' as a holistic endeavor which cannot ignore any of the following areas: gender equity, racial and ethnic equity, cultural competency, environmental sustainability, class equity and meaningful citizenship/democracy, internal peace and physical, mental and spiritual health, and healthy relationships. All of this, of course, while in the



*meantime* teaching children everything from their abc's and arithmetic to biology and algebra. This was the dilemma of my thesis.

Then of course, there are the structures, politics, and problems of our current education system, the enormity of the U.S. and complexity of it all as an education system. When considering transformation in such a social construction, where to begin?

As I began trying to untangle the enormous resources on peace education, I stumbled into a connection with Eisler when I decided to reach out. She directed me to her book; *Tomorrow's Children*, suggesting it may cover many (if not all) of the bases I was dizzily trying to address. Within the first pages, I found that this book encompassed my essential feelings and was a more perfect guide post than I could have asked for.

I passionately believe that if we give a substantial number of today's children the nurturance and education that enable them to live and work in the equitable, nonviolent, gender-fair, environmentally conscious, caring, and creative ways that characterize partnership rather than dominator relations, they will be able to make enough changes in beliefs and institutions to support this way of relating in all spheres of life. They will also be able to give their children the nurturance and education that make the difference between realizing, or stunting, our great human potentials. (Eisler, 2000: 7)

In my research for this thesis, I've come to the conclusion that CTT does indeed exemplify the kind of systems thinking that can best help us foster the critical thinking and open heartedness needed for a more peaceful world.

Tomorrow's Children is one of the most inclusive, comprehensive, and viable solutions toward the transformation our education system needs in the United States that I could find, and I hope that Eisler's work becomes more and more wide spread. The rest of the review is mainly dedicated to an in depth exploration of a few current educationalists. By looking at some non-peace scholars, who nevertheless recognize the need to act on tough global issues with a

focus on how to do so in our schools, I examined some significant ideological trends in United States thinking on education. I based this analysis on how they either conflict with or connect with Eisler's and my vision for peacebuilding education, and in doing so, further developed a core set of elements which ample evidence support as necessary considerations for peacebuilding education, which I condensed in Chapter II.

Next, I set out to explore the local educational atmosphere of Santa Cruz, California, a very progressive community in the United States, to see how peace and partnership principles are being implemented, what gaps exist, and how far we have to go in order to reach a peace or partnership education. In order to achieve some understanding of the various theories being utilized in Santa Cruz education, I conducted interviews with community education leaders, as well as observations at three very different schools. I also gained insight from some others involved in education, including Riane Eisler herself, Don Saposnek, a long time child psychologist and pioneer in the field of child mediation, and with Michael Watkins, Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Public Schools.

While I chose a broad base for my research and therefore was not able to delve into the level of depth that is traditional, I wanted my research to be a comparative canvassing and transdisciplinary work, in part because peace education is a galvanizer of such work in schools as well as in research. By drawing from the various approaches to peace education at work here, I sought to show the positives and connections within several variations of education style and hopefully highlight the need for the inclusion of missing elements. My hope for this research is that it will illuminate for the Santa Cruz community how vital the development of our education

is toward a more peaceful world and a better understanding of the steps we need to take to get there, and that it can be used as an example for other communities in the U.S. and the world.

### *Clarification of Language and Terms*

I hope to clarify my word choices by explaining that I use certain phrases interchangeably in order to point back to the main goal of my research: to consider how to transform education in Santa Cruz so that it both a) prepares our children and future generations to cope with the realities of an unstable world, from global violence to environmental deterioration, and live happy fulfilled lives based on principles of peace rather than fear and violence; and b) instills them with the principles that will lead to a cultural peace in the United States, which I believe will contribute to a more peaceful global society. These two goals, that of the personal and global, are mutually reinforcing and interrelated; I cannot imagine that we could achieve one without the other, for when discussing the “tool kit” of someone who is able to live with inner peace, you are simultaneously discussing the principles which describe a culture of peace. Therefore, I will often refer to ‘education for peace/a more peaceful world,’ ‘peace-building education,’ ‘education for cultural peace,’ and ‘partnership education,’ all as a way of referring to this ultimate goal.

I also wish to convey that my statements about current education failings are in no way meant to be all-encompassing. I know that some of the best people in our country are tirelessly working in schools with our children, for much less recognition than they deserve. I also have witnessed numerous examples of wonderful schools and classrooms, and I know there are many more that I have not seen. When I refer to educational failings, it is meant as a nutshell to encompass an array of complex issues, and to point at the deep systemic inadequacies that we

must continue working to amend. I know that I am brand new to the work of vitalizing our schools and that countless activists have been involved in this for generations. I only hope to join in as small part of moving this work forward.

I also want to elaborate that this thesis is written with an understanding of the wildly complex and convoluted meanings of terms such as “development” and “sustainability.” In the International Masters for Peace, Conflict, and Development Studies at UJI, I engaged in invaluable education on these subjects and their pervasive and distorted impacts in our global communities and environs. I hope that by acknowledging this, without devoting my entire thesis to the disentanglement, critique, and analysis of such concepts, of which many theses and papers have already been written, my intention is to use these words and also the term “peace” with my own specific and informed meaning.

For my purposes, I am reclaiming positive meanings for these terms, taking them back for their original purpose. Within this thesis, these terms are based upon principles that recognize the sanctity of all human and non-human life, past, present and future. That seeking peace must bring to light and reconcile injustice in all its forms against humanity and nature. That we must all take personal responsibility for direct, structural, and cultural violence, even indirect violence we practice as consumers and citizens of violent regimes. That “sustainability” must be meaningful, in that we find ways of living which can support life in all its diversity on this planet for all future generations, not simply as a catch-phrase to sell a commodity which is *less* harmful. And that “development” is not an act of colonization, patronization, or a guise for neo-imperialism. I choose to bring development home in this work, to engage in a discussion of how the United States is in dire need of the *development* of our intellectual and moral faculties in

order to reconcile our violent history and current violent practices at home and abroad. That we must face a potentially excruciating self-reflection, and that we must evolve in our consciousness before we participate and lead the ending of our human race—along with the countless species which have already vanished from the earth largely because of our selfish choices. Our children deserve that we devote ourselves to the endeavor of teaching them better than we have been taught; that we attempt to arm them with tools of peace which we have not perfected but which they may improve upon and wield far more masterfully than we have managed. We must strive to give them better building blocks so that they may build a world better suited for peace and conditioned on sustainability.

I am not delusional in realizing this dream is potentially unattainable and that the human race, as we've come to recognize her, is likely near an expiration. It is my assertion, then, that we continue to have the utmost moral imperative to do all we can to avert this doom, even if it seems there is little chance of success. We owe it to all those who have fought, died, and suffered, and to the potential lives of human and earth's progeny, to right the wrongs we live with still.

# I. Literature Review

## 1.1 Introduction of Literature Review

It was difficult for me to narrow the field of focus adequately for this project, because its true purpose was for me to gain as much knowledge as I could pertaining to the question of building a system of education in the United States which can foster the capacity of future generations to become peace builders and contributors, and shift U.S. culture toward cultural peace. In pursuit of this question, the information I needed to seek out was two-fold; on the one hand, what are the leading movements, theories, and influences in U.S. education today, and on the other, from a perspective of peace studies, what are the ideal conditions and necessary components of an educational system designed to produce a more peaceful world through a peace-oriented/conscious population? In other words, how do we develop our education for peace, and what is currently going on that is helping/hindering this transition? This larger scheme of knowledge was imperative for me to review in order to develop a framework for researching and assessing my focus area of Santa Cruz, California.

Based upon my own personal and scholarly research of over a decade, I have developed personal convictions about what is needed in education if it is to accomplish a shift toward peace. I acknowledge this bias in my perspective, and also wish to describe my point of view while conveying my commitment to analysing my research with as much open-mindedness as possible. I approached this research with a strong viewpoint, and was also willing to allow my views to grow and change. That being said, my studies in the Masters for Peace, Conflict and Development helped me come to believe that we need new perspectives in research. That, in line

with research on multiple intelligences which figures prominently in my research - that some minds work more from a holistic standpoint, while others take a more traditional academic route into great depth of a narrowly defined subject. I wish to contribute something of the former; that I believe we need both holistic and refined knowledges to work together; that we need highly specialized knowledge of very specific subjects, yet we also need specialized knowledge of broader subjects, studies of the interconnections that make a whole. I believe both types of knowledge need to work together. Because I feel so strongly that education for a peaceful world *must* consist of a group of elements or principles, and because I am of a nature to view the whole, it felt dishonorable to myself and inappropriate to my findings to try to narrow my focus to one or two of the elements described herein. Therefore I am attempting a thesis that may not be entirely traditional, and my hope is that it is still able to provide value to the academic community.

The focus that eventually did reveal itself was the veins of the Three Discourses which run throughout this work. The main authors I have delved through are Riane Eisler, Ken Robinson, Tony Wagner, and Angeline Stoll Lillard; all of which from varying perspectives engage in Discourse One with vehement rejection and criticism, and all supply the principles of Discourse Two as the appropriate alternative. To a lesser degree, with the exception of Eisler, these authors dabble into the Novel Discourse of peace orientation. My approach is to analyse the theory of each author's theory with critique and comparison. In chapter two, I create a grouping of the common and unique elements touted by each author, to elaborate on what is encapsulated within the theories of the Second and Third Discourses.

Here in this literature review is where I first came to decipher the Second and Third Discourses. Interesting findings included the incredible parallels between some of the current valuable education theories and peace education. Most authors, such as Robinson and Wagner, unknowingly (or at least without full acknowledgement) advocate analogous principles as does Jon Paul Lederach (2005) and many other notable peace scholars as valuable skill sets and attributes needed for those working in fields of peace, conflict, and development. My most significant and constant critique of these works, is that while they come so close to advocating for exactly what is most needed - education for a peaceful world - they fall just one step short and miss the mark, most of the time, and in doing so are unwittingly participating in a construction of reality which is unsustainable and violent; the premise of Discourse Three.

My deepest criticism is that these authors seem, as is a reflection of U.S. cultural rhetoric and priorities, somewhat obsessed with economic viability, competitiveness, or gain. I comment on this regularly throughout my review, and I want to preface that critique here. First, I understand that this is indeed a necessary concern and topic for discussion, particularly to an individual, whose well being and ability to support themselves and a family are paramount. Whether or not you can afford a roof over your head and food in your belly, and for many Americans also, the ability to pursue passions, hobbies, and recreational activities, are serious issues. Economics is important for the nation as well, both for humanistic reasons of wanting its citizens to have what they need, and also for other motives such as power and prestige.

However, the issues of peace and sustainability are directly and intimately related to all of our survival as well. Food and water scarcity, biodiversity decline, war and terror, civil unrest and racial tensions—all these and more can and will dramatically impact many individuals' and



communities' continuance; and even our own privileged existence in the "first world," though we refuse to acknowledge it. It could be seen as the difference between micro here and now concerns and macro future concerns; yet our here and now are directly creating our future lives and those of the world's children and grandchildren, as well as impacting the here and now of millions suffering worldwide. Therefore, the core argument of my thesis continues to be that making sustainable peace the center of education is the only ethical option for raising our children; economy, *instead of* peace and sustainability, must come as a secondary concern or side note in a discussion on *how our children are going to develop peace tools*. This is not to deny that in our current system, economic viability is of significant importance for all. It is merely to recognize the folly in making this central above sustainability. As all the authors demonstrate, even unknowingly at times, the skills children will develop in education for peace will indeed provide them with the ability to live self-supporting and personally fulfilling lives. Economic viability can be part of the narrative through the utilization of peace principles in school, and will be achieved regardless, and in fact putting peace central may be the only way to move toward an ethical economy. Economy cannot be the tantamount goal if we are serious about a world where our grandchildren's children have a chance to be born and thrive.

Eisler is the major exception to this critique. Her work, *Tomorrow's Children* (2000), is essentially the embodiment of the dream that I had which originally sprouted the conception for this thesis. Her Cultural Transformation Theory, developed over decades through numerous volumes, applied to the subject of education, describes a whole and viable framework which can be utilized by schools and organizations to enable students to not only develop all of the personal and intellectual faculties that would enable them to thrive as human beings, but also gives them

the critical background specifically formulated to aid them in intentionally and consciously building a peaceful culture. Her theory of education is the most comprehensive and useful from my perspective, and I have come to believe that it could be a drastic improvement in the U.S., as well as elsewhere, if her theoretical framework were adopted universally in education. I especially appreciate CTT and partnership education theory because it so clearly makes *principles* its main concern, which enables it to have extensive flexibility while maintaining consistency. However, as the other authors have demonstrated, there are infinite ways of manifesting a peace-building school system, and though I use Eisler's theory as a comparative tool in my literature and primary research, I do not argue for dogma and recognize that schools must exercise autonomy in choosing how to utilize the peace principles which I hope will be made more prevalent, even normalized.

Another interesting source that I rely on heavily is a book about the method developed by Dr. Maria Montessori in the early nineteen hundreds. In this volume, the Montessori system has been analysed through modern scientific study to illuminate the incredible benefits of Montessori's work. A question that has arisen as a result of this research is why are these valuable methods not being used much more broadly, and why are people so resistant to the Montessori Method? In fact, much of what the other authors promote and many of the studies and examples used to substantiate their positions - was already covered and accounted for by the method Montessori developed based on her medical observation of children's learning behaviors. One answer is that, due to the private nature of Montessori schools, there is no standard for how accurately and adequately Montessori theory is actually applied. Also, a common issue with the other theories I've researched and the deeper discourses of peace theory I promote, lack of

awareness and understanding from the general public plays a large hand. This quagmire directly interlocks into the Three Discourses; where the Montessori Method deeply embodies the principles of Discourse Two and even Discourse Three , it has heretofore been hindered by the hegemonic dominance of Discourse One.

The structure of this section of my thesis is as follows; first, I will discuss Eisler's theory in *Tomorrow's Children* (2000). Then, I backtrack to cover some of the histio-theoretical origins of Discourse One; the United States' education system and another major movement stemming from this history, the Standards Movement. Then I will discuss the other authors' main ideas and their relationship with the Old, Alternative, and Novel Discourses.

A primary take away from my literature research is that it has given me even more reason to remain steadfastly committed to my theory and perspective of education as being based within a set of guiding principles, and that shifting the guiding principles is what transforms education. This is what has enabled my development of the Three Discourses that are applicable throughout each circumstance. Every author I have sampled addresses education from this standpoint in one way or another. Each author argues that the foundational principles which inform the historical factory style of education and the current standards movement of education, are not appropriate for today's world and today's students, if they are to be given the tools and skills needed to become informed/compassionate/active/democratic/productive/fulfilled, or peacebuilding citizens. Such principles include rigidity, conformity and "one size fits all" ways of teaching and learning, compliance, "right" and "wrong" answers, and curriculum which is memorization-based, predetermined, and finite - principles which objectify students (and teachers) and teaches them to objectify in turn. The principles which promote well-being and the

fulfillment of the potential of learning communities are based on recognizing differences in learning styles and passions, exploration, creativity, and self-directed, open-ended, and community involved curriculum, and many more themes which are discussed in Chapter Two.

One of the reasons Eisler's theory is so powerful is that at its core, it is about teaching students to be able to analyze the very principles guiding their education and culture. It is perhaps the most coherent theory I've found for my own analytic purposes and for education itself, because it always comes down to a simple question of principle sets: either domination principles or partnership principles.

### 1.2.1 Riane Eisler, *Tomorrow's Children* (2000), and Cultural Transformation Theory (CTT)

Eisler has developed her theory over decades. It was originally introduced in her book "The Chalice and the Blade" in 1988. The basic premise of CTT is that all cultures are situated in their social norms, practices, structures and beliefs somewhere on a spectrum between *partnership* and *domination*, and that cultures can and do shift back and forth on the partner/dominator continuum; particularly "in times of extreme social and technological disequilibrium" (Eisler, 2000: 4-5). Eisler makes clear that her theory is a spectrum; no culture is at the farthest end of either pole, neither entirely domination oriented or entirely partnership oriented. We all are somewhere in between. The domination side of the polarity is characterized by the use of violence to maintain power and authority within hierarchies. The primary hierarchy is patriarchy; men are seen as superior to women. While this is not the only hierarchy, Eisler explained her rationale for putting gendered inequality atop the list of dominator structures in our interview on July eleventh.

*I start from the premise that if children observe and experience in their families the ranking of the male half of humanity over the female half they get this built in neurally,*

*almost. We are looking at difference as equated with either superiority or inferiority, dominating or being dominated, being served or serving. So I see gender as the key piece, it doesn't mean that racial injustice, etc. etc. doesn't matter; of course it matters. But it's not coincidental that studies show that people who come from rigid domination families... are also highly prejudiced. (Eisler, 7/11/15)*

Children are raised with household, media, school, social and all manner of experiences that convey and reinforce to them that either dominator or partnership values are normal, right, and natural (Eisler, 2000: 4-5). In a dominator society/family, once a child has internalized the understanding that their mother is subordinate to their father (or sometimes visa versa), they have already been wired to accept as natural the ranking of one human being or group of human beings over another. Racism, classism, hetero-normativism, and all other forms of discrimination more easily follow than for those brought up in an egalitarian household.

Again, in CTT, while the valuation of men over women is seen as a primary inequality from which other inequalities can be accepted as natural, it is important to not confuse such principles with the limitations of, for instance, the first wave feminism movement. "...We are not dealing with simple causes and effects, but with mutually interactive and reinforcing elements that maintain a system's basic character." (Eisler, 2000: 35) One of the core principles of CTT is looking for and understanding the patterns and interconnections of domination or partnership within a system. It is a holistic approach which looks at how values manifest and reinforce themselves in multiple spheres. Therefore, her quote explaining that hierarchical rankings are often first demonstrated in the home can be seen more as the initial programming of domination/subordination, rather than as entirely gender focused.

In summary, the four core elements that describe a culture oriented upon dominator principles are...

*An authoritarian top-down social and family structure, rigid male-dominance, a high level of fear and built-in violence and abuse (from child and wife beating to chronic warfare), and a system of beliefs, stories, and values that make this kind of structure seem normal and right. (Eisler, 2000: 4).*

Conversely, the four core elements within a culture configured toward partnership include democracy and equality in familial and social spheres, gender equity, much less institutionalized violence and a corresponding system of beliefs that reinforce these types of values as normal (Eisler, 2000: 5).

Tomorrow's Children (Eisler, 2000) is Eisler's application of CTT in the field of education. Eisler uses this theoretical structure as the basis of what she calls 'partnership education,' and gives a comprehensive outline for how such a transformation may take place and what it would consist of. "At the core of partnership education is learning, both intellectually and experientially, that the partnership and dominator models are two underlying alternatives for human relations." (Eisler, 2000: 9). It is easy to see that this theory is united with the Third Discourse, which embodies the principles of Discourse Two, but carries them further into addressing inequities and injustices.

## 1.2.2 Partnership Education Process, Content, and Structure

### i. Process

Partnership Education is addressed at three levels; Process, Content, and Structure. Process refers to the pedagogy, mode of teaching, or the role teachers assume as either dominator or partner, and also the quality of relationships modeled in a school for students. It is meant to give children/students the *experience* of partnership relationship so that they know they are possible (Eisler, 2000: 14), as opposed to the experience of being dominated by authority figures

in a school setting, yet being taught that respect and equality are the way things ‘should be’ ‘out there’ in the world.

Partnership process is an integrated teaching style or pedagogy that honors students as whole individuals with diverse learning styles. It focuses not only on cognitive or intellectual learning but also on affective or emotional learning...It cultivates less linear, more intuitive, contextualized, and holistic ways of learning. (Eisler, 2000: 14)

Partnership process includes recognition of Gardner’s “multiple intelligences”, and utilizes and cares for not only “cognitive or intellectual learning but also..affective or emotional learning” as well as somatic learning and the cultivation of “the will to act.” (Eisler, 2000: 14). It also includes self-directed learning, collaborative learning, democratic process, and learning *to care* and *through caring* within a caring environment (Eisler, 2000: 15-16). These elements are important to other authors and will be discussed later, as well as other elements of Eisler’s take on process which are unique to her theory. Unique to Eisler’s theory is the notion that teachers must be trained in self-reflection; in order to be fully able to teach and exemplify partnership relations, they must be able and willing to examine internalized beliefs resultant from dominator influences (Eisler, 2000).

## ii. Content

Eisler elaborates most upon content rather than on structure or process, by examining each academic subject (as well as non-traditional subjects she promotes) in depth, with examples of ways to teach and explore them from a CTT/partnership perspective. Violence in media, nursery rhymes and fairytales, and later in life school curriculum focusing on wars and battles, contradict any messages teachers and parents convey about gentleness and caring, effectively reinforcing dominator societal values. Such an education produces citizens living with the belief that human beings are bad and violent, and therefore need to be dominated and controlled.

Narratives that provide a negative picture about “human nature” are central to dominator mythology. They are, however, totally inappropriate if young people are to learn to live in the democratic, peaceful, equitable, and Earth-honoring ways needed if today’s and tomorrow’s children are to have a better future—perhaps even a future at all. (Eisler, 2000: 28)

The critique of traditional curriculum is that it is taught, generally unconsciously, from a dominator perspective. For example, history is mostly taught from the perspective of the ‘victor’, the wealthy white male elite class, focusing on wars and battles. “Classics...romanticize ‘heroic violence’ and present a worldview in which rulers and warriors are the only noteworthy protagonists.” (Eisler, 2000: 28). Not only is this a dominator perspective, but the lack of acknowledgement that it is such, or prompting questions about the origins of the perspective, also reinforces that such a perspective is ‘normal.’ Even the ways we teach science are biased toward a worldview that is uncaring. Eisler recalls the popular interpretation of the ‘selfish gene’ and the popular distortion of Darwin’s teachings, which were much more focused on love as a key for evolution, but somehow the only aspect that is taught in lessons is “survival of the fittest.” (Eisler, 2000: 28, 37). The fact that as a rule only white male scientists, astronomers, philosophers, and mathematicians are presented in the majority of school content conveys a message that only white men occupy such roles and that they are the only progenitors of our historical heritage; obviously impactful on the self-esteem and ambitions of non-white and non-male students. The unacknowledged and unrecognized dominator lense in education, handed down through generations of school curricula, reproduces the warped worldview that hierarchies of domination are natural and inherent in human beings and other species. It does not give a balanced perspective of all the partnership that is natural in both the animal and plant kingdoms, the realm of science, and throughout human history.



If we focus only on partnership process, we provide an education that at best gives children conflicting messages, creating mental and emotional confusion through process-content mismatch. Most critically, we fail to provide them with cognitive maps that will help them construct a better future. (Eisler, 2000: 17)

Professor Eisler told me in our interview that she suspected in my research I would encounter progress in terms of partnership process, but a lack of understanding in the need for partnership curriculum. My research has to a large extent confirmed her prediction.

Eisler believes we must revisit our schools' curriculum and redesign from the ground up; not necessarily throwing out everything that has been used traditionally, but critically examining everything we've used, how we've used it, and build a new curriculum with both old and new elements, all from a partnership perspective (Eisler, 2000: 18). Ultimately, we need to design a curriculum that teaches students how to examine what has traditionally been taught, as well as new subject matter through the lens of domination/partnership worldviews. For instance, when learning about the arts, or sciences, not only looking at works and achievements from other cultures or genders usually ignored (non-white scientists/artists, women, etc.), but also examining how cultural constraints of the time (and today) hindered and sought to prevent women or other marginalized groups from pursuing their work and fulfilling their potential. Also, being introduced to how traditionally marginalized *principles* or *ways of knowing*, historically discredited because of their "feminine" or cultural connotation (including subjective analysis, intuitive/empathic methods) are becoming more widely recognized as valuable contributors in fields of science (Eisler, 2000: 143-144).

Eisler's philosophy is to shift student's analysis *away* from conventional polarities based on ideologies (right vs. left, capitalism vs. communism, religious vs. secular) and to learn how to

assess cultural phenomena based on values and relationship; to look at whether practices of violence, injustice, cruelty, authoritarianism or abuse are being employed and what the *consequences* of these practices are; and what the results of practices of non-violence, democracy, sustainability, caring, and justice look like (Eisler, 2000: 10). Eisler shows within every subject, from math and science to art and social studies, that the evidence supporting partnership culture as a more desirable and positive mode for human existence is vast. If children are given the tools to see for themselves the outcomes and possibilities of dominator and partnership models, they will have the awareness and ability to work toward a cultural shift toward partnership culture throughout their young and adult lives.

Eisler also advocates for some seemingly radical additions to school curriculum, such as effective and caring parenting classes given to young children early in their development, classes on relationships, sexuality, self-regulation and life-planning, and more (Eisler, 2000: 219-235). These subjects will be explored more later.

### iii. Structure:

The last element refers to how schools are structured and how they operate. In terms of partnership education, Eisler believes there is much evidence to support that smaller schools promote more intimate one on one relationships and democratic atmosphere, and that in order to become empowered citizens of a democracy, children need practice participating in democratic positions and in leadership roles. Nova Highschool was an example of a school that worked with Eisler's partnership model. "At Nova, the primary governing body that makes school policy and rules is open to both students and faculty." (Eislery, 2000: 20) She emphasizes the need for hierarchies of actualization rather than consensus, stating that authority roles are important for

healthy function to take place, as long as authority is held with the purpose of helping others reach their own potential rather than exerting control (Eisler, 2000: 21).

However, a partnership structure does not mean a completely horizontal organization. There is a distinction between *hierarchies of domination* and *hierarchies of actualization*. Hierarchies of domination are imposed and maintained by fear. They are held in place by the power that is idealized, and even sanctified, in societies that orient primarily to the dominator model: the power to inflict pain, to hurt and kill. By contrast, hierarchies of actualization are primarily based not on power *over*, but on power *to* (creative power, the power to help and to nurture others) as well as power *with* (the collective power to accomplish things together, as in what is today called teamwork)...accountability flows in both directions. (Eisler, 2000: 21)

Though it seems an obvious concept, I have personally never heard of hierarchies described in such a way. She manages to dispel the myth that leadership must be about maintaining control and dominion through punishment and threat; *hierarchies of actualization* provides a way to describe leadership in partnership terms. Of course there are many examples of such leadership and structures throughout human history; however, in domination oriented societies they are relegated as exceptions or anomalies rather than the norm.

Eisler also believes community resources for parents and students should be housed within schools (Eisler, 2000: 24). While she does not elaborate on this, she makes clear that as a society it will be necessary to place more value on our schools by allocating more funding and care. According to Eisler, bureaucracy needs to be dismantled in schools in order to shift from domination to partnership structures. Lastly, another falsehood would be that competition has no place in such a worldview, but instead it is simply viewed differently in partnership organizations; it is a healthy motivator to spur individuals to do their best and even to encourage others to succeed, rather than a method of assigning worth (Eisler, 2000: 21-22).

### 1.2.3 Conclusion of Partnership Education Introduction

By conveying Eisler's Partnership Education theory in a more in depth way, my goal was to give an encompassing explanation of what I have found to be the closest model to what my research has shown as an education system that may be capable of providing the cultural shift toward peace that is so direly needed for the continued existence of our species. Within the literature I have researched, Eisler is the only author who has included all the elements I argue are necessary to achieve the goal of an education for peace.

Many of the elements she covers are covered by others and will be discussed accordingly. The framework of partnership and domination in CTT is unique, and operates as an undeniably strong foundation which ties all aspects of her blueprint into a whole. This lack of such an underlying theory is part of the weakness in other sources; they are only able to expand their ideas so far without obscurity through complexity - they lack a consistent anchor of basic premise. Cultural Transformation Theory and the partnership vs. domination model is also what enables the crucial elements of social and environmental justice and equity to be central in Eisler's work, whereas my most constant critique of others is the missing comprehension of how irreplaceable these subjects are in pursuit of a sustainable future.

It is difficult to find much fault in Eisler's work; however, I will introduce two discussions. The first is simply that although I find CTT and partnership education to be the most viable and well developed theory for peace education adaptation, and in conclusion of my work would recommend it as one of the most universally positive to consider, I simultaneously recognize the validity and value of numerous other methods as potentially sufficient, if whatever missing elements are accounted for. In short, I would promote that schools adopt the peace

principles laid forth with autonomy, developing unique systems with their community's own creativity. Eisler theory also promotes creative, democratic process, and while I agree with her that CTT is an invaluable tool and may even be the best route for peace education, there is no doubt that it is not the only option. While I use it henceforth as an analytic and comparative tool, I also make room for variation.

My last critique of Eisler's theory is an acknowledgement to cultural sensitivity. While I see the potential and the enormous vitality that is available to any community worldwide who chose to adopt and adapt this model, I understand the necessary caution when describing something that can be utilized globally. Just as I wouldn't prescribe any formula or solution to any school in the U.S., I would refrain even more so from doing so for other cultures. This is in recognition of the massive harm that western societies in particular have wrought upon the "other," in forcing cultural values, beliefs, religions, practices, and economics etc. onto the colonized. This is not Eisler's intention or my own. I share her belief that her theory is exceptionally valuable for any who choose to utilize it. Simply put, clarification on this point was a necessary note.

### 1.3 A Brief Look at Historical Foundations of U.S. Schools

Understandably, a common discourse within all the educationalist books I've reviewed has involved certain recurrent statements about the historical roots of our public schools systems and traditions of pedagogy and school structure, which consistently holds negative connotations, leading into a subsequent negative discussion about the more recent Standards Movement, No Child Left Behind, and other related policies. I consider the prevalence of this discursive knowledge formation a powerful testament of emerging discourse on education; it speaks to the

normalizing of language about principles and value-shifting from domination type models and the need for peace-oriented models—even if the acknowledgement is missing that it is peace principles that are being supported in the new discourse. I would argue that this particular interpretative repertoire is a key *stepping stone* in the emergence of the Novel Discourse this dissertation supports. Again, though it is less common for authors in the field of U.S. education to take the final leap to a discourse that uses language of peace and sustainability as the core necessity of education, the deepening establishment of rebuttal of older foundational models and the championing of principles reflected here, makes possible the next step in discourse. Such transformation in common discourse can coincide with structural and cultural transformation.

Some typical key-words/ideas of the First repertoire include the theories of the factory model school, the Lockean model, behaviorism, and industrialization of education. Also: compliance, conformity, obedience, linear, right and wrong, memorization, manufacturing, mass education, winners and losers, and marginalization.

Summarized by Lillard, traditional and mass education comes out of the Lockean premise and the factory model. The Lockean model of the child as the empty vessel coincides with the factory model; if the teacher is responsible for filling the children's heads with a specific formula of facts and information then it is most effective to have the children sit behind desks and receive the same input simultaneously (Lillard, 2005, 38-39). Traditional schooling has been modeled of another theory which is that of behaviorism, which holds that children commit information to memory through rewards and punishments (Lillard, 2005, 39).

In traditional elementary school classrooms, children learn mainly from the teacher and texts...Elementary school classrooms are engaged in this form of instruction (on average) 60-70% of the time, with much of the rest of the time spent in individual seat work and transitioning; the percentage of time spent in lectures is thought to increase in high school...

This is convenient to a factory model, since factories operate most efficiently if all of the raw materials are uniform. It suits the Lockean model of the child as well, since children at the same level are assumed to be alike and thus ready for the same knowledge to be poured in. (Lillard, 2005: 192)

The negatives which accompany these problematic foundational codes are numerous and serious. The obsession with standardized testing, misguidedly aimed at raising the standards of performance for U.S. children, possibly hitting its crescendo with the infamous No Child Left Behind act, is a disastrous intensifying of these codes rather than the much needed retirement of them. One irony fits into the Novel Discourse of this thesis; Robinson reflects that “One of the key agenda items for NCLB was closing the “achievement gap” between socioeconomic groups,” yet...“the forms of education the standards movement is promoting are exacerbating it.” (Robinson, 2015; 20-21). I point out the use of the term “achievement gap” as a rhetorical device that could be examined on many levels; potentially as a tool which justifies marginalization of minority communities and students, and shifts away from more pertinent topics regarding “income gaps,” “justice gaps,” “representation gaps,” and so on, to language which ideologically insinuates blame for “achievement gaps” onto the affected communities themselves. I do not mean to excuse every student from their own part in their education—I do wish to point out how prevailing discourse can effectively erase society’s responsibility for the creation of such inequities. In this discursive erasure, we justify leaving those who suffer from historical and present injustice with the burden of attempting to overcome a situation created largely by power holders. Similar critical consideration should extend to assumptions implicit in Wagner’s use of the term, and explorations into discourses about globalization and global relations, and the centrality of economic “growth,” “successfulness,” and “competition.” While I can’t do such an

analysis justice here, I hope that within this dissertation my belief is clear that these are the types of topics that our students need the tools to deconstruct.

Although not directly violent today, many teaching practices and school structures (particularly in regards to the standards movement) still stem from these earlier dominator standards, which Eisler says are “decidedly *not* appropriate for a democratic society” or for a world facing ecological devastation. This is so because being raised with a domination oriented authoritarian system teaches children to obey orders and that violence by power holders is normal (Eisler, 2000: 12). These internalized beliefs lend themselves to “the illusion that we can arbitrarily control nature, promoting the short-sighted ‘technology will fix everything and clean up every mess we make’ worldview” (Eisler, 2000: 12).

A mirror example between the historical onus of the education system and the standards movements can be provided in this description by Robinson;

In terms of *teaching*, the standards movement favors direct instruction of factual information and skills and whole-class teaching rather than group activities. It is skeptical about creativity, personal expression, and nonverbal, nonmathematical modes of work and of learning by discovery and imaginative play, even in preschool. (Robinson, 2015: 12).

It is fair to call these principles in league with domination practices: where individuals are objectified by reduction of choice, prohibition of imagination and creativity, and restricted in expression of self—such a format cannot support the fulfillment of potentials, the potential for fulfillment, and the stretching of peacebuilding capacities.

Peace education scholars also engage in this repertoire condemning the Standards movement. Harris laments that with so much pressure toward standards, “young people have few opportunities during their schooling to dream about what kind of society they want to live in and what they should do to get there.” (Harris, 2002: 2). Drawing from this quote, it seems Harris



would advocate for envisioning practices and the strength of imaginations toward peace to have a place in school.

#### 1.4 Tony Wagner and The Global Achievement Gap (2008)

I chose to include The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need -- And What We Can Do About It (2008) by Tony Wagner in my analysis initially because of the keywords included in the title; “global” and “survival”. Based upon these words, and other recommendations included in descriptions of the book such as the declaration of Keith R. McFarland “Tony Wagner is not just talking about our schools here—he is talking about the future of our nation,” or in the description of the book itself, “...Wagner situates our school problems in the larger context of the demands of the global knowledge economy. He illustrates that even in our best schools, we don't teach or test the skills that matter most for the twenty-first century.” Again, buzz words and phrases. The “skills that matter most” in our time are related to peace and sustainability. However, like so many other education scholars, Wagner treats these as side issues. Here they become peripheral issues in the greater scheme of economic viability, and less importantly, informed and active citizenship. As with Robinson, this is my greatest critique of Wagner; that he makes peace, sustainability, and social justice side notes, while touting economic concerns as the epitome of what is important and vital. It could be argued that this is not an entirely fair critique, given that both authors are education rather than peace experts to begin with. However, I believe this is one of the ultimate and most crucial critiques of our society today; the issues of peace, as outlined in the introduction, are critical enough that they warrant our central and full attention. We are doing our children a great disservice by continuing to operate in and hand down the distorted worldview

that the economic capitalist machine is the most important aspect of life and society; for this is a worldview that is sure to lead to our destruction and devastation.

Wagner is well respected and seasoned in U.S. education and the author of many books on the subject. He received his doctorate in education from Harvard University, where he is now a member of the faculty. Aside from my critique of his work, it nevertheless represents a powerful work in terms of peace education, for while it may be largely ignored within the book, his research advocates in large part for a shift in peacebuilding principles to become the foundation of education in the U.S. Wagner has a slightly more cohesive stance than Robinson in that he gives a single consolidated and memorable statement of his plan for education; that it should be designed not for memorization of curriculum, but to utilize curriculum to enable students to develop seven core competencies or “survival skills”. He says that these skills are necessary for children to become active participants in a strong democracy, happy and fulfilled human beings, and, most pronounced in his work, viable economic contributors and competitors.

Wagner’s survival skills are:

1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
2. Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence
3. Agility and Adaptability
4. Initiative and Entrepreneurialism
5. Effective Oral and Written Communication
6. Accessing and Analyzing Information
7. Curiosity and Imagination

Clearly, there is much overlap between skills recommended by Wagner and those of other authors. There is also much missing. I will delve into each of these later in examination with the findings of other authors.

Wagner states in chapter one;

Moving between these two worlds, I have come to understand that there is a core set of survival skills for today's workplace, as well as for lifelong learning and active citizenship—skills that are neither taught nor tested even in our best school systems. Young people who want to earn more than minimum wage and who go out into the world without the new survival skills I've uncovered in my research are crippled for life; they are similarly unprepared to be active and informed citizens or to be adults who will continue to be stimulated by new information and ideas. Parents and educators who do not attend to these skills are putting their children at an increased risk of not being able to get and keep a good job, grow as learners, or make positive contributions to their community. I believe that opinion leaders and policy-makers who do not understand the profound implications of teaching and testing these new survival skill are complicit in an unwitting conspiracy to put our nation at even greater risk of losing our competitive advantage. (Wagner, 2008: 14)

Note how in each sentence, economic concerns are listed first before citizenship or learning. This is the case throughout the book. When Wagner tacks on something such as “Equally importantly, they are skills that our kids need in order to participate effectively in our democracy” (Wagner, 2008: 15), it is hard to believe he means equally importantly, given that nearly every example and angle he analyzes come from the business world, business leaders, CEOs, or employers. There are much fewer concrete examples given in terms of how the survival skills can contribute to active and conscientious citizenship, and fewer still references given to questions of peace and sustainability, perhaps none in regard to the role our cultural behavior plays in global strife (or even the strife of racial or other minorities here at home). So, even though I would venture to guess that Wagner's “business leaders” would agree that employees equipped with a sense of accountability and responsibility are highly desirable, this is little discussed.

It is important that Wagner points out that legislatures and others are accountable for the unpreparedness of our children. However, Wagner himself misses the major point of what is at stake. If we can better equip children to deal with the problems that will confront them in their or

their children's lives, what's at stake is far more than a crumbling economy, it's the crumbling of our entire global system of all life. If we continue to model for them that competing in the economy is the most important thing in life, we will all be accountable for the end of the world as we know it, and the inability for our children and their children to go on. Not to mention, the countless other children in the U.S. and the rest of the world who will not reach adulthood, and the uncountable species of life that will vanish from the face of the earth.

### 1.5 Ken Robinson and Creative Schools (2015)

Ken Robinson is a world renowned educationalist who has worked as an advisor for governments, NGOs, schools and businesses in many countries. His 2006 TED talk on creativity in schools is the most watched in TED history, viewed by millions in over a hundred nations (Robinson, 2015: xvii). His recent book, Creative Schools (2015), advocates a set of principles being utilized in a myriad of ways in numerous schools and organizations throughout the world, which represent, as he argues, a vitally necessary revolution in the way we see and provide education. Even more so than Wagner, he relies on the examples of many schools and organizations that have undertaken transformation and the adoption of such principles and have begun to thrive as a result. The theory he presents as a whole has many useful elements from a perspective of developing a culture of peace through education. Here, I will analyze his book from this perspective.

In the introduction of Creative Schools, Robinson summarizes his theory this way;

The revolution I'm advocating is based on different principles from those of the standards movement. It is based on a belief in the value of the individual, the right to self-determination, our potential to evolve and live a fulfilled life, and the importance of civic responsibility and respect for others...As I see it, the aims of education are to enable students to understand the world around them and the talents within them so that they can become fulfilled individuals and active, compassionate citizens. (Robinson, 2015: xxiv).

I find this declaration very positive and close to complete as a summary of the ideas my research shows are the most positive organizing principles for an education which can promote a more peaceful culture and future. The very first statements confirm that Robinson's theory recognizes that principles are the basis of education, and then that the principles he promotes are in the realm of partnership education and peacebuilding. Mentioning our potential to evolve links his theory directly to CTT. Recognizing that human beings need both a relationship with the inner and outer world, and the need for compassion and action, mark Robinson as a potentially powerful peace education advocate.

The first school that used the principles Robinson advocates for transformation was Smokey Road Middle School in Newnan, Georgia, USA. It was a problem school with low achievement, a lot of fighting and disciplinary issues, and poverty stricken students (Robinson, 2015: 1). This is a similar model for many of the schools that Robinson uses as examples of transformation. The four step process applied to this school was;

1. Getting the students to *attend*,
2. Creating an environment in which students could feel safe at school,
3. "help students feel valued as individuals"
4. "teaching the appropriate curriculum that the students needed for future success."  
(Robinson, 2015: 3).

The first two were not a main focus - perhaps as they are too obviously necessary, and because the principles Robinson advocates are shown in his examples to be remedies for such foundational issues in schools. This also leads me to see his work as evidence that these principles provide a foundation of conflict transformation at the level of student relationship and

behavior, or violence in schools, which is a powerful element for peace education but not the focus of this thesis or the works I've reviewed.

The emphasis was on the second two principles, which are both included in my discussion of elements of peacebuilding education. Another example he uses illustrates the principle of 'appropriate curriculum' or 'future success curriculum' and also another principle championed by Robinson: the need for partnerships/projects/internships/workshops with professionals in the community. Another principle of global and community awareness and service is also exemplified in the following anecdote. Unfortunately while Robinson vaguely cites the need for 'compassionate and active citizens' and the dire circumstances of our globalized world as justification for his work in this field, my main critique of his discourse orientation is the lack of attention afforded to the necessity of global peace education. Like Wagner, he fails to grasp the full implications of his own work and findings. He fails to convey how much his work can contribute to a more peaceful education system and world, and that this is our most crucial goal.

This second example is the "Minddrive" project. It was born when a Kansas city architect was invited to a career lunch at a community charter school for at-risk youth (Robinson, 2015: 26). This lunch resulted in a partnership between architect Steve Rees and the highschool. First he began a program of mentorship which connected students with volunteers in the business community so that kids "gained a glimpse into their potential futures" (Robinson, 2015: 26). Next, Rees taught an unconventional course on creativity and entrepreneurial studies in which students were encouraged to imagine at a conceptual level real world businesses, scenarios, or issues, and out of this class came the seed project of designing cars. When Rees's students

wanted to do more than just conceptualize, Rees responded to the enthusiasm and creative thinking by finding a crashed car for the kids to restore (Robinson, 2015: 27). The project eventually blossomed into a non-profit organization in which students build electric cars and drive them around the country giving presentations on environmentalism and creativity (Robinson, 2015: 27-28).

The principles utilized in this example led to greater academic success, as well as empowerment, innovation, and environmental/social awareness and action. Robinson advocates for providing curriculum in which students develop skills that will serve them in their real future lives and aid them in becoming financially self-sufficient is an imperative for education (Robinson, 2015). He and Wagner both argue that many of the recent trends for standardization and especially standardized testing rob schools of the capacity to provide such education (Robinson, 2015)(Wagner, 2008). Every author I've surveyed has agreed on the need for the development of skills in math, language, and science; however, they argue that these are not enough, particularly in their traditional form, and that projects like Minddrive allow young people to develop creative thinking and innovation, teamwork, and other skills which are most desirable in the globalized business world of the 21st century (Robinson, 2015: 19). I concur that giving young people skills that will allow them to become economically viable and self-supporting are important in today's world; however, I disagree with Wagner's and Robinson's level of focus on this issue. Eisler has a more balanced perspective regarding the higher importance on issues of global and cultural peace and sustainability. From this angle, Minddrive is an ultimate success because it helps develop citizens who are innovating and finding excitement and passion in a movement toward environmental sustainability, and

produces channels through which young people experience involvement in participating and raising awareness within their community—therefore, experiencing the deep satisfaction of contributing to a greater good for humanity. Such involvement with deep purpose and service to the greater good are likely a strong element of a path to some of the deepest feelings of joy and fulfillment, as research like Brown’s on whole-hearted living (Brown, 2010) and in great numbers of testimonials from members of twelve step recovery programs indicates. Because these two critically important things, personal joy and fulfillment as well as developing an environmentally and socially sustainable culture, seem to naturally reinforce each other, it follows that they are worthy of considerably more research and implementation in our schools.

Robinson eloquently sums up this route of creating alternative education, and the principle of empowering students as individuals who recognize themselves and are recognized for having their own unique gifts.

Students who’ve been slumbering through school wake up. Those who thought they weren’t smart find that they are. Those who feared they couldn’t achieve anything discover they can. In the process, they build a stronger sense of purpose and self-respect. Usually, their achievements in conventional schoolwork improve enormously too. Kids who thought they had no chance of going to college find that they do. Those who don’t want to go to college find there are other routes in life that are just as rewarding.

...Of course, the success of alternative education projects like Minddrive is not automatic or guaranteed. It takes care, passion, and expertise on the part of the adults, and trust, willingness, and commitment from the students...these programs show vividly that these students are not incapable of learning and are not inevitably destined to fail. They were alienated and marginalized by the system itself. (Robinson, 2015: 30-31).

I argue that the positive impacts described here should indeed be goals of all education. Yet it needs to go one step further. In providing an education that illuminates for all students that they have intelligence and gifts, and can develop skills and achievements, it *also* needs to incorporate principles of ‘selfless service,’ and contributing to the sustainability of the greater



whole of society, from the local to global. Robinson comes very close, but misses what could be a greater contribution to the development of education toward a more peaceful world; that each child should be encouraged to discover their unique gifts and passions, within a “meaningful context” (an element capitalized on by Eisler and Lillard) of realizing that their gifts are valuable in the pursuit of saving our world. Prescription based approaches in which schools demand young people devote their life to peacebuilding are not what I am calling for. Fostering an educational culture that makes central the crucial need for all of us to contribute something to this greater good if we are to survive as a species would be a strong influence, but would still honor the individual’s calling. Providing such context, as did the Minddrive project, could give students a lived experience of how their own personal calling could fulfill them if channeled in an avenue of service.

A powerful critique of the traditional ‘industrial’ style of education and the standards movement to look at this quote and Robinson’s book from Eisler’s CTT. Marginalization, alienation and the devaluing of certain people and skills are hallmarks of cultural domination, while recognition of diversity, collaboration, and empowerment as gifts are all components of partnership cultures. Robinson, Eisler, and the others provide ample evidence of dominator practices in education which do not serve the community on any level, and offer significant proof that partnership principles can, if utilized effectively, lead to thriving student and staff populations, and eventually, a more sustainable and thriving world.

Robinson uses a few different sets of principles as guides for how we need to thinkw= about education. One original metaphor is that industrial education is much like industrial agriculture, while *organic agriculture* shares the worldview of the education he supports. He

states that industrial education/agriculture emphasize output and yield, while organic agriculture, and ideally education, considers four principles. The *health* of everything involved in the process from the soil, plants, animals, and the entire planet (in education the wellbeing and development of the “whole student, intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially”) (Robinson, 2015: 43-44). The *ecology*, taking care to sustain balance and interdependence of whole system (in education, the whole student to the whole community) (Robinson, 2015: 43-44). *Fairness*, equity for farmers, workers, consumers etc., (celebrating diversity and individuality, and respecting roles of those employed), and *care*, considering the effects of actions now and in the future (creating “optimum conditions for students’ development, based on compassion, experience, and practical wisdom.”) (Robinson, 2015: 43-45).

Robinson also argues that there are four areas for which education should prepare students; *economic, cultural, social, and personal* (Robinson, 2015: 45). I doubt economic was listed first because it is considered most important, however it seems telling given the prominence of the topic in Robinson’s and Wagner’s books. Both Wagner and Robinson site the “Partnership for 21st Century Skills,” an association between nineteen U.S. states (including California) and thirty-three corporate partners (both for profits and nonprofits). Many of the sought after skills agreed to be valuable by these states and corporations are conducive to peace building. The terms ‘justice’ and ‘equity’ are missing from their list, and Robinson’s reference to social justice in terms of race and poverty are minute, while any mention of inequality concerning gender or global relations is completely absent. His stated principles are largely in line with the peace building skills I argue are necessary for a sustainable future, though lacking significantly in these areas. I wonder if it is plausible to talk about ‘changing metaphors’ (as the

title of one chapter claims) in a meaningful way without giving sufficient thought to injustice when discussing education and enacting it. Robinson might argue that such issues were too large to address in his book. Eisler's approach is superior for this reason. If we continue to ignore these issues in our education, we cannot change the experience of marginalized students to one of validation and inclusion, and we cannot assume that any students will have an adequate understanding of the interconnections of past injustices to the present to enable and motivate them to dismantle the direct, structural, and cultural systems that reproduce them.

It is slightly ironic that Robinson fails to place the most crucial issues of peacebuilding, in this case the environment, at the center of his argument, because he uses environmental metaphors beautifully. He illustrates the proper functioning of school structure in terms of ecology: that the primary responsibility of education is to create the conditions for students to want and be able to learn; that it is the responsibility of teachers to facilitate this environment; it is the responsibility of principals to support conditions that allow teachers to facilitate, and it the responsibility of policy makers to enable principals to do their work. (Robinson, 2015: 72).

#### 1.6 Angeline Stoll Lillard and Montessori: *The Science Behind the Genius* (2005)

Angeline Stoll Lillard's work Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius (2005) is enlightening. Lillard documents numerous studies to illustrate the potency of the principles and practices that Maria Montessori used to create her method of education. Her book is broken into chapters based upon some of the main components or principles that constitute Montessori education, which are as follows, as summarized in chapter one:

1. "That movement and cognition are closely entwined, and movement can enhance thinking and learning;
2. that learning and well-being are improved when people have a sense of control over their lives;

3. that people learn better when they are interested in what they are learning;
4. that tying extrinsic rewards to an activity, like money for reading or high grades for tests, negatively impacts motivation to engage in that activity when the reward is withdrawn;
5. that collaborative arrangements can be very conducive to learning;
6. that learning situated in meaningful contexts is often deeper and richer than learning in abstract contexts;
7. that particular forms of adult interaction are associated with more optimal child outcomes;
8. that order in the environment is beneficial to children.” (Lillard, 2005: 29).

In sum, movement, control (or empowerment), interest (or passion, curiosity), rewards, collaboration, meaningful context, role of the teacher, and order in the environment. Most of these elements, developed significantly by Montessori in the twenties and backed by science today, are promoted by the other authors I have reviewed, and are discussed in the elements section more thoroughly.

Almost in its entirety, Lillard’s volume is dedicated to documenting copious amounts of modern research which back up Montessori’s method. It is such fascinating argumentation, it was difficult for me to not include every single study in this analysis. I have limited myself to recounting a few illustrative studies.

A very limited summation of what I have learned of the Montessori method itself follows. First, movement is foundational in Montessori education. In discussing the Montessori method, Lillard is the only author who spent any significant time on the subject of movement in learning. While Robinson and Wagner have provided examples of schools which allow more movement and hands on work (such as High Tech High, or other programs including the arts or occupational courses like woodshop, metal shop, etc.) in discussing other topics that happen to intersect (self-directed learning or appropriate curriculum), no other author expressed movement, in and of itself, as crucial to the fulfillment of learning potential.

Montessori, however, through analysis of extensive observation, made movement central to her entire curriculum and theory.

In order to develop his mind a child must have objects in his environment which he can hear and see. Since he must develop himself through his movements, through the work of his hands, he has need of objects with which he can work that provide motivation for his activity. (Lillard, 2005: 45).

I will bring some of the evidence which confirms the validity of this technique into the discussion of other elements later. Suffice it to say that Dr. Montessori developed a hands-on, material based curriculum, which utilized more than the principles listed above, the environment, and which was designed through the careful and long-term observation of children. By careful experimentation to find and develop materials most beneficially suited to aiding children's natural learning inclinations at the most appropriate times of their natural development, Montessori crafted a spectacular boon to developmental learning.

There are many questions and critiques of Montessori schools and her method in general, and research focused directly on Montessori method is lacking, though coincidentally one of the schools included in this thesis, Midtown Montessori, has just been used in another study through the local university. Lillard makes a somewhat irrefutable case for the benefits of research based education designed for the minds and nature of children (as was Montessori's goal), rather than on reproducing a system of education which seeks to force the child's mind into a form which is not natural to it, simply because it is what we were raised with and know, or for more sinister reasons, such as the maintenance of domination and control.

For many reasons, Montessori is a framework that is highly conducive to peace education and is its own formidable model for peacebuilding education. It is by far the most carefully and

extensively developed system for education I have seen. Though it does not by itself account for inclusion of social and environmental justice, there is certainly room for the adaption of these into the method, and some Montessori schools in Santa Cruz are striving to do exactly this.

## 1.7 Some Reflections from the Field of Peace Education

### 1.7.1 Harris and the Briefest of Overviews

The rarity of the Novel discursive repertoire about peace education, the understanding of it, and commitment to it, is highlighted by Harris. “The main goal statements for schools that constitute the core of the education system in the United States neglect to mention the word “peace.” (Harris, 2002: 4). He agrees that there is a “conspicuous lack” of peace education in our schools,

While working on my thesis, I found a common question from those inquiring about my work was, “what *is* peace education?” Peace education has many definitions from many viewpoints, and from my own it not a simple answer. I hope to make clear that I realize within this thesis I am drawing upon a rich and diverse history of peace education theory (PE/T). The theory of PE I have outlined in Chapter II is an attempt to encompass all the elements I believe are necessary components of a holistic curriculum and pedagogy for PE in the US, as I have gathered them from various sources. It was not possible to cover all of the great scholars of peace education past to present, especially because I wanted to execute a literature analysis of non-peace education scholars as well. I hope to contribute something unique in my all-encompassing approach, as well as my approach to the discourses around education and PE in the United States.

Harris states that PE “refers to teachers teaching about peace - what it is, why it does not exist, and how to achieve it - academic content that gets ignored in most schools of education.” (Harris, 2002: 4). However, Harris agrees with me that there are many facets of peace education, and that it can be taught in different ways, from different angles, with different goals and connotations depending on the given time or lesson. He cites inner and outer peace, human rights education, environmental education, international education, conflict resolution education, and development education, as different approaches to peace education that encompass complex issues, and are complementary to one another (Harris, 2002: 15-26). Harris covers the bases, and affirms my stance that peace ought to be taught at every level of education just as math is, as knowledge of these processes is needed for the continuation of our society (Harris, 2002: 29).

There are many articles which help to summarize the historical evolution of peace education theory and practice, and Harris provides one. He pays tribute to Maria Montessori and her theory of pedagogy which would interrupt children’s subservience and acquiescence to authoritarian rule. Freire and “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” (1968) with its process of *conscientization* was a powerful contribution toward the education needed to liberate the world of structural violence. Brocke-Utne (1985), Reardon (1988), and Noddings (1993) brought feminist aspects and the ethics of care to peace education theory. In 1988 Harris named ten goals for peace education, as well as five stipulations for a peaceful pedagogy (Harris, 2002: 11-12). Harris mentions the influence of “new age healing” in PET in the eighties, and then the emergence of environmental education, bringing to the fore concerns of sustainability and the relationship between peace and the health of the environment (Harris, 2002: 12-13). Johnson and Johnson (1991) and Patti and Lantieri (1996) are early contributors to conflict resolution

education, the latter “added to the mix crucial components dealing with anti-bias and multicultural education” (Harris, 2002: 13).

Harris cites flaws in a couple of peace education theories, the Quaker Project and the neoconservative focus on teaching children values such as responsibility, honesty, sharing, cooperation etc. These approaches are incomplete in that they neglect “serious study of social forces that cause violence.” (Harris, 2002: 11) I promote including such principles into an education for peace, in fact I insist that it is the underlying principles informing education that determine whether it is an education for peace or not. However, I believe this set of guiding principles must include those relating to social and environmental justice and equity, education on structural and cultural violence, international and intercultural relations, etc. In other words, I advocate inclusive holistic curriculum and pedagogy; all of the areas examined by Harris should be included.

My theory of PE includes all of the theories mentioned above, albeit not necessarily perfectly or exactly, and hope to show that PE does not have to be a matter of “either/or” but rather a vibrant opportunity for “yes, and.” It is not a matter of choosing one theory over another, although many schools, educators, or individuals may choose to do so and in making such a choice over the neglect of PE, this is a step forward. I take some from each theory and argue for the holistic inclusion of all elements as the ultimate goal. Yet it is still a matter of autonomous creativity as to how the principles of PE are deployed in any setting.

### 1.7.2 International Narratives of the “Globally Competitive Child”

In “Producing the ‘Globally Competitive’ Child,” Boulten delves into a discourse analysis of this theme from a different vantage point, examining how the rhetoric surrounding



the idea of “globally competitive children” as a neoliberal construction that shapes, constructs, overlaps, and fuels neoliberal development, especially in regard to the realities for young learners in the Philippines and the knowledge economy.

Though Boulten focuses on the impacts on youth and development in the global south, his work also contributes to concerns for peace as it can be enacted in the United States. The developmental discourse around the “globally competitive child” in developing nations, who have in recent years begun to surpass U.S. children in some standardized tests and other areas of competency, has helped to create the mutated form of the narrative about assuring U.S. students become *globally competitive* once more. From my perspective this is just another form of separating *us* from *them*, and yet another manifestation of the obsession with Western domination and dominion over the rest of the planet.

In the United States, where xenophobic sentiment and the escalation of turning anyone who *competes* instantly into an enemy is gaining fever pitch; this is decidedly not the correct way to go about advocating a higher level of educational success. Not only is there much evidence that cooperative and group learning produces better learning outcomes, but celebration of diversity does the same. Intercultural learning is also highly beneficial. So while some forms of competition can be healthy and beneficial, for it is probably not the best approach in our current cultural environment of hatred, blame, fear, and stereotyping. The focus that needs to be adopted is for U.S. students to begin looking at the challenges of creating global sustainability. As their youthful counterparts in other nations become more and more creatively ingenuitive, children here can celebrate these as strides toward a brighter future for all, and could possibly undertake a

positive competition; not one in which they strive to keep their competitors down, but instead one where they strive to become the best contributors to global and local issues that they can be.

Another interesting parallel to draw from Boulten's analysis concerns "empowerment." Boulten makes connections between how the "empowerment" of the poor through integration into the knowledge economy is a construction that is more and more complementary to "neoliberal geoeconomic interests and neoconservative geopolitical strategies." (Boulten, 2009). If this line of inquiry is applied to learners in a nation like the U.S., many questions could rise in relation to what agendas are served by furthering discourses around the competitiveness, or lack thereof, of our children. As I've mentioned considerations of xenophobic anxieties and "us vs. them" mentalities, I link here discussions such as these—raging about the "economic *viability*" and "*competitiveness*" of our new generations—could certainly be played upon by geopolitical, military, geo-imperial and developmental interests. In terms of movement toward peace and sustainability, such questions should spur us to critically reexamine reliance on such narratives.

It may be enlightening to examine other aspects of development agendas in contrast to the educational landscape in the U.S. One such comparison can be initiated by looking at this aspect of discursive power illustrated by Boulten;

It is testament to the discursive power of organizations such as the World Bank to mobilize public relations campaigns and state and other actors, that the seemingly stable, hegemonic, commonsense definitions of development today would have been unrecognizable as little as a decade ago. Constant revolution in the definition of development— and therefore in the policy prescriptions that flow—has been a hallmark of the neoliberal agenda, and a core component to explaining the role for 'experts' in keeping abreast of, advocating, and driving such policies. (Boulten, 2008, 332).

Some questions raised here include the power of discursive transformation; if the field of development is so malleable to extreme discursive changes, why is such power not similarly

directed upon U.S education for the sake of shedding the outmoded models that have driven our “global competitiveness” into the ground? Or perhaps, as reflected in routine policy changes disrupting school business, maybe the very same power of discursive transformation does exist in the field of education. If it is the same neoliberal agenda that informs so many seemingly unique development ideologies, which “change” without changing at their core motives, could this be the same neoliberal agenda that holds in place and enacts artificial “changes” upon the United States educational landscape? If there is a relationship between these two illusory “change” strategies, perhaps they share similar goals. As one goal of neoliberal development is indoctrination, because to “behave as good, neoliberal subjects they need to be shown the benefits of western-style capitalism,” (Boulten, 2008: 333) then perhaps as U.S. children are already well established as loyal consumers, it begs question if authentic change in our education system may actually not be desirable by the “neo-liberal agenda.”

## 1.8 Conclusion

In terms of content analysis, my literature review reveals certain themes, “buzz” words, and ideas that hold true across a wide range of disciplines and approaches to the field of transforming education in the U.S. Those who work and research in the field at the cutting edge tend to agree on the principles I outline in my next chapter. There is common agreement in the negative assessment of the standards movement, and the traditions of schooling inherited from the origination of public education in our country. What is rare, however, is the necessary understanding and devotion to a deeper discourse on peace education in meaningful terms.

Authors like Robinson and Wagner exhibit a common “navigation between different subject positions, or temporary identities” (Talja, 1999: 470) that is possibly the most relevant

core of current U.S. discourse about issues of peace and sustainability. On the one hand, dialogue surrounding global issues of environmental instability, social strife and the like, has become so common (at least in liberal circles and communities such as Santa Cruz) it has almost lost its meaning. Rather, it is a rhetoric that has been accompanied with little, no, or insufficient action and meaningful change to the point that it has become intertwined with an assumption of meaninglessness and hopelessness, it has been relegated to the realm of lip service and “somebody else’s” duty. It is perfectly expressed in Van Oord’s “Beyond the Mission Statement,” in which the author reveals the hypocrisy of education “mission statements” which claim the goal of educating students for peace, then do not follow through with adequate and substantial peace curriculum and pedagogy (Van Oord, 2014: 8). The dance between paying lip service to the needs for peace education, and moving on to what “really” serves and concerns us as U.S. citizens - namely, economic success and competitiveness - is a discourse that has emerged in recent decades as realizations about global warming, etc., have become mainstreamed, and yet I challenge it now as a discourse that is erroneous and less valid than the Novel Discourses emerging with deeper understanding of peace education. As Van Oord states it is “*a great start*, but unfortunately little more than that.” (Van Oord, 2014; 8). Mainstream dialogue seems to have gotten stuck for too long at this “great start,” the recognition of a problem - however we have stayed in the phase of recognition without forward action for so long that the reality of there being a problem seems to have lost its critical importance. This discursive statement’s prevalence has created a large ideological block for those who seek to engage in genuine change for peace. The reality constructed and being reconstructed through the repertoires of “hopeless” scenarios for peace and sustainability, combined with the cultural value

statements relegating economic issues as the be all and end all of importance, are the discourses that need to be transcended and transformed.

The discourse on economy itself is of course one of the strongest U.S. statements of all, and discourse (or lack thereof) about race conflict and gender violence, or social injustice ad infinitum, is possibly the type of discourse Americans are *most* uncomfortable with. It is perhaps understandable, therefore, that authors writing about transforming education for the better in the United States would place more emphasis on the former and shy away from the latter - as a means of mollifying and thus spreading their message more widely. Unfortunately, from a constructivist standpoint this is regrettably and exactly a perpetuation of the realities these new and Novel Discourses attempt to remedy. Giving power to one, and erasing the other. This is another problematic element on U.S. discourses of peace and education.

The only author<sup>3</sup> who directly transcends these discourses and acts as a progenitor for the Novel Discourse embodied in my thesis is Eisler. Eisler makes the leap from rejecting dominator principles of the past and present and addressing the roots of our issues thoughtfully developed through partnership principles—to *also* making the development of a peacebuilding education system to contribute to a more peaceful world—the *center* of her theory. Lillard also contributes by making the respect of the whole child and its right to learn in its most beneficial and natural way central, without glorifying the U.S. economic obsession. Montessori herself was a peace advocate. However I cannot say that Lillard completely taps into the Novel Discourse of global peace that must be normalized.

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<sup>3</sup> Here, I'm referring to the main, non-peace education authors comprising the main body of literature review. However, Eisler *does* qualify as a peace scholar. Also, it would be interesting to conduct an extensive review of peace education theorists to decipher how often the learning principles of Discourse Two are included in their considerations. It may be that the field of peace education could gain much from the Second Discourse, just as the Second is not complete without the Third.

In my next chapter, I will continue analysis of the literature through the consolidation of the strategies that foster peace principles in students.

## II. Principles of Discourse Two and Three

“Critical pedagogy, multicultural pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, education organized around themes of care, and other newer approaches to education highlight that we need to reexamine and redefine what we mean by *education*.” (Eisler, 2000: 18)

### 2.1 Introduction

For simplicity, I split my discussion of elements into two veins of inner and outer peace education. However, separating any element from the whole is not entirely possible due to the fact that interconnection is a hallmark of this peace education. As will be illustrated, not only do elements of inner peace interrelate, overlap, and reinforce with elements of outer peace, but elements within each category do the same. The interrelating of these principles would be better represented by a complex web than by linear demarcations, though I do my best with the layout that made sense within a written work.

Typically, both inner and outer peace considerations are challenging in our current structure and somewhat taboo, though I believe Santa Cruz is more progressive and in the process of very meaningful shifts with both inner and outer peace education. The list of what we still need nation-wide in our schools in order to meet these goals is daunting, however, I can summarize the basic shift I attest we must continue making by pointing to the foundational principles or values that inform and shape the cultures of our schools.

Different scholars have used different models to describe the set of principles from which our schools have been derived and the principles we need to shift to and integrate for the sake of our society and life on the planet. For instance, Harris (2002) gave several examples of how theories of peace education has been organized by various scholars, Eisler (2000) gave her own

set of principles in her unique organization. Nearly every author I've reviewed has coined their own model. Ultimately I've found that, regardless of the model, the principles are essentially the same. Principles may even be named differently across methods<sup>4</sup>, but at their core the pattern can be revealed.

The traditional method of public schooling in the U.S., as described, critiqued, and replicated through the First Discourse, relies on principles of conformity, top-down hierarchy, obedience, memorization, rigidity, and domination. Dominating tactics were more obvious in decades past, and we've come to a more gentle common model; extolling the use of corporal punishment, and experimenting in small doses with new methods of teaching, like hands-on learning, group projects, and discussion, at times breaking from the main method of blackboard lecturing. However, our model is still largely rooted in dominating and controlling ideologies. Students are still largely out of control of their learning experience, and the hierarchy of power goes up from student, to teacher, to principal, to superintendent, to policy maker. Also, most of the content we rely on comes from a domination ideology where we focus on the "victors" of history, or in other words, the oppressors, enslavers, and the men of conquest. Our textbooks do not provide multicultural or multi-gender perspectives, but instead erase many of the historical odysseys that represent a less violent worldview and reflections of a large part of the student body's identity - the non-male, non-hetero/gender-conforming, non-white students—and their counterparts across the world. We also have not yet created highly developed methods for teaching children early on that the world and lifestyles they are inheriting is in crisis and unsustainable. Ignoring these very real and most relevant topics is also embedded in domination

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<sup>4</sup> As in the difference between such ideas of "honesty" and "truthfulness." Different words aiming at an essential idea.



cultural values because it implicitly reinforces all such forms of human violence as normal and inevitable, and does not produce critical thinking about counter movements for peace and possible ways of amending past and current human folly (Eisler, 2000). Further, it is akin to raising our children to live lives of denial, encouraging a head in the sand approach to their coming demise. In short, we are doing our children a severe injustice.

It is not fair nor does it serve or protect our children to continue this form of education, based on principles of denial, irresponsibility, and misguided rigidity. The evidence that an alternative set of principles can actually provide students the opportunity to become builders of a more peaceful world is enormous. The principles I'm speaking of are what Riane Eisler would refer to as "partnership" principles, twelve step communities and world religions often call "spiritual" principles, and what as a peace student I have called "peace" principles. These common sense ideals are embodied by a large set of human characteristics which we often call virtuous, or positive. They include but are not limited to practices and characteristics such as; honesty, self-reflection, compassion, perseverance, creativity, cooperation, courage, curiosity, exploration, freedom, responsibility, depth, inclusion, diversity, and respect. For decades, studies have shown that an education that engenders these principles is the most successful at creating a healthy, high-achieving, and potential fulfilling (or exceeding) student body, which is the rationale of Discourse Two. Most of the studies I've found to support my contention have focused largely on the academic and personal development of American youth, often as it correlates to the future economic viability of our country. However, I am taking this information in a different direction, to support the Novel Discourse of peacebuilding. A model of education built upon these principles is not and cannot be driven solely by a desire for economic

competitiveness, indeed, we would still be advocating a head in the sand worldview if we were to trumpet such a goal. While such an education *is* the most beneficial for our children's *personal* future security and fulfillment, it is also the model of education that will raise a population capable of changing the course of the runaway train we are on. It is an education that will raise peacebuilders, who will work for justice and equity, sustainability, and restoration. Giving our children the the tools for amending our cultural inadequacies may be our only hope for the future.

Eisler makes clear that throughout human history, there has been tension and movement upon the spectrum of domination and partnership within societies the world over. However, Eisler takes pains work to clarify that she does not argue that the last few thousand years have been solely the domain of dominator tactics. Again, a crucial element in CTT theory is that no culture ever is solely dominator *or* partner. Another thing made clear in all of Eisler's work is the acknowledgement and focus dedicated to individuals and movements that have operated throughout our recent dominator epoch to bring back a shift toward partnership society. These movements and individuals include those such as Ghandi, the Renaissance, the women's suffrage movement, Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement, the Occupy Wall Street movement, and recently Bernie Sander's campaign, to name a bare few. These movements, and Eisler's contention, are reflections of the principles of Discourse Two and Three at work in society throughout history. Though in my work these discourses relate to education, their core values apply to all aspects of life and society; just as here, they encourage children to apply them to all areas of life.

There have always been those who have worked for partnership/peace values, and much beneficial progress has come from those works, often spanning generations. It is imperative we continue to sow these values into the foundations of our cultures so that they can transform the systems which culture produces. It also works in the opposite direction; acting upon the structures of society can help the transformation of cultural values. In fact, many scholars, activists, and I believe that we must work on all levels simultaneously: the direct, structural, and cultural.

I personally always return to the education of our children, and therefore the social structure of education. Hereafter is a compilation of the principles or elements which I have found in my research to be positive, or possibly even necessary, to an education system that can give children the opportunity to develop into effective peace/partnership/sustainability building citizens, possibly capable of averting the crisis we all face. All following elements can be grouped as peace principles, partnership principles, or spiritual principles.

There is no way I could have covered every element exhaustively, and more can be added to this list. I've done my best to cover the basics of most principles in order to present a snapshot of a holistic model. These are most of the principles that make up the Second and Third Discourses.

## 2.2 Development for the Teaching Profession

I begin here as many of the authors I researched rightfully addressed the teaching profession as an obvious cornerstone of education. Students need well trained teachers as guides, mentors, inspirations, supporters, and knowledge holders. Though there were differences in the theories of authors regarding the teaching profession, there were also commonalities along the

lines of values and principles. And all were clear that teacher training programs and the resources devoted to them in the United States are woefully deficient and misinformed in terms of methods and approaches - wretchedly entrenched in the Old Discourse, and struggling to adapt to Discourse Two.

Like Robinson, Wagner is clear that well trained, masterful teaching is the key to successful student learning, and he demonstrates the enormity of the problems we have in providing such mastery in the U.S. His own experience of earning a master's and doctoral degrees in education did not come close to preparing him to be a good teacher or principal, and he documents that "very few teacher preparation programs focus on developing the skills needed to be an effective teacher, and they rarely give student teachers meaningful teaching experiences with knowledgeable and effective supervisors" and certification programs for administrators give no focus at all "on how to be a change leader-or even how to supervise teachers effectively." (Wagner, 2008: 145). Dr. Arthur Levine, president of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, wrote a 2006 report surveying education school alumni and twenty-eight programs nation wide. In it, he was unable to find "a single example of an effective education leadership preparation program in the United States," and found that at least three out of five alumni claimed that "schools of education do not prepare their graduates to cope with the realities of today's classrooms." (Wagner, 2008: 145-146). This is at the very least a serious contributing factor to our problems in education. CTT links these issues to the lack of cultural value placed upon the institution of education. In a more partnership oriented society (Finland is used by Robinson as a fine example), education is given more resources and respect as a care-based institution, understood as a major contributor to the human capital and potential of a citizenry.

Robinson also links another side of the issue to the valuation of the teaching profession. Our undervaluation of teaching and education falls under a cultural legacy of Discourse One.

Wagner also details his appreciable experience with classroom observation as something that he greatly recommends for teacher development everywhere, in fact, he states “I truly believe that viewing and discussing videos of teaching and supervision is *the single most effective strategy for improving instruction for all schools.*” (Wagner, 2008: 142). Wagner believes that the isolation in the teaching profession must be broken, and teachers as well as principals and other education professionals must learn through practice to become comfortable working together to develop a shared understanding of what is meant by good practice and academic rigor within their school and community (Wagner, 2008: 155-163). In some ways, Wagner is largely arguing for a cultural shift toward partnership principles within our schools. He includes a segment titled “The Culture of the Education Profession,” in which he explains that the “Old World” of our schools is still operating in top down hierarchies of “compliance to traditional bureaucratic authority...Authority and accountability in education-from state, to district, to school, to individual classroom-are very much top-down and one-way and, as such, create a culture of compliance.” (Wagner, 2008: 155). Critical of the Old Discourse and fully in line with the holistic ideals of the Alternative and Novel Discourse, Wagner suggests that respect, community and communication, enthusiasm, and meaningful accountability, are equally important to teachers and other education professionals as they are to students.

Robinson points to Finland as a great example of schools that are flourishing by using these principles. One of the reasons cited for Finnish success with education is they have “invested heavily in the training and development of teachers, and as a result teaching is a

high-status, secure profession.” (Robinson, 2015: 60). Eisler’s book, The Real Wealth of Nations (2007), is devoted entirely to describing the vast benefits of placing higher value, both economically and culturally, on professions and roles traditionally believed to be “feminine.” She argues that teaching is not seen as a masculine profession and therefore is valued less than other professions<sup>5</sup> (Eisler, 2007) She also advocates in *Tomorrow’s Children* (2000) that “we must give much greater social recognition to the value of teachers, both through better pay and through increased funding for continuing teacher development, education, and support.” (Eisler, 2000: 22). Robinson also points out that the culture of Finnish schools encourages collaboration and communication rather than competition, amongst and between teachers, staff, parents, and the outside community. Basically, they have fostered a partnership culture in their education system and it is thriving as a result. Here is an example of the gap between Discourse Two and Three; Eisler moves her theory into the realm of meaningful peace and sustainability by exposing cultural and systemic hierarchical inequities. By failing to reach this level of discourse, those stuck within the Second Discourse cannot achieve the cultural shifts we need.

Some of the other issues Wagner sites are the practice of tenure, the lack of meaningful feedback or evaluations for teachers<sup>6</sup>, lack of consensus upon good practice in the profession -

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<sup>5</sup> Still, when a man steps into the role of teacher, he is typically compensated more highly than his female counterparts (New York Times, 2010)(Tinch, 2008: 29) in accordance with the dominator value of men over women, which is yet another level of Discourse One principles.

<sup>6</sup> Evaluations is another significant element for students as well that I did not cover in this chapter. I will touch on it briefly by mentioning that the grading system today is still problematically entrenched in Discourse One. Research cited by Stoll Lillard (2005), as well as Wagner and Robinson shows that reward and punishment, external incentive, and letter grades can diminish internal motivation and satisfaction with one’s work at any age (Stoll-Lillard, 2005: 152-191). An interconnected view of such disadvantages for students *and* teachers can be a contribution from holistic views from the Alternative and Novel viewpoints. Discussions about alternatives, like portfolios or mastery based goals, to competitive and “perhaps most insidious” (Stoll-Lillard, 2005: 166) grade systems delve deeply into all three levels of Discourse and are important considerations for future research.

largely due to lack of community participation and communication amongst teachers and principals etc., and also, the question of whether American tax payers and government officials

*...care enough about the future to pay educators a more professional wage and to provide them with the working conditions they need to succeed: smaller classes, teachers organized into teams with shared responsibility for groups of students, more effective coaching for continuous improvement, better and more frequent local assessments of students' progress, and more time to work and learn with colleagues. We also don't yet know whether schools of education and the education profession and its unions, even with the right incentives, are willing to rise to the new challenge and give up old behaviors and beliefs. (Wagner, 2008: 165)*

Here, questioning whether our society as a whole *cares enough about the future* to take action leads to the chicken and egg problem of how can we foster more care of the future in our society without educating our children *to care*, yet how can we teach our children to care when we as a society, do not?

Another intriguing question which I have not found in any Discourse so far, is the role of teachers in general, and specifically if the *term* “teacher” is outdated and unuseful, or even harmful. Perhaps it is too enmeshed with past dominator hierarchical relationships in schools, where the adult has the knowledge and the students are considered empty vessels to receive it. A more beneficial paradigm for teacher/student relationships may develop where both parties recognize mutual learning, following, and leading, in a dynamic process of discovery and exploration. Robinson’s research, and Wagner’s experience as well, suggest that some of the most effective teachers are mainly there to ask their students good questions, leading them into critical thinking, and engaging curiosity and deeper analysis. Projects like MindDrive suggest that masterful teachers may largely be liaisons to the outside world; facilitating the projects dreamed up by students and making them possible, demonstrating to students they are possible.

So, perhaps shifting away from the terms teacher/student may be an improvement. Learning facilitators, guides, partners....these could be simple yet powerful discursive tools in strengthening the underlying value shift toward Discourse Two and Three.

### 2.3 Inner Peace, Whole Human Education

This set of principles are interlocking, integral, and mutually reinforcing. This is a brief summation of what I refer to as “inner peace” principles and I’m pulling them together under the heading of “Whole Human Education.” These are the principles that shape education practice for a more individually adaptable and flexible, personalized experience, that research has shown is more effective than traditional education as a “one size fits all” philosophy. Such uniform ideology allows many students to miss opportunities for learning altogether, while failing to enable those who *are* able to conform to the system to reach their full potential and develop the most beneficial lifelong learning and living skills. Utilizing these principles with a partnership process based approach to education serves to instill in young minds their own inherent value and the value of life, humanity, diversity, nurturance. Experiencing these principles through interactions with adults allows them to be internalized by the child. This pedagogically demonstrates the natural human capacity to thrive, and that we all deserve respect and recognition; that each of us has something of value to offer.

This is a huge group of principles and ideas, and some are more inseparable from one another than others. They cover a range from *how* children learn best, in what kind of setting, atmosphere, culture, and with what methods, to *what* is valuable and that everyone deserves to have an opportunity to learn. With the former, simple things like timing and age structure have a significant impact, as well as more pedagogical questions about process and teaching/learning



method (for example, recognizing and allowing diversity of learning styles and collaborative or self-directed learning rather than forcing a specific mode or pedagogy). With the latter, some interesting topics have been breached by these authors in regard to curriculum typically not included in traditional education, such as classes on human and personal relationships, child rearing, sexuality, and developing a relationship and understanding of the personal, or even spiritual, inner world.

### 2.3.1 Cooperation and Team/Group Learning, and the Question of Age

In collaboration, cognitive work is socially distributed, so the cognitive workload of each party is reduced...people can talk back, exchange ideas, and fill in gaps in each other's knowledge, thereby raising the level of discussion...Thinking is shared across a network, easing the processing load on each member of the network. (Lillard, 2005: 221).

In the tech industry, which Wagner diligently focuses on as a desirable job sector, it makes sense that “distributed cognition” as described by Lillard above is utilized. The drive in the tech world is to come up with innovations pushing the limits of what anyone has yet to have thought of; therefore, many minds working together are apt to come up with more worthwhile ideas than an individual mind. This is even more true when entering the field of peace studies. This is where one is confronted with the most complex problems of human history. The problems our children will be inheriting are the problems they will have to come up with collaborative solutions for, as no one person will be able to address them alone.

Montessori developed education that begins well before traditional schooling does in the U.S., at around age 5 or 6. Dr. Montessori had educational recommendations for children as young as infants, specifying a particular sequence of specific objects to aid in their development (Lillard, 2005: 45). Research shows that both peer tutoring and collaborative arrangements

produce better outcomes for students both socially and in terms of learning (Lillard, 2005: 223); we know that throughout elementary school and high school, social life is of central importance to young people, yet traditionally schooling forces isolation, individual work, and passive listening to an adult at the front of the classroom, instead of capitalizing on the natural inclinations of youth as do programs like Montessori (Lillard, 2005: 194-195, 222) or other collaboration based programs. Ironically, the traditional system seems almost backward; younger children up to age 5 are placed in very interactive environments when they are not developmentally very capable of peer interaction, while older students are forced into isolative work when they are so much more engaged by their peers (Lillard, 2005: 194-195).

There are many documented benefits to structuring learning so that children can engage with one another. Dr. Montessori may have created ideal scenarios by grouping classrooms into age groups spanning three years, as it is likely that children learn best through imitating just slightly older peers; ages 3-6 are grouped for primary schooling and 6-9 and 9-12 are grouped for lower and upper elementary. She also encouraged visits between classrooms; for children at the oldest level of one group may go to visit their future classroom to see what they will be doing the following year (Lillard, 2005: 202). The benefits of such groupings, and interaction between close age groups, include the advantages of tutoring (most successful with children aged slightly apart or at levels just above and below one another) and collaboration, observation and imitation, and also relationship building (Lillard, 2005: 192-223).

Studies showing that even in infancy, humans are likely to want to try out a behavior they witnessed someone else perform, even after a delayed amount of time (Lillard, 2005: 196-197), may have significant implications for peace education. It seems plausible that more exposure

children receive to peacebuilding actions may encourage and inspire them to try out the same or similar behaviors; perhaps both normalizing such actions for the child as well as giving them the opportunity to develop positive connotations with peacebuilding behaviors. When a slightly younger child is able to observe a slightly older child engaging with the same materials she is using but at the next level of complexity, she can experience enthusiasm to learn the next task, in fact, Montessori teachers report that the observation of others' working with materials can even inspire children to work with materials they may not have had motivation to work with prior (Lillard, 2005: 201). Perhaps the experience of seeing another child who inhabits the developmental stage just beyond the one a child currently occupies, performing some feat, is linked to a sense of desire for greater empowerment. As the child then witnesses himself moving forward and learning the skills he initially observed in someone else, he develops a sense of self-fulfillment and empowerment, which may develop a pleasurable connotation with learning.

This could be compelling information on which to capitalize in our schools to promote peacebuilding capacities in our children. The global issues we face can feel overwhelming for any individual. Wagner, Robinson, and Eisler share a conviction that rote compliance is harmful to U.S. democratic participation, as well as to the environment and future of the world. In order to confront and creatively work toward solutions for catastrophic issues like climate change, it seems likely that qualities such as a sense of empowerment, on a *community* level more than an individual level, are needed. Eisler includes numerous examples of humans collectively and tirelessly working for and achieving change; examples such as MindDrive give students a lived experience of fostering change themselves. Seeing others become empowered and then experiencing empowerment, individually and as a group, may be essential.

Peer tutoring has been shown to have enormous benefits under the right circumstances. With the right level and type of structure, peer tutoring studies have been shown to improve student success in comparison to a control group in topics covered by tutoring as well as topics not covered in tutoring sessions, and that these results lasted into the two years following the tutoring program (Lillard, 2005: 204). “In one study, tutees asked 240 times more questions when being tutored by a peer than during whole-class learning.” (Lillard, 2005: 222). This evidence may also relate to critical thinking, discussed later. Student tutoring also gives enormous benefits to the tutor. In another study, students who learned material for the purpose of teaching it to another student scored almost twice as high in conceptual understanding, and rated themselves as more interested and actively engaged, with higher enjoyment levels (Lillard, 2005: 208). Increased motivation is reported by students who expect to teach what they are learning, and considering it has been “suggested that more organized cognitive structures are employed when learning with the expectation that one will pass information on, and that this is responsible for the cognitive gains accrued by those who are intending to teach” (Lillard, 2005: 208), it could be thus theorized that the human brain is actually set up to help others learn, and to engage in group learning. Not only does this reinforce the notion that cooperative learning styles are most beneficial to students, but it also could mean that students may best learn in environments that are geared toward teaching them how to be helpful to others; perhaps even, how to be peacebuilders.

Collaboration is shown to be more conducive to learning than solitary work (Lillard, 2005: 210), and this principle relates, in something of a paradox, to the value of the individual. “Collaborative systems share such characteristics as viewing all children as a potential resource

for others' learning," (Lillard, 2005: 211) "each party brings skills or knowledge that another may lack, allowing different partners to serve as scaffolds for each other's learning." (Lillard, 2005: 211) Vygotsky referred to "proximal development," the learning that happens when an individual cannot accomplish a task alone, but in "the company of a more advanced other" is able to succeed (Lillard, 2005: 193). We can be greater than the sum of our parts when we work together and learn from one another. Could these boons in learning be pointed out to students, who are asked to analyse how each person's unique gifts contributed to a shared success, and then used as a "scaffold" to consider the preciousness of interculturality? To foster great joy in diversity? To build respect and appreciation for differences and the complexities of the individual? And further, could these lessons learned early in life help instill in students knowledge of tremendous need for respect of human rights and diversity worldwide?

As for relationships, collaborations have been shown to be more beneficial amongst students when the students are friends; they are more likely to critique, elaborate, and offer explanations, and were more adept at solving difficult problems together than non-friends (Lillard, 2005: 214). Sustained relationships also provide more beneficial contexts for learning (Lillard, 2005: 214), making the three year Montessori groupings even more attractive, and also showing that education is not impersonal and individual, but indeed involves our social nature and abilities to connect. Eisler expresses some of the imperative for this to be realized when she speaks of the suffering and thriving resultant from dominator and partnership relationships experienced in childhood. As the psychology drawn upon by Eisler and Lillard both show, "it suggests that children learn the most in collaborative exchanges when they collaborate with

people with whom they have deeper and more positive relationships,” (Lillard, 2005: 214), which paves the way for a discussion on relationship education.

Researchers...note that when students are effectively helped to work together to accomplish shared goals, they learn both the teamwork and personal accountability needed for the post-modern workplace. Researchers...found that when schools become “caring communities” there are positive outcomes for both students and teachers, such as more personal motivation, nonviolent conflict resolution, and altruistic behaviors. (Eisler, 2000: 15)

Although students are clearly better served by models that are adapted to social and collaborative learning based on positive relations, and such models have been significantly recommended since at least late 80s and early 90s, our traditional system tends to still use factory/lockean style, with collaboration being utilized as an add on at best (Lillard, 2005: 193, 212, 222-223). Research such as this offers a powerful argument for addressing another long standing and deeply imbedded educational discourse; instead of children bearing the onus for adapting to the way school is designed as has been the norm for so long, it seems obvious that schools instead must adapt to how children best learn. However, this idea is so contrary to our deeply held beliefs about school that it is rarely pursued.

### 2.3.2 Self Directed and Exploration Based Learning

Freedom of choice and autonomy are somewhat key elements for optimizing the principles of collaboration and teamwork, and Dr. Montessori’s method allows these principles to benefit from one another. Children in Montessori classrooms are self-directed most of the time as mentioned earlier; they are also given the freedom to choose whom to collaborate with amongst their peers and whom to ask questions of and make observations to. “People sometimes fear that if a child of five gives lessons, this will hold him back in his own progress. But, in the

first place, he does not teach all the time and his freedom is respected.” (Montessori, quoted by Lillard, 2005: 209)

Ken Danford, founder of “North Star Self-Directed Learning for Teens”, a community center where students and parents are given a safe space and resources to choose the direction and style of what the student will pursue for their own education, mentioned to Robinson that no one before him had ever told the kids he works with that they have any other option but to attend school unless they want to be socially ostracised failures who never go on to college or get good jobs (Robinson, 2015: 54-55). However, when given respect and encouragement to take charge of their own education, students who attend North Star often discover a “passion for learning,” and go on to renowned colleges or do other positive things in their lives.

A study in which rats were shown to have more neurological activity when placed in an obstacle course as opposed to having an exercise wheel may have implications for what creates internal motivation. Researchers were led to conclude that movement employed with purpose is related to brain development (Lillard, 2005: 44). Perhaps this is evidence that we should also reconsider sheltering our young students from challenge; perhaps keeping motivation healthy and strong requires that we provide difficulty early.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of play:

“partnership teaching also relies on nonverbal experiences through art and music, drama and poetry, contact with nature, and above all, play –whether the actual play of younger children or the conceptual play of more mature minds exploring the rich possibilities in ourselves and our world.” (Eisler, 2000: 16)

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<sup>7</sup> This is an adage also supported by Robinson’s and others’ conviction that holding students to high expectations of their capabilities can help them to raise their own expectations for themselves; leading to higher levels of performance.

Though Eisler is the only scholar to bring actual play into the subject matter, other authors account for the power of “conceptual play of more mature minds.”

It may be crucial that we foster play and possibility as a foundational concept of learning, for as we have seen through dominator models and the studies between lockean and factory models versus Montessori, traditional education tactics can lead to disenchantment, swift deterioration of internal motivation/interest/curiosity, and a sense of meaninglessness/hopelessness. These results are disastrous if the goal is to foster in youth the abilities and willingness to be peace builders, innovators, and environmental champions in their adult lives. As I have experienced in my own studies in the Masters and with my fellow students, sometimes a sense of hopelessness and grief can be so overwhelming it can be temporarily paralyzing. During such moments, it has been crucial for me and others to rely on each other to remind ourselves of the meaning, purpose, passion, and possibilities behind our work. Had we been instilled with these tools on a daily basis through a structure built upon such principles, I think it is possible we would be even more adept and effective in our current peace work, with fewer emotional pitfalls.

However, terms like “play” and “creativity” have had their most beneficial meanings hijacked by conflicting discourses such as those of the Standards movement. In such discourses, play is a waste of productive time in which children should be working to better their minds or test taking abilities. In the discourse of peace education embodied here, play certainly is engaged in for it’s own sake, however, it is also more than just a recreational activity. Play and creativity can be engaged in spaces that deepen a child’s relationship with others, broadens imaginative capacity, problem solving and conflict transformation, and can also lead to deeper relationship



and exploration of the world within the self. This last product can be related to peace building skills in many regards seldom discussed—in terms of self-reflection, deep appreciation and awe for the spiritual world, prompting questions of ontology, critical thinking, self-regulation and empathy. I argue that encouraging the pursuit of a child’s natural creativity can build a child’s reserves of inner joy and satisfaction, which could then contribute to that child’s willingness and capacity to connect deeply with inner experiences, feelings and reactions. Later, when denial is discussed, introspection will again be touched upon as a potentially crucial ability and practice.

### 2.3.3 Multiple Intelligence/Diversity in Learning, Honoring the Individual

Chapter four in Creative Schools is titled “Natural Born Learners.” In it is discussed the innate learning capacity in all humans from birth, and a recommendation that all levels of education from primary through university should study and learn from the best early-years facilities they can find, for such facilities capitalize on and cater to the natural learning instincts of their age group (Robinson, 2015: 73), not to mention the enormous amount of development that takes place during the early years of life. The question of how we might take advantage of the greater intake of information in the first five years for the sake of peace building is a powerful possibility for peace research.

The research of Sugata Mitra and his experiments with giving children technology with little or no instruction is used to illustrate that children are surprisingly capable of learning independently “if given effective tools” (Robinson, 2015: 75), which is exactly the wisdom Montessori built her system upon. This research is used to explain why traditional education is so limiting. When the curriculum is a pre-defined and finite “body of material to be learned” (Robinson, 2015: 75), and the modes in which students must learn it are fixed, and not even the

most useful, the opportunity for exploration, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving are diminished, if not destroyed. A significant loss of this practice is that children miss the opportunity to discover their own methods of learning and problem solving, and thus are prevented from their optimal learning outcomes. Expecting everyone to learn with the same limited techniques, and also expecting all students to learn at the same rate, is how traditional education ignores the variety of strength and intelligence of individuals, and many students get labeled “unintelligent” or come to believe such falsehoods of themselves (Robinson, 2015: 75). It is a system that only allows those with capacity for specific ways of learning to succeed, but it fails to fulfill the potential of all, and fails to teach respect and honor for human difference. This does not serve the movement for a more peaceful world, for our problems are of such complexity and enormity that we direly need everyone’s strongest contribution and we need as many approaches and perspectives of problem solving as we can find. We particularly need peacebuilders who will be able to come up with solutions “outside the box.” If we only teach children to use one method of solving problems or that there are specific answers, we cannot hope that their unique untapped intelligences will come up with innovations creative enough to help our situation.

One of Robinson’s main principles is that the education that will flourish and feed a flourishing society must be *personalized*. It must have the capacity to recognize and optimize on the strengths of each individual. The four elements he sites as being critical to this aim are that “systems that are personalized to the real abilities of every student” must a) see that intelligence manifests in numerous and interconnecting ways, b) support students to delve into their personal strengths and passions, c) allow *scheduling* to reflect the reality that learning takes place at

different rates, and d) develop practices of *assessment* that better support learning and achievement (Robinson, 2015: 82-83). Making sure that students have the time and means to pursue their own interests as well as learn a common curriculum is reflected in Montessori from a very early age. Timing in traditional schooling is commonly cited as problematic. Robinson is referring both to the splitting up of age groups and also the militarized daily schedule, often signified by the use of bells. In this regard, the Montessori style is also superior with children choosing how long to spend at each activity and more gentle direction issued from teachers if a child obviously needs encouragement to take a break or spend time with other materials. This allows for deep concentration to take place, whereas short classes with forced transitions can effectively deter many opportunities for deep engagement. It is also an example of dominating control, which encourages internalization of rote obedience and conformity rather than inspired contributions based on internalized belief in unique worth, collaborative strengths, and the autonomy which brings ability to think critically and make personalized contributions.

#### 2.3.4 Appropriate Curriculum and Community Involvement

Robinson and Wagner make the case that the Standards Movement with its obsession on standardized testing and focus on shallow memorization rather than deep thinking and skills building are failing to provide the “appropriate curriculum” necessary for students to be able to compete in the new economic climate. Robinson also declares that the hierarchies of subjects that diminish the value of hands on career skills and the arts, as well as the perceived worth of the students who choose to pursue them, is a damning norm that must be addressed. “This academic/vocational caste system is one of the most corrosive problems in education.” (Robinson, 2015: 17). Robinson’s strong point about caste systems is a prime showcase of the

dominator values deeply entrenched in our schools' cultures. If we are to create community where individuals are truly honored and free to find their highest fulfillment, we must then honor all the various manifestations of personal creative energy which a student finds themselves drawn into, whether that be a career in music, caregiving, technology, or carpentry, etc. Yes, leadership will be pursued by some more than others, however in hierarchies of actualization rather than domination, leaders will not be valued higher than others, they will be taking on roles of public servant, doing their community a service, just as a plumber performs a needed service. If we are to dismantle other damning hierarchies such as racism, sexism, and classism, then we need to dismantle the mental constructs embedded in our culture that teach us hierarchies of domination, where some are more valuable than others.

“Education, as today conceived, is something separated both from biological and social life. All who enter the educational world tend to be cut off from society...People are prepared for life by exclusion from it.” (Lillard, 2005: 224) Maria Montessori quoted by Lillard expresses that “learning is motivated by the context in which it is needed.” (Lillard, 2005: 225). If this is indeed the case, then this is both a boon to training children in the U.S. in peace building skills and a challenge. On the one hand, *need* is plentiful. The human race and many other species of life on the planet have *need* for such learning to occur. Of course, no parent in the U.S. would support exposing their children to any lived experience of the horrors being wrought on the planet for the sake of learning motivated by dire need. However, research shows that even meaningful examples and symbols can suffice to provide motivating and aiding context for learning. (Lillard, 2005: 225). Lillard points out that providing meaningful context is exceptionally difficult in the traditional mode of schooling; word problems in math or vocabulary lists memorized from work

books, for example, are hopelessly removed from most children's immediate experience, and creating connections between the ever-changing material and textbooks and student's lives is of varying success and depends upon "more gifted teachers." (Lillard, 2005: 225).

Clearly many of the skills and facts learned in school are intended to serve learners outside the school context, but the manner in which they are taught sometimes obscures those purposes, reducing the extent to which school learning is transferred to contexts outside of school. (Lillard, 2005: 224)

All authors I reviewed recommend that learning in schools extend outward into the larger community. Examples given by the authors highlight internships and projects with professionals, and Montessori includes student planned field trips as inherent to her system.

Eisler addresses the realities of some students that touch into the personal and emotional struggles generally ignored and unaddressed in our current factory model of school.

As Sheila Mannix and Mark Harris write, what is urgently needed is a school 'that can be an effective antidote to the stress of the street and the hurt of the home, a haven of safety, orderly learning, and personal growth, the school as the guarantor of a child's right to protection, education, and love.' Because schools are increasingly in a position of having to meet these needs, but not equipped to do so, Mannix and Harris call for social investments that will make it possible for schools to become "the social hub of the community, a mechanism with which society can reach out to families in trouble and ensure that help is provided. (Eisler, 2000: 24)

If we envision this reality, the idea of a whole village raising the children, it seems that partnership values need to be further developed within the whole of our society. Service to the community needs to become a part of normal life, in place of the individualistic self-absorbed culture predominating and promoted currently. Though it will be a difficult task to instill these values in our students without having a community of adults already committed to such values, we must start somewhere. "Gathering the troops" could be a reclaimed metaphor for

peacebuilders - we must gather and encourage more adults who already embody such values into the education of our children—then the next generation will have a more cohesive adult community to provide the needed mentorship.

This is an example of the challenge of placing an element into one category or the other as either more inner or outer peace is aligned. On the one hand, in order to attain inner peace, students may need to feel that pursuing their chosen field is both valued and available. And on the other, so long as we allow certain populations and careers and life choices to be shamed or devalued, we will be contributing to social strife, institutionalized inequities, and will fail to build the strength of care and community our society will need to overcome the problems cultural violence has created.

### 2.3.5 Personal Well Being and Development

The idea that education must teach students to relate both to the outer world around them with the tools of mental acuity, and *also* to the personal world *within* them is powerful, somewhat radical, and absolutely central to what we need to seek. Robinson links the lack of humanity in education to many of education's problems like "boredom, disengagement, stress, bullying, anxiety, depression, and dropping out." (Robinson, 2015: 52). Robinson fails to mention deeply important and confounding elements of growing up into a whole human being, namely *relationships*, romantic, sexual, and other intimate forms of human connection which young people biologically find at the fore of their concerns, and which are often defining and shaping experiences.

Robinson does not offer much in the array of concrete solution about how education can aid students in developing a relationship with their inner world, however bringing up the subject

strongly is worthy of mention, and I celebrate his call for human responses to human issues (Robinson, 2015: 52). The notion of including such personal matters as spiritual, emotional, and relational development in our schools is still a more novel discourse than topics such as self-directed learning and critical thinking, etc., have become as they've gained traction in common narratives about education. However, I see Robinson's and Eisler's discussion of these as contributions to the substantiation of this novel and needed discourse. In my own personal and informal interviews with many peers, it seems to the average person in my generation (within the region I occupy, at least), the subject of relationship with self and others has been expressed time and again as the most important element they craved and needed during their school years that was the most ignored and absent from formal school activity. It is possible that this subject is already a strong narrative amongst millennials, or perhaps, it would become exceptionally strong if these topics were brought up consistently and widely within this demographic. This would be an interesting area for further research, and potentially fruitful in terms of strengthening the movement by strengthening the discourse for peace education.

Another question to consider in our schools is whether trauma is a subject that should be taught. This is a topic I have always believed to be important for young people, as many struggle with psychological pain which can interfere with learning and development, and also lead to various forms of violent behavior. Having information and discussions about how the human psyche is vulnerable to trauma and how it reacts and internalizes such experiences may give students a head start on finding their way to healthier lives for themselves.

What we find in dominator systems is the institutionalization of trauma—whether through the pain of physical and/or emotional abuse, through humiliating and painful rituals of male initiation, or through the creation of artificial scarcity of both material and emotional sustenance in all areas of life. This is how rigid hierarchies of domination are

maintained. In short, the conditions that cause pain and anger are built into dominator systems. (Eisler, 2000: 35).

A teenage student from a Santa Cruz high school recently made a local presentation documenting that a quarter of all teens suffer from untreated mental illness. In twelve step recovery, the value of the “wounded healer” is seen as without parallel, because it often takes someone who has survived and succeeded at transforming their own wounds in order to aid and support someone who is currently struggling with a similar difficulty. It may follow that making discussion of such issues normal and common, and helping survivors heal, may lead to a set of peacebuilding youth who are especially gifted in the field.

Linking partnership education to these issues, Eisler states:

This is not to say that teaching that fosters these capacities in children will solve all their problems, particularly of young people who live in circumstances of desperate poverty, alienation, and violence. But making a child feel seen and cared for can make a big difference, particularly at this time, when so many young people feel helpless and hopeless. (Eisler, 2000: 16)

#### 2.3.6 Relationships, Sexuality, Child Rearing

What we learn and replicate in our fundamental intimate relations are the direct progenitors of the culture we will help create in our own lives.

It is fascinating to consider in Dr. Montessori’s report that her schools were criticized as “asocial, because of the lack of whole-class, uniform activity.” (Lillard, 2005: 193). I find this interesting because of the insinuated association of “social education” with the passive intake and regurgitation, reaction, or simply absorption of information, such as hordes of Americans may engage in while watching sports as a crowd, watching a movie in a theater, or sitting in a classroom listening to lecture. This is a very different type of social engagement than deep,



thoughtful, intimate, and empathetic exchange between two or more people; in fact, in such scenarios there is little if any opportunity to develop meaningful relationship based upon interaction and knowledge of another human being, or the shared experience of working toward a solution to a problem or goal.

Montessori education explicitly includes learning respectful social behavior as much as part of the curriculum as math, music and language (Lillard, 2005: 198-199). Called “lessons of Grace and Courtesy,” they include very small children how to be careful and aware of their environment and the people and things around them; practicing care to not knock over a neighbor’s work, how to serve food or push in a chair. Children learn they affect their environment and community at a very early age in this model. There is also storytelling, designed to inspire children to behave gallantly as the depicted hero or heroine, as well as the practice of having children act out social scenarios, “demonstrating successful and unsuccessful ways to interact with others.” (Lillard, 2005: 199).

Another argument that supports the need for relationship building, active listening, intimacy, and communication to be integrated into school curriculum is the discovery that “children have been found to advance more in moral reasoning after discussing moral dilemmas with classmates than with their mothers, and this finding appeared to hinge on the degree to which transactive reasoning was used in discussion of the dilemmas.” (Lillard, 2005: 221). Whether this can be reproduced with adults—if adults are able to interact with children’s ideas in a transactive way—was not discussed, but could be another reason to further the teaching profession with partnership process, training teachers to recognize the value and insights of the individual child. However, it is also a clear indicator that we ought to intentionally encourage

and guide such discussions between children in classrooms, and abandon the compartmentalized and false notion that morals and values are the domain of parents, when it is demonstrated that children learn from their peers and that schools teach principles whether they are conscious of this or not. The fact that transactive discussion is crucial for this development to occur also reinforces the need for critical thinking, as well as positive, respectful, and caring relationships between students so they can best benefit from one another.

This finding further supports the necessity of partnership process and structure; for it is unlikely that transactive discussions will take place within dominator frameworks.

Eisler champions a unique notion that parenting classes, as well as classes on healthy relationships and sexuality are necessary components of education. Like the concept in the previous element of personal development, this is still a novel concept.

## 2.4 Outer Peace Education, or Education About A *Whole* World

The next few elements, while still often related to the question of a whole human being, can also be grouped into subjects that are largely unacknowledged in traditional schools, yet are crucial to providing an education for building peace and sustainability.

### 2.4.1 Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is arguably one of the chief foundational skills students need to learn, for all of their life concerns, and, is of course, tantamount for peacebuilding. It was a common thread throughout all the literature surveyed for this thesis, and it is widely agreed that students in the factory model of education are not given adequate resources to develop their capacities of analysis in their academic work, nor in the world around them. There is enormous evidence that critical thinking is indeed vital for students, from all perspectives, be it economic or peace work,

yet a survey sponsored by Partnership for 21st Century Skills and a few other organizations found that of 400 employers, almost 70 percent ranked high school graduates they hired as deficient in critical thinking skills (Wagner, 2008: 20). In explaining her partnership education model, Eisler says, “When taken-for-granted assumptions are made visible we can choose to accept, reject, or modify them. Choice is central to partnership...without the opportunity to exercise choice there can be no critical thinking.” (Eisler, 2000: 26). Self-reflection and introspection are a part of critical thinking for Eisler, and being able to challenge our own or others’ assumptions is one of its benefits. In fact, I argue the tremendous need for critical thinking further justifies the absolute necessity of whole-human approaches to education. Analysing internal beliefs, assumptions, and fears, and denial or fear of conducting such internal reflection, could be considered some of the greatest obstacles to meaningful critical thinking.

Asking questions is considered a central aspect of the skill. Wagner places this skill at the top of his list, and says that a considerable part of the explanation for the necessity of this skill is contributed to the “flattening” of modern organizations. The structures of 21st century companies have changed from rigid hierarchies with managers telling employees what to do, to organizations where there are many teams that cross network with each other, and employees need to be able to figure out what needs to happen and how to go about it on their own (Wagner, 2008: 15). It is possible that some segments of the corporate world are moving more into partnership structures and away from dominator hierarchies, as such movement can lead to more effective and thriving organizations described in Eisler’s volume The Real Wealth of Nations. So, it is imperative for students be prepared for not only peacebuilding, but also the economic world they are inheriting.

I would like to consider several quotes from Wagner's interviewees. They all discuss what critical thinking means and why it is important, from a business perspective. This one is from Annmarie Neal, vice president for talent Management at Cisco Systems, who defines critical thinking as

Taking issues and situations and problems and going to root components; understanding how the problem evolved--looking at it from a systemic perspective and not accepting things at face value.

It also means being curious about why things are the way they are and being able to think about why something is important...What do I really need to understand about this; what is the history; what are other people thinking about this; how does that all come together; what frames and models can we use to understand this from a variety of different angles and then come up with something different?

...One of the biggest issues facing corporations in America today is changing how we think about problems: 'this is the way we've always looked at it' versus understanding the problem from the perspective of a 'flat world.' So we need to approach problems and challenges as a learner as opposed to a knower. We need to be curious versus thinking 'I know the answer.' Yesterday's solution doesn't solve tomorrow's problem. (Wagner, 2008: 16-17).

I find almost incredible the parallels between the skills Neal states *businesses* need and what Lederach shows *peacebuilders* need. What if, instead of talking about innovating for greater monetary success, Neal was talking about how students need to understand racial and ethnic strife throughout the world? Considering root components, the evolution of the problem throughout history, looking at things systemically? What if she were discussing our devastating ecological crisis? And another quote about employability, directly correlating to peace building skills;

The focus for the last five years has been on thinking skills, as well as emotional intelligence--can they interact and relate, can they come up with new ideas, can they bring these new ideas to the table and work with people in the process...

...Individuals who can see past the present, see beyond, think about the future and think systemically, connect the dots...We're looking for less linear thinking-people who can conceptualize but also synthesize a lot of data. (Wagner, 2008: 19-20).

Again, that word; systemic. Future thinking, less linear thinking, interacting and relating. All important abilities for young people who are going to have to confront deeply complicated conflicts and sustainability issues. What if these intelligent business leaders changed their focus, and utilized their capacities for peacebuilding instead of just status quo money making? What if they began to educate young people how to build the same skills?

Another element of critical thinking is the ability to sift through enormous amounts of information and make sense of it, choose what is relevant and useful, and analyze it critically. This is an overlap with Wagner's sixth survival skill of accessing and analyzing information; the two are inseparable if they are to be valuable, particularly for peace building.

An interesting twist comes from Wagner's interview with Rob Gordon, a military educator who had served as director of the American Politics Program at West Point. He mentions that the role of the military has expanded into areas of development, and critical thinking and intercultural aptitude are now important for military leadership, that it is necessary to "develop cadets' ability to think adaptively and flexibly, as well as critically...the ability to think broadly and deeply." (Wagner, 2008: 21-22). Gordon mentions assumptions, alternative solutions, and being able to work with others who have differing viewpoints in order to find the best solution (Wagner, 2008: 22). This flexibility in thinking, respecting and having the willingness to consider someone's thinking that is different, and wariness of assumptions, are also strengths for a peace worker.

## 2.4.2 Democracy

Democracy is obviously a huge discursive subject in U.S. culture. It has been so ubiquitous that, along with the “global warming” discourse referred to earlier, and the “development” discourse so sweeping throughout our modern times, that it has perhaps become a type of “white noise” discourse. The type of narrative we pay lip service to, but don’t often think about or delve into much more deeply. It is simply *there*, as it “always has been” and “always will be,” in our collective minds.

The subject is treated with slightly more consideration in Wagner’s work; however it still takes a back seat to economic issues. Robinson more clearly feels democracy is crucial. He and Eisler examine the dilemma that learning not only about, but also *how* to effectively participate in democratic processes, is a dire need in U.S. schools. Such learning needs to take place not only at the level of curriculum but must also be experienced at the level of school structure and process (Eisler, 2000)(Robinson, 2015: 152-157). Being active and empowered participants in their own lives from an early age is a necessary ingredient for young people to find passion in what they do, and to feel invested in their community, world, and future. Lillard lays forth bountiful evidence of how the suppressive and controlling nature of factory or standards model schooling can diminish and eventually even extinguish a child’s natural joy and interest in learning. Robinson concurs, and connects the same extinguishing of learning to the extinguishing of democratic participation. One example of how the mutual principles of freedom of choice and democratic structure can lead to active citizenship is an instance where there was a protest against budget cuts in a school district, and the only students to participate in the protest were those who had participated in a democratic program in their classes (Robinson, 2015: 154). It is

easy to see why we need young people to learn about their democratic voices through lived experience if they are to be the builders of peace in our future - not only so they can see how to influence change, but also so their fire for participation in life will burn strongly.

#### 2.4.3 Equity and Social Justice Studies

Studies have shown that when gender and race is included in curriculum even as an intervention it can have positive and lasting effects on students' levels of prejudice (their attitudes, perception and behaviors). These interventions have particular influence when introduced with preschool and kindergarten aged students (Eisler, 2000: 19)

In terms of cultural and social issues, Robinson's research covers them at their surface but his conclusions are sound in many regards. Robinson declares that the cultural aspect of education needs to "enable students to understand and appreciate their own cultures and to respect the diversity of others" (Robinson, 2015: 48) and affirms that schools need rich, broad curricula to achieve this, decrying the narrow and shallow curriculums required by the standards movement (Robinson, 2015: 50). He recognizes that much of the strife in the world has resulted from intolerance, perceived difference and fear, and states that in today's world "living respectfully with diversity is not just an ethical choice, it is a practical imperative." (Robinson, 2015: 49). What Robinson fails to express or truly understand is how central the need is for understanding colonialism, imperialism, and injustice throughout history and into the modern day, including postcolonial and perhaps transcolonial and transmodern theories. He may argue that "human conflict has always been as much about culture as it has been about money, land, and power" (Robinson, 2015: 49) which is a view held by many and popularized by works such as Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations." However; it neglects the complexities of conflict, and the reality that resources, territory—and therefore, power and domination—have almost

always been central to conflict, with cultural differences often used as rationalization for domination practices. For instance, the widespread belief that Native Americans were savages in need of religious salvation justified the land grabbing and massive genocide of United States colonization. Or the rhetoric that Africans were inferior to people of European descent, justifying the massive profiteering of the inhuman transatlantic slave trade. When students are truly encouraged to look deeply at issues of cultural conflict, as peace studies promotes, it is most commonly found that there are questions of power which can be understood as the dominator strategies of violence, manipulation, intimidation, etc.

It is an insult to oppressed communities and their histories to attribute the horrendous violence of the past and present to human fear of difference, when in fact that fear was largely orchestrated as a tool for power, subjugation, and economic greed and acquisition. It is a form of violence to ancestors and living recipients of this legacy when it is ignored in classrooms of privileged students, and even more so for the students who live it still. Robinson is correct in saying that this issue is a practical imperative. But in not treating this topic with the attention and honesty and knowledge it deserves, he again, perhaps unknowingly, perpetuates the system which he recognizes to be in dire need of transformation. While he shuns the standards movement for disallowing the time and space for thoughtful study in these areas, he actually does the exact same thing in his book. This is why Eisler's framework is held in my highest regard. Its primary focus on developing the capacity for drawing out patterns and themes for a long term and systemic worldview is the kind of skill needed to make sense of the pervasive impact and causes of violence and injustice throughout human history.



In explanation for the social needs of students, Robinson states the goal is to “enable young people to become active and compassionate citizens,” (Robinson, 2015: 50) and gives a story about women’s suffrage and uses Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech to draw attention to the lack of democratic participation in the U.S. Though I agree in the case of the U.S. (and other countries) strengthening our sense of civic responsibility is indeed necessary for a more peaceful world, this explanation is minimal at best in terms of educating students to be champions for social equity and justice.

Unfortunately, my literature review gave a fairly descriptive example of where the second “alternative” discourse stands in terms of social justice issues, and illustrates why the Novel Discourse on peace is still so needed. In the mainstream Alternative Discourse which touts these principles, there is still much hesitancy when it comes to discussing issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Even when it is discussed, it is rarely in depth and lacks self-reflective and critical understanding. The inadequate discourse around these topics allow erroneous repertoires to continue their reign; such misunderstandings rooted in cultural beliefs of superiority and inferiority, and lacking knowledge of systemic discriminations remain mutually reinforcing. It also increases tension between oppressed groups and their allies fighting to change the system and those who do not have educated understanding of cultural and systemic oppression. How could those uneducated on systems of oppression understand what their comrades are marching in the street about, when there is no normalized understanding within the culture about such issues?

This is part of why the novel “peace” discourse remains novel. Peace studies and peace education is an extremely complex field, and it is so marginalized that discussions and

comprehension about it are severely limited. These limited understandings and misunderstandings lead to, contribute to, and are perpetuated by interpretative repertoires about peace which include stereotypes of idealistic, unrealistic, weak, etc.

These are interesting points to keep in mind when discussing the next element. Gender could easily fit within the heading of this element, however, Eisler's theory has a particularly valuable lens that I wished to focus on.

#### 2.4.4 Gender

Another big piece of the partnership education fabric is developing gender equity. This, states Eisler and many others, enables not only girls/women but also boys/men to find fuller means of self-actualization. In dominator societies, traits associated with men are prioritized and given value while so-called 'feminine' traits and qualities are devalued, which is reflected in the systemic devaluation seen in our schools of certain subjects or ways of knowing and learning. Through partnership education, children learn the immense value, indeed the life-and-death value of the so-called 'feminine' aspects of human nature and to explore how stereotypes of 'masculine' and 'feminine' are not actually inherent to male and female but are traits that belong to us all (Eisler, 2000: 13). So called masculine and feminine traits must be acknowledged as having inherent value, as they are needed for the health of humanity as a whole. Partnership education provides context for this to be learned. Learning to value both masculinity and femininity can address the imbalance of both sexes: boys who are taught they must be hyper masculine and deny any type of caring traits or emotional needs, and girls who come to believe their roles are subservient, over-sexualized and helpless. Through partnership education, girls

and boys can learn to embrace themselves and each other as whole humans, allowing all of their positive traits to thrive.

Issues of gender discrimination and oppression were completely ignored throughout the Alternative Discourse pieces I studied, such as Wagner and Robinson's works. Similarly, I found no significant discussion of LGBT students by any Discourse Two author surveyed, their identities would necessarily be included and valued equally and respectfully within a partnership framework, according to the principles described by Eisler and demonstrated throughout this thesis.

One book solely dedicated to the topic of gender in education did describe some of the challenges faced by non-gender conforming children. While Eliot explains that boys are more constricted in their gender roles and suffer worse consequences for exploring outside masculine stereotypes, or transitioning to gender female, and that girls have more flexibility and less backlash when doing the same, she fails to connect that the "inequality" she expressing is the result of a rigid gender hierarchy where white, heterosexual men are dominant above all. The constraints on boys to be masculine is not beneficial for boys as it is objectifying and dehumanizing; but social punishment for rejecting the status of masculinity is not just *sad for boys*;

The fact that girls grow more flexible and boys less so in their toy preferences reflects the different roles of men and women in Western culture. Compared to men, women have a wider range of options as adults--from stay-at-home- mom to businesswoman, soldier, doctor, bus driver, and more. Girls see these roles in real life and, increasingly, in newer picture books...*If they're lucky*, girls are also taught that they can do anything boys can do. All of this makes boy toys more palatable to girls as they grow beyond simple male-female dichotomies in understanding gender.

Sadly, boys don't get this same message....

The problem is status. Even today, in the twenty-first century, jobs traditionally held by females are considered lower status (and in many cases are lower paid than traditional male jobs.” (Eliot, 2009: 110)(Emphasis my own).

While Eliot’s book is enormously valuable and can be used to break down harmful stereotypes that harm *both boys and girls*, men and women, *and also* maintain domination of men over women (as well as LGBTQ), one must constantly be including the realities of gender hierarchy into the information where it is missing, which is often. Not once in her book does she mention rape, sexual violence or assault. Even on this topic of gender non-conformity where she makes the case that “boys, of course, have it worse” (Eliot, 2009: 114), she neglects issues such as corrective rape that all members of LGBTQ communities are threatened by. And when she explains that—

Boys, of course, have it worse; girls can (*up to a point*) gain status by engaging in male activities, but the reverse is not true...when a boy *does* exhibit many girl-typical behaviors, he is about six times likelier to be sent to a psychiatrist than a girl with a comparable degree of masculine behaviors (Eliot, 2009: 114). (Emphasis added)

—she again fails to see *within her own language* when she uses terms like “up to a point” and “if they are lucky” how gender hierarchies are invisibilized through acceptance of their normalcy. She all but disregards that girls gain status by acting masculine because they are devalued for their given gender to begin with, and that boys lose status by acting feminine because girls are devalued to begin with. In a book solely devoted to gender and the remedy of gender gaps, I find the lack of understanding about patriarchy and gender oppression even more shocking and problematic; it’s like treating a cancer patient with alka seltzer for an upset stomach. This is exactly the level of invisibility in Discourse Two that restricts it from serving the greatest good, and that will forever hold it back from solving the greatest threats of our impending downfall.

I would never say any one person's or group's oppression is more or less important than another's. The point I'm making about the research I've conducted is that gender has been the least discussed and the most invisible oppression in all levels of this research. That does not mean that it is a more important issue than racial inequity, or should be considered ahead of environmental degradation. All these issues are overlapping and interconnecting. What is important for me to bring up is the question of invisibility; because in countless ways, as described and not described by Eliot, explicit and implicit discourse about gender is affecting all of our children, in the U.S. and beyond.

#### 2.4.5 Environmental Sustainability

Although not overtly violent today, many teaching practices and school structures still stem from our earlier dominator standards, which Eisler says are “decidedly *not* appropriate for a democratic society” or for a world facing ecological devastation. Being raised through a violent authoritarian system teaches children to obey orders, and that violence on the part of power holders is normal (Eisler, 2000: 12). These internalized beliefs lend themselves to “the illusion that we can arbitrarily control nature, promoting the short-sighted ‘technology will fix everything and clean up every mess we make’ worldview” (Eisler, 2000: 12). Conversely;

Partnership education can prepare young people to more realistically address environmental issues and use new technologies in responsible and appropriate ways, focusing on long-term consequences, not just quick fixes. It will teach them to think in holistic or systemic terms—that is, in terms of relationships, including our relationship to Mother Earth. (Eisler, 2000: 13).

Robinson does link the need for environmental consciousness and sustainable innovation to his advocacy for economic readiness;

The new and urgent challenge is to provide forms of education that encourage young people to engage with the global economic issues of sustainability and environmental well-being--to encourage them toward forms of economic activity that support the health and renewal of the world's natural resources rather than to those that deplete and despoil them. (Robinson, 2015: 47).

Robinson has the right idea. Like too many of us today, the mistake is in making this declaration a side note, perhaps not having the capacity to fully recognize the true direness of our reality. When we make peace building qualities an elective, an optional side note in education, we misinform and mislead young people as to the realities of the world they are to inherit and one day lead. This is why it should be at the core of all aspects of education, such as Eisler achieves in her framework. None of the authors questions whether capitalism is a viable system in the long run for a sustainable world. I think there is significant reason to make this question a part of the debate about education; however, for the sake of this work I will leave the question there and assume capitalism will continue for the foreseeable future. So, it is necessary to then question how students can become the compassionate and critically minded citizens that will take over capitalist industries and eliminate the most destructive and unsustainable practices, innovating solutions to foster peace.

#### 2.4.6 Economy

Though many scholars and I, as well, question the very feasibility of a sustainable, nonviolent capitalist system, I will not attempt to challenge the underpinnings of capitalism in this thesis. Instead, I will attempt to advocate for a shift in perspective within our capitalist system. As I have argued fervently throughout this work, it is unrealistic and harmful to lead students to believe that making money, the economy, and personal gain, are the tantamount goals

in life; for continuing with such cultural values will ensure the detriment of many species of life, including our own, and arguably mislead children about how to have a truly fulfilling life, and therefore leave them with unrealistic ideas about how to meet their deepest human needs. Therefore, we must teach students that these are personal and societal goals; however, as a society, they must come after and as a result of the development of sustainable practices and innovations. This means that the cultural values which build our future economy and its success - must stem from valuing peace above profit, and peaceful work and innovations must be considered the most beneficial and monetarily recognized to the economy. While providing for oneself and family is certainly primary motivation for most individuals, schools should seek to internalize in students the notion that personal well being is intimately connected to the well being of humanity and the world as a whole. Children deserve to learn that they have the power to shift what is valued economically, and realize that they are free, encouraged, and can experience first hand the fulfillment of engaging in work which contributes to the well being of the world, rather than taking from it.

Cultural Transformation Theory is conducive to this aim; for it both allows students to recognize big picture patterns and interconnections, as well as realize that societies can and do change based upon the values people choose to commit to and what they do with those values. Eisler's book, The Real Wealth of Nations, could be a stunning exploration for high school students to examine how partnership practices in economies are greatly beneficial to the well being of citizens.

## 2.5 Food: When “You Are What You Eat” is Too Scary to Digest

Is it possible that this subject above all is the scariest for U.S. Americans to consider in a meaningful way? It seems possible, given the almost complete absence of discourse on the subject from all education literature reviewed. This topic will be touched upon later when the issue of denial is discussed in chapter three.

Food is something everyone engages with every single day. If a person does not eat on a given day, it seems safe to say that they at least think about eating. The old adage “you are what you eat” nowadays is a pretty terrifying concept for us to examine, and the topic of foods and “food products” served in our cafeterias is a wide discussion—even while there is little or no discussion about making education on the subject of food standard. Issues in the realm of obesity, diabetes, malnutrition, behavioral disorders, bullying and eating disorders, are part of discourses *about* our schools, though are less often included in discourses about what children learn *in* our schools. Discourses about how our food systems operate are more or less unheard of, and represent an extremely novel discourse. Inhumane treatment of livestock in factory farms where conditions not only call into question ethics, but also the health implications for humans who consume the mass produced products, as well as the detrimental environmental impacts of such “farms.” The destruction of biodiversity and soil degradation through monocropping and intensive pesticide use, vs. other forms of food production that happen at the level of counter-culture, within other cultures, or historically, could be both personally meaningful topics for young people who have a daily link to the subject matter through their own consumption. This is also the type of cultural questioning that can develop critical thinking, value alignment, and passion for democratic participation. Food is a topic that connects us intimately with the



whole planet; and social justice is intimately involved with the food we consume, from immigrant farm workers and the issues such communities face in a hostile and hierarchical culture, to the environmental racism inflicted on communities living within rainforests, to the inequitable distribution of food and how we cultivate and commodify it—contributing to global starvation issues—as well as the ethnocide of colonialism which can separate peoples from their cultural foodways. In other words; the single subject of food connects with essentially every single aspect of a holistic education from inner to outer peace. The ways in which students in our schools need to engage with one of the most concrete issues of their lives are numerous, and the obstacles to addressing the lack of engagement are significant.

In his article, Weaver-Hightower gives information on the reasons I listed above, as well as other pertinent rationales to take the subject more seriously when it comes to education research (Weaver-Hightower, 2011). While food and food systems are in fact an enormous and critical subject for our children to become educated on if we are to achieve a sustainable future, similar to the field of peace research and peace education, Weaver-Hightower notes that education researchers regard the topic “as objects of derision rather than serious concern.” (Weaver-Hightower, 2011: 15). According to his work, similar derisive discourses that hinder the progress of Discourse Three surround and block this aspect of peace education.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

There seems to be a pattern among the types of discourses held back and reproduced through ignorance. Lack of in depth understanding and exploration are common.

Some of the elements discussed in this chapter are more integrated into the most prevalent interpretative repertoires on education in the U.S. than others. Critical thinking, for instance, is a “buzz” word in many realms from policy makers to teachers and parents. Other concepts are still only part of the most novel discourses; considerations such as parenting and early childhood education are rarely spoken of at mainstream levels and when considered at all can be seen as fringe ideas, unrealistic, or not realistically actionable.

This kind of Novel Discourse is where the narrative of my thesis resides. It is my interpretation that the evidence I’ve gathered illustrates a discourse in the U.S. about education (but also beyond) that sees *peace education* as a fringe idea, based in unrealistic ideals, and prescribes changes which are not realistically actionable. I argue that this discourse is based in shallow understanding, or even misunderstanding, about what peace studies, education for peace, and peacebuilding actually are. This is easily comprehensible when I consider that I’ve spent many years in undergraduate and graduate course work studying the field, and still have much to learn. However, humanity cannot afford for peace to be studied only by those of us who choose to pursue it in universities and graduate programs. The dominant discourse about “unrealistic, idealistic peace and peace education” continues to construct the daily reality within our schools and as a country; and continues to be an obstacle to the Novel Discourses which better serve us to take root and spread their knowledge base. Therefore, we must continue to engage in discourse analysis in this field, deconstruct the narratives that do not accurately reflect reality, and deepen the community’s understanding of the Novel Discourse on peacebuilding and peace education I strive to represent here.

While each element I've described could easily take volumes to discuss on their own, to provide deep and meaningful understanding, context, and practical implementation, it was my intent to also illustrate how interconnected and inseparable they are as a *cohesive set* of principles that need to become the embedded guideposts for how we teach and structure our schools. In regard to deepening understanding of what really constitutes peacebuilding and education, I contend that we need to increase knowledge of in depth proficiency of each element, as well as proficiency of the entire set as a system.

Part of the analysis in this chapter was meant to illustrate the difficulty of separating the elements. As an example, and as one may notice while reading each element, the evidence I've discussed could have been listed under more than one heading, such as the information about different rates of learning for individual children provided in both the element of multiple intelligences as well as earlier in cooperative learning. Correspondingly, elements also integrate with each other across the division of inner and outer peace. In the same manner, providing students with the nurturing lessons to help them develop their sense of self, self-reflection, honor and recognition of themselves as individuals and therefore diversity, and about relationships and how they can translate into powerful cooperative engagement, are internal developments that are intimately connected with having a clear sense of voice, personal and communal power, and responsibility in a democracy.

The interconnections and relationships of these elements are essentially limitless. Therefore it is important to realize that this is holistic framework. It may be excessive to attempt to cover the thousands of ways such elements can mutually reinforce, or to expect every single teacher to be able to recite all such connections. My assertion is that ignoring too many of these

elements will weaken the system as a whole; they do work best holistically, and even most of our schools and programs that *are* shifting to foundations with many of these principles are lacking too many to be as effective as needed. Too many of our schools, of course, are still entrenched in the old principles all together. In the construction of a fully holistic model, it may be most effective and realistic to trust that many mutual reinforcements will take place naturally in individual students and classes and schools. If a general framework for these principles has taken root, and the process, content, and structure of the school are grounded in these principles, the internalization of them within the students will do the rest. The connections will take place, whether at the level of conscious or subconscious, because they are inherent. In other words, implementation of these principles does not need to be dogmatic, strict, exact. The set itself includes flexibility, adaptability, acceptance and diversity, freedom, creativity, movement. This is why principles must be at the center of the pedagogy—otherwise, our children will be given too many limits—which will hinder them in the enormous task of cultural transformation and creative solutions toward peace.

### III. Exploring Education Discourse in Santa Cruz

#### 3.1 Who I Interviewed, Where I Observed, and Why

The main interviews I will analyze for this chapter occurred with participants across a broad spectrum. My interviews began with Michael Watkins, Superintendent of Santa Cruz County schools; Don Saposnek, a local child psychologist and pioneer in the field of divorce and child custody mediation; Donna Saffren, co-founder, owner, and manager of Midtown Montessori where I also performed an observation; and Sara Spencer, a local educator occupying spaces peripheral to the mainstream system of public education. My in depth discourse analysis resulted from these four interviews. As professionals working from very different standpoints in the field of education in Santa Cruz, and with unique expertises, perspectives, and experiences, I these interviews enabled me to determine commonalities of discourse which seem to have reached enough pervasiveness to be present amongst such different viewpoints. However, there were also subtle variations amongst the most prevalent repertoires, and also unique insights gained from the variation in positionality. It was conceivable prior to the interviews that such commonalities and variation would be present, yet the findings were still surprising and enlightening.

The informal interviews, which regrettably were not recorded but engaged with full knowledge of my research and the participants motivation to contribute to this project, included John Goldberg and Heather Cline-Scott. John was a successful engineer for many years who decided to become a substitute math and science teacher. Similar to Spencer, Goldberg is somewhat of a jubilant radical operating intentionally on the fringes of public education, where

he feels he maintains more freedom to be the kind of teacher he says kids need, while “working the system” to his benefit, and also as an example of possibility. His was also one of my classroom observations.

Heather Cline-Scott was a contact I made after interviewing Don Saposnek. She is working with New Teacher Center, a national nonprofit working with teachers who are new to the field in order to increase their skills in the classroom and provide them with support for their first years of teaching. Before working with New Teacher Center, Cline-Scott worked for the local version of the organization, New Teacher Project, in and around Santa Cruz. As teaching became an obvious center point in my research, it was quite an opportunity to get to speak to Heather about her work, and get a grasp of her perspective on the issues as someone in a position to do some of the most crucial pioneering work on the ground. I took notes during our conversation, and with her consent, have paraphrased parts of our conversation. All quotes from our conversation were my best attempt to recreate the ideas she conveyed to me.

The sphere of perspectives from which I was able to draw range from public school, public school administration, public school after-school programming, a private Montessori school, child psychology, and teacher training. Drawing all these perspectives into an analysis was fascinating and multidimensional. In fact, the analysis of this material alone could go on indefinitely, as I know I did not exhaust each facet and nuance. I’ve placed my main focus on some of the main and most pertinent threads of discourse, and also on the most valuable insights I’ve gained in the pursuit of understanding education in Santa Cruz as it relates to an education for cultural peace.

I will begin by sharing some of what I observed in the schools I visited, followed by the in depth discourse analysis of interviews.

### 3.2.1 The Calabasas Elementary Community Farm and Student Discovery Project

This project is an active example of many of the peace principles I've studied. It became a partnership between Calabasas Elementary School and UCSC students after the school lost its funding for a gardening teacher in 2010. Some students from UCSC became involved for their senior project, and it has blossomed since then. The first stage involved gardening and nutrition education, both in the classroom and in the school's discovery garden, as an afterschool program led by UCSC interns, and now taught by Spencer. As the project progressed, the interns began having regular meetings with the school's administrators and the parents. As many of the interns describe, involving the parents and creating relationships and communication with them so that the program could evolve based upon what *they* desired and envisioned was a critical component to achieving the purposes of the program, which involves community empowerment and food justice.

*I think what is most important when it comes to approaching this project is the aspect of one's own "positionality"... In order for there to positive change that is in a sense for the people and by the people, those who are in the dominant positions need to allow for the voices of the community to be heard and considered. (Celeste Gonzalez, UCSC Intern, Spring 2015) (calabasaselementarycommunitygarden.wordpress.com)*

This project is powerful on many levels, particularly because of its inclusiveness of most, if not all, the main threads requisite to peace learning and building. Multiple interns make reference to self-awareness and their personal positionality, examining privilege and personal connection and contribution, while recognizing that in order to have power, their project must be in a sense owned by the community which they are seeking to support. Watsonville is a lower income area

of Santa Cruz county, dominated by hispanic families, many of whom are immigrant farm workers in the regions extensive and famous agricultural industry. Therefore, the children at Calabasas elementary are primarily Latino and often live with families who have experienced injustice and inequity. The interns further acknowledge that the project is educational for all involved; UCSC students are confronted with social realities from which their privilege may have shielded them. However, many interns express commonalities with the communities they are now engaging; coming from low income environments or immigrant families themselves, they gain through the program valuable knowledge with participatory research and activism, creating greater food equity with the creation of community farm space for local families to spend time growing and harvesting with each other and for themselves. Creating availability of cultural foods was also mentioned.

This project utilizes many elements I've documented in this thesis, including hands on learning, cooperative learning, and parental and community partnerships. It also succeeds in melding some of our most pertinent realities of environmental sustainability with social justice and racial equity. It is one of the only projects that I have managed to touch upon within the Santa Cruz community that is beginning to link all of these veins of peace discourse, from justice, self-reflection, environment, food, cooperative learning, and more.

As we begin to take the next steps toward getting parent input and contributions to how to continue with the community garden, this is something we must always keep in mind. All of our outreach and events with the families really need to be focused on learning as much as we can from the parents and their experiences with community organizing and gardening. As we always emphasize, we are simply facilitators who wish to unleash the full potential that parents have to self-sustain and create opportunities for themselves and their families. To ensure that we are operating in this way, it is a good idea for interns, as suggested in the paper, to reflect on themselves first and identify what we are doing and why we are doing it. Personally, when I reflect on my position I see myself as a student with a certain amount of privilege, as I can afford a University education and living away from home. I also come from Mexican and Colombian heritage, and am familiar with the



issues that Mexican-American immigrants face. From this position I have certain opportunities to learn from and assist others, such as the families of Calabasas, many of whom have immigrated from Mexico. The CES internship is an opportunity for me to reach out to those I feel I can connect to and do anything I can to give them the places they deserve.”—Amalia Fuentes, (calabasaselementarycommunitygarden.wordpress.com)

This is a testament to the power of university education regarding sustainability and justice in action through partnerships with the surrounding community. As touted by the educationalists I’ve reviewed, this is a wellspring that must be tapped more deeply and powerfully to further normalize and empower the discourse of peacebuilding in the community and educational realm, both here in Santa Cruz and beyond.

### 3.2.2 Observing John Goldberg’s Classroom Ethics

Goldberg is an example of many Discourse Two principles in action, and his position as a free agent within the public school system is an example in and of itself. In our informal conversations, Goldberg expressed dismay and rejection of teacher credentialing programs, which can cost two years of time and the expense of a degree, and in his assessment, do not provide optimal teaching methods. So, when Goldberg found a passion for teaching after leaving his prestigious career in engineering, he refused to go back to school for what he considered a less than worthwhile degree, and instead has been working the system as a substitute teacher.

I was granted permission to sit in on two seventh grade summer school science classes at Cesar Chavez middle school. Both classes were filled with hispanic children, as the segregated homogenization of Santa Cruz county goes largely undiscussed. Goldberg, a caucasian man in cowboy boots (which he refuses to relinquish to dress code, another rendition of his rebellious personality), has a playful yet respectful repertoire with his students. I notice several Discourse Two things happening; hands on learning, holding students to high standards and expecting

responsibility, cooperation and team learning, questioning. Goldberg sneers at the text books on the shelf and proclaims, “We don’t touch those.” He jokes with the kids and gets them participating. “Ok, when I cut off my finger with this razor blade, I’m gonna need a volunteer to take it to the office and put it in ice, bring my car around and take me to the hospital.” One of the most impressive moves he made; when all the students vied for the pretend volunteer positions “Me! Me! Choose me!” Goldberg, in both classes, chose the young man who looked the most likely to be the “trouble maker,” the boy who had an attitude of “I’m too cool to participate in class,” the kind of kid your snap judgement (and past experiences in school) tells you is probably not too invested in his academic life. By simply choosing these kids in this silly exchange, I saw, in both class periods, an immediate change come over the boys. For the rest of the class, they seemed more comfortable, more involved, and more at ease just participating alongside their classmates. It seemed that just being given some positive attention was enough to help them break out of an identity that perhaps was all too often thrust upon them.

I wish I had recorded my conversations with Goldberg. One thing I asked him about was the bell system. After studying Montessori and its questioning of the arbitrary interruptions of bells and block schedules, watching Goldberg’s kids set up and begin their experiment, only for class to end just as their interest was being captured, was almost painful. When I brought it up to Goldberg, and asked him if it would make a difference to him if he could keep his kids for two hours, or even a full day, his eyes took on a far away look as he mused, “Oh, what we could do with a whole day.”

### 3.2.3 Midtown Montessori

My observations at Midtown Montessori were beautiful examples of the scientifically backed methods I learned about through Stoll-Lillard's book. There were fascinating and unexpected paradoxes taking place; kids were free to direct themselves, and with various levels of energy, yet the classroom was possibly the most structured I've seen. Children (ages 2-5) were engaging in complex tasks requiring significant focus of motor skills; such as pouring water from one vessel into another. Other children who were not engaging productively were eventually gently pointed toward a learning activity. A girl had volunteered to help make lunch, and had put on an apron and was making muffins from scratch.

Lunch was the most stunning display I witnessed. First of all, everything is set up to be at the child's level, tables, chairs, wash bin, utensils, glasses and dishware. Laid out on the table was an array of all vegetarian and most vegan foods, of varying colors and textures, some of which the children helped to prepare. I watched children come in on their own, gather their own

dishes, serve themselves lunch, take it to a table and begin eating with friends in a respectful manner. Afterward, they put their dish in the wash basin, swept their seat area with a small hand broom, and pushed in their chair.

The relationship building to food and nutrition is unique and desirable; perhaps these children, having been exposed to such real foods early will be more comfortable later in their life examining bigger issues in the U.S. and global food systems. These children are also experiencing



relationship with themselves as capable, responsible, and caring actors, with each other as learning partners and community, and with adults as respectful guides and supports. This atmosphere must be impacting the worldview they are founding in significant ways. I saw that the teachers were committed and adept at their communication with children, never raising a voice in frustration or alarm, facilitating conflict resolution with calm rationality and empathetic reflection. I found myself wondering what educational environment these children will encounter at the age of six and beyond.

### 3.2.1 Discourse One: The Old World of Education, a Failing System

In almost every instance of this research, participants readily offered serious grievances with the current system of U.S. education. Not a single interviewee believed the system is working at its highest capacity, or that it is serving the needs of United States children and society. Almost without fail, participants tapped into the First Discourse's narratives about factory style education, the Lockean model child as empty vessel, and/or dismay of the Standards Movement and "teaching to the test," and even commented on the dominator style of our education system. Another common thread was the observation that the traditional system does not serve and engage students. This theme connected my participants the most securely.

Differences about solutions, foci or angle, and other root causes were more various. For instance, Watkins and Cline-Scott were clearly optimistic and in support of the more recent movement for "Common Core" standards, and the Four C's; cooperation, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, while Saffren was clearly skeptical about Common Core. Another difference was the direction of approach taken toward the problem. Saffren was much more significantly concerned with on the ground, developmental needs and impacts of children of the

public system, and its foundational premises, like the teacher directed classroom. None of the other participants directly combatted this assumption, though Cline-Scott discussed the progression of teaching process toward partnership, and Watkins touched upon the way in which “cutting edge” schools are breaking down into smaller academies and rely upon more cooperative set ups.

One of the themes that stood out to me the most was the way the participants decried the system as being dehumanizing, not only toward children but also toward adults, and often linked this phenomenon to aspects of society beyond the education system. Dehumanization seems to be one of the main points of disdain for the factory model, and all participants recognize how the system disallows choice, difference, and recognition of humanity.

*...If we're so so worried about socialization, what sense does it make to have all the same age group, in all the same demographic, stuck in one classroom, all day long. You're basically teaching them to all be the same. (Spencer, 9/1/16)*

*...Their most exciting part is recess...but why can't that be every time we're in the classroom? Why can't we get outside of the box of "sit down in your chair!" Why should we treat these children like they are something less than? I don't know if you've heard of the new saying "childism." Right, like, "you sit down because I'm the boss and I tell you!" We're kind of on this power trip, when these are our future, like this is our future...What are you just showing them? That when they grow up they need to have authority over other people? (Spencer, 9/1/16)*

Here, Spencer's direct reference to the socializing processes of the dominator model of CTT is striking. In fact, as participants referenced various aspects of social woe in our system even beyond education, I recognized that it could all be linked together through CTT, which could perhaps provide a better foundation for the dissemination of understanding not only to participants, but the for the spread of the discourses they obviously support.

In fact, almost every repertoire utilized by participants within the first discourse can be

gathered under an umbrella repertoire about *dehumanization*, *objectification*, and *domination*, or the CTT model. Most if not all of Saffren's poignant observations on this discourse could be categorized under this general heading.

*Have you been in a school since the bell rang? It makes me jump through the roof. It's like what the heck are we doing to these kids. We are totally desensitizing them. It's a machine. It's geared to desensitize. I think they need people working at taco bell because if you think about it, they dummy down dummy down...Dummy down. And then we give them Ritalin if they have any idea that's different. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

*I find that the system was set up to be monotonous and to be impersonal. And I think the major changes that need to happen is it needs to not be monotonous and not be impersonal. It needs to become really personal, like each child should be known. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

Here, I also introduce one of Saffren's significant themes of "each child being known" which is linked with the principle honoring the individual and diversity, and is the antithesis of objectification. Also, while Saffren does not use the term "homogenized" until later, the tone of monotony and Spencer's comment on homogenization me to make a link back to the socialization of children on a global level;

Homogenization (or equality of 'opportunity') is important also at the level of individuals; it is partly about what young people are taught, and partly about what young people are taught about being taught. The teaching process becomes about how young people come to imagine themselves as forever "trainable" (Bonal and Rambla, 2003): as good, neoliberal subjects in the making; as projects to work upon, and to be worked upon; as perpetually becoming something more (or at least something new)." (Boulten, 2008: 334)

I can't help but apply this statement to the educational system of U.S. children; perhaps they are not so separate from other students in the world as we tend to think. Again, our questioning of the interconnection of narratives which create, justify, and reinforce our realities here and throughout the globe must continue at every level, from in depth case studies in Santa Cruz and the Philippines, to broader studies which look at the possible relationships between them.

The lack of choice and empowerment—and for Saffren a strong sense of self and identity—was a strong element of the dehumanizing rhetoric, and for participants was inexorably linked with the fact that such a system is not suited to the way children are developmentally geared to learn. “But just to park a child and say today you’re going to learn about math, or in third period you’re gonna have a language class. It’s not serving the child. They’re not learning.” (Saffren, 8/19/16) One proclamation Saffren made which was even more novel was to question the entire idea of giving homework. She said that after two of her students went to kindergarten, they showed up for lunch at MM with xeroxed homework packets, which were initially exciting to the girls, but which Saffren said were well beyond their skill level.

*It’s busy work. There’s no joy. Again, not their choice, there’s no joy in it, there’s no interaction, it’s sit down and fight with your parents. No one should have homework before seventh grade. No one.*(Saffren, 8/19/16)

*Yes. I think that some teachers are progressive. I don’t think all teachers are authoritarian, hitting a switch to get everybody lined up. I think that they are progressive within their classrooms, but I think more and more the more that we make them teach to the test and have this calming core, blah-dee-blah, and just focus on academic subjects the more limiting it is. And I just think it’s another veneer to put on a system that doesn’t serve and nurture the individual and the talents and reasons that that individual exists.<sup>8</sup>* (Saffren, 8/19/16)

Here is a point of contention between support/dismissal of the progression of the standards movement into the Common Core movement. Saffren seems to lump Common Core with the Standards Movement and NCLB, which all participants deemed not only a failure but a detriment. Not all participants felt negatively about Common Core. This will be an interesting point for research moving forward into coming years. On the one hand, looking at CoreStandards.org, there is much in the rhetoric that mimics the standards movement. On the

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<sup>8</sup> This quote from Saffren also introduces some of her very strong repertoires, one being the idea of the “veneer” and the other relating to “the reasons an individual exists,” both ideas will be discussed further.

other hand, the “standards” that are now being espoused are more principle-centered and almost hinging toward the Second Discourse<sup>9</sup>, but not quite. It seems to be better oriented in terms of critical thinking and evidence based research, yet the list seems disappointingly limited and limiting. It’s also regrettable to notice the prominence of “globally competitive” economy-focused narrative which I critiqued in Wagner’s and Robinson’s work.

Saffren’s indictment of the Common Core is part of a much larger critique of the foundational principles of public education as a whole and falls under her repertoire of *the veneer*; in this instance, the limiting nature of *academic* subjects, which is still largely unquestioned by U.S. society, but is creeping in as a novel discourse, and touched upon by Robinson, and even Superintendent Watkins, when he condemns the standards movement.

*It’s been harmful for public education, it’s been damning for the last twenty years. Even the supporters realize that now, it took them a decade, it took them a long time...but now the Feds are doing a reauthorization for...NCLB...and they’re realizing that there is no place for rigorous standardized testing. Poor kids got cheated during this whole model...not only on the testing but the focus on myopic curricula around english language arts and math. So if you’re poor, you didn’t get a lot of science, maybe computer science, maybe a art. For a whole decade we screwed kids. So, it’s been very harmful, and we’re moving away from it... More or less the punishment model, we punished the school if the kids didn’t perform on the standardized test. The kids didn’t want to take these damn tests anyway!” (Watkins, 8/19/15)*

So even high level administrators are sometimes aware that the curriculum shaped by standards can be far too limiting. Also imbedded in this excerpt is reference to authoritarian structures within education and the lack of choice and empowerment, not just for children but extending up the latter in what Eisler call hierarchy of domination model. Also, Watkins,

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<sup>9</sup> The Common Core standards are: 1. Research and evidence based 2. Clear, understandable, and consistent 3: Aligned with college and career expectations 4. Based on rigorous content and the application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills 5. Built upon the strengths and lessons of current state standards 6. Informed by other top-performing countries to prepare all students for success in our global economy and society



Cline-Scott, and Spencer all spoke to racial disparities inherent in the dominant education system (and beyond), and while there was also discussion with Saffren, it was approached from unique perspective, and she made similar observations more in relation to socio-economic position<sup>10</sup>.

Donna Saffren was deeply skeptical, even more so than the others, in her interview about the very premises upon which our public schools have been shaped, taking her observations down to the very practical realities of what happens day to day on a campus. She was the most outspoken that the way we are doing things simply does not make sense. *“There are things that they do because it’s been ingrained because it’s a habit, they do it universally across the United States.”* (Saffren, 8/19/16). For Saffren, the very foundation of having a “teacher directed” classroom is inherently a failure for the way in children learn. When I initially brought up the ideas of the Second Discourse and the progressive principles of education such as flexibility, self-directed and explorative learning, collaboration and teamwork, her response was, “that does not happen with the teacher directed class. It does not.” (Saffren, 8/19/16). Some other interesting, common sense, developmentally rooted observations she made that are still very novel involved recess.

*I mean they never go outside in public elementary. You know that right? I mean they get twenty minutes of recess, or something crazy, they’re kids! And the other thing is, if you don’t think a kid learns physics by being outside, or can do geometry or math...Again, they have to shift their whole system.* (Saffren, 8/19/16)

### 3.2.2 Money, Funding, and Other Explanations of Root Problems

Most participants agreed that money is a major issue in the public education system. Cline-Scott spoke to the huge class sizes in which students can’t get their needs met. Her work with teachers, designed to oil a clogged system and create a better learning environment for both

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<sup>10</sup> Both topics further discussed later.

teachers and students, has also been impacted by budget cuts. The invaluable work she does of supporting new teachers and helping them develop their skills in the classroom during their first couple of years is support that increases the retention rate of new teachers in the profession by 87% (Cline-Scott, 8/23/16). She told me that last year, due to budget cuts, she had twenty teachers on her docket, instead of the official the maximum number in her organization, fifteen (Cline-Scott, 8/23/16). She said that the huge case load negatively impacted the quality of support she was able to give the teachers she mentored, and reduced the number of meetings she was able to have with them (Cline-Scott, 8/23/16). Paraphrasing our conversation, she interconnected issues of money with out of touch policy makers or administration—where the people making decisions are too far away from classrooms—and the standards movement; “The further you get away from the classrooms, the further you are from what happens day to day—students become numbers, everything is around test scores, even as we move away from NCLB...It still has a lot to do with money” (Paraphrased from Cline-Scott, 8/23/16).

Watkins said it’s not a funding issue, it’s a leadership void, and the lack of continuity that occurs when a new superintendent comes in with a new agenda. Other conflicts also prevent transformation; entities like unions and school boards with their own agendas.

*The school board trustee has a lot of power to set the vision, they have to understand that power. Heretofore they didn’t have as much power because there were so many state mandates, so they need to understand that power. (Watkins, 8/19/15)*

Cline-Scott confirmed this sentiment to a degree, saying that the only constant in education was change (Cline-Scott, 8/23/16). She referred to Common Core with a positive connotation, saying that she had hope for its impact, along with Habits of Mind<sup>11</sup>. Yet she also predicted “this is

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<sup>11</sup> The 16 Habits of Mind, a group of traits, skills or proclivities written by Costa and Kallick (2008) are far more progressive toward the Second and even Novel Discourse. Taken from the Art Costa Centre for Thinking website;

going to change in a few years and teachers are going to be asked to do something new.”  
(Cline-Scott, 8/23/16).

Saffren talked about the issues of money and economy but from a very different approach. She talked more about the education system and the well-being of our children getting lost as it fits into a larger social and economic system;

*And so these kids that are playing video games for hours on end, because the parent works at Taco Bell, or maybe has a night job, or maybe they're juggling between the mom and the dad one works at night one works during the day. I'm telling you, I don't even know how some families make it. Seriously. I mean just think-if you lived in Santa Cruz and you had a family of four and you were not a professional...but still trying to make it. Did you see that thing in Forbes magazine in Santa Cruz? Santa Cruz is the third most expensive place to live in the United States. And I don't even know how they calculated this, they said it takes 113% of a median income to live here...just for your housing expense. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

She links the current economic model to our dependence and blindness to a failing educational system: “It’s a system that doesn’t work. It doesn’t serve the child. It doesn’t serve us. And now it’s like it’s absolutely essential that that system is there because everybody works, moms work, dads work, everybody needs to work. How are we gonna get that 113%?” (Saffren, 8/19/16). Spencer also makes reference to the socio-economic positions of parents and teachers and how that hinders any action or change. “I don’t know if people have enough time to let it pick up on their radar,” is how she answers when I ask if people are aware that our system is not ideal for

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Habits of Mind is knowing how to behave intelligently when you DON'T know the answer. It means having a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems, the answers to which are not immediately known: dichotomies, dilemmas, enigmas and uncertainties.

Our focus is on performance under challenging conditions that demand strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity, and craftsmanship. (Art Costa Centre for Thinking).

Discursively, there is some link between Habits of Mind and the Common Core standards, but the relationship is tenuous and unclear. Orange County in Southern California has the strongest language connecting the two that I have found (Orange County Department of Education, 2011).

our students. She also talks significantly about the injustices and burdens facing specifically the Latino families and farm workers in the region which her school serves.

Spencer and Saffren both utilized the repetition of certain words or phrases to tie a theme to the greater conversation we produced, and I found the parallels of these themes fascinating. Both participants intertwined holistic or systems thinking into their rhetoric. Spencer did this by using the phrase “teasing out.”

*And I do think it's going to be a spiral that keeps going down. I guarantee that this started generations ago, and now we're just finally starting to see the effects of what it means to not have that “it takes a village” mindset...And it's very hard to tease any of what we just talked about apart. Once you start bettering one place, it's going to better everything, once you start degrading in one area it's going to start degrading everywhere. So unless you really have a good balance, which I personally don't feel we're finding right now, things are going to spiral. (Spencer, 9/1/16)*

*Somewhere along the line something wasn't going right. And when you look at other countries...vs. what we try to call capitalism but is really not capitalism when you really get down to it. There's all sorts of political stuff you can get into too, so it's hard to tease it apart. (Spencer, 9/1/16)*

All participants, but particularly Saffren and Spencer, tried to connect the issues we were directly discussing to larger issues throughout our culture. The most fascinating manifestations of this for me were Spencer's metaphor about “the veil” and Saffren's use of the term “vener.” Speaking of her own experience of coming to question certain taken for granted norms in the United States, she said:

*I almost call it this veil, ya know? And once you start poking holes in that veil, like, wait! That doesn't make sense! Instead of just following it because everybody else is or because you've been told to, or because it's just how you were taught. Once that veil started lifting for me, you can't shut it back off. (Spencer, 9/1/16)*

Saffren used the term “vener” eight times throughout our interview, mainly in regard to

the cultural prejudices and intolerances regarding racism and homophobia. However, in her last use of the word in regard to our education system; “And I just think it’s another veneer to put on a system that doesn’t serve and nurture the individual and the talents and reasons that that individual exists,” (Saffren, 8/19/16) she masterfully links the ongoing issues of inequity and dominating hierarchy in our country with the dominating, dehumanizing philosophies of our education system, stating that we do not have real solutions, we are not seeking real solutions. We are slapping bandaids on festering bullet wounds.

Another searing observation made by Saffren is that as a nation, we are in the midst of a “zombie apocalypse.” As explanation for what is really wrong in the U.S., she says “...Zombies are really largely populating the country and there are a few conscious people that are saying ‘wait no this is wrong.’” And later; “...nowadays it’s the zombie apocalypse. And I tell you it’s happening right now. People walk around asleep. And not in their bodies, not in their bodies at all.” (Saffren, 8/19/16). This repertoire extended into theories of a population in denial or kept in the dark. Spencer, in reference to the realities of our health, social justice, and our own destruction of our environment, said “...People either don’t want to pay attention to that and they’re in denial or they have not had the exposure, it’s not on the media, it’s not available to them.” (Spencer, 9/1/16). She also said of the public education system, “I feel like it’s going to have to have a huge major overhaul, for there to be a major difference,” and to make clear where her personal stance on public education is she pointed out that this year she had decided to take her children out of that system entirely and begin homeschooling them. (Spencer, 9/1/16).

*I think there’s a large segment that are asleep and that are not, that look at their kids and go, “we went to public school, they’ll be fine!” I just feel so often at elementary age, even in Santa Cruz, that people just, you throw your kids to the wolves, and you carry on. I think it’s really hard in the public system to have a child really be known, unless they’re playing the game. So I think the dismantling of the public school system, there’s gonna*

*have to be, really serious call to question of some of how they, just operations of how they do things. To even break up this idea of what traditional education is. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

Again, Saffren and Spencer share perhaps the most radical level of rhetoric in terms of how much transformation the public education needs, though it is possible that it is more their position that gives them a sense of comfort to speak more freely on the subject.

### 3.2.3 Parents and Teachers

The role of parents is quite strong in discourse on education, and it was so in my interviews, though it was also a subject approached through varying repertoires. As quoted above, Saffren looked at the economic situation of parents as preventing them from thinking too deeply about the education system, and Spencer also made references to the barriers the parents in her school's community face to in depth involvement; "...again it's just getting that word out and actually getting the support from the parents who are already overly swamped, and probably working three jobs and have multiple kids and have other family living with them." (Spencer, 9/1/16). Saffren did spend some time talking about her own experience as a mother of school aged children, and what she perceives happens when parents realize the impoverished nature of the public system.

*...It's a system that is so in place and so cemented that what happens is a parent encounters it, has their own ideas, tries to forge some change, gets shot down, tries again, keeps going, then they may homeschool. There's a handful of people that will try homeschooling, which is really evolving...These are underground things, though, they are not the status quo norm. And what happens is your kids age out before you can forge any change...*

*...But as soon as you grapple with it a little bit, and try to forge any change you outgrow it. You're kids are at the next level. It's not your problem anymore. It's really hard to find people that will forge and make that change happen. (Saffren, 8/19/16).*

Saffren also tapped into another old discourse that has been surrounded by contention, also mentioned by Saposnek, concerning the question of what age do you make an intervention of the patterns that create unpeaceful cultures? Saposnek joked that he's had students argue in a "self recursive infinite regression" about what age relationship classes should begin, starting in high school, then arguing elementary, then arguing preschool, then "No actually we're gonna have to waste one generation and start over because the moms don't know how to parent!" (Saposnek, 7/6/16) He said ultimately, the reasonable thing to do is to start wherever you are, as early as you can, and that societally we should be

*...teaching kids first about themselves and regulating their own emotions, before that get healthy parents and raise them, teach the parents before they have children how to have healthy children, have mandatory parenting classes that are taught by people who know about this stuff, teach them ongoing classes not just one class...check back in and keep building their skill set, and then when their kids grow up teach them parenting skills along the way. (Saposnek, 7/6/16)*

I was surprised by the conviction with which Saposnek advocated mandatory parenting classes, because it is such a unspoken ideal - United States citizens, ironically so averse to their "choices" being taken away, even as our entire education system denies choice and freedom from the start. It was powerful to hear this notion put forth in no uncertain terms by a developmental psychologist. Saffren also was keyed into the importance of mothers who have internalized peaceful principles.

*It starts with a peaceful mother, and peaceful pregnancy, and moves into birth. And the habits are formed during that time. So if we're gonna intervene in any way, we need to start there. There needs to be more education for parents. It takes more education to get a driver's license than it does to have a baby. If we are going to move forward as a species we need to have people aware of what they're creating and what's happening within themselves. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

While my research is focused on education, parents are obviously an inexorable aspect of the way children are socialized. The idea of involving parents more in education is a serious point of entry for transformative movement and further research.

As for teachers and the situation of the teaching profession, I was again surprised by the different rhetorical strains. Watkins referred to the programs that Cline-Scott is engaged in, and said that the support and development happening through them is hopeful. Cline-Scott was also hopeful about the focus shifting on more social and emotional learning and the Common Core etc., and the new focus on “what do students need to be college ready?” becoming a national consideration. However, her concern, reflecting Wagner’s indictment of teacher credential programs, was that teachers are not being supported with how these new skills and concepts can actually be transmitted in classrooms. “If you don’t know how to do it you can’t teach it or support it.” (Cline-Scott, 8/23/16).

Issues with Montessori are very different. Saposnek and Saffren both explain that because they are private and unregulated, Montessori schools can be completely different from one another, and even fail to reflect any of the Montessori philosophy or curriculum at all, or have drastic interpretations. However, in a Montessori school like Midtown Montessori, the benefits of Montessori can really take place.

*What the elementary teacher is tasked with is trying to keep each child sort of balanced. Bring into light various things that will pique their interest. And it’s still really individual, but everything is taught in small groups cause you wanna go be with their bud, your bud. And then you go work together. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

In a classroom like MM’s, the philosophy and strategy is crystal clear and undertaken with grace and ease by the teachers.



On an even darker side of teaching in public system, Spencer furthered my understanding of how the dehumanization comes back to teachers. After listening to her describe oversized classes, teachers being swamped with zero pay for most of their prep time, more than once mentioning the sacrifice of self-care, and the pressure of state and federal standards, I had to ask this: “So would you say that most teachers get into the teaching profession with this kind of attitude and belief and passion, and then after a while they kind of succumb to essentially having their choice taken out of the picture?” She replied, “...Yeah, it’s kind of like that learned helplessness at that point, well you’re damned if you do damned if you don’t...but putting that heart and soul into each and every child? It is absolutely demanding...” (Spencer, 9/1/16).

### 3.3 Discourse Two: Progressing with Principles

As I intentionally sought out professionals occupying spaces of progressive transformation, it comes as no surprise that each participant was fluent in the Second Discourse, and in many cases the Third. The overlaps of the two discourses make it difficult to separate them. I’ve chosen to discuss the majority of what I deemed positive discourses that connected to both progressive education and the principles of peace and peace education here. In my next section on the third and Novel Discourse, I will discuss some of the specific elements of peace that are not always included in the Second Discourse, and also the gaps in interview dialogue.

One central aspect of the Second Discourse that was demonstrated strongly was the realization that education must be oriented to suit the way people naturally learn and thrive, rather than the traditional method of attempting to force students to adapt to the way the system dictates they learn. Spencer was clear in her thinking that we’ve got the sense of superiority of adults over children wrong, that for success we must “look at children for the example instead of

the other way around” (Spencer, 9/1/16), and that the system is “going to have to have a huge major overhaul, for there to be a major difference” (Spencer, 9/1/16). Saffren talked about the need for schools and parents to begin ask themselves the key question, “how do people learn?”

*If people could somehow, just have that question posed and answer it, it may crack open a door to be like, “well wait a minute, if that’s how we learn (because that is the only way I learn...)” I have to be invested, and so do children, and so do adults. Until we get people on that wavelength, of “I need to make an investment in order to receive,” then it’s just going to continue on as dog eat dog...(Saffren, 8/19/16)*

Saposnek gave me invaluable insight into some of the developmental aspects of how children learn. The manifestation of genetically influenced temperament traits was one of his most steadfast concerns (and areas of expertise). His explanation drove home to me more meaningfully than ever why we must help teachers and parents understand diverse personality and learning propensities. To summarize; if you try to force a child to behave against their temperament, it stresses them, and stress causes the child to become even more deeply entrenched in their natural temperament. For example, if you yell at (or stress in some way) an overly active child, they will unintentionally react by becoming even more hyperactive; if you yell at (stress) a naturally sedate child, they will become even more inactive. Stress inhibits the child’s ability to learn, and it can also negatively impact their identity and self-esteem.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, Saposnek told me that creating “goodness of fit”<sup>13</sup> is one of the most important things we can consider in our education of children.

*I extrapolated between school model and child, between particular teaching style and child, and when you link those up with “goodness of fit,” which is accepting the child’s temperament and not trying to change it, you get maximal growth, maximal learning, maximal understanding, and fewer conflicts. (Saposnek, 7/6/16)*

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<sup>12</sup> Attempting to force a child to adopt a temperament other than what is natural to them is also a form of objectification, which falls into the dehumanizing aspects of public education.

<sup>13</sup> “Goodness of fit...means accepting a child’s temperament and not trying to change *it*, but creating an environment that allows that child’s temperament profile to express itself without conflict.” (Saposnek, 7/6/16).

Saposnek went on to say this level of honoring diversity is such a complex task that it has not yet been achieved, but that no model of education for peace will succeed with all children without it (Saposnek, 7/6/16).

After I described Eisler's CTT and theory of partnership education to Michael Watkins, he comfortably jumped into the Second and even Third Discourse;

*I think you're right, when we were talking earlier about the traditional model in public education where you have the teacher or master and you have the students being the receptacle of information. However that's gradually changing in more advanced circles of public education where it's more cooperative, collaborative and peer to peer learning. So... I see it happening. And also, along with that, the Common Core, which really touches on the four C's, communication, collaboration, creativity, {critical thinking}, which really lends itself to really support this theory of partnerships. Schools for so long operated in isolation of the community and primarily society, because society really hasn't been involved in public education, to the extent that they should, I do believe, to the extent that maybe some other communities do get involved...Because under the current model, many students are highly disengaged, I mean, we are moving into the 21st century with 20th century teaching methods and the students are quite frankly bored. Yes, it's changing; it's a slow process. (Watkins, 8/19/15)*

This is one of the only examples I've come across in the interviews of 20th vs. 21st century methods, which again harkens back to Wagner. I do not believe that this rhetoric of "20th vs 21st century" and "the globally competitive child" includes in its scope the Novel Discourse that *global peace and sustainability* are central aspects of what 21st century education consists of. My conclusion about this rhetoric is that it has one foot in the Second Discourse about progressive education, and the other foot firmly, yet cryptically, entrenched in the discourse on economic and capitalistic competition, to which the U.S. is so devoted that it is the invisible norm.

This is not to say that Watkin's ideology was not embedded in the principles of peace - it was. Our conversation revolved significantly around the deeper issues of peaceful society and the

education that might lead to it. One example of this was the mention of the alternative program called “Character Based Literacy,”

*...If you look at that their whole literature series is aligned to certain character traits, respect, trust, not boyscout stuff...but that's a step in the right direction. We've been doing that now for a number of years....I'm getting off culture to character now, but I think that's important as well for many of our students, as they get to know themselves and help be responsible for their actions. (Watkins, 8/19/15)*

Culture vs. character is an interesting dialogic dichotomy brought up in Harris's article as well, in terms of how we have viewed them separately in the U.S. for a long time. This is another repertoire that deserves challenge. My aim is to push for the cultural normalization of character traits that allow people to think about and foster peace, and is no different from Saffren's and Saposnek's claim that peaceful parenting must become embedded in our cultural practices if we are to end cycles of violence and maladaptation. It is clear to many—peace scholars like Harris, educationists, and everyday Americans alike—our culture normalizes and encourages certain character traits over others. However, the stubborn persistence of narratives that attempt to completely separate deficiencies or strengths in the character of individuals from their society must be addressed; no one is raised in a vacuum, and for the most part there is a relationship between culture and character.

This segment of conversation touches on the inclusion of personal psycho/social, even spiritual development, as part of the picture for a full and worthy education plan. Saffren voiced even more strongly the need for young people to understand who they are and who they want to be.

*You know there is just a thousand things for a kid to do outside that are very grounding activities. Feeling the sun on their face, I mean there are all these things that are not happening because they're on a screen, and the mialin is being formed. So it's really hard to undo that and then if they're not even connected in their bodies, and then they go off to school and there one of 800 kids, and nobody knows who they are, they don't know*

*who they are, they haven't made any decisions except to push the button to kill the guy. That is, that's the only reality for them where they're successful in a lot of ways. I mean are they making their own dinner? No.* (Saffren, 8/19/16)

Again, using a fairly novel approach when discussing the causes and effects of children's struggles in the U.S., Saffren talked more about the idea of being present and in one's body than did anyone else, and again she mentioned food - but as it relates to self-esteem and success.<sup>14</sup> It also challenges the ideological separation of culture and character adhered to largely in the U.S. Saffren points to the neglect in helping students establish identity through being known and recognized that is common in huge schools. Ideologically, this is so novel because we tend not to think of school as being a place for children to find a sense of self. How could we, if we see schools as factories, existing to fill empty vessels with uniform information? The Dominant Discourse about what school is meant to be is a very narrow definition of academic achievement only.

This quote hints at some of the darkest experiences we've seen in recent U.S. history with education, and connects with why Saffren believes having small schools is one of the most important changes we can make.

*I am frightened by eight hundred and seventy five kindergarten through sixth graders on one campus and maybe forty adults. Maybe. I'm frightened. I'm frightened because do they know all of those children? How could they possibly know all of those children?* (Saffren, 8/19/16)

Saffren's tone indicated to me that it is not just school shootings and violence she is concerned about, but also simply the well being of students who perhaps never act out, but fail to receive the support they need. She also differed with the Spencer and Cline-Scott who all called for smaller class size as the solution for children receiving the one on one attention they need.

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<sup>14</sup> This is very novel, but an interesting point of potential, which I will discuss further later.

*Small schools. One hundred and thirty kids, max, first through sixth grade. I don't think the classrooms need to be as small—if it's a mixed age group you have teachers in the classroom other than the teacher—you have your third year students, they've been there, there's a three year term. So two thirds of the class are returning students, so it really enables the teacher to teach more, and it enables the students to become more proficient because they're teaching the younger children. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

Saffren is talking about the rationale of mixing the age groups of children, which she believes eliminates “nearly all behavioral problems...” (Saffren, 8/19/16). In her explanation of this, she goes on to describe very closely what Eisler calls a “hierarchy of actualization.”

*There are natural leaders of the class, they are undisputed, and they help the younger ones. It's just a very nurturing way of doing things that could be implemented easily if the public system would grab on. (Saffren, 8/19/16).*

All participants included other Discourse Two principles as well. Cline-Scott, as noted earlier, mentioned Habits of Mind, diverse learners, and said that she sees some of these qualities in students already. “I also feel hopeful in the mindsets of some of our students...I see students having a lot of compassion, empathy, and curiosity, and learning how to work with others and how to problem solve.” (Cline-Scott, 2016). Spencer spoke of encouraging critical thinking by asking questions rather than providing rote answers, also signifying respect for children’s intelligence, adding “I try to help them piece it together themselves...” (Spencer, 9/1/16).

### 3.4 Discourse Three: Delving Into the Unsung Principles of Peace

#### 3.4.1 Physicality and Food

The physical body and food were two of the most novel subjects, even within the Novel Discourse of peace education that I found in my literature review. However, they were strong subjects for both Saffren and Spencer—even though food not mentioned at all by any other participant. Spencer went so far as to say that food and nutrition “is the most substantial part of it

in my opinion,” which I felt was a strong proclamation of Novel Discourse—though her chosen position as the teacher of the Garden Project lends itself to her freedom to focus on that issue, as well as perhaps reflects her personal position and philosophy. She went even farther connecting food to the local issues of race and inequity, social and environmental and health justice.

*The injustice where it's like here are these people who are actually growing the mass amounts of food especially in this area and they're treated the most poor, where, we wouldn't be here, we wouldn't be alive without that job being done. And especially all the chemical aspects and the hazards of not having organic farming. What are the health concerns?...and even if it weren't for yourself eating it think about just the condition those workers are in...and then you get into the environmental issue, all that runs into our waterways, all of that runs out to the ocean, and we're really digging our own grave.*  
(Spencer, 9/1/16)

With those issues in mind, she said the garden project is an opportunity for her to “put her thumbprint on the kids” and bring up questions about nutrition and the food system we live with (Spencer, 9/1/16).

Saffren also place a lot of emphasis on the food in her school, about which I can attest is an almost miraculous transformation of the norm of school food. She told me that the two things that set her school apart more than anything else are “it's unique smallness and the food.” (Saffren, 8/19/16). Recalling the way she tied children's self-esteem to the capacity to feed themselves; it is this practicality of teaching children at very young ages how to live life at its most basic and fundamental levels, and how to care for oneself, others, and our surroundings through grace and courtesy lessons, that gives even more novelty to Montessori philosophy. Yet this seems to be quite a missed opportunity for U.S. children, as something that could be implemented at low cost (as Saffren mentioned her other recommendations would be of no cost, either).

Saffren's philosophy is, of course, strongly grounded in Montessori theory, in which movement and recognition and working with natural human development are key. "...As human beings we are meant to move around." Saffren takes this paradigm even farther, into the realm of novelty. Her worldview takes respect for the human being as existing in a particular way for a greater purpose to another level; a level which is simultaneously beautiful and rare in U.S. rhetoric. The very beginning of our conversation centered around the idea that babies are naturally and internally motivated to develop their own physical core strength.

*...Core strength, physical core strength and them being grounded in their body. One of the ways this manifests is now-a-days we have all these gizmos to hold our babies, instead of us holding our babies...they spend so much time reclined that they never, and it's supported, that they never develop this (gestures toward own stomach area) and the way it shows up as a three year old is they can't sit up in circle, or when they're observing at a table they are leaning on the table like this to observe, they just don't have the core strength. It's just such a - because we are biological organisms. And I think that there's this propensity that the child, the baby, knows what it needs, it's very natural, and that's why the baby's doing downward dog. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

While Cline-Scott didn't voluntarily go into areas of food or children's physical being, she and Spencer did bring the bodies and wellbeing of teachers into the conversation. Perhaps teacher self-care is a repertoire gaining more and more traction in literature written for teachers; however, it was absent from my sampling of literature, so to have it make itself apparent in my primary research was encouraging. Spencer reiterated self-care for teachers multiple times, explaining that the pressures of the job essentially rob our teachers of the time for this basic need. Cline-Scott brought in the idea of teachers needing to have self-compassion for not being able to "do everything all the time." (Cline-Scott, 8/23/16). My interpretation was that essentially: teachers must forgive themselves for not being able to meet unrealistic expectations perfectly.



### 3.4.2 Fostering Happiness and Inner Peace

That issue of self-compassion and self-care are footholds in a more humanizing philosophy for our schools, and perhaps it is *humanization* that we need to make the core goal, in order to transform the dehumanization that has been foundational for so long. Creating an atmosphere where adults and children alike are respected and honored as unique human beings would be a big step toward fostering inner peace in our school cultures.

Cline-Scott described her experience as a teacher in Santa Cruz as being flexible with the process of how she chose to teach curriculum, though the curriculum itself came with a “pretty strict pacing guide.” (Cline-Scott; 8/23/16). She said that for her, showing her kids humanity was an important aspect that she took time for in her classroom. “Every Friday we would have a classroom meeting and compliment each other. I told them I loved them, we sang and had dance parties. I told them, ‘it breaks my hearts sometimes when we are having struggles, so we are gonna work through it.’ I cried with them sometimes, I couldn’t help it.” (Cline-Scott, 8/23/16). Saffren contributed the element of the self-reflective teacher/administrator.<sup>15</sup> When I asked her how she came to be the founder of MM, she said, “I realized I was happiest when I was an administrator and then also worked with children.” (Saffren, 8/19/16).

Saffren talked about drawing out the interests and strengths of individual children, and making curriculum relevant to their interests. This is a principle understood in Discourse Two about the way children best learn, however, Saffren may be linking this into a higher, perhaps

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<sup>15</sup> Other participants also utilized self-reflective techniques in describing their positions and philosophies, as when Spencer spoke about “the veil lifting,” as well as later in her interview which is discussed in coming sections.

spiritual, viewpoint about how we will build a peaceful and sustainable world. “...And interests. And *strengthening* those interests. And that’s the other thing—we are going to need people who know who they are. And what their *interests* are.” (Saffren, 8/19/16). This is one link where another one of her overarching themes clicks in; love your work. Love what you do. She says that this simple, yet often seen as unattainable goal, is the solution to so many social woes, and ultimately how we create peace.

*Again, hashtag love your work. If they love their work, they will be peaceful, they will become normalized they will do it for the sake of doing it... It’s trusting that every organism is not here by accident, and is not an empty vessel for us to fill with what WE think they need. It’s trusting that, and allowing, it’s a being in allowance of process. And then you have a peaceful person. It’s when a person is pummelled and told what to do, or made to feel like somebody has the advantage that they don’t have or is getting over. It’s all of that sectioning off, happens within the individual first, and then is moved outward. That’s what I believe. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

This leads us into discussing issues of injustice in our education system, and how we educate, or fail to educate, our children about these crucial realities.

### 3.4.3 Equity: Race, Class...and Gender?

It was heartening that each of my participants readily discussed issues of social inequity with me, particularly regarding race. Watkins had the most to share with me on the topic, and has been the most active in advocacy for racial justice. When I asked him if he thought we were addressing the issues adequately in our classrooms in Santa Cruz, he said:

*African American men being shot by police at an alarming rate, maybe it’s always happened, maybe video has changed it, but I was watching TV yesterday, this guy had his hands up and got shot in the chest. I mean, I’m just stunned. I think that as far as educators and teachers, do we talk about our history as a nation? How, you know, Jim Crow, and segregation, and Brown vs. The Board of Education, and equal rights has really played a part in where we are today. You know it’s not taught to the level that it should be, to the detriment of all of our students, but I think more importantly to the detriment of African American students, because their history is minimized and those intergenerational traumas that have transformed communities for the worse in most*

*situations, is not discussed. We don't talk about the crack mom and crack baby...and the ghettos and the property and how the property was taken away. So no, there could be a lot more dialogue around equity, privilege, class, history, black history, and I don't think there's enough. (Watkins, 8/19/15)*

I shared with him some of the experience I've had with learning about injustice, racism, and many painful realities, even up to and through the the masters program. I described the emotional difficulties many of us took turns supporting each other through on a daily basis when studying issues of global peace, conflict, and development. I asked him if he believed kids could handle being taught about these issues.

*Kids can handle it, it's the adults who can't<sup>16</sup>. Also you have to be a bold superintendent, because you're gonna get backlash from the parental community... "We don't believe that more resources should be going into the African American and Latino...we don't believe that you should be bringing up issues of equity or race...." but the kids are ready for it. I mean, the kids, the new generations are ready for it...I would say, there are just a few superintendents that address it in their districts, but some do. I think San Francisco, Oakland, I mean I'm talking about there's African American superintendents in Berkeley, Oakland, San Jose...they're addressing it....But it takes trust and it takes time and it takes thoughtful rollout. But I think the students benefit from it. I mean why the hell would you want to... keep them unaware of some of what they need to know about our history and why certain things are taking place, when African Americans couldn't get loans because they were red lined from certain areas or they couldn't buy property... I mean we're not talking 150 years ago, we're talking 25, 30, maybe even today. So you know I think it's happening, but it takes a bold superintendent and it takes a bold board to support that superintendent. I think it's not as pervasive, it's not happening as much as I'd like to see it happen in California. (Watkins, 8/19/15)*

*Are we doing a good job? No. Okay. But very few places are doing a good job, because if you look at the work force, and the leaders in public education, there are very few African Americans, the fewest of any ethnic group. I think there are 30 African American superintendents in California out of 1000, so not very much. A few more Latinos. So, the cultural awareness, even if you look at the leaders, how culturally aware are the leaders in public education? I would say moderately at best" (Watkins, 8/19/15)*

Watkins' stance that it is adults who have a hard time or are resistant to talking about race or having racial equity discussed in schools was mirrored later when he stated that race is an

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<sup>16</sup> I agree with him, though would add that while kids may be ready for it, that does not mean they do not need support and guidance when learning about violence and oppression.

uncomfortable topic in our country, and again when he said “Is there enough being done? No. Do people want to hear about it? I’m not sure people are ready for it.” (Watkins, 8/19/15). This sentiment has not stopped him from making enormous strides forward with other superintendents;

*I’ve been doing work more or less statewide...I’m also a member of the 58 California County Superintendents Association which I was president of at one point in time...during that period I was at least able to raise the awareness of Black Lives Matter with the other 58 county superintendents...I’ve been working through those mediums and also state legislature to talk about ways to improve outcomes for African American youth because it’s evident in graduation rates, dropout rates, reading levels, math scores, suspensions, expulsions, incarcerations. Ya, it’s pervasive, and the history is very important...as you raise the awareness...I saw a change in their attitudes toward African American students (and I’m not just focusing on African American students it can be all students, but I focused on African Americans), but, because they didn’t know, you don’t know. I mean, even me, unless I do some more research I’m going, ‘is it really that bad?’ There are some markers out there, and it’s pretty bad. (Watkins, 8/19/15)*

Obviously Watkins is a serious fighter for equity, and Santa Cruz is lucky to have him. I chose to leave in an aside he made, which in my understanding was meant to convey that he is not solely concerned with African American students, which he may have felt compelled to add because a strong portion of our conversation centered on this issue. While later, I will critique the lack of discussion of gender by essentially all participants, which possibly speaks to an even more invisibilized issue, I wanted to add here that I felt Watkins was more than justified in his focus and attention to the issue of racial inequity and injustice, and in particular in our discussion, the inequities compounding on African Americans. While he confirms that as a Novel Discourse, it’s discussion is not as normalized as it needs to be, he is actively doing the work toward normalizing the discussion. As he mentioned, even in leadership, awareness and representation is inadequate.

Cline-Scott and Spencer volunteered their understandings that inequities are a huge part of reality, even here in Santa Cruz county, particularly in Pajaro Valley and the districts south of Santa Cruz, where schools are almost exclusively Latino, and many parents work in the agricultural fields as undervalued citizens and/or immigrants. Cline-Scott called teachers a “powerful force” for mirroring peace by “how they react or don’t react in situations, and what kinds of experiences or stories, they bring to light.” (Cline-Scott; 8/2/16). Teachers, by this signpost, could bring to light experiences and stories designed to create awareness, tolerance, or better: celebration of diversity, and understanding of injustices throughout history.

Saffren, again, had a unique perspective on the topic of addressing inequity.

*There’s been a pecking order all the history of our country. So it’s ingrained in our culture, and I think that you change it, you know people used to say you change it through education. I think it’s a spiritual evolution. I think if you meet people’s needs, and if people are doing that “love your work” thing, I think that it happens. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

Saffren’s perspective is intriguing. It can certainly be seen as too simplistic, and not taking into account structural aspects of oppression. This is my main critique of the Montessori model. similar to Harris’s critique of the Quaker Project: without engaging students<sup>17</sup> deeply and critically through content on the matters and intricacies of systemic and cultural domination and oppression, we cannot hope that they will have the skills it will take to dismantle them.

*...Go to one of those trilingual schools where they speak Vietnamese, Chinese and {English}...and see, how are they dealing with race relations? Because it’s back to that thing again of, if people are doing what they want to do, they don’t care! They don’t care*

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<sup>17</sup> I gained great insight from Saposnek about the developmental stages and comprehension abilities of children which I sadly cannot go into fully in this dissertation. In sum, while developmentally children may not be able to comprehend and engage with deeply complex issues that are at all abstract until the age of eleven or twelve, they can still absorb much in the years proceeding to lay a foundation for deeper understanding later. In particular, Saposnek and Cline-Scott mentioned one school that goes above and beyond in teaching for peace from pre-k up. Mt. Madonna School in the Santa Cruz mountains uses daily foundational teachings of kindness, respect, and interconnection, and manages the embodiment what Saposnek says he feels is “one of the best schools in the country,” and produces students who are college ready and “highly evolved.”

*if you're purple with spots. If I am happy and fulfilled none of that matters to me. I think there' are really just a lot of really unhappy people, I think it's a social ill to blame, and they don't take responsibility for finding that love, that love of work. The other thing is I think it's just archetypal, the whole thing about race and gender and same sex relationships. It's archetypal. So for us to overcome that archetype we have to come from a position of groundedness and strength. Otherwise we won't. But the veneer thing. I mean he {Donald Trump} has poked a hole in that veneer. I mean we're making people be respectful, and that does not solve the problem. Does not solve it at all. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

I believe that Saffren has the other piece of a complex puzzle, and it reinforces my theory that if we provide a holistic and comprehensive peace education for children when they grow up and follow their passions, many of them, like myself, Watkins, and countless others, will be driven to dismantle oppression. I believe many children will need to be educated on these subjects in order to discover their passion for such work, and that many more people would be active now had they had such an education earlier. Similarly, the “social ill” of blaming is very ingrained in U.S. culture and is in a vicious cycle with intolerance and bigotry. I agree that individuals can and do find freedom from such traps by finding love and passion for their life. However, it needs to be addressed from all angles; inner and outer peace; teaching to honor the individual, and also providing the skills and understanding that many will use to stand up and eradicate injustice.

However, Saffren's approach remains compelling, and in a way is common sense.

*Until people come into themselves and love what they're doing they are not going to be tolerant of anyone around them. They are just not going to have it. They are not going to have the empathy or the tolerance of I'm free to be who I am, so you're free to be who you are. We're not truly free. We're not truly free...(Saffren, 8/19/16)*

Simply put, unhappiness and self-objectification, for which we are so completely socialized starting in public school, are barriers to tolerance of others. It is a logical argument. If I have been taught not to accept myself, and that I am unacceptable as a whole human being without being altered, enhanced, compartmentalized, etc., then how will I ever accept others as they are?

Saffren's lament that we are not truly free resonates with Eisler's explanation of how dominator culture replicates itself generationally. This is a poignant segway into the topics of trauma and combatting dominator culture.

#### 3.4.4 Combatting Domination Culture and Addressing Trauma

In powerful and unique ways, my participants are all working to dissolve the tendrils of domination in education. What I learned from Saposnek about temperaments opened my mind even more to diversity in learning styles; he made it clear that *some children are not self-directed*, and that self-directed learning is a style that does not serve them. I asked him about children who seem paralyzed by choice because they were raised by domination strategies; which Eisler (2000) and Harris (2002) both cite as debilitating for learning. "So the variables you described have the capacity to either magnify a temperament characteristic to a dysfunctional extreme or to moderate it to a more receptive place, where they can now learn and listen." (Saposnek, 7/6/16). Essentially, using violence/stress to raise a child will inhibit their learning capacity regardless of their temperament; yet some children are not naturally disposed toward self-direction.

Even so, it may be a valuable point for further research. Is there a way to apply "goodness of fit" to non-self directed children to help them develop their capacities for some self-direction? All adults must make some choices for themselves. Perhaps learning that some people are genetically wired to be more passive and take direction could culturally help us be more tolerant and less judgemental of individuals who may otherwise be labeled negatively as "weak." When I raised the subject with Saffren she was well versed in temperament, and said:

*I think that there are families where the parents are the boss, and the children follow what the parents say. And I think that those children are confused in a place where they*

*need to be self directed and making choices. I think that they have a lost sense of self to begin with. I do not think that's the majority of children. But, a child that's raised authoritarian, where you're gonna eat what I tell you to, you're gonna sit down when I tell you to, you're gonna wear the clothes that I tell you to? What it does with them is it puts them at cross purposes. Like, "wow, at school I can make all my choices but at home I-aaaaah" - does not compute. (Saffren; 8/19/16)*

*And what I often say to parents, really, is Montessori is not for every child but it's for most. It's for most. Being self-directed making your own choices; it's for most. (Saffren; 8/19/16)*

My takeaway is that while children who are truly temperamentally not self-directed must be honored in the education, too (and Saffren explained that even such children can be gently guided and directed in Montessori, it is just not forced). And the level of choice inherent in Saffren's (and Montessori's, when adopted accurately) is a crucial element in overcoming domination and objectification in our society that is missing in public education.

Bringing it back to "loving your work," I asked Saffren if her school prepares children to grow up and choose lives in which they love what they do and she answered with confident affirmation. She says with the strong sense of self and decision making that they develop, they have the propensity to go on and live such lives. However, she pointed out that if they transition from her school into an atmosphere where they are not *known*, where they are dominated and objectified, where their choices are taken away, etc...then there can be no guarantee.

She gave me an example of what can be lost in such a transition.

*So Elias went to kindergarten last year at De LaVeaga, that's 875 {students}, right, and he had skinned his knee, and his mom was talking to me and she goes, "it's just kind of sad Donna, nobody had noticed that he had skinned his knee. He didn't go and talk to anybody," I mean he didn't have a lot of blood but there was blood on his leg. And nobody noticed or talked to him or comforted him, ya know? And all of those things, those empathy characteristics that we really want to develop in children, are absent. And see, {within} a mixed age group? "AAH! Elias needs an icepack!" They care, it's a pack, they care for each other, it's really different with mixed age groups, it's very sweet. I have parents that come and ask, "do you section off the five year olds?" And I just tell*



*them, yeah, come and watch. And then they see, like, oh my gosh, why would we section off the five year olds? They all collaborate. It's really very sweet.*

I learned a lot about the development of empathy from my discussion with Saposnek, the way children learn to mirror empathy and kindness before they actually understand it. This illustration therefore seems to be of significant importance; if on a large campus children go unnoticed, they are losing some of their most essential development - the development of empathy by experiencing empathy from others. Now, Saffren's fright at 875 children on one campus makes sense.

Add to the concern about lack of empathy the issue of trauma.

*The psychological effects that students bring to school is, the trauma that students bring to school—all students—is minimized and not really addressed. We saw three suicides at Aptos High last year. I can go on and on about behaviors that need to be addressed. One of the things I think we can do back in those small schools is relationships, it is relational, and...if I know Sarah's having a bad day as a school teacher, and I know Sarah, I can address it. It's not really addressed in a comprehensive school. But...we are undertaking an initiative, it's called trauma informed care, which in fact, teachers are made aware of psychological stressors that affect every student or all students coming to their classrooms or how to deal with those stressors. I think that you're right...the awareness is becoming greater. But you know if you look at across the whole dynamic schools very few have been trained in trauma informed care to understand the emotional and mental baggage that kids bring to the class. (Watkins, 8/19/15).*

Watkins, who was once director of Santa Cruz Alternative Education, is well aware of the issue Saffren raises. He says that testimonials at graduations in smaller alternative programs share “common thread around how they didn't feel connected to their comprehensive high school, there was zero connection, zero support...So they come to these alternative schools where there's connection there's family, relationship, trust makes a big difference.” (Watkins, 8/19/15). He also mentioned that cutting edge high schools are trying to break down into smaller academies,

just as Saffren proposes, and as was described by Robinson. Clearly, even with trauma informed care, there is still not enough being done.

Spencer had her own perspective on this topic as well. She ties in her counseling degree as an asset toward being more supportive with kids, and points out that in demographics plagued by inequity, trauma can be even more prevalent, and most teachers lack the skills to cope, particularly because their workloads are already overburdened and they themselves are unsupported.

*...But putting that heart and soul into each and every child? It is absolutely demanding, and when you have an overstocked, overfilled classroom, and especially when you're in the demographics where there is daily trauma! There's domestic abuse, there's starving children, there's students who come in the exact same clothes as the previous day and you can tell that they don't have either the means or the parents there to be able to support them, or, you can just tell that there's the hardship. And I don't think people are prepared to carry that with you, either. I really - my degree was in counseling psychology, and I don't understand why those are two separate degrees...they really go hand in hand. I feel like I'm such a better teacher now that I went through counseling school. And I can - "oh, my kid's having a problem here" well I get down at their level, I make eye contact, I'm like, "hey, do you need a hug first? Take a break first" and a lot of the times it's like, "No! Who are you? Stand up, do the job!" And it's just going through the motions. So they aren't able to tap into what they're feeling, they can't express it, they don't know how to manage it, so it builds up and builds up and, then you get the kids who are fighting in the hallways. I mean, heaven forbid you take it as far as looking at all the gun violence that's going on at schools today. (Spencer, 9/1/16)*

Again, the question of empathy and creating a humanizing environment is seen by people on the ground as key factors in serious concerns.

### 3.4.5 Questioning Capitalism

I was impressed with the number of times our system of capitalism was called into question and called out for its role in our problems, even without any prompting.

Saffren brought it up through her own experience as a small business owner, and she is proud of the way she runs the school. “It’s become a place where people can work and earn a near living wage, it’s become a community.” (Saffren, 8/19/16)

*The thing that I realize in owning a small business is that the only way that small businesses really make any money is by underpaying their staff...{there was a post on facebook} about how capitalism is an unfair system and we really need to review capitalism as a paradigm, and it depends on: I get more than you, you stay there and do the work. And that is not how I run the business. But I could be a lot wealthier if I did run the business that way. But I can’t, my conscience won’t let me. (Saffren, 8/19/16)*

Saffren seems to embody an integrated philosophy, in which her values inform all aspects of her work, and that is a rarity in U.S. culture. There is evidence of self-reflection meshed with social reflection, which I consider an important skill for students of peace. Self-reflection was also demonstrated in Saffren’s explanation of how she started the school, that she realized what made her happiest was when she worked in administration and with kids (Saffren, 8/19/16). And she extends her critique of capitalism to our cultural problems with inequity and prejudice; “Ya, but as long as I think that you have more advantage than me—and also it’s rooted in capitalism too. If you have more than me, then I’ve been left out and left behind.” (Saffren, 8/19/16) She also reflects on the way our system forces us away from our children and babies during critical periods of development; “I watch people struggling with having babies and they have to go back to work. It’s not good.” (Saffren, 8/19/16) Spencer challenges our system of capitalism as not even capitalism to begin with, and clearly sees issues throughout many aspects of our society as interconnecting. (Spencer, 9/1/16).

Another issue brought up here is privilege. Initially shocked by Orchard School’s tuition of \$9,900 per school year, I consequently found that this is actually below the national average for center based daycare at over 11,000 per year (Babycenter.com). The issue of paying for care,

and in this case for the best early childhood education, is inevitably linked to privilege in our economic model. This is a serious consideration for further research and initiative.

### 3.5 Conclusions

#### 3.5.1 Rhetoric about Santa Cruz and Peace

There were many disparities about whether Santa Cruz is in fact progressive or not. Saffren called it more homogenous than other places, and the segregation I witnessed between Santa Cruz city area and Watsonville area was indeed striking. “Overall I don’t think Santa Cruz is progressive, no. Educationally I think it’s still in the Stone Age.” (Saffren, 8/19/16). Perhaps Saffren is right to an extent, however the amount of engagement I encountered with the Second and Third Discourse in my interviews alone is astonishing. I also felt that the number of alternative programs and initiatives I’ve seen being undertaken is promising; from the Calabasas Garden Project, to MM, to other impressive schools like Orchard and Monarch, to the work Watkins describes with his board and the availability of Alt. Ed.

*In this county we’ve been able to create a number of different alternatives, I’d say over 25, so there’s always a school for somebody, but that’s not the norm across the state. I think... all students learn differently, and we try to match their characteristics and their learning style and their needs whatever they may be with the different types of schools. So I think Santa Cruz County has a strong supportive network for adolescents, do I say we catch all of them, no... but if they want an education they can get one in SC, there’s no limits. (Watkins, 8/19/15)*

Watkins had a mixed response to the question of whether Santa Cruz could make a good springboard for progressive education. He said “yes and no.” However his overall testimony seems to point to many areas in which Santa Cruz is doing better with these principles than other locations, and he added that with state mandates giving more funding autonomy locally through

“local control funding formula,” “progressive communities have the opportunity right now with boards to craft their own educational system within their own district... So there are a lot of opportunities but people haven’t grasped them yet.” (Watkins, 8/19/15).

Watkins also pointed to the difference in treatment of juvenile hall detainees in Santa Cruz vs. the rest of the state<sup>18</sup>, and the teacher training program that includes units on diversity and equity. “I think that there is an increased awareness at least for the disadvantaged adolescents in SC County that they need more than the heavy hand, the hierarchical model where it’s domination...” (Watkins, 8/19/15) However, despite all this, he says there are still significant gaps and not enough being done.

Another repertoire I was somewhat surprised to find actually supports my theory that the Novel Discourse of peace is being hindered by other negative discourses surrounding it. Most participants volunteered phrases, attitudes, or experiences about the negative ways in which progressive peace ideas are viewed and received. When Watkins mentioned the Character Based Literacy program, he added a disclaimer that it was not “boy scout stuff.” Saposnek made reference to condescending rhetoric about Santa Cruz and liberal ideologies associated with the town. When we began discussing some Discourse Two principles, his initial reaction included: “That would be a very sophisticated model to put into this generic Santa Cruz-y idea that we’re talking about. Everybody kind of knows this stuff, oh ya, that’s the peace nics...” This is important because there is a prevailing discourse that misunderstands the depth and breadth of the field peace studies. Due to the limited to non-existent understanding and education about peace in U.S. culture, the rhetoric that is strongest about peace studies, education etc. is very

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<sup>18</sup> Santa Cruz is one of only two counties which has supported the end of solitary confinement for juveniles, which is clearly not beneficial (paraphrased from conversation with Watkins on 8/19/15).

shallow, narrow, or unsophisticated. Therefore, even those with knowledge pertaining to Discourse Two and Three can often have a sense that movements regarding them are flimsy and unreliable, uncredible. Also, it's possible there is a common urge to distance themselves from to a degree so that they will not be mistaken as flimsy, unreliable, or uncredible. This harmful misunderstanding is a significant block to meaningful discussions which would help peace education to gain traction.

Spencer shared that she had her own stigmas to overcome about alternatives, that she grew up with ideas about “those weirdo homeschoolers, those freaks...” (Spencer, 9/1/16). Now she says the stigmas are directed at her.

*I get outcast for speaking up about it. Like, “Oh, who’s that freak who thinks daddadadada” or “ooh, look at that tree hugging hippie,” or this or that. I don’t understand why I should be demeaned for thinking about the proper treatment of children, and our earth, and our bodies, and how am I wrong with that? (Spencer, 9/1/16)*

So it does appear that progressive attitudes in Santa Cruz exist in tension with more exclusionary and fear based thinking.

One interesting reflection was the strength of each contributor’s position in their discourse—again, perhaps an obvious conclusion.. These themes were at least partially influenced by my own participation in the interviews. I both sought perspective from each participant on their areas of passion and expertise, and also at times encouraged the conversations to continue down certain lines if those topics seemed to fit into my own questions and concerns for education. However, while I did play a role in shaping the topics of discussion, the participants took my questions in their own directions as I provided a very free form, open ended format.

Saffren's dialogue was heavily rooted in early childhood development, in respect for the child, and honoring the individual; discourse deeply rooted in Montessori's philosophy. Watkins focused more on racial equity than any other participant. Due to his position as an activist and pioneer for California's African American community, I intentionally opened that dialogue as his viewpoint on such matters and their relationship to education is immeasurably valued in this research. This is clearly a particularly important perspective for him, as he pointed out himself the disproportionate number of superintendents from minority ethnicities, the lack of representation of these issues in our classrooms, and the lack of solution based concern for African American (and other minority) youth.

Spencer had a holistic attitude and a more focused outlook in regard to food, health, and the environment, which fit with her position as the Garden Project teacher. And of course, Cline-Scott's interview centered on teachers, and Saposnek's was firmly entrenched in developmental psychology. The strength in difference of position provided me with two important insights. The first was that all three discourses were acknowledged and understood at some level by each participant, the principles themselves overcame the uniqueness of perspective. The contribution of each was absolutely unique, and I gained valuable information from each that was not received from another. This leads me to conclude that a dynamic approach to furthering all our goals of a more successful and peaceful education by engaging in more transdisciplinary, or trans-professional, partnerships could be pivotal, or at least beneficial.

### 3.5.2 Gender

A gap that is both fascinating and tragic for me as a researcher was the almost complete absence of discussion on gender inequity across most of my interviews. I failed to make it a

center-point in my questions and topics. However, it was included in almost every question when I asked about the topic of inequity and social justice in our educational content. One example is the discussions of inequities amongst superintendents. In California, only twenty out of fifty-eight superintendents are women. According to recent studies using data gathered nationwide in 2012, the the ratio of female superintendents has risen from a shameful 10% in 1990 to 23% by 2012 (Wallace, 2015: 42). However, these statistics are even more astonishing when considering they reflect an almost inverse ratio of how many women to men occupy lower echelon positions in our education system (Wallace, 2015: 42). Men continue to dominate positions of authority even in a stereotypically female dominated sector (Wallace, 2015: 42). In this regard, California is somewhat more progressive, with nearly 31% female superintendents (Dudek, 2011: 16). However this is still not representative of the female population, in general, in students, or in the field of education as a whole. When we look at the cross sectionality of gender and race, the numbers are even lower.

I believe Eisler's theory is indispensable here. Her theory focuses on the way domination society creates hierarchies by devaluing some and valuing others. She says the most primary hierarchy is the male half of humanity over the female half, and this extends to the traits and characteristics associated with each gender, as well. This explanation can be applied to the system of education, a field prominently feminized and considered a "caring" profession; and is also widely accepted as an overworked and underpaid profession, even while everyone agrees it is one of the most honorable and important positions within our communities.

Based on my interviews, I must conclude these issues are either a) even more masked and shrouded than issues of racial disparity, b) so normalized that even the most progressive among



us accept that women are worth less than men, or c) that we are even more uncomfortable confronting them.

An interesting side note: most participants mentioned one of the presidential candidates and each candidate had their own repertoire. Donald Trump was brought up with horror, disbelief, and as an example of the worst of U.S. culture and the challenges we face by both Watkins and Saffren. Bernie Sanders was brought up as a beacon of hope and grassroots success and progress by Spencer and Saposnek. Saffren came closest to talking about gender by discussing Hillary Clinton.

*I wasn't thrilled with Hillary, she's never thrilled me. There have been some outstanding women, that could be president, and it wasn't Hillary Clinton in my mind. But, it all of sudden dawned on me—oh my God! It doesn't even matter, she's a woman! It doesn't even matter, I don't even care who she is! Well, except for Sarah Palin. I mean, she knows our system, she's a woman! I want her elected. I really got on the Hillary, I'm in. Hook line and sinker I'm voting for you...I am in my consciousness, saying GO HILLARY!*

*...but most, most women, I mean, yeah, college educated...I think college educated women can kind of appreciate - but young women, or teenagers today, are like, "yeah, what's the big deal? Hillary's nominated." I don't think they fully grasp, I don't even think they grasp that a black man was in the White House! (Saffren, 8/19/16).*

### 3.5.3 Is Change Possible?

One last vein that ran throughout the interviews were comments reflecting a sense of doubt that we can truly overcome the magnitude of the issues in public education, or the lack of understanding that seems omnipresent. "I really do feel that people really just don't think it's possible anymore. And therefore they stop trying." (Spencer, 9/1/16). Every participant expressed some level of doubt or hopelessness.

*That's why I get so frustrated, because I know that these individual differences, all my great ideas, I know it's not going to work. So I just get kind of depressed and frustrated about it, and just attend to each kid and that's as much as I can do...I teach large groups*

*of students all the issues I'm describing, hope one of them or you will figure out how to create policies in spite of all the limitations I see." (Saposnek, 7/6/16)*

Whether it was Saffren's *Zombies*, or Watkins belief that adults are not ready to face deeper issues, I found this common theme fascinating since it came from people actively and deeply engaged in such transformative work. For me, uncovering this discourse of cynicism points even more strongly for the need of normalizing Novel Discourses about peace, peacebuilding, and peace education. The more normal such dialogues become, and the more understanding there is about the depth, breadth, principles and possibilities of peace work, the less we will have to combat discourses of cynicism and unjustified rejection. I hope that by engaging in this discourse analysis, both participants and others will see their place within a larger community of peace-workers than they had realized, and that the work is vastly transdisciplinary. There are countless avenues into peace work in education, and these participants exemplify a few. Each perspective has much to gain and offer the others. By drawing them in, side by side, in this analysis, I hope some of those possibilities have been illuminated.

# Conclusion

## *Synthesis of findings and Limitations*

The findings that I focus on are intertwined with my position and bias as an individual. What I have stated from the beginning of this thesis about the three discourses and the movement we need to continue between them is the result of the findings that emerged as the research unfolded. To synthesize them here; in this dissertation I have highlighted three important discourses in the realm of education in the United States. These repertoires are complex and overlap in many ways, making them impossible to separate cleanly.

The First/Old Discourse embodies the traditions of education that have shaped what we have on a mass scale today; large, impersonal, factory style schools, separated by age, and still dedicated to a Lockean view of the child as an empty vessel. However, the primary way this First Discourse revealed itself in my thesis was by way of severe critique and rebellion by many authors and interviewees. This critique straddles all three discourses, though for the most part I've placed it within the label of the First.

The Second/Alternative Discourse is gaining popularity and awareness in the United States and beyond, and has a long and rich history of scholars, educators, and theorists who recognize the flaws inherent in the factory style education. This Second Discourse promotes and proves that the foundational principles of the First Discourse are ineffective and actively hinder the greatest potential for learning and thriving in an educational setting, and the alternative set of principles it presents are much more aligned with research about how humans actually learn, and learn best.

Discourse Two is gaining traction in U.S. mainstream media and consciousness, though it is still far from being widely implemented. There are great obstacles to shifting foundational principles and practices in the monolith of U.S. public education; and other discourses about the impossibility, unrealistic, or unattainability of such changes are part of the challenge.

The Second Discourse also has a significant shortcoming, and that is it fails to make the connection to peace and sustainability. This is where Discourse Three or the Novel Discourse comes in. Discourse Three concerns the narratives (or lack thereof) surrounding movements for peace education. This is a huge field, with many theories and approaches. My focus on peace education is the underlying principles, widely studied and documented, that can lead to higher levels of cultural peace and the imbuelement of peace-building skill sets.

Discourse Three, for my purposes here, has three main points; first, it is the most realistic standpoint to acknowledge how desperately the U.S. needs to provide future generations with skills and understandings for social and environmental sustainability. Two; the principles of Discourse Two and Three are nearly identical - with the glaring omission in the prior of this most fundamental reality and cruciality of peace. And Three; Discourse Three is extremely *novel* in the ideological rejection and invalidation by surrounding (and inaccurate) discourses deeply rooted in U.S. rhetoric that peace and peace education are unrealistic, impossible to implement, idealistic, not in alignment with our primary aspirations of individual and economic success, and superfluous additives to already overpacked curricula. And at worst, topics concerning peace and sustainability can even be distrusted as *threats* to personal liberties.

The Third Discourse faces even more challenges than the Second. I believe my research illuminates that at least part of the issue is the lack of in depth cultural knowledge about peace

education and building. To a degree, this is a self-fulfilling prophecy; because we do not teach the principles of peace, there is no understanding of them, and therefore misunderstandings or lack of information is all there is to inform opinions and rhetoric on the subject; leading to a severely diminished sense of importance of peace education, a lack of ability to foster deeper discussions, and lack of knowledge and motivation for implementation in schools.

Of course, obstacles to meaningful discussions about peace go far beyond this. In a militarized society, where mass media is owned by a powerful few - who have personal and corporate ties to industries such as privatized prisons, military ventures, oil, etc.; deep considerations and critical thinking on topics like social equity, environmental justice, and sustainable global relations are not necessarily desirable. Deeply imbedded cultural beliefs and intolerances, as well as the enormous and complex issues within the education system and political considerations all add up to contribute to the seeming “impossibility” of change toward better or more peace-oriented education.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I began to uncover these veins of discourse while seeking some understanding of where rhetoric in U.S. education stands. This undertaking was inevitably restricted by its enormity, and by the very nature of discourse as being fluid and invariably multifaceted. Again, I wish to reiterate that my bias and personal view point had great impact here. As a researcher, I focused on what was most important to me, and most certainly ignored, was blind to, or gave less attention to aspects of analysis that were less significant to my goals and beliefs as a peace researcher and individual. There are countless sources that could have been included that were not and many tangents that could have been explored. My attempt was at a sampling of rhetoric from some popular education scholars who are proposing

alternatives to factory style education. For the most part, what I found in these narratives landed in the realm of the Second Discourse.

This was a narrow sampling, and as the focus on the three discourses emerged as the research was conducted, in hindsight, I may have chosen a different or wider variety of sources and conducted my primary research with more concise methods. There is abundant room for growth of this research, however, my starting point was a necessity as I needed to ground myself in a vast field (U.S. education) which I was essentially a new comer. As a result, the research ended up becoming a practice in drawing.

The second chapter was an attempt to create a summary of the foundational principles spanning Discourses Two and Three, that have been studied thoroughly, though perhaps not always in reference of one or the other discourse. In this context, I wanted to connect the missing link between Discourse Two and Three, as well as provide an overview of the information I attained, which may not be entirely new but has been immeasurably valuable for myself as a person going into the field from here.

In chapter three, I analyzed the conversations I had with various local professionals in and around the field of education, all occupying unique positions. Again, my initial goal was different from what I now recognize as the ultimate outcome. At first, as with my literature review, I felt I needed to ground myself and research in a multitude of perspectives on this monolithic subject. The result, however, went beyond this. In engaging various professionals in similar (though not identical) conversations, I was able to see deep connections in belief, principle, and narratives across a wide variety of perspective. On the one hand, the “differences in perspective” were perhaps limited because all interviewees seemed to share the common

ground of liberal values, and commitment to what I've referred to here as "peace principles." On the other hand, their positions as individuals and professionals were all strongly diversified.

I found tremendous power in each conversation I was granted. The knowledge and insight that was shared with me was invaluable in my mind, and there are many ideas to that have significant potential contained in those interviews. Each individual also represents an abundantly active contributor to our children and system. I felt honored to be get a glimpse into each person's work, and felt that each could have their work documented much more fully as lessons in cultural transformation work.

Taken together, the interviews and work of the participants has a whole new dynamic to offer, one that I've barely scratched the surface of. Each individual is making amazing impact within their own sphere - aware or unaware of the others working in tandem with them in other interconnecting spheres. The narrative and beliefs that hold these individuals together are striking and strong, and if illuminated, could exponentially increase the power of this work within the community and strengthen the inspiration and confidence of these dedicated individuals. Is it also possible that by drawing awareness to the commonalities of doubt, dismissal, despair, and sense of isolation in this work, in the midst of such dedication and contribution, that such research could poke holes in the narratives even the most dedicated among us allow to hold us and our work back?

While the problems facing education in the United States are enormous, both in terms of the Second Discourse, which seeks to give our children a more fulfilling and meaningful education, and in the Third Discourse, which seeks to do the same while placing peace and sustainability as central cultural and educational necessities, it is clear that countless participants

who are contributing to the furtherment of these goals. One of the most interesting potentials of future research in my opinion, is to explore how emblazoning the discourses that even we as activists subscribe to in this challenging endeavor can hold us back. How we may still be isolating ourselves across fields, disciplines, and perspectives, and that by further revealing the connections between different people and projects, through shared principles and ultimate goals, could lead to stronger movements and empowered activists.

These comments are not to say that certain connections and awarenesses do not already exist for and between all my participants, for surely they do. However, I keep returning to the idea of furthering connections, if only in furthering awareness of the multitude of paths by which these projects are being undertaken. Partnerships - all mentioned in this thesis regard as vital. Since knowledge is too vast for any one person or group to wield all there is to know, we must share our various pieces to achieve solutions to our daunting challenges. Here, my belief of the collaborative work I believe our children will need to undertake for a peaceful and viable future comes back to us in how we will make such an education possible for them.

Finally, my ultimate concern - what have I found in terms of imbuing education, starting here in Santa Cruz, with the principles of peace? I found that the work is underway, and has a long history of champions and evolution - just as in other part of the country and all around the world. However, it is still an uphill battle against the hegemony of a tradition which perhaps *still* is more content with submissive workers than critical thinkers, would still rather foster ignorance and obedience than equity and sustainability. Even so, peace workers like those I've interviewed here, even those who may not recognize themselves as such, continue this centuries old work, in countless ways. And discourse continues to evolve and stagnate. It seems there is evidence that



with every two steps forward in this work, there is a counter step back with the rhetoric of “it can’t be done,” “it will never change.” This researcher has begun to wonder if this entry point, in education and peace research, may be one of the most crucial entry points to burst open.

After all, what we say and believe about our world is intimately and irrevocably intertwined with what we create and recreate. If we continue to subscribe to the belief that the world will never change, even as we work toward change, we are fighting against our own efforts. It may seem idealistic, but in fact it may be the courageous evolution we need, for us to question and even dare to put down these unhelpful sentiments. And teach our children in a way in which they never pick them up.

### *Recommendations for Future Research and Possibilities*

Avenues for future research are numerous. As Stoll-Lillard makes clear, research that thoroughly documents long term results of vetted Montessori programs could be highly beneficial in normalizing such high quality early childhood programs. Productive head starts such as these, or others like Mount Madonna school, which both Saposnek and Cline-Scott referred to as a high-quality peace program for children, could create early platforms for children to further develop skills in peace and critical thinking, and as Saffren purports; a strong sense of self-confidence in decision making that can lead to a genuine love of work, which could also be highly valuable in the development of skilled peacebuilders. These are all possibilities for future research, and there are still others based on the multitude of factors, principles and approaches mentioned herein.

Further, research into the discourses that shape, inhibit, and reinforce our educational structures and our action to change them could be valuable. Making such study and analysis

more well known across the community in education could spur questions about the status quo, as Saffren suggested we ask at parent-teacher nights simple questions like “how do *you* learn?” (Saffren, 8/19/16). It could also cause participants in the system and in activism to pause and investigate their own conditioning to believe that peace and change in the school system are unrealistic. Finally, it could work toward the further normalization, or at least a larger and deeper awareness and understanding about the principles of peacebuilding in our schools.

There are many ways such research could be undertaken. Locating such discourse analysis in a confined setting, such as a single school, could even be used as a model later for policies and practices in which school wide change could be initiated by laying bare the discourses that are held school wide. Making visible gaps in understanding, rote reliance on outmoded traditions that we know are not helpful, and illuminating common struggles, limiting beliefs, and also commonalities of virtue and dedication to change; such a school-wide unveiling could create more space for community building and support, inspiration, self-reflection, and catalyse creative solution seeking from within.

Again, limited by the knowledge I did not wield at the beginning of my research, and having gained what I have, I can look back and see that in many of the success stories that I read or heard about during this work often had a lot to do with an initial analysis of belief and discourse that was underlying a failing system. Further understanding of how this process can help enable transformative action in schools and in the system as a whole<sup>19</sup> could lead to effective programs of community discourse analysis as foundational to lasting change.

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<sup>19</sup> Watkins gave examples of such self-reflection by bringing his school board into juvenile hall to show why solitary confinement was counterproductive, or by giving facts about the severe inequities African American students face in schools to other superintendents - helping his colleagues shift their inner dialogue about certain groups of children, and the system that is supposed to serve them.

My stance is that ultimately, our systems of education arise from whichever set of ideological principles they are built upon; a set of principles that views children as cogs in a factory, that need to be shaped and molded by a heavy hand<sup>20</sup>, or a set of principles such as those described by all the authors and interviewees, one that views students as valued and unique individuals, equally deserving respect and recognition, a system that inherently values space for creativity and exploration, a system that knows it has as much to learn as it does to teach...perhaps even one that recognizes that our world is in danger from a long history of violence, and that we owe our children the best we have to give them in terms of tools to heal our broken histories and systems. This research reflects this stance. Underlying principles can be identified in every discourse reviewed. And by engaging in the deep self-reflection of analysing our own internal and external discourses in and about education, we can continue the hard work of consciously choosing to shift the outmoded principles that guided our schools for so long, to principles that serve our children and our world with depth, clarity, and compassion.

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<sup>20</sup> I hope I've made clear that the "set of principles" for any model is much more complex than this. Just as I devoted a whole chapter to an inexhaustive set of principles for peace education, so there are a multitude of principles that support a factory, dominator, or other type of schooling system. My intent with such a statement as above is to reference the whole set of principles by a small example, requesting readers to fill in the blank by use of theories laid out earlier.

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# Appendix:

## Transcribed Interview Selections

### *Interview with Riane Eisler, July 11th, 2015*

SF: Essentially I agree with Tomorrow's Children and I feel that the curriculum needs to be centered in these things that we don't even teach kids most of the time like race relations and gender these things that are really really difficult

RE: Just human relations, parenting, dating, family

SF: Yes, yes, I loved that section on relationships too. And you know whoever I talk to they reflect that back to me, like, ya know when we're in highschool that's all we care about and we're so lost and we're so alone

RE: Yes and they don't teach it.

SF: What we're learning is so meaningless.

RE: Well as you know my perspective is one of how do we build cultures of peace. Because, so the conflict resolution peice, to me, is a temporary, important, but the problem with conflict resolution is that it only attracts the people who already want to do that and it doesn't change the transmission from generation to generation of the use of fear and force to impose your will on others, starting in child rearing starting in gender relations.

So, that's why my focus is so much on, the notion...I start from the premise that if children observe and experience in their families the ranking of the male half of humanity over the female half they get this built in neurally almost. We are looking at difference as equated with either superiority or inferiority, dominating or being dominated, being served or serving. So I see gender as the key piece, it doesn't mean that racial injustice, uh etc. etc. doesn't matter of course it matters, but it's not coincidental that studies show that people who come from rigid domination families where that are either rigidly male

dominated or where the husband is quote 'hen-pecked' which, you know, and then the mother takes over that domination role, that they are also highly prejudiced. And some of the early studies on that were the authoritarian personality studies Elso franco brunswick, I don't know if you've come across those...

So the question is, then, education to help people overcome. What role can, well first of, I think there should be parenting education. And we do have a wonderful resource on our {website}...called the Caring and Connecting Parenting Guide....so this is a really good resource that I would love to see used in schools. I think we should have parenting education in schools.

SF: For parents and/or for children?

RE: For kids.

SF: Ya, so that they know what healthy parenting looks like.

RE: Starting, so that they can break the patterns. So that first of all the data, and you can find this I looked this up for my book sacred pleasure, but apparently kids who have been in good parenting programs in high school the teen pregnancy rates plummets, and also the kids all say, gee I'm never gonna hit my child. Because, that's how I was brought up, but I can see where, what does it model? It models using force to impose your will on others...

So, now when you said you want to look at the programs in Santa Cruz because there are a lot of alternative schools one possibility I'm just throwing this out might be to use the template of partnership education, process, content, and structure, to evaluate the various schools.

SF: That's actually an amazing idea and I don't know how I didn't think of that.

RE: So if you do that, I suspect, that would be my hypothesis, is that they're very good at partnership process, but that they're less good at partnership structure because they don't understand the difference between hierarchies of actualization and domination, and they think it has to be consensus, and consensus is the quickest road to a domination system, you know the person who doesn't agree can hold you up from here to eternity, right? ANd that they're very bad on content, that they simply haven't changed the content, and ignore the basic fact that we humans learn by stories, and the story of the old curriculum which is still taught in the alternative schools.

I mean I'm not saying for example that we shouldn't teach the Illiad, okay? But let's teach it in the context of a rigid domination society and then understand how crazy the conventional interpretations of it are, as this being a question of whether the warrior or the king should get a slave girl. I mean that this is a reflection of a domination society where this child doesn't matter, and all that matters are the people who dominate the king and warrior. And who cares? Ya know, I mean both of them are part of pathological noxious system, you know that idealizes control, domination, violence. So I would think that if you were to use that approach, you could develop a system for evaluating but at the same time you are evaluating you could use your evaluation process in your interviews with people to also help them to have a more integrated holistic approach that doesn't just focus on process but really reexamines content, uses tomorrow's children, and as far as structure doesn't misunderstand that you do have loci of responsibility and it is up to the leader or the manager to break that tie, if it happens, that you can't just have everything be by consensus, because the person with the greatest negative attention need will hold you up forever. So it becomes very inefficient.

SF: I think three of the questions that I wanted to ask you you kind of touched on in what you just said, one was the teacher as storyteller. You know I know your organization is doing work, but for me, where do I want to go in terms of like where do i jump in and how do we spread knowledge of this and the training of teachers, how do we train teachers in this process and do we need to really integrate it into teacher training curriculum?

RE: Absolutely, and that's tough. Because the whole system now, including really the alternative schools that have to conform, you know, it's teaching to the test, and, I mean, it's so *stupid*.

SF: It's tragic.

RE: It's dumb! That adults should think that this matters, I mean I remember cramming for tests and I don't remember a thing. Nothing. THAT's not learning. THAT's not development. I also think that there's a wonderful resource, a teacher at the American School in Fremont, by the name of John Krieger, who has developed, and he uses my work in this, what he calls the 'creed' project. And it's a way of helping kids sort out what are their values, what are the influences that make them acquire them, and what do they *really* want their values to be. Which I think is a, and he teaches it in his literature, in his sophomore literature class....

...well some kids from his class last year took the leadership program and they founded a caring economy club in American High school.

SF: Aww. That's so great.

RE: So ya, it's you know, just a little here a little there, but that's how change happen, and if you can get some of the very *good* people in Santa Cruz, through your questions, to refocus on curriculum, and on *story*, then I think you can accomplish not only a thesis that will be solid but also do some good.

SF: Yes I'm definitely hoping for that.

RE: so, yes, to answer your question, teacher training is very important. Hard to do right now. But, we can sneak things

SF: {Laughter}

RE: And yes, the teacher as storyteller is very important.

SF: That ties into, ok one of my biggest questions when I knew that I wanted to do peace education in the United States because we impact the world so much, and I know for me I've always gravitated towards the social injustice the environmental injustice, um you know, American Indian Studies and peace philosophy and conflict philosophy, like in my program at {UJI} it's like we were a small group, and it's like we had to take turns almost every day like lifting someone up who's heart was just hurting so badly because it's hard to take these things in. AND of course it's a privilege that I get to go learn about this in school instead of experiencing it and not having a choice. But when I was reading *Tomorrow's Children* and I was looking at, from the get go educating children about the possibility of a partnership world, and how it's been happening from the beginning of human time forward, and people are always working towards a better world, and also telling them the realities of dominator practices and how painful it can be, but, I just wondered if I had been raised that way, if I would be so much more equipped to kind of deal with these as I'm confronting them. Do you think that kids will be more able to feel hopeful and positive instead of feel that despair that some of struggle with?

RE: Well, of course. Because what we have is an educational system and a social critique that goes with it, that focuses on deconstructing the domination system, and you can do that from here until eternity, but what we've lacked is realistic model for *reconstructing*, and the old alternatives, socialism, religion or secularism, they don't work, and they don't

work because they don't take into account the whole picture. Which is, they don't pay attention to the most foundational relations and how those relations are culturally constructed, gender and parent-child. So, unless, and that's where the partnership and domination systems transcend all these categories. So I think that once kids get it, and you can start on a very basic level with a very young child. What's your best relationship, what's was it like, and what's your worst relationship, and what they will be describing will be the domination and the partnership system. but They'll only describe the relationship they won't understand, and that comes later, the structural elements that you need, that yes you have to have gender balance, that yes, you have to reexamine the notion of what is, not only effective parenting, which we're reexamining, but also (that's where the Caring and Connected Parenting Guide comes in) ah, but also what is effective organizational development? What is effective leadership? And what is effective teaching?

*Interview with Michael Watkins, August 19th, 2015*

MW: I think you're right, when we were talking earlier about the traditional model in public education where you have the teacher or master and you have the students being the receptacle of information. However that's gradually changing in more advanced circles of public education where it's more cooperative, collaborative and peer to peer learning. So... I see it happening. And also, along with that, the common core, which really touches on the four C's, communication, collaboration, creativity, and one more which I can't think of, whatever it may be, which really lends itself to really support this theory of partnerships. Schools for so long operated in isolation of the community and primarily society, bc society really hasn't been involved in public education, to the extent that they should, I do believe, to the extent that maybe some other communities do get involved. But, there are a couple things happening in California, now I mentioned the Common Core which lends itself to more of a collaborative structure, which also lends itself to more diverse thinking, and higher order thinking, when you have other minds coming into play in this. Because under the current model, many students are highly disengaged, I mean, we are moving into the 21st century with 20th century teaching methods and the students are quite frankly bored. Yes, it's changing it's a slow process.

But I do think this has merit {partnership education}, and it could move away from that dominant, you talked about maybe the white male dominant society, and the privileged society, because that still is the culture in which we live in, in my opinion. Privilege

matters. I highly support it, it has a place in public education, as we look at different transformations happening right now in California.

My other analogy is, the state has transitioned to what they call a local control funding formula, which has 8 priorities, but it basically is saying, “local community, you figure it out” so i think progressive communities have the opportunity right now with boards to craft their own educational system within their own district, with not, with very minimal heavily state mandates. So there are a lot of opportunities but people haven’t grasped them yet. But it’s on the horizon, is what I would say.

SF: Can you tell me what differences you see between Santa Cruz and other counties you’ve worked in, in terms of youth and education. What advantages and opportunities do you see here and what challenges do you see? But, it actually sounds like California is moving in a direction that is helpful.

MW: Well, California, but you mentioned Juvenile court. In fact there’s a resolution before our board meeting tomorrow to end solitary confinement for juveniles, for adolescents in juvenile halls. In this county we clearly support that. And we’re one of the few counties, I think there are only two in the state of the 58 counties...that support ending solitary confinement for juveniles which we all know is counterproductive. But that said, it came up in our last board meeting as well, and we have a seven member board here in Santa Cruz, and there were some who wanted to vote against the resolution. They wanted to stay status quo, well not status quo we don’t have status quo we don’t lock kids in solitary confinement in Santa Cruz County, when I worked in Alameda County they did, but that’s another story. So what I did was take them to juvenile hall earlier this week, so i took the board up there...they met with the chief probation officer and the teachers up there and realized that it is more productive to have students in class and be more preemptive around counseling and other supportive measures for acting out juveniles - You’re right, I think that there is an increased awareness at least for the disadvantaged adolescents in SC County that they need more than the heavy hand, the hierarchical model where it’s domination, no no...even the most egregious offenders we’re working with to ensure they get education and have a humane stay in there, which is not the norm in California...so back to partnerships, in this endeavor we partner with mental health, social services, probation, the courts to make this all happen, so partnerships are key in public education.

In this county we’ve been able to create a number of different alternatives, I’d say over 25, so there’s always a school for somebody, but that’s not the norm across the state. I think... all students learn differently, and we try to match their characteristics and their

learning style and their needs whatever they may be with the different types of schools. So I think SC County has a strong supportive network for adolescents, do I say we catch all of them, no, but if they want to be caught, I mean not physically caught, but if they want an education they can get one in SC, there's no limits. Where in some places I've seen that if students are lacking credits or, whatever it may be, there's no options for them.

SF: I feel like some of our alternative schools have really impressive programs, I know a lot of education philosophers think smaller schools are really the ticket, and it provides a more cooperative, democratic and intimate relationships between adults and students. So I don't know if you would agree with that. My question is how can we use some of the positive things we've done in our alternative schools? {For instance, a program that focuses on the local habitat and practical skills} How can we start integrating some of those principles into our larger or regular schools?

MW: {Summarized: Supports small school environment; reason—graduation ceremonies; testimonials from students are compelling} ...Common thread around how they didn't feel connected to their comprehensive high school, there was zero connection, zero support, zero connection. So they come to these alternative schools where there's connection there's family, relationship, trust makes a big difference.

That said, I do see that the more cutting edge comprehensive high school are trying to break their large highschool down to smaller academies, in other words you're seeing maybe a health academy a science academy, where students may have cohorts and teachers may get to know and understand them a little bit better. So I think it's happening but it's not wide spread.

SF: {Summarized: Is funding the main problem? How can we get it to spread?}

MW: {Summarized: Superintendent's job is very demanding, to shift a culture of a school is very demanding, conflicting forces like unions, school boards that don't want to make changes.} It's a cultural mindset we have to get away from, we have to educate educators around best practices and research, and give them tools to operate under these new conditions, under this new format. So if you look at some of the schools or districts that are on the cutting edge, they have a lot of these practices embedded."

{Summarized: New superindendent, new agenda, few places with continuity}  
There is no consistency and best practices and leadership, I'm not even sure how to get there.

The school board trustee has a lot of power to set the vision, they have to understand that power. Heretofore they didn't have as much power bc there were so many state mandates, so they need to understand that power

SF: A lot of what I've read has been about the standardized testing and NCLB, and from a lot of different perspectives it has not been that helpful for our students and really hindering our teachers possibly from teaching from this creative perspective that recognizes differences in children...So does the new way that California is doing things, if that frees us from the necessity for that or if that's excluded, and how you feel about that?

MW: It's been harmful for public education, it's been damning for the last 20 years. Even the supporters realize that now, it took them a decade, it took them a long time...but now the feds are doing a reauthorization for...NCLB...and they're realizing that there is no place for rigorous standardized testing. Poor gets got cheated during this whole model...not only on the testing but the focus on the miopic curricula around english language arts and math, so if you're poor, you didn't a lot of science, maybe computer science, maybe a art. For a whole decade we screwed kids. So, it's been very harmful, and we're moving away from it. And thank God, it's taken ten years to tell these individuals maybe it's not working. More or less the punishment model, we punished the school if the kids didn't perform on the standardized test. The kids didn't want to take these damn tests anyway! So, anyway, I think there will be still some assessments around schools moving to a smarter balanced computer assessment, I don't think it's going to be as onerous, and it will be tied to the common core which is tied to the four C's, so it's a major shift in K-12 education.

SF: {Summarized: I told Michael that when I read that he was the first African American to ever be elected as a superintendent in California, and that was only achieved as recently as 2007, I was flabbergasted. As a community leader, Watkins is a champion for social justice and the celebration of diversity. I recounted that I had read that programs addressing such issues, according to Eisler and other peace education scholars, are little more than add-ons to core curricula, if addressed at all.}

SF: Things like diversity and gender, and class, and privilege are mostly just add ons, if anything. From this perspective, it should be foundational, it should be gender balanced, it should be completely culturally inclusive and ethnically inclusive, because kids suffer so much when they don't get that from the get go, and throughout their entire education. So how do you think we're doing in Santa Cruz in terms of that movement... and also the



natural environment, because domination also goes to nature, and all of the problems we are seeing there with global warming and the exploitation of our natural resources.

So, do you think that caring, teaching kids about caring relations, and teaching kids how to care about each other and the earth, and maybe people they don't know or people who are different than them. Could that also be an important aspect of teaching equity?

MW: Are we doing a good job? No. Okay? But very few places are doing a good job, because if you look at the work force, and the leaders in public education, there are very few African Americans, the fewest of any ethnic group, I think there are 30 African American superintendents in California out of 1000, so not very much. A few more Latinos. So, the cultural awareness, even if you look at the leaders, how culturally aware are the leaders in public education? I would say moderately at best. I'm going to tell you go on to a YouTube website; my friend Bernard Kinsey, he talks about the history, in other words...African American men being shot by police at an alarming rate by police in alarming rate, maybe it's always happened, maybe video has changed it, but I was watching TV yesterday, this guy had his hands up and got shot in the chest. I mean, I'm just stunned. I think that as far as educators and teachers, do we talk about our history as a nation. How, ya know, Jim Crow, and segregation, and Brown vs. The Board of Education, and equal rights has really played a part in where we are today. You know it's not taught to the level that it should be, to the detriment of all of our students, but I think more importantly to the detriment of African American students, because their history is minimized and those intergenerational traumas that have transformed communities for the worse in most situations, is not discussed. We don't talk about the crack mom and crack baby, and his mom and his baby, and the ghettos and the property and how the property was taken away. So no, there could be a lot more dialogue around equity privilege class, history, black history, and I don't think there's enough.

...What {Kinsey} does is use African American art to talk about how African Americans don't know their history, and if they don't know their history their gonna have a hard time understanding how to navigate the world...so I've taken that stance myself. Is there enough done? No. Do people want to hear about it? I'm not sure people are ready for it. I've done presentations, I put it out there pretty much, but my audience is more progressive. I'm also on the criminal justice council here in Santa Cruz, we're talking about race, and if I put it out there I really put it out there, and I do respect all law enforcement who we work very closely together, but I still think there is an awareness gap in that relationships with a lot the minority cultures in this community.

I've been doing work more or less statewide, I've done, I'm also a member of the 58 California County Superintendents Association which I was president of at one point in time...during that period I was at least able to raise the awareness of Black Lives Matter with the other 58 county superintendents...I've been working through those mediums and also state legislature to talk about ways to improve outcomes for African American youth because it's evident in graduation rates, drop out rates, reading levels, math scores, suspensions, expulsions, incarcerations. Ya, it's pervasive, and the history is very important...as you raise the awareness...I saw a change in their attitudes toward African American students, and I'm not just focusing on African American students it can be all students, but I focused on African Americans, but, because they didn't know, you don't know. I mean, even me, unless I do some more research I'm going, 'is it really that bad?' There are some markers out there, and it's pretty bad.

SF: Yeah, it's almost like culturally our deal is to just pretend like that never happened or it's in the past so it doesn't matter anymore...

Do you think hope is important? Can kids handle it, can kids handle these issues?

MW: Kids can handle it, it's the adults who can't. Also you have to be a bold superintendent, because you're gonna backlash from the parental community. The helicopter parent and whatever else you want. "We don't believe that more resources should be going into the African American and Latino...we don't believe that you should be bringing up issues of equity or race..." but the kids are ready for it. I mean, the kids, the new generations are ready for it. If you are a real, I would say, there are just a few superintendents that address it in their districts, but some do. I think San Francisco, Oakland, I mean I'm talking about there's African American superintendents in Berkeley, Oakland, San Jose, Richard Karanzo is San Francisco's Latino, they're addressing it. I think Long Beach, Chris Dynhouzer, is addressing it. But it takes trust and it takes time and it takes thoughtful role out. But I think the students benefit from it. I mean why the hell would you want to... keep them unaware of some of what they need to know about our history and why certain things are taking place, when African Americans couldn't get loans because they were red lined from certain areas or they couldn't buy property, I mean it all makes, I mean we're not talking 150 years ago, we're talking 25, 30, maybe even today. So you know I think it's happening but it takes a bold superintendent and it takes a bold board to support that superintendent. I think it's not as pervasive, it's not happening as much as I'd like to see it happen in California.

SF: Do you think that moving away from the standardized testing gives some progressive teachers more room to bring these things up in their classrooms?

MW: I would hope so. I mean it can't hurt. But I think it still has to start at the top down, it has to start in a couple ways...We are doing it, this county office operates what they call a beginning teacher support program, induction program. What we are doing is a two year, once you get your credential you go back and we work with you for a couple of years. During that period we do have some units around equity, diversity, how hard they teach it...but it's addressed. So the new cohort coming up I'm more hopeful. I mean it's gonna take time. Race is not a comfortable topic for this country. It's not comfortable, and it's gonna worse, now when you talk about Donald Trump building walls for Latinos, and if you're born in this country take away the 14th amendment right where you're not a citizen. I mean it's very polarizing stuff but people are buying that shit, so I don't know. But we just have to keep educating as best we can.

SF: It's cool to hear, I do feel like we have a step up in Santa Cruz, and I'm kind of wondering if in the long run, if we implemented some of these changes that are controversial, it sounds like we have you, we have a board that is courageous like you said, we have parents who are maybe a little bit more conscious here, and that maybe we could make some of these changes here and our kids could really thrive as a result, and maybe that would be influential to other communities in California. "Oh hey, look at what Santa Cruz did, maybe we should look at that because look at how well kids coming out of Santa Cruz are doing."

MW: Yes and no, I still think there is so much pressure on schools, even under a new accountability model which we're still developing, to show academic results, and people have in their mind set that you can't do - you could do both! It doesn't have to be one or the other, you can show strong academic results by embedding cultural awareness and equity practices into, it could math it could english I don't care, literature would be a great way to do it! Literature and history. You know it's still not to the point where I'd love to see it and see it happen.

You mentioned, there's one other program that we operate throughout the Alternative Education Division here at the county office, and it's called Character Based Literacy, we work in conjunction with Santa Clara University... if you look at that their whole literature series is aligned to certain character traits, respect, trust, not boyscout stuff...but that's a step in the right direction. We've been doing that now for a number of years. So that group of cohort...I'm getting off culture to character now, but I think that's important as well for many of our students, as they get to know themselves and help be responsible for their actions.

SF: {Summarized: I mentioned to Eisler's theory that the first internalization of domination relationships happens at home when families display power dynamics between parents, and that children exposed to this are more likely to be prejudiced in other ways later in their life. I then brought up trauma, and Eisler's idea about giving young children parenting classes so they can learn early on the effects of healthy and unhealthy parenting.}

MW: We've also instituted a program a trauma. I totally agree with you. The psychological effects that what students bring to school, the trauma that students bring to school, all students, is minimized and not really addressed. We saw three suicides at Aptos High last year. I can go on and on about behaviors that need to be addressed. One of the things we can do back in those small schools is relationships, it is relational, and if you know, if I know Sarah's having a bad day as a school teacher, and I know Sarah, I can address it. It's not really addressed in a comprehensive school. But...we are undertaking an initiative, it's called trauma informed care, which in fact, teachers are made aware of psychological stressors that affect every student or all students coming to their classrooms or how to deal with those stressors. I think that you're right, i think it's becoming more the awareness is becoming greater. But you know if you look at across the whole dynamic schools very few have been trained in trauma informed care to understand the emotional and mental baggage that kids bring to the class.

*Interview with Don Saposnek, July 6th, 2016*

SF: Santa Cruz children, to varying degrees (excluding some of the more disenfranchised children), are sheltered from many of our world's harshest realities. However, I believe children need to given information about these realities early on. How difficult might it be to give children a meaningful understanding of realities very different from their own?

- a. Is it difficult to convey that seemingly very divergent realities are actually intimately connected with their own lives, even if they can't see it concretely?
- b. Can and should we give children a 'systems thinking' perspective?

What are your initial thoughts and opinions on those ideas?

DS: So you know some of the schools like Mt. Madonna and Waldorf, that are focused on teaching that in each child, starting with teaching kindness, teaching empathy, teaching understand, teaching kids to pay attention to emotional intelligence first before getting into understanding facts about the world. Developmentally that matches kids, because first they are in their gut before they are in their head before they move into the world.

So, developmental psyche is mapped out stages of development. Well, emotional development is more complex, but cognitive development has been the second trajectory beyond physical development. That has been well mapped out and lots of controversies but pretty much we all agree on some the basics. So the basics are you start out in Piaget...So what he came up with is the stages of development, the first is sensory motor stage, from 0-2. So first the child's in their bodies, and their all reflexes and they start observing things and they take in data, which he calls schemas, schemas are sort of patterns of the environment both internally and externally, internally as reflected by the parents, the mirroring process.

So developmentally first it starts in the body, and then as child develops coordination they start to walk and they start to explore the world outside of them...then they go into a stage called preoperational stage 2-7, and concrete operational from 7-11 or 12. In preoperational is a thought pattern, like a mathematical problem, and you go through certain operations to solve the problem. {like how to move salt and pepper}

So preoperational is you're learning the fundamentals for doing that, and then with concrete operations, you can think about things pretty significantly from about age 7-11 or 12, but you can only think about things that you have a visual, a sensory anchor for.

SF: How does that relate to, being read fictional stories, for instance?

DS: You can hear stories and you can imagine, that's why it's pre, well concrete operations is not a static state it's always moving toward the next stage. So as a child, I'm either curious about things, curious about getting information during concrete operations, that's elementary school, essentially. So they can learn a whole bunch of stuff, they can even do simple operations of math and learn mathematics. They can't think abstractly yet.

So what happens at age 11 or 12, they move into abstract thinking. And abstract thinking is defined as full adult abstract capacity. So now you can think about 2 ideas that you have no concrete anchors for for the first time. And it often happens in a week or two period, suddenly something happens neurologically in the brain where all the synapses connect, just gell, and boom you're in abstract thinking.

...As a teenager they can now start imagining, what could balls become?...

So now back to this idea when can kids understand other cultures other ways of being...(of morality), they can't until abstract thinking. Formal operations, it's called.

Parents think kids can understand more than they can, because the child reflects, mimics, parrots, but does not genuinely understand...

Not to say that they can't get pieces and learn pieces because they can, they can learn simple interactions, they can learn how to be kind to somebody. Basically they're going through the motions of kindness behavior, they don't understand the notion of kindness. They have to keep being reminded. So in concrete operations you're building a concept, but it's very slow and piece by piece, your building inductively your concept, but it's not until they have the capacity that they can deductively come up with a notion and then implement. So it's two different ways of getting to logic, one is a slow build up inductively, and the other is sudden download.

SF: Once they get to that sudden conceptual download place, do the things that they've been absorbing throughout their earlier phases, do those things start making more sense.

DS: Yes, they all click into place.

SF: So does it matter to lay specific groundworks when they're, before the age of full comprehension?

DS: I think in terms of overall long term parenting yes that's the task of parents to teach them all the elements to the point where they can put it together without expecting them to put it all together on their own because they can't. But they'll talk like they can and act like can but they'll always fail then they get punished, unless the parents understand that, so if you take a positive approach to parenting as parenting is about teaching it's not about discipline, discipline is about teaching. And any bad behavior the kid does translates into "what doesn't he understand about this".

So ya they are creating the building blocks of pieces that will go into the concept but they can't really talk about the concept until they get there. So, if we did design curriculum that teaches from a systems approach, that teaches peace and conflict content, it's possible that once children hit the download stage at 11/12 they may be ahead in their understanding because of their background? As long as we keep in mind we are providing building blocks, and deeper understanding isn't the goal until later, perhaps we could be coming up with better building blocks.

There's one other line of developmental research which is moral development. Kohlberg first described it has been refined. This is an interesting idea, that kids go through stages of moral development it parallels cognitive development but it's a different content. It's

about evaluating people's behaviors and ideas along the way, in the concrete operations they're very primitive and you're just judging people as good or bad people. And once you get into abstract thinking, you can now think about situations and contexts, so now you can look at those same behaviors in a broader context. But they can't do that before that stage. So they're hopelessly locked into right or wrong. So your ideas of holding paradox, they can't. They're cognitively incapable of holding paradox.

SF: So you were talking about the role of parents. What do you think of the roles of schools?

DS: Wait—So Kohlberg stages map the moral stages of development and at the cognitive one parallelly, but once they get to formal operations, for the first time the child can think about moral decisions that aren't black and white...then you get to a higher level stage five which most adults get to...but stage five is the highest level most humans are capable of, because they can now operate on the greatest good for the greatest number, instead of me and what I want right now.

{Summarized: During vietnam war...Tiananmen square}

...That kind of a person, who's willing to give his life for a principle is the highest level of moral development that very few adults ever achieve and here he is at 19 years old. So that argument was that's the highest level of moral development where you really can think about beyond yourself, entirely... most Americans are like at level 3 or 4, it's all about greed and me and myself and screw everybody else...

SF: So I guess for me, in regards to what you're talking about, the best solution to be to shift cultural values. Like you are saying too many people in our country are at level 3 and we need them to be at level 5, if we are to continue surviving as a species. So for me it's about creating schools that can help shift those cultural values.

DS: Let me describe what Mt. Madonna School does, it was originally a school that came off of Baba G who was an Indian Yogi who came here to set up a yoga school on top of the mountain, and subsequently built this free standing school that I think is one of the best schools in the country, kids get into college, they are really highly evolved. I guess it's mainly based on yogic principles...I think they have a preschool there and they teach the kids about kindness and exercising they do all the things all the santa cruz-y type things, it's kind of hippie school originally, but now at a higher level, they've taken these kids all over the world, field trips to India and all over and met the Dalai Lama, not preschool but in elementary school. They start off with introducing them to yogic principles but they

got away from religion, they always infuse it with spirituality, that's really one of the highest levels of development for humans, a sense of spirituality. Which one of my colleagues in Michigan, she's a divorce mediator but has a very strong meditation practice, she said the definition she likes of spirituality is just connectedness. Which is a great concept it's non religious everyone can accept it and it basically is the connectedness of everything in the universe. And so, when you do any local or personal, interpersonal act, you are affecting the rest of the universe, that's the core concept. You can teach that to little preschoolers. In concrete ways. And they've got various ways of doing it... so they have all these little exercises that try building this notion of spirituality at very young ages. As part of that process also talk about being kind to other people, and when you affect any one person you are affecting everybody, and then it comes back to you. So, they're building building blocks of the concept, even though the kids couldn't define spiritual, they wouldn't know what to say, but they get inductively all these examples of it, and they're getting a full meal of that every day in school, putting all those building blocks in place to build the concept on by the time they get to abstract thinking, it's kind of a no brainer, they already know it.

SF: If you show a kid a tv show, is that a concrete anchor?

DS: No. Not really.

SF: You mentioned that kids learn through touching and doing, motor skills, so does that mean that the way our public schools tend to be set up is completely missing the mark?

DS: It's not the most efficient way. Montessori...So the Montessori educational model, and there are I think eleven Montessori schools in SC County, and I've been to most of them and consulted with them, they're vastly different from one another, you won't even recognize them as Montessori, some of them. Some of them take Montessori literally, and they literally won't touch children and they stand in the back of the room as a consultant, and let kids go and do whatever their doing, and they have to come to the teacher and ask for help. And other Montessori schools they cuddle kids and they hold them and they tell them "What a good job you did!" And in pure Montessori you never give feedback like that, you say "I see that you've made a color, and I see you put purple there." "Ya what do you think about it?" "Not important." That's the only reflecting. So from the purest form to the...which doesn't look much different from public school but they get much more money for it than public schools, there's individual differences among your concept once it's been out a while. But the model itself is based on self-directed learning and tangible touchable.....using the abacus....so that's kind of the model that would allow



kids to learn educational from concrete to abstract. Montessori mapped what we know about development. Program teaching materials in exactly what the theory says. So theoretically it should work optimally, however there are so many differences among the kids that I've been consulting with the Montessori school across the street from me for the last 35 years, and I've seen almost every single troubled kid they've ever had, and I get the ones that don't fit into Montessori. They need a structured someone telling them what to do, they need to do math with 30 other kids at the same time being told which problems to work on, if you turn those kids in a school where their free to explore and choose whatever learning project they want to work on they get paralyzed. They sit in the middle of the room and play with their toes. They don't know what to choose. They don't know how to choose. So they try to teach them how to choose, but they don't get the concept, they're not kids who are self-directed. And the individual difference of kids is an important piece of all this, because you can't take a kid who isn't self-directed and make them self directed. It doesn't work. I've seen it over and over and over. But you put them in a catholic school where they have to sit and their told exactly what to do all six hours of the day, their great learners. Similarly, you put the Montessori kid who's free spirited learns on their own self-directed you put them in a catholic school make them sit still and they go bonkers, start acting out.

Sf: Are the kids who get paralysed and can't self-direct is that who they naturally are or the way they were raised?

DS: {Summarized: One size fits all just doesn't work. Some is genetics. Experience will increase natural tendencies. Public education is too big to tailor-make stuff.}

I use this model....I've got a profile that has 17 dimensions that have all been well researched over 50 or 60 years that describe individual differences as temperaments genetically loaded characteristics that don't change much. If you have a continuum they are gonna move from one end closer to the middle but they won't switch sides. Activity level, sensitivity level, adaptability, emotional expressiveness, risk taking, physical and mental, sociability, those are all genetically loaded temperaments that are hard wired into the brain at conception. And it's not a median ratio of temperament.....

So it's kind of a complex mixture that results in a phenotypic expression of temperament that results in a style of behavior. All of those interact with parenting. One size parenting doesn't fit every different child...they are so complex you can 10,000 permutations of a single gene...so you have 8 kids with 2 parents and none of their temperament profiles are the same, they're all different and they respond differently in a thousand different ways, so creating a goodness...means accepting a child's temperament and not trying to change

it, but creating an environment that allows that child's temperament profile to express itself without conflict. Activity level is a case in point... high active in utero, vs. low active in utero. If you take the very high active kid and make them sit quietly and punish them, they actually get more active. The way genetics work, is if your moderate high active, and you stress the organism, whether it's a mouse a chimpanzee or a human child, they go in the direction the gene is pulling them they get more active it's a self fulfilling prophesy. The low active child you yell at them and tell them to go out and play and sign them up for soccer, they actually get less active, and now they won't even get up off the floor. And it's not passive aggressive, it's just how the genes pull them it's their stress response, because the mice do it too. If you shock the mice, the mouse is moderately high active, they get more active, with a moderately low active they get slower when we shock them.

It's such a powerful basic concept. {Goodness of fit} I extrapolated between school model and child, between particularly teaching style and child, and when you link those up with goodness of fit, which is accepting the child's temperament and not trying to change it, you get maximal growth maximal learning maximal understanding, and fewer conflicts. Within a family, within a school setting. That's another variable to look at.....the greatest model in the world for peace building won't touch some kids if you're trying to teach them in a way that goes against their temperament.

SF: {Summarized: A model needs to take into account some kids need more direction.}

DS: That would be a very sophisticated model to put into this generic Santa Cruz idea that we're talking about. Everybody kind of knows this stuff, oh ya, that's the peace nics, but implementing it you can get some of that but if you don't look at the child environment interface, you're gonna miss half the kids. The greatest conceptual model is not tailored to how kids actually are. And if you can pull that piece in, wow, that's pretty sophisticated.

SF: I actually just added this question earlier today; What skills do you think are most crucial for our teachers to be developing that are currently not prioritized? Would you say, learning about natural differences between children might atop those?

DS: Yes. I'd say that's the first thing. Because then all the discipline problems go away, the level of didactic education gets tailor made, and you basically are addressing each kid uniquely instead of one size fits all. And once you unbundle the one size fits all, you have opportunities to actually teach kids the way they learn.

SF: {Summarized: Introduces Eisler's CTT}. Even the kids that naturally need more direction, would you say that there would be a very significant difference between teaching them in a more dominating way vs. teaching them in a more compassionate, respectful, cooperative way, even if you are still giving them direction?

DS: You're moving the discussion now from the basics of how kids experience things and learn to given that, how do you teach them best.

When I was describing a moderately high active child, and you stress the organism, they get more active. So the variables you described have the capacity to either magnify a temperament characteristic to a dysfunctional extreme or to moderate it to a more receptive place, where they can now learn and listen. If they are pushed to be hyperactive because you stress them they can't learn anything anymore they're agitated. Or if they're shut down and cut off they just go passive, they go limp. Or if they're moderately adaptable and you stress them, they get more adaptable and then they don't discriminate anymore they just go with anybody they'll go with strangers and be kidnapped. If they're not adaptable and you stress them, they stop flexing with anything. So any learning experience that influences them are gonna magnify or moderate all of the temperament characteristics. So it has kind of a sub stratum effect of interaction between a child's given, and what you are attempting to do from the outside in. That's a given process functionally that's happening regardless of your intention. Now when you get into learning principles that you wanna teach, that are cognitive principles, you have to first deal with how are they going to experience the learning, and then if you've optimized that, what are they gonna learn from it. And then the model that you're teaching them, whether it's a dominating one or a accepting one, certainly will effect the kid, after all of those other layers are affected on their own. So you can't take that thing and just apply it to a child and assume you're going to get an effect. Cause it's going through all these filters that I just described. And that's the complex or sophisticated understanding of that. Damn hard to implement. Cause ultimately you're left with one kid with one teacher for life.

SF: Maybe Americans are so adverse to learning about the reality of how our culture is impacting the rest of the world because it's just so painful, but is it plausible to give children a framework where they can learn about this stuff early on, but also in a way that doesn't totally diminish hope and a sense of empowerment that we can do better?

DS: I'm reminded of, during the Cold War, or soon after that...there was a whole movement

about nuclear warheads being aimed at each other. I was teaching in the late 70's I was teaching a course on child development and I had about 180 students in the class and I invited a colleague, Allen Bass, who was heavily involved as an activist anti nuclear, and he was trying to get students to stop this nuclear - we're gonna all be killed - and he was writing about it some really profound stuff. So he came and talked to my class and he came and presented his lecture and he said the students they just go in a trance. And he said he's that experience before when he lectured other classes and he said it's an automatic shutdown mechanism when you're overwhelmed. Even though he gave them little things to do to prevent the nuclear attacks, it wasn't enough, people just, they can't think about it and they just block and they go numb.

And he said he's so frustrated he had all this stuff he's got all these tools and interventions possible but they're little ones and they have to build, and if you get a crescendo of a lot of people doing those little things, like Bernie's doing, you can make a major impact. But to mobilize the troops on the ground, to do little things that seem meaningless and hopeless, they go numb. It's like, 'no i don't want to think nuclear' they go smoke their joint and play with their dog, they didn't have video games back then but they'd jump into a video game now.

But he did describe that as a phenomenon that happens with humans. And I think the greater the contrast like you're describing our American culture so safe and cushioned and buffered from all the horrors going on in the rest of the world, especially in a middle class, upper middle class culture, where everything's so safe, to introduce horrors, I get it, it's hard to do. Because there is an automatic numbness that shuts you down, denial is what happens. Denial is a defense mechanism that is very useful.

{Summarize: Like a woman standing outside of her burning house screaming no no no}.

That's a very adaptive thing to do, saying no no no, which is I'm denying this can't be happening it's not real.

{Summarize: Talking about school shootings, other tragedies...}.

....

So all that is kind of going back to this question to think about this question of how do you teach kids to think about that stuff without overwhelming them. It does overwhelm.

{Summarize: Maddison Middleton and killer, what do you do with that?}

Those are all sort of the limitations of trying to come up with a solution for what you just described. There's layers of natural blocks to being able to access a horror like that, especially as a kid...kids have natural protections. (Divorce as an example; it can be so traumatic it's very important how they are told, because they will remember it in 25 years. All kids will react and deal with it different) Kids have natural ways of protecting themselves by working it out in their own style. So I guess the answer is how do you learn the kid's style for processing horror, and then how do you create that opportunity for them to do that. Individual, kid by kid, instead of one policy. That's why I get so frustrated, because I know that these individual differences, all my great ideas, I know it's not going to work. So I just get kind of depressed and frustrated about it, and just attend to each kid and talk about their kid and that's as much as I can do. That's why I've never gotten to a policy level...I stay on a clinical level. I teach large groups of students all the issues I'm describing, hope one of them or you will figure out how to create policies in spite of all the limitations I see.

So what would you take away as the answer to the question of how do you teach kids about horrors outside of their comfort zone, with their denial block?

SF: I'm still not entirely sure...some of the things I've become interested and that I actually believe kids need in terms of that inner peace model, is developing the tools for coping with their inner reality. So whether it's meditation, mindfulness, self-reflection, self-compassion, some of the stuff you're saying Mt. Madonna and some schools are teaching. If those were more focused on early, could those frameworks potentially help either adolescents or even later adults, have the courage to confront painful realities, instead of just going straight into denial or even recognizing, "hey, I've gone into denial, but at some point I'm going to have to deal with this."

DS: The answer is yes. If you can teach them—I mean the things that we're learning that relate directly to psychopathology for life, is emotional self-regulation. The earlier that a child can learn emotional self regulation, to learn how to control their feelings control their anxiety, control their anger, by meditation...by secure attachments with their moms and dads, as infants, and then building a calm peaceful life, with few traumas, or if they have traumas to have it processed together with them in their style, so that the child learns how to integrate bad things into the secure base in a secure attachment. Then when they grow up they have the capacity to take in the horror, not panic, emotionally regulate, still allow thinking to go on in spite of the emotional reaction, because it's stamped down, then they can solve problems. We got great research now when you have a good

secure attachment and good parenting, you can handle almost anything as an adult. In an inspired, enlightened kind of way. So that it's actually reasonable, instead of reactive.

It came up this quarter, my "Children and Divorce" class, where the students are interested in how you can prevent kids from getting a divorce as adults, as there's a high incidence of repeating that pattern because you didn't learn how to watch relationships to be healthy. And they're asking, how early can you teach kids about relationships that are healthy so they don't have to get divorced. They've got tools to navigate relationships instead of walking off and getting divorced as a solution as the only solution. And most of them start with well, in high school you teach them, you have relationship classes you teach them how to have healthy relationships. They say, "no! You need to go back to junior high." "No, you need to go back to elementary school," "no PREschool is where you start" "No actually it's a good mothers!" "No actually we're gonna have to waste one generation and start over because the moms don't know how to parent." Because you've a whole generation of dysfunctional mothers!

SF: And fathers!

DS: Who learn from dysfunctional parents.

So it becomes an almost self recursive infinite regression of where you start, you start wherever you are, is the reasonable solution, and then as early back as you can in a --- model, teaching kids first about themselves and regulating their own emotions, before that get healthy parents and raise them, teach the parents before they have children how to have healthy children, have mandatory parenting classes that are taught by people who know about this stuff, teach them ongoing classes not just one class, place the check back in and keep building their skill set, and then when their kids grow up teach them parenting skills along the way. Teach their kids relationship skills, conflict resolution, mostly self-regulation. One psychiatrist put it really well he said when he looks at all the research on psychopathology every single psychopathology, psychiatric or psychological, comes down to lack of emotional regulation. That every single pathology has that as it's root, whether it's anxiety or depression, or psychosis, or schizophrenia, whatever it is, all of them have the problem of not being able to regulate their own emotions. Which comes from secure attachment, having a parent contain you, nurture you, love you and teach you how to calm yourself. So when the baby's distressed, the parent picks him up and calms him and holds him and comforts him and talks quietly and calmly, and basically saying physically and verbally 'you're going to be ok.' So out of that experience the baby learns, 'this is safe.' They internalize that experience, and when they develop language and learn words for it they show empathy for other kids because empathy comes out of their secure

attachment, then they get feedback socially that that feels good now people like me, and now I have enough for myself I can start giving to others. And then you have the path to peace.

SF: Inner child and reparenting, how early can we teach kids that didn't get that secure attachment from their parents, to start giving it to themselves.

DS: {Summarize: You can get it through really good long term therapy, or you can find a life partner who is really healthy—I think if you're really healthy you won't get codependent, it happens and when it happens it's like magic. Part of it is teaching how to pick the right mate}.

You've got to start somewhere where you have secure attachments. And then everything else follows from there.

{Summarize: The window for secure attachment is 6-11 months, insecure or no attachment predicts psychopathology for life unless you get a great therapist or a great mate}.

If there's a little bit left over of the dysfunctional person for being tolerant of a healthy person instead of bored, than that's the opening for that happening. And then the sustained commitment of the healthy person for tolerating the craziness of the unhealthy person and hang in there with them, then you have the seed for...

SF: {Summarized: Asked about the possibility of schools providing opportunity for secure attachments through caring teacher relationships}.

DS: The adage about attachment is you just need one secure attachment from anybody, it doesn't have to be a parent for you to have the capacity to attach to other people. If you don't have one solid attachment you can't attach to anybody securely. So it can be a teacher...if the parents are available. The requirements for attachment are daily consistent contact. Ideally over a long period of time many hours each day. You attach to somebody who's with you who's attuned to you who's there, not tuned out, preoccupied, not there. If a teacher can simulate that then yes a teacher can serve in that role.

SF: Even if it's later like from 4 to 8 years old?

DS: Then it's reparative. But the earlier you repair it the easier it is. The first year of brain

development is 100% growth, the second is 15% growth, and then it {can't understand} out from there.

{Summarize: You are taking in data all the time creating fundamental structures in the brain}.

And if you're getting a lot stimulation and you're getting more synaptic in place to create concepts with, if you are sparse of stimulation up until four, you don't have much to work with the rest of your life. You're rigid and more chaotic in your life, and the rigidity prevents you from fluxing and learning new things. So really secure learning allows flexibility of brain development for the rest of your life you become a great learner, and are safe to absorb all kinds of external input.

SF: It sounds like the ability to have empathy, is very dependent on secure attachment, and if empathy is a relatively critical aspect of peacebuilding and creating a more peaceful world, than it sounds like secure attachment is actually one of the primary things to consider in terms of raising peacebuilders.

DS: So you're talking about prenatal parenting classes. Maybe that's a start.

SF: Yes that might be one of the most crucial elements. Beyond teacher training also parent training.

Our last question; Our schools have always operated on the belief that children need to learn what adults and society deem important for them to become productive members of society. In some ways, school is meant to program children with what we have deemed appropriate and desirable.

- a. What do you think about the idea of completely re-purposing the goals of our schools? What if we said the purpose of school for our students was to provide them the space and resources to a) explore and discover who they are and want to be, and b) to develop the skills necessary to make empowered choices as to what they want to do with their lives, and collectively, their communities and world?
- b. If we were to repurpose our schools, what would you say is the most important goals that our schools should seek to provide for our students? What do we need to focus on to best serve them?
- c. What do you think about our current school system? It's strengths? Weaknesses?

DS: I immediately as I was listening to that question I jumped to the political level. Because



without addressing that you're not going to get any change in the school system. That's a top down choice not a bottom up choice. The only bottom up choices that do exist are to opt out of the school system and do homeschool or make your own private school in the way that you wanna make it. Which is what most of the private schools start with. But then eventually you get institutionalized even there in the development of that school and you're back where you started. Unless the culture changes along the way up and gives you a platform to sustaining it, sustaining the aspirational goals instead of wiping them out and defunding them.

When you try a bottom up thing once it gets to a certain point you're snuffed out, because there's too much money in the system, money and power. If you can get at greed at the basis for money and power, greed runs everything. That's where I keep getting stumped every time I come up with a great idea. You can't get rid of greed easily. Except if you start the kid feeling so satisfied feeling attached he doesn't need to consume, he doesn't need it all. He can share it. So it can work both ways but you gotta start somewhere.

SF: I feel like greed isn't actually where it ends, I actually think greed is a product of fear. Fear of not having enough, being enough, being safe, all of that.

DS: Greed is what maintains.

SF: So if we can replace fear with that spiritual form of love...

DS: That connectedness, that definition of spirituality if everybody could feel connected if the top 1% could connect with real people instead of their money we could get somewhere but how do we do that? Every once in awhile one of these politicians has his epiphany religious conversion or something and suddenly moves from being a criminal to being a pastor, that happens, but it's very rare.

SF: In one class in peace studies we addressed the idea of embracing your enemy, and how to transcend the labels of good and evil. Even my fellow peace students had a difficult time with the idea that you have to embrace Hitler, that you have to embrace Stalin, and George Bush, love thy enemy kind of thing.

DS: And why did they have trouble with it?

SF: I think the idea of embracing and loving someone or accepting someone who has done such atrocious horrendous things is beyond what we're culturally raised with any capacity to do. But I think that that's something....I envision educating our mass

children, the masses of children in this country, with the realities of corporate greed and mass destruction around that, but don't demonize the one percent, they're scared human beings, and nobody's all good or all bad. My hope is that children given a really deeply idealized education could choose a better future than what we have right now.

DS: That's a compelling argument. It's true, but you have to have enough of those kids growing like that. A critical mass where they actually have enough to make a difference and a window a path to get there, that hook. Somehow they can get in there. So you're talking about top down and bottom up at the same time at least conceptually. And you're right they have to converge somewhere and you get a singularity of purpose. Ambitious.

SF: It's about honoring the individual child. I know that I have to do what I'm passionate about, but if we raise all children to make a difference in a way that they're passionate about, then everybody will be working at every level from every angle, we can't just tell kids that there's only one way to make peace or one way to make the world better, they have to make a contribution - and you know I understand not all kids are going to choose a life that is virtuous and selfless, but I think we can make it more of a cultural norm that being of service is really wonderful and really necessary. Everybody needs to be of service in some way. I think that's kind of a lost element of the human experience, that is so fulfilling, it is so important for us to feel whole as human beings. And I think that's maybe why we're so consumeristic, as well, there are certain things we have lost touched with our humanity, things that make us whole {Summarize: So we become consumers in an attempt to complete ourselves}.

DS: Another thing that comes to mind is something I've been hoping to write about...is young children that have a level of compassion that they're not supposed to have developmentally. Stories I've heard...and I've heard enough stories like that, and I realize where does the Dalai Lama come from? The Dalai Lama comes from this group of enlightened men that go around from village to village looking at babies in cribs and newborns and they just watch them. And once in awhile they find one that they all agree has it. I don't know what to do with that! They pick the Dalai Lama based on watching the babies. That there's some inherent compassion. And I've seen enough young kids that had the capacity to do that because you need a certain level of cognition to be able to do that, they just connect. Heart to heart. Selflessly. In the psychological literature it's called pro-social behavior but it's not behavior. It's something deeper.

SF: Do you feel like that's really rare?

DS: You can understand what it looks like and then cobble it together, because we know

enough of the pieces that you can recreate that. You can make a person who's empathetic, maybe deeply instinctively compassionate, but at least empathetic...and that's good enough. If we had a critical mass of people who have the capacity for empathy instead of greed, that would be so much better than what we've got. We don't need a bunch of dalai lama's running around, just the next level.

*Interview With Donna Saffren, August 19th, 2016*

DS: It starts with a peaceful mother, and peaceful pregnancy, and moves into birth. And the habits are formed during that time. So if we're gonna intervene in any way, we need to start there. There needs to be more education for parents. It takes more education to get a driver's license than it does to have a baby. If we are going to move forward as a species we need to have people aware of what they're creating and what's happening within themselves. And there are people that are very conscious in that way, that are naturally conscious, but there are a lot of people that need to come into consciousness about it. So far it's a matter of biology and the luck of the draw for the sperm.

SF: Is that why you started doing parenting classes here?

DS: Definitely. It's why - it's funny we just hired somebody from prenatal and she's already saying it that we should be there helping coach that program and coach the people who work there, because they don't know they just don't know. Do you want to know a couple of my pet peeves that I've run into just recently? Ok the first pet peeve is around core strength for children. Core strength, physical core strength and them being grounded in their body. One of the ways this manifests is now-a-days we have all these gizmos to hold our babies, instead of us holding our babies. So every woman at prenatal carries that little carrier around with the baby in it, and there was a baby at a meeting that was doing downward dog just like this, this shape, and not even six months old. AND the mom is trying to push her bottom down, saying I don't want her to walk before she crawls, and I said, that isn't what I'm watching her do, I'm watching her really try to strengthen her core, I'm not watching her try to walk, and what I really think is they spend so much time reclined that they never, and it's supported, that they never develop this (gestures toward own stomach area) and the way it shows up as a three year old is they can't sit up in circle, or when they're observing at a table they are leaning on the table like this to observe, they just don't have the core strength. It's just such a - because we are biological organisms. I'm observing Olivia, my grandchild, and how, and Christine and I tried, we were laying on the floor with her and she will keep her feet up

like this forever, that's all she does, all day long, is keep her feet up like this. And we're going, ok, this is hard. And she's kicking out and going like this, it just, all around the core. But if you're in a reclined position like this, you aren't doing any of that. And I think that there's this propensity that the child, the baby, knows what it needs, it's very natural, and that's why the baby doing downward dog.

SF: So why did you decide to start this school?

DS: Well my children went to one Montessori school and I worked at another Montessori school and I found that there was a need to serve parents who work outside the home. And that Montessori schools-there's this Americanization that happens of what we think school is supposed to be like. And if you go and observe the larger Montessori schools in this area they look like big classrooms, you know there's still tables and chairs and you see the shelves and the materials and everything's run very similar to this, but, it's not small it's not homey, the ceilings are high, I mean there were just a lot of missing elements. The FOOD. The food. Have you seen the thing on facebook on how people going to college don't know how to make a boiled egg, or, I mean it's really kind of humorous to me. But so here they are just so connected to the food they eat. I mean, every morning the children come in we fold the laundry from the day before because we use these cloth towels to dry hands, and then they chop the vegetables.

So it's circuitous route of working in non-profits, after I was a preschool teacher I worked in non-profits for a long time and did fundraising and I realized I was happiest when I was an administrator and then also worked with children. And then I thought, I can just start a Montessori school.

But there was a need for this, otherwise it wouldn't have manifested, and it's bigger than just us serving children, too. It's become a place where people can work and earn a near living wage, it's become a community. I just got a text from Kendra the other day, she was meeting with a couple of people about her wedding, I'm going to officiate her wedding in September, that "Donna! you created a community!" So it's even beyond what I was thinking I was going to do, which is create this space where children can flourish, and become stronger within themselves, become strong decision makers, become peacemakers in their own right. Which it doesn't even take definition though, they're peacemakers because they know who they are and they know what is socially attractive and what is fair, and so that makes a person a peacemaker. It's just like, be kind and others will be kind to you, it makes you a peacemaker. So, anyway, Kendra is saying that and it's so true. I affect the parents and that they form relationships, the children have

their relationships, the staff have their relationships, the staff and the parents have their relationships. It's just a whole network of people.

The other thing, I thought about duplicating this...and then what I realized one of the reasons that makes this stand out from like Santa Cruz Montessori or other Montessori programs, is its unique smallness and the food. Unique smallness. It's like 26 people, usually there's siblings so there's like 23 families. You know it's just, ya. It's just nice. And all inadvertent, I mean really. It was all unintentional, but intentional. We have 5 words which is...collaboration, sustainability, kindness, respect, peace. And those are not lightly taken words. And I need to come up with statements of how we reach that, but our intention are those five words, that's a strong intention for those five words. But definitely the staff is really collaborative. For instance I'm hiring somebody to replace Sarah who's pregnant, and Joe interviews the person, I interview the person, Julia interviews the person, and we have almost hired two people that weren't really a match. Melinda may be a match, but we'll see....The thing that I realize in owning a small business is that the only way that small businesses really make any money is by underpaying their staff...(there was a post on facebook) about how capitalism is an unfair system and we really need to review capitalism as a paradigm, and it depends on; I get more than you, you stay there and do the work. And that is not how I run the business. But I could be a lot wealthier if I did run the business that way. But I can't, my conscious won't let me. It's like, these women I'm interviewing from Janus, they get paid thirteen dollars an hour. Can you imagine working your butt off for thirteen dollars an hour? I mean my very beginning wage thirty day probation is sixteen, and I think that's too little. I haven't figured out how to charge the parents-because believe me, every time I jack up the staff, the parents get, it just get's passed on to the parents.

SF: Because ultimately what it comes down to is values. You touched on the way we think about school, and the core of what I've gotten to is basically looking at the different discourses we have in our country about education. And you have your traditional discourse where it's like kids sit in the desk and they take notes and they absorb information, and that just isn't really realistic. So there's a new discourse that's becoming more engrained in popular culture that's stuff like this, like "no, that's the wrong set of principles, we need to use this set of principles" and that's like flexibility, self-directed learning, explorative learning-

DS: Collaboration with others.

SF: Collaboration, team work.

DS: Solution centered. Ya. All of that. And that does not happen with the teacher director class. It does not.

SF: And it's interesting that you talk about your conscience and your way of looking at the capitalist structure, because that's a big part of it. If we don't have adults that don't operate with the principles that we need to teach our kids than that's a big barrier.

What do you think about the way Americans view school and education, traditionally vs. the more progressive approaches?

DS: Well, this is a really sad time in our country for me. Now you're getting into the psychological of that zombies are really largely populating the country and there are a few conscious people that are saying wait no this is wrong. Donald Trump is the republican candidate. I mean really. And he has a lot of supporters. So I think that most of the people are asleep. And I think a lot of their values are based on - I'm not even sure what, I think it's what's reflected in the media. I think people get a lot of information and watch a lot of tv. They used to say that religion is the opium of the masses, it's TV. The part of the brain it stimulates, the whole. I mean, for me! You know how I take a break? I watch TV for a couple of hours. Because I produce produce produce.

...So when you're dealing with a populace that that's nearly the majority, I don't think they are the majority, but I think there's a large segment that are asleep and that are not, that look at their kids and go, "we went to public school, they'll be fine!" I just feel so often at elementary age, even in Santa Cruz, that people just, you throw your kids to the wolves, and you carry on. I think it's really hard in the public system to have a child really be known, unless they're playing the game. So I think the dismantling of the public school system, there's gonna have to be, really serious call to question of some of how they, just operations of how they do things. To even break up this idea of what traditional education is. It's going to require, I mean people are not going to surrender and go, "Hey Finland has it going on, let's do what they're doing" even though Finland is off the charts...they are beating the pants off us, because just like the parents, the kids are zoned out. If someone we could shake people awake and ask them "When is the time that you learn about something, and how do you learn it?" If people could just as an individual just look at themselves and say "When is it? Is it when I'm parked in some room in a training that they tell me I have to do, or is it when I want to study something or learn about anything..." And then I read about it and then I absorb it. It isn't because somebody says ok now you need to learn about THIS. If people could somehow, just have that question posed and answer it, it may crack open a door to be like, "well wait a minute, if that's how we learn (because that is the only way I learn...)" I have to be

invested, and so do children, and so do adults. Until we get people on that wavelength, of I need to make an investment in order to receive, then it's just going to continue on as the dog eat dog... The other thing, there's a couple things public schools can do. First of all, pose that question at your parent night. "How do you think your children learn, how do you learn?" Let's think about this for a minute. There are things that they do because it's been ingrained because it's a habit, they do it universally across the United States. If I was the boss, the Secretary of Education, the very first thing I would do is say ok, we're not gonna use bells. The teacher is going to say to her class or his class, "class dismissed. Ok, you can take your books and go home now. Have a nice weekend. We're gonna have that goodbye, or he or she will stand by the door and say "goodbye, have a good weekend." AND we will interact at dismissal, interact at the entry. It's simple. Doesn't that seem super simple? Ya. We still do bells. The bells will be reserved for fire drills and emergencies. Have you been in a school since the bell rang? It makes me jump through the roof. It's like what the heck are we doing to these kids. We are totally desensitizing them. It's a machine. It's geared to desensitize. I think they need people working at taco bell because if you think about it, they dummy down dummy down dummy down, so that we all go home and watch tv and bitch about the rich and we'll get Donald Trump and stay on that. Dummy down. And then we give them Ritalin if they have any idea that's different.

I've been listening to this guy, he's a chiropractor from Texas his name is Don Demartini and he has this method of working with people to find their strengths and this woman brought her kid to him and she brought her kid to him and said my kid has ADD he can't learn anything in school he can't stay still or concentrate. And he goes through the whole dialogue with this kid of, "so what do you like to do?" "Oh well I kind of like to play video games." "Oh really? Tell me about your video games." And this kid is naming all these intricate characters and all these people who play online what their names are and what their scores are. So if you take a kid like that who isn't ADD obviously they're focused, and you can make math relevant to, "Oh you know how they come up with those scores? They do an average." If you can make it relevant, then they see a value in it then they'll study it. Then they're asking the question, right they have the interest the interest is there. But just to park a child and say today you're going to learn about math, or in third period you're gonna have a language class. It's not serving the child. They're not learning.

SF: It doesn't take into account them as human beings.

DS: And interests, and strengthening those interests. And that's the other thing is we are

going to need people who know who they are. And what their interests are. It's that whole thing of if you love your work you'll never work a day in your life. That's my hashtag, hashtag love your work. That's really what you want for every human being. Is love what you're doing, be in the activity and see the resourcefulness of it.

So the bells, gone. Second thing, if I was Secretary of Education. I would combine the age groups. At no other time in our lives, are chil- am I, look at, how old are you?

SF: Twenty-nine.

DS: Ok. I'm fifty-nine. How close are we? You know? And Joe's in his mid thirties, Julia's in her late thirties, my sponsor is ten years older than me, I am surrounded by people who are not fifty-nine. And so, I find that the system was set up to be monotonous and to be impersonal. And I think the major changes that need to happen is it needs to not be monotonous and not be impersonal. It needs to become really personal, like each child should be known. So I would combine age groups. Every first through sixth grade teacher can teach any of those grades. You are credentialed to teach any of those grades. Essentially first through third grade you teach the same lessons just your third graders have more skills than your first graders do. But it's the same curriculum. They could combine first through third and fourth through sixth. So I would also do that. It would eliminate, when you have combined age groups it eliminates the need for "who's the top dog." It is, nearly all behavioral problems dissipate because their are natural leaders of the class, they are undisputed, and they help the younger ones. It's just a very nurturing way of doing things that could be implemented easily if the public system would grab on.

That's the kind of change I would like to see implemented. And lastly, this is probably more important than the other two. Small schools. One hundred and thirty kids max, first through sixth grade. I don't think the classrooms need to be as small, if it's a mixed age group you have teachers in the classroom other than the teacher you have your third year students, they've been there, there's a three year term. So two thirds of the class are returning students, so it really enables the teacher to teach more, and it enables the students to become more proficient because their teaching the younger children. I mean there's this whole dynamic that happens as a result of that, right? So small. One hundred and twenty-five, max. I am frightened, by eight hundred and seventy five kindergarten through sixth graders on one campus and maybe forty adults. Maybe. I'm frightened. I'm frightened because do they know all of those children? How could they possibly know all of those children? And so, there are quiet working children that are just not ever even glanced at, because they don't cause any trouble-



SF: That was me.

DS: Ya, and that's fine too, maybe you didn't need any teacher feedback, but maybe it would have been nice to have had somebody ask you, "what's your opinion about this?" or "what do you think about this?" just to help you strengthen your decisions and your opinions, and be acknowledged for what you have. And, if you were that third year student, helping the younger ones. And expressing those opinions...it's just making it creative and expressive. We're missing.

And see these are not things that would cost money. I don't know if you noticed or not, none of this stuff is gonna cost money, that I'm talking about. Even making small schools. They could section it off, and make small schools on a large piece of property. They could do it. They could have 800 kids, small school, one administration, and have like eight different campuses. There is a way of doing it. But even then, I think they should also just build small schools. It's just crazy. It's crazy to have that many kids in one area.

So Elias went to kindergarten last year at De LaVeaga, that's 875, right, and he had skinned his knee, and his mom was talking to me and she goes, it's just kind of sad Donna, nobody had noticed that he had skinned his knee. He didn't go and talk to anybody" I mean he didn't have a lot of blood but there was blood on his leg. And nobody noticed or talked to him or comforted him, ya know? And all of those things, those empathy characteristics that we really want to develop in children, are absent. And see, a mixed age group? "AH! Elias needs an icepack!" They care, it's a pack, they care for each other, it's really different with mixed age groups, it's very sweet. I have parents that come and ask, "do you section off the five year olds?" And I just tell them, ya, come and watch. And then they see like, oh my gosh, why would we section off the five year olds? They all collaborate. It's really very sweet.

SF: You had said something to me once before about how we give these young boys these violent video games to play for hours and hours on end without any interruption, and then we send them into a school environment where they are completely anonymous, and unseen and unheard, and how that was kind of just asking for trouble.

DS: Yes, and I just think it's that same unconsciousness of been driven, I mean it's zombie. The zombie apocalypse. This woman, I was mentoring a woman who is a UCSC student, a psyche student, and there is this class up there about monsters in society. And I would so love to audit that class. At different time periods when Frankenstein was written, and when Dracula was written, and the mummy, and all of these, and how nowadays it's the

zombie apocalypse. And I tell you it's happening right now. People walk around asleep. And not in their bodies, not in their bodies at all.

And so with boys, you asked for boys you asked about that. First of all, if a developing child is sitting still for any length of time they are not moving. And as human beings we are meant to move around. What you're doing is you're perfecting mialin in the brain, you're growing this husk on this brain tissue. And they are getting this - really good at playing video games. There is a really good book about habits, but it's about excellence, it's about being excellent at anything. In sports. Any of those people that get gold medals it's because they practice nine hours a day. And so these kids that are playing video games for hours on end, because the parent works at Taco Bell, or maybe has a night job, or maybe they're juggling between the mom and the dad one works at night one works during the day. I'm telling you, I don't even know how some families make it. Seriously. I mean just think-if you lived in Santa Cruz and you had a family of four and you were not a professional, let's say you just worked at Safeway, or something, even at Safeway and that would be a great gig actually, but still trying to make it. Did you see that thing in Forbes magazine in Santa Cruz? Santa Cruz is the third most expensive place to live in the United States. And I don't even know how they calculated this, they said it takes 113% of a median income to live here...just for your housing expense.

So if they're not moving their bodies around, their not looking at leaves and picking up bugs. You know there is just a thousand things for a kid to do outside that are very grounding activities. Feeling the sun on their face, I mean there are all these things that are not happening because they're on a screen, and the mialin is being formed. So it's really hard to undo that and then if their not even connected in their bodies, and then they go off to school and there one of 800 kids, and nobody knows who they are, they don't know who they are, they haven't made any decisions except to push the button to kill the guy. That is, that's the only reality for them where they're successful in a lot of ways. I mean are they making their own dinner? No. They're probably sticking something in the oven and serving it up. The video games are just like drugs, it's a symptom of an {underlying} ingrained problem, and rooted problem, with an existing system and paradigm that needs to shift...And it's based on a lack of trust, too...and it's because they have thirty kids of the same age in one class. They don't trust anybody, neither would I! It's like, it takes me a third of the year to get to know my class, to know who I can trust, and then the rest of the year I'm kind of teaching to that group that I trust, and then the last part of the year, everybody's hog wild because summer's coming. It's a system that doesn't work. It doesn't serve the child. It doesn't serve us. And now it's like it's absolutely essential that that system is there because everybody works, moms work, dads work, everybody needs to work. How are we gonna get that 113%?

SF: So, this conversation that we're having is very much rooted in this discourse that I've found about this alternative set of principles that serve kids much better, and helps them learn peace, and learn peace principles. You had said that you think a lot of people are asleep, but how strong do you think that discourse is getting? Do you feel like parents that come here are catching onto this new set of principles, do you feel that other people in the society are catching on, do you feel like there are people in the public school systems that know these things but just don't know how to implement it? You don't think it's very strong?

DS: Not yet. I just think, this is what happens, it's a system that is so in place and so cemented that what happens is a parent encounters it, has their own ideas, tries to forge some change, gets shot down, tries again, keeps going, then they may home school. There's a handful of people that will try homeschooling, which is really evolving, the homeschool movement is really evolving too, which is super cool. These are underground things, though they are not the status quo norm. And what happens is your kids age out before you can forge any change. I remember thinking, "oh my god! The government should help us with daycare, moms should be at home with their kids till they're two." I remember thinking that, like "I can't not work!" And then I have this baby, and I gotta stay home until they're two, or be with them until they're two. And I found jobs caring for children where I could bring my kids with me. That's what happened. But a lot of people can't do that. And so it's like, what I watch is people struggling with having babies and they have to go back to work. It's not good...

...What happens is parents are faced with money with budget. But as soon as you grapple with it a little bit, and try to forge any change you outgrow it. You're kids are at the next level. It's not your problem anymore. It's really hard to find people that will forge and make that change happen. That's really what happens, is your kids age up. Different problems, different circumstances.

I can tell you Happy Valley School is finally at the kindergarten level at least, not giving homework. And THAT, this woman has taught 18 years, Ms. Byrd, I know her, that is a huge, HUGE thing. She's been doing research and has decided it's absolutely dumb to give kindergarteners homework. This is the experience; so I had two kids go up there. They left here, they would come here at 12:30 to come and have lunch and stay the rest of the afternoon, their parents worked and they don't have aftercare for kindergarteners. And right at first the first two weeks, "Oh! We have homework packets!" You know, and they're these ridiculous xerox things, that just like, so, first of all so under them. I mean these girls are writing in cursive. It's under them. But they're like "We have homework

packets!” And by the third week it’s like, “oh my god, I gotta do the homework” it’s just a hassle. It’s busy work. There’s no joy. Again, not their choice, there’s no joy in it, there’s no interaction, it’s sit down and fight with your parents. No one should have homework before seventh grade. No one.

SF: Before seventh grade?

DS: At least. Maybe before high school. I don’t think it benefits them. At all. I think kids need to be outside playing in their neighborhoods.

SF: And if they’re actually engaged in their work and concentrated on things that they’re interested in learning during school hours then they’re probably accomplishing a lot more than most kids do in all their hours of school and after school with homework.

DS: Right.

SF: ...On the larger scheme of things, some of these major issues that are playing out in the world and in our country; racial inequity, environmental issues, gender inequity, violence against LGBT communities, all these kind of things. And, I know that at this age, teaching about social strife doesn’t make sense necessarily, because...

DS: They don’t see it. They don’t know.

SF: ...They’re not able to process that.

DS: If their needs are met, and if their learning needs are met, it will create- I mean that was Montessori’s whole thing. If you meet the child, with-cause they give you feedback- if you respond to that feedback and meet that need you will have a peaceful society. That was her whole thing. Again, hashtag love your work. If they love their work, they will be peaceful, they will become normalized they will do it for the sake of doing it, of creating or learning, or whatever it is that their working out. It’s trusting that every organism is not here by accident, and is not an empty vessel for us to fill with what WE think they need. It’s trusting that, and allowing, it’s a being in allowance of process. And then you have a peaceful person. It’s when a person is pummelled and told what to do, or made to feel like somebody has the advantage that they don’t have or is getting over. It’s all of that sectioning off, happens within the individual first, and then is moved outward. That’s what I believe. I really believe that.

SF: What about, not that this necessarily happens here, but what if children are raised in

environments, whether it's in their families or just in society at large and the media, where they're internalizing a lot of stereotypes; where does critical thinking come in? Where does it come in that we start teaching them to reexamine these internalized beliefs that they have?

DS: That's why I said you have to start in utero, and then you allow, you're in allowance for that child to develop. People that already have that habit pattern of the mind, unless they are willing, it's like the whole thing, they have to be willing to change, they have to be able to question. And some people....

{interruption}

The disenfranchised person or the person who has gotten their information, it's such a cultural thing...I think there are things ingrained in areas of the country, I think that the racism, I think there's a veneer, that actually Donald Trump has shown that it's just a veneer. That is the beauty - see we kind of needed him to show us the stuff. We have very little cultural tolerance, and we never have had cultural tolerance, really, when you look at how the Irish, the Jews. There's been a pecking order all the history of our country. So it's ingrained in our culture, and, I think that you change it, you know people used to say you change it through education. I think it's a spiritual evolution. I think if you meet people's needs, and if people are doing that "love your work" thing, I think that it happens.

SF: So that makes room for spiritual evolution?

DS: Ya, but as long as I think that you have more advantage than me, and also it's rooted in capitalism too. If you have more than me then I've been left out and left behind. So, what you're talking about, that kind of consciousness on a national level, or a global level, I think the internet will get us there. I think we have a great opportunity to get there. But I do think the civil rights movement, integration, I think what that did in a lot of ways is put a veneer. The other thing, that I'm kind of appalled by, after the Democratic National Committee nominated Hillary, I mean I wasn't thrilled with Hillary, she's never thrilled me. Like there have been some outstanding women, that could be president, and it wasn't Hillary Clinton in my mind. But, it all of sudden dawned on me, like, oh my God! It doesn't even matter, she's a woman! It doesn't even matter, I don't even care who she is! Well, except for Sarah Palin. I mean, she knows our system, she's a woman! I want her elected. I really got on the Hillary, I'm in. Hook line and sinker I'm voting for you. California is gonna vote for her anyway, the electorate is gonna go to her anyway. I am in my consciousness, saying GO HILLARY!

...but most, most women, I mean, ya, college educated and if you look, and I'd love to see the graph of how many women are college educated and how many aren't, I think college educated women can kind of appreciate-but young women, or teenagers today, are like, ya, what's the big deal? Hillary's nominated. I don't think they fully grasp, I don't even think they grasp that a black man was in the White House! I thought, Michelle was just over the top, that she lives in a house that was built by slaves. I mean she was- see now I was, vote Michelle Obama, 2020. But it would kill her. Too much of a job. Hillary is tough enough. You gotta be, she's gonna have to be tough, and she is, she is.

But that veneer! That we have of, tolerance for gays. People aren't tolerant of gays. They are not. They have just pushed it down. People need to get out, they need to come out, of why they're not tolerant of them, what bothers them, what bothers you about this? And until they embrace that...they need to embrace that. They need to know, they need to be aware. The veneer thing hasn't worked. All of the LGBT, all of the alternative lifestyles, even though they've said gay marriage is legal all of that stuff, until people come into themselves and love what they're doing they are not going to be tolerant of anyone around them. They are just not going to have it. They are not going to have the empathy or the tolerance of I'm free to be who I am, so you're free to be who you are. We're not truly free. We're not truly free...

SF: Not necessarily at this age level, but even older, I feel like no one is talking about race relations and all that stuff and I feel like those things are still just swept under the rug, but I also recognize that when it comes down to it, it's a value shift, and it's more about kids learning the skills to research, to do in depth critical research...

DS: I think it would be worth your while to get out of Santa Cruz, because it's so homogenous. I mean really, I mean we have a large gay community, but really. I mean there's no ethnicity here. I mean where's the black guy? There's nothing going on here. If you go over the hill, and you listen to different languages, like go to one of those trilingual schools where they speak Vietnamese, Chinese and {English}...and see, how are they dealing with race relations? Because it's back to that thing again, of if people are doing what they want to do, they don't care! They don't care if your purple with spots. If I am happy and fulfilled none of that shit matters to me. I think there's really just a lot of really unhappy people, I think it's a social ill to blame, and they don't take responsibility for finding that love, that love of work. The other thing is I think it's just archetypal, the whole thing about race and gender and same sex relationships. It's archetypal. So for us to overcome that archetype we have to come from a position of groundedness and strength. Otherwise we won't. But the veneer thing. I mean he has poked a hole in that veneer. I mean we're making people be respectful, and that does not solve the problem.

Does not solve it at all. And I'm not kidding about Pennsylvania. I was appalled. And the kids just parrot what the parents say.

SF: When your kids in this school grow up, are they going to be able to, is this preparing them to choose to live a life in which they love what they do?

DS: Oh completely. They're free to make decisions, there's freedom of movement, there's freedom to- ya. I mean there's so many choices that there's very little conflict. Because they're using that right now? Oh ok I'll come back to that later I'll go do this. And there's constantly new things being brought out. No they have, I mean they have the propensity to grow up that way. If they move into a system where they're not known, not listened to, told what to do, you know, moved, shown how to move their body. I mean they never go outside in public elementary. You know that right? I mean they get twenty minutes of recess or something, crazy, they're kids! And the other thing is, if you don't think a kid learns physics by being outside, or can do geometry or math...Again, they have to shift their whole system. The thing is they have the property to do it. But they don't...how to get it done, without being hated while you're doing it. And then you age out...But ya there's a lot of work to be done...

I know children. I know how they learn and I know what they need.

SF: How did you become so well versed in all of these principles of how children learn.

DS: I did a lot of reading. I read every book Montessori ever wrote, and then some. And I've read Steiner, Reggio Emilia, I've read everything. Ha! And then honestly, the most that I've gained is through my own observations of children. Just observing, observing and watching, receiving feedback and responding. I always tell new teachers, ok, this is what it is. Ok it's one pride swallowing event after another. Just know that you're gonna have to take a deep breath, ok, now I'm going to respond to this. Because they are just constantly giving you feedback on what lessons they need, what grace and courtesy lessons need to happen. How you interrupt somebody, tucking in your chair when you get up from a table. I mean imagine if 26 kids all left their chairs out when they get up from the table? It's like, uh, ya, we need to all. And that's the feedback, all of a sudden everybody's leaving their chairs out.

So how did I learn? I lot through observations, and from remembering my own school experience. I remember what I learned like what I was interested in, what I retained and what those periods were. I remember the huge blind spots i had because in many cases I thought I was smarter than the teacher, because that's a teacher directed system. And they

had a linear directed plan, and we don't learn linear! We're mind mappers! It just isn't how we learn!

SF: So you know how everyone thinks Santa Cruz is so unique and progressive? I was talking to this guy and he was saying Santa Cruz is actually not unique, it's just like anywhere USA.

DS: It is. Except for it's more homogenous. You get a more educated population, I think, live here. Definitely. For instance, at this school, two thirds of my people are from Palo Alto Medical Foundation, they're doctors, lawyers, Indian chiefs. You know? I just think this community because it takes 115% of the median income to pay a house payment here, that that is our population. So I think in that way, and that makes people culturally advantaged. Right? But it's a different kind, I don't think everybody's doing necessarily what they want to do, I think they're doing what they should be doing. Overall I don't think Santa Cruz is progressive, no. Educationally I think it's still in the stoneage.

Lastly I want to say this Montessori was really black balled because she was a socialist. I mean politically she was out of her realm in the United States, they did not want anything to do with her. And that is reflected in, if you take an early childhood education class at Cabrillo she is a footnote! They do not even mention her. Seriously. Because she was so radical in how she felt and her passion around socialism. Which is not communism. Socialism is very different. So, we created, it's the reason our system went this way, she went that way, she went to India. At one time, she was at the world's Fair here, in 1911, or something, they had a model of one of her classrooms, everybody's like wow! Check that out! I don't know the guys name, but he did not like her politics, and he veered off and went with what the Russians were doing. Because at that time Russia was still a monarchy and capitalist. And the Russians were doing this industrial age, ring the bell, you want people dummied down, you want them sitting cause you're telling them to sit, because we want them working in the factories. That was the split. And we are still preparing children to work in a factory.

SF: Or to be good little soldiers.

DS: Yes. I think that some teachers are progressive. I don't think all teachers are authoritarian, hitting a switch to get everybody lined up. I think that they are progressive within their classrooms, but I think more and more the more that we make them teach to the test and have this calming core, blahdeebah, and just focus on academic subjects the more



limiting it is. And I just think it's another veneer to put on a system that doesn't serve and nurture the individual and the talents and reasons that that individual exists.

SF: One very last thing. So I had this really interesting interview with a child psychologist and he was talking to me about personality types and he agreed honoring the individual is one of the biggest things you can do and there are all these different traits that kids express all these different variations of, and that some kids are naturally not self-directed. And they have a really difficult times directing themselves. He said some kids actually thrive when you sit them at a desk and you give them the worksheet and you tell them exactly what to do and when to do it.

DS: I think that there are families where the parents are the boss, and the children follow what the parents say. And I think that those children are confused in a place where they need to be self directed and making choices. I think that they have a lost sense of self to begin with. I do not think that's the majority of children. The other thing about Montessori is that you meet the child where they are. If they need some direction; (in a whispered voice) "let me show you something" you whisper, "let me show you this thing over here" and then you pique their interest. And perhaps they are, or perhaps they go "meh," and go off, and then you let them observe other children or let them do-there's an opportunity. But, I don't think most children learn that way, especially under five. Under five NO teacher direction. It's just wrong. And making them share, NO. They're not ready to share. They'll share when they're ready to share. Making them share, making them do all of the things that we do to under five year olds with absolutely no purpose. Like, every single thing in this classroom has a purpose, a reason it exists for the child to learn from it. Every single thing. So that much thought, that much intent, creates a...atmosphere for children to blossom in that way. But, a child that's raised authoritarian, where you're gonna eat what I tell you to, you're gonna sit down when I tell you to, you're gonna where the clothes that I tell you to? What it does with them is it puts them at cross purposes. Like, "wow, at school I can make all my choices but at home I-aaaah" - does not compute. So yes, the psyche guy, what he was talking about is the various temperaments that children have. And what I often say to parents, really, is Montessori is not for every child but it's for most. It's for most. Being self-directed making your own choices; it's for most. In the elementary level, there are, there are times especially in the elementary level, children when they hit six they start forming packs, they want to be with their buddies they want to work with their buddies, they're ready to share. They have their own identities established, so then they're ready to share. Right? Cause they know who they are. See while they're forming personality, it's not okay, because they don't know-it's a developmental thing. So. In elementary a teacher will say, "Ok, first year students, come over here for your math lesson." And so they're given a math lesson,

and then they are free to either do the work around that math lesson, or they can go off and do something else. What they have is a journal, and they write down their little math assignment, and they have some time till Friday, to get THAT math assignment completed whenever they would like to choose to do math. And what the elementary teacher is tasked with is trying to keep each child sort of balanced. Bring into light various things that will pique their interest. And it's still really individual, but everything is taught in small groups cause you wanna go be with their bud, your bud. And then you go work together. You go talk about how do you do this math problem. And let me tell you how it served Chirstine (my daughter), cause Christine had auditory processing deficit, which is called the invisible disability. She looks like she gets it? She's not getting it all. So, first year math students, come for your math lesson. Teacher gives the lesson, she writes everything down, she starts to do the work. She turns to one friend and says, "did I do this right?" And the friend goes, "no you left out this part," and she goes "oh okay." Then she turns to the next friend, "did I do this right?" And the friend goes, "oh ya." So essentially she's gotten three lessons. And that's how SHE learned how to move and learn and how to move forward in her education.

Did I answer why it's not for every child? Even though it is. I have a kid right now that I know, I can tell he's not gonna make it. He has serious learning differences, serious deficiencies in his communications, he's two and a half but I can see it. It's already there, everything's present, there's something organically not right. And, Montessori is perfect for him! He is awesome at choosing work. What it is is the number of kids, there's too many kids here. He needs ten kids. Ten kids to choose to be buddies, ten kids. He's just starting to walk around and bump into people, they start acting out, cause it's too stressful. So I'm probably gonna have to bump him. Sweet, sweet kid. But man. There's some stuff. That's organic though. See, but if you have a normal brain, a normal processor, it's really- and really it's even for him. But he needs smaller. Ten kids.

SF: So many things to consider.

DS: And each child is their own. Each person, it's the same thing as being a human being we all are bringing something to the planet and to each other. Integral. And if we don't discover that we're missing a bunch. We're missing.

*Interview with Sara Spencer, September 1st, 2016*

SS: The injustice where it's like here are these people who are actually growing the mass

amounts of food especially in this area and they're treated the most poor, where, we wouldn't be here we wouldn't be alive without that job being done. And especially all the chemical aspects and the hazards of not having organic farming. What are the health concerns?

SF: Another reason to buy organic food!

SS: Exactly, and even if it weren't for yourself eating it think about just the condition those workers are in.

SF: It's a human rights issue, so I'm voting for-

SS: Well and then you get into the environmental issue, all that runs into our waterways, all of that runs out to the ocean, and we're really digging our own grave. And people either don't want to pay attention to that and they're in denial or they have not had the exposure, it's not on the media, it's not available to them.

So I kind of take this as an opportunity to put my thumbprint on all the kids, and there's a little bit of nutrition, "yeah you know that regular (food) pyramid isn't really true" and let me just throw this at you and see where you're coming from. And I try to help them piece it together themselves, like what would be better? Eating something fresh off of a plant that you grow for virtually free in your backyard, or going down and buying it in the frozen food section, or it comes in a box, or a can? So I try to get into that level too. But again it's just getting that word out and actually getting the support from the parents who are already overly swamped, and probably working three jobs and have multiple kids and have other family living with them. It's an interesting issue to try to even address.

SF: So many different veins in what you just said. One about nutrition-it's interesting because as I do research on education and peace education, food is one of the topics that's completely ignored, which baffles.

SS: Which is the most substantial part of it in my opinion.

SF: Yes, it's huge! It's one thing in life, you might not ever use algebra again, you might not ever write a book, you might not even go to college. Yes, you need to know how to communicate, and write and do all those things, but you are for sure going to be eating every day.

SS: Absolutely, and your health is going to be for surely impacted by those decisions.

SF: And our whole world is engaging in these issues and creating or destroying through them. Also it's kind of an interesting parallel that you were talking about the people here in this community are growing our food and they are treated the worst, and at the same time, AND, the parallel to that is the people who are raising our children and educating our children are not valued, and are not being payed, and are constantly under more stress of too much stress not enough support.

SS: Definitely not enough pay, definitely not enough self-care. You see it, you can tell what week it is of the semester just by looking at people, and like oh, is she still putting on makeup? Not that that's a standard, but you can tell from the beginning everybody's cute and dressed, and then it's like people are walking around in ugs and oversized sweatshirts and barely have a clean face and their hair in a ponytail because they are just so stressed and frazzled.

And I do think it's going to be a spiral that keeps going down. I guarantee that this started generations ago, and now we're just finally starting to see the effects of what it means to not have that "it takes a village" mindset. And connecting the dots. The same with medicine...if you're going to the doctor and you say that your stomach hurts they're usually only looking at your stomach, they're not looking at your emotional condition, they're not looking at your nutrition, they're not looking at, ok, how physical are you, they're not looking at all these very important things, it's one specific, "hey what's this?" And it's very hard to tease any of what we just talked about apart. Once you start bettering one place, it's going to better everything, once you start degrading in one area it's going to start degrading everywhere. So unless you really have a good balance, which I personally don't feel we're finding right now, things are going to spiral.

SF: If you could magically wave a wand and magically have things in a better balance what would that mean for you...in general, when you say that we're not doing well with balance in our education system?

SS: Let me start with the personal level...I personally and especially with the different laws that have been passed in terms of immunizations and my personal beliefs on that, I straight up decided to homeschool my children this year. My kids were at Valencia school in Aptos, in a very- and it was a great little location, but already with the three weeks that I've been homeschooling I can absolutely see a difference in my twelve year old's attitude, I can see a difference in his overall confidence he seems like he's smiling more, his connection with me, or at least my connection with him seems stronger. With my youngest son, Reese, he's five and he should be starting kindergarten and my heart

kind of ached I knew he would love having a little class full of friends. And it's not like he's only home with me, we'll get out and do the social aspect and there's a bunch of community classes and all that, but I mean that's basically where I'm at with the public school system. I feel like it's going to have to have a huge major overhaul, for there to be a major difference. And it will probably be smaller class sizes, it would have to be, it needs to be that one on one attention. And I feel if people, let alone children, cause children kind of fall into it automatically, they're such amazing- I really wish we could hold onto childhood longer and look at children for the example instead of the other way around. Because, you look at kids, and as long as they are fed and they're nourished, and they are emotionally stable, and they get the support, they are going to learn everything, and super quickly and super easily and it's gonna be engaging and fun for them, and just look around the campus and see- their most exciting part is recess. Which isn't to say, recess is great, that's awesome, get that physical activity that socialization, but why can't that be every time we're in the classroom? Why can't we get outside of the box or "sit down in your chair!" Why should we treat these children like they are something less than? I don't know if you've heard of the new saying "childism." Right, like, "you sit down because I'm the boss and I tell you!" We're kind of on this power trip, when these are our future, like this is our future! These are our future presidents and future politicians, and future teachers and doctors. What are you just showing them? That when they grow up they need to have authority over other people? And personally that's not what I view. So having that more kind of touchy feely kind of mindset I truthfully feel would better everything.

SF: That kind of mindset, how prevalent or rare do you feel like that is here at this campus or at other schools that you've seen?

SS: I used to sub before I was here so I was kind of all over this district and then I subbed up in Oakland while I was doing my graduate degree. And, I think everybody would probably come into teaching with that intention for the most part. There's always gonna be the bad so and so, right? The bad doctor, the bad lawyer, the bad teacher, all of that people just get a little misguided. But I also feel because of the stress of everything else, and the pressure, that's put on them from administration, and not necessarily the principal, but just statewide, federal, all of these standards. I really do feel that people really just don't think it's possible anymore. And therefore they stop trying. It's very difficult.

SF: That's one of the biggest narratives I feel I've uncovered in this research, is "it's not realistic, it's not possible, it's never gonna change" and what I imagine- because I haven't been able to interview very many teachers and I've been focusing more on

alternatives for instance, this kind of project, Montessori, other kinds of things. And I've contacted so many public schools and it's just like-WALL.

SS: They don't have time for that, right?

SF: Yeah, and I don't think they really want people coming to observe or interviewing.

SS: And what's that say? I don't think they're proud of what they're able to accomplish, not that they aren't proud of what they could be doing and proud of their work, but the way that it comes across, you literally have to be working almost twice as hard, and putting in your own money for supplies, and your own time, that you should be with your own family! Or you should be doing your own self care for crying out loud! But they don't get prep time a lot of the time, so they have to do that on their own dime and their own hour.

SF: And it's really sad, because we desperately need our brightest minds getting into the teaching profession, and yet, I'm not going into teaching for precisely that reason!...

{Interruption}

SF: So you would say that most teachers get into the teaching profession with this kind of attitude and belief and passion, and then after a while they kind of succumb to essentially having their choice taken out of the picture?

SS: I kind of think, yeah, it's kind of like that learned helplessness at that point, well you're damned if you do damned if you don't, so alright, I'm just gonna get the bare minimum so I keep my job, and I get the money cause otherwise I can't survive, but putting that heart and soul into each and every child? It is absolutely demanding, and when you have an overstocked, overfilled classroom, and especially when you're in the demographics where there is daily trauma! There's domestic abuse, there's starving children, there's students who come in the exact same clothes as the previous day and you can tell that they don't have either the means or the parents there to be able to support them, or, you can just tell that there's the hardship. And I don't think people are prepared to carry that with you either. I really-my degree was in counseling psychology, and I don't understand why those are two separate degrees. I really do think that all education experience and all counselors should have some educating experience because they really do go hand in hand. I feel like I'm such a better teacher now that I went through counseling school. And I can, "oh, my kid's having a problem" well I get down at their level I make eye contact, I'm like, "hey, do you need a hug first? Take a break first" and a lot of the times it's like, "no! Who are you? Stand up, do the job!" And it's just-going through the motions. So

they aren't able to tap into what their feeling, they can't express it, they don't know how to manage it, so it builds up and builds up and, then you get the kids who are fighting in the hallways, or- heaven forbid, you take it as far looking at all the gun violence that's going on at schools today. And that's actually I think further into the picture, where you're not even looking at damaged children right now, you're looking at damaged adults. Who had never had the support and the help while they were children. And it's like, well "why am I here? Why are YOU here?" And they're fed up. I can totally relate to that.

SF: Again it's interesting that I see that parallel of dehumanization of teachers and adults in this line of work, and well, maybe kids like recess so much because that's the only place they get to make choices for themselves.

SS: And they're free they can be who they are...It took me the longest time to even get over my own stigma around homeschooling, because ever since I was a kid "oh those weirdo homeschoolers, those freaks, they're so weird, they're so odd." Had to think about it, well, if we're so so worried about socialization, what sense does it make to have all the same age group, in all the same demographic, stuck in one classroom, all day long. You're basically teaching them to all be the same.

SF: I feel like it's widespread that people recognize the value of smaller class sizes, that people realize our classes are too big. But what about the bell system, the age grouping, that kind of thing, do you get a sense that people in general realize that that is not the most ideal situation, or do people just take it for granted because that's the way we were raised.

SS: I don't know if people have enough time to let it pick up on their radar truthfully. Unless people are really into it, I kind of call myself an info junkie, I like to dig. And it started when I was up in Oakland actually, and I was seventy pounds heavier, eating fast food, and it just kind of slowly but surely- I almost call it this veil, ya know? And once you start poking holes in that veil, like, wait! That doesn't make sense! Instead of just following it because everybody else is or because you've been told to, or because it's just how you were taught. Once that veil started lifting for me, you can't shut it back off. And then I feel like I get outcaste for speaking up about it. Like, "Oh, who's that freak who thinks daddadadada" or "ooh, look at that tree hugging hippie" or this or that. When really I don't understand why I should be demeaned for thinking about the proper treatment of children, and our earth, and our bodies, and how am I wrong with that? And again you can kind of go down to the whole system, do people, especially governmental

agencies, do they want critical thinkers? Or especially after the industrial revolution, occupy their cubicle.

SF: It's very interesting because there is a movement a narrative that is taking on speed...yes, it serves people in power to a large degree to have just, like robots essentially. Where we just follow authority and we just don't question. But at the same time we're becoming incapable of globally competing in the economy.

SS: Especially in the United States, and I think that's that pendulum, they think they're doing everything super awesome, but they're looking at it in such an isolated tunnel vision kind of view, that now that it's swinging back - ok, so it's the most expensive place to live, what are we the thirtieth for medical care, we're way down there for education, health, disease, all of these different things. Somewhere along the line something wasn't going right. And when you look at other countries, especially the first world, and how happy certain governmental systems do work, vs. what we try to call capitalism but is really not capitalism when you really get down to it. There's all sorts of political stuff you can get into too, so it's hard to tease it apart.

...I really kind of connect with that "think global act local." So I'm thinking of all these things, am I gonna be able to change that global kind of...no! I'm one person. But I'm going out and with integrity with my own pride with what I do feel is right, and holding that as mine, right? Letting other people be what they want, but if they ask questions being honest with them, or suggesting, "hey I'm just curious, why do you do that?" Trying to understand for myself. By acting that way on a daily basis and just to be the person that I feel is best, hopefully that influence kind of rubs off. And then you start attracting other people who are like minded and that's when you're getting the small groups. And those little grass movements, look at Bernie Sanders for crying out loud! Once people realize that they're not alone in that thinking, because it's usually so reserved inside you, I'm like, "you know? I don't care if people think I'm a whack job. I'm gonna say this, and if you feel the same way join together and we're that much stronger for it." And we're usually shut down before that can happen.