

## Transforming Power and Transformative Learning in Peace Educator Development

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**ABSTRACT** Peace education and the development of peace educators should be a vital component of any education system. This is particularly so in a developing country such as South Africa where high levels of violent crime and protest action occur alongside growing inequality. It is therefore surprising that in a context such as this so little attention is given to peace education in terms of programme offerings and scholarship. This paper explores and theorises aspects of the multi-faceted curriculum processes and the teaching and learning experiences in an undergraduate peace education programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Drawing on a small-scale qualitative study involving interviews with novice peace educators, the paper explores three aspects of curriculum innovation within the UKZN programme which attempts to address the cardinal challenges of peace educator development. It then considers three learning opportunities created for novice educators through such a curriculum. Using the lens of Mezirow's transformative learning theory the paper finally, theorises some of the learning and teaching experiences of this programme.

### INTRODUCTION

Peace education is a marginal and under-researched sub-field of education. This is particularly so in South Africa where peace education has never been part of mainstream educational provision for youth or adults. Opportunities to participate in a peace education programme or to be trained as a peace educator are thus rare. The few opportunities that do exist remain largely within the small and declining non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector. Significantly, for a country with high levels of violent crime and protest action, alongside growing inequality, far too few higher education institutions offer peace education programmes to their students and wider communities. Equally worrying is the lack of opportunities for the training and development of peace educators within such institutions. The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is an exception to this trend by offering peace educator training at the undergraduate level as well as peace studies programmes at the postgraduate level.

This paper responds to the above-mentioned problem of inadequate scholarly attention to peace education in South Africa by examining the curriculum of a current peace education programme at UKZN and participants' experiences of it. Drawing on a small-scale qualitative study where interviews with novice peace educators was a primary source of data, the article explores and theorises important aspects of the multi-faceted curriculum processes and teaching and learning experiences in an undergraduate peace education programme. The enquiry is guided by the following research questions: What is the nature of learning and development of novice peace educators in the UKZN programme? How does the UKZN curriculum shape such learning and development? In responding to these questions, the article also responds to a further lacuna identified by Bekerman and McGlynn (2007:5) when they call for "the urgent need to pay attention to the voices of educators involved in peace educational efforts who, from their personal and professional experience, bring a wealth of knowledge" about this important sub-field of education.

Working from the premise that peace education and the development of peace educators is a vitally important component of any education system and of particular importance in a developing country with a history of violence, this paper considers the need for peace education globally and locally, and explores three aspects of curriculum innovation within a programme at

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UKZN which attempts to address the challenges of peace educator development. The focus here is on how the curriculum contributes to developing peace educators through AVP workshops, through service learning, and within a community of peace educators. The article then considers three opportunities created for novice educators through such curriculum innovation, namely the opportunity to learn conflict transformation skills in a deeply experiential manner, the opportunity for practice using a well-established curriculum and participatory pedagogy, and the opportunity to serve as an apprentice and to join a community of peace educators. Finally, the article theorises some of the learning and teaching experiences of this programme using the lens of transformative learning theory (Mezirow 1991). Transformative learning theory opens a generative theoretical space for scholarship on peace educators' transforming power and transformative learning.

### **Contextual Imperatives for Peace Education**

In reflecting on the differences between models of peace education in terms of ideology, objectives, emphasis, curricula, contents and practices, Bar-Tal (2002: 2) comes to the conclusion that peace education serves as "a mirror of the political-social-economic agenda for a given society". Peace education in South Africa must therefore reflect this country's own unique context and history in terms of its content, pedagogy and underlying philosophy. Addressing the violent nature of conflict in this context is paramount.

Violent conflict has become a feature of contemporary society at both global and local levels. On the global front, it has been noted that the period following World War II has involved unprecedented levels of violent conflict (Fier 2002). More recently terrorism, the so-called 'War on Terror' and some cases of regime change in different parts of the world have all displayed deadly violence. At the local level, service delivery protests and the state responses to such protests are often violent. South Africa's poor ranking on the Global Peace Index (118 of 153 countries in 2011) points to its lack of peace in broad terms (Institute for Economics and Peace 2011). Violent crime, including high levels of domestic violence, is a particular feature of this decline.

We live in a time of growing inequality and deprivation which underscores the more systemic nature of violence in society at large, a somewhat more hidden yet equally deadly form of violence which Johan Galtung (1969) referred to as structural violence. In 2010 South Africa ranked as the most unequal society in the world according to its Gini co-efficient (Soudien 2011). This backdrop of increasing inequality and violence as well as a decline in social justice and peacefulness across the world highlights the urgent need for ongoing and multi-sectoral responses to building and sustaining a non-violent society characterised by social justice and peace. Such a vision requires contributions from all sectors of society. This article explores and discusses one such contribution from an adult education programme at UKZN.

In order to explore the peace education curriculum and how it has been experienced, it is first necessary to describe the broader Certificate in Education programme and the methodology employed for this research.

### **The Certificate in Education at UKZN**

The Certificate in Education (Participatory Development) (CEPD) is a two-year programme that provides an initial qualification for adult educators and community development practitioners. Students typically come from non-governmental and community-based organisations. In the second year the programme offers an opportunity for specialisation in peace education. A novel component of this curriculum over the last few years has been the introduction of Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops (described below). In course evaluations and interviews, the AVP workshops were consistently identified by the majority of learners as the aspect of the curriculum having the "most impact and benefit". The impact of the AVP workshops is thus a focus of this article in terms of its contribution to the broader development of peace educators.

The pedagogy for the peace education modules as a whole and the AVP workshops in particular encourages experiential learning, dialogue, critical reflection and taking action. The final aspect of the curriculum allows learners to put into practice what they have learnt during a service learning project where they engage in

peace education within their communities or organisations.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study examined the learning and development of novice peace educators in KwaZulu-Natal using case study methodology. Case study is suitable for research where the goals are to “probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit” (Cohen et al. 2000:185). In the present study the goal was to gain an in-depth and rich understanding of the peace curriculum at UKZN and how it contributes to the learning and development of novice educators by posing the following research questions: What is the nature of learning and development of novice peace educators in the UKZN programme? How does the UKZN curriculum shape such learning and development? The chosen methodology was also guided by the earlier-mentioned advice of Bekerman and McGlynn (2007) to consider the voices of active peace educators and to draw on their experiences and knowledge. The data set for this study therefore includes interviews with six peace educators, educators’ reflective journals, as well as my own observations and reflections on working with these novice educators. Course evaluations of the training provided to these educators and evaluations of the subsequent peace education workshops which these educators have facilitated (their service learning) also form part of the dataset.

All participants were purposively selected based on their status as novice peace educators. Each participant had completed three levels of AVP training and had also facilitated an AVP workshop or two as an apprentice to experienced AVP facilitators. Given the focus on AVP in this study, those students who had chosen to run an AVP workshop for their service learning were thus purposively selected for this study. Two of the educators were interviewed two months after completing their CEPD studies while the remaining four were interviewed two years after their studies. This allowed the study to capture some initial reactions on peace education and for longer-term changes and reflections to be gathered as well. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and then analysed. In most cases, participants selected their own pseudonyms which are used in this paper. As end-of-course evaluations are completed anonymously, data drawn from this source do not therefore carry any identification.

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### THREE ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM INNOVATION

In this part of the paper, the author draws extensively on personal experience and reflections as a university-based adult educator, which involves fulfilling the roles of ‘lecturer’ on the Certificate programme and ‘facilitator’ and ‘member’ of AVP workshops and the KZN AVP network.

#### Developing Peace Educators through AVP Workshops

A key element of the new peace education curriculum in the certificate programme, which is novel for university-based curricula, is the inclusion of AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) workshops. These powerful, experiential workshops prepare students to respond to conflict situations in a non-violent manner, eventually leading to accreditation and experience as an AVP trainer.

There are three levels of AVP workshops, namely Basic, Advanced and Training for Facilitators (T4F). The AVP Basic workshop introduces and explores nonviolent alternatives to conflict by building participants’ skills in affirmation, communication, cooperation and conflict resolution. This is done in a highly participatory workshop over two days where experiential learning, dialogue and critical reflection are central pedagogical strategies. AVP workshops employ fun games, scenarios and roleplays which keep participants actively engaged and constantly reflecting and sharing (dialoguing) their experiences and learning. This is enabled by a safe learning environment created by ground rules that foster mutual respect, confidentiality and voluntary participation (Alternatives to Violence Project 2002). Kreitzer and Jou (2010:80) capture the essence of a Basic workshop when describing it as “a dynamic blend of deep and honest sharing on difficult subjects and fun games that enable the participants to laugh together”.

The Advanced workshop, also run over two days, fosters participants’ conflict transforma-

tion skills by focusing on building consensus while allowing considerable space for participants to choose the topic or issue that is explored during the workshop. The T4F workshop builds facilitation skills and allows each participant to gain some practice in facilitating a component of an AVP Basic workshop.

Once certified as AVP facilitators, participants seek opportunities to facilitate AVP workshops. They initially serve as apprentices to more experienced facilitators until they are confident and experienced enough to serve as lead facilitators. This is an important built-in system of peace educator apprenticeship (discussed below) within the AVP framework (Fig. 1).

The AVP philosophy and path to peace is best expressed by what is referred to as the “AVP mandala”, a conceptual model which underpins AVP training and which has the concept of “transforming power” at its centre.



Fig. 1. AVP mandala

The central concept of Transforming Power reminds participants of their inherent inner strength and ability to transform a conflict in a non-violent manner. In the KwaZulu-Natal context this concept of transforming power has been associated with the concept of Ubuntu to create a local re-contextualised version of the AVP mandala. The African worldview of Ubuntu is underpinned by the values of interdependence, empathy, sharing and cooperation (Murithi 2009). These values resonate strongly with the core principles within the AVP mandala.

### Developing Peace Educators through Service Learning

A second innovative aspect to the CEPD curriculum is a service learning component. Dur-

ing this part of the programme students are engaged in experiential learning via a service learning project which requires them to plan, implement and reflect on a peace education event in their respective communities. This aspect of the curriculum is a challenging but important aspect of developing peace educators and shows signs of facilitating deep experiential learning (Le Cornu 2005; Fenwick 2000), transformative learning (Mezirow 1991) and educator identity development (Wenger 1998).

Gün et al. (2010) remind us that irrespective of the quality of training programmes, the most crucial *learning to teach* begins in the classroom when novice teachers make the transition from the *learner* to the *teacher*. The service learning component of the CEPD is therefore significant in that it fosters students' engagement in authentic practice. Those running AVP workshops for their service learning benefit from an established framework of peace education with developed curricula, pedagogy and materials (discussed below). This level of institutionalisation of peace education facilitates the induction of novice peace educators and transition from 'learner' to 'teacher'. The CEPD students' experiences of this crucial transition in terms of pedagogy, confidence and identity are discussed and theorised below.

### Developing Peace Educators in a Network of Peace Educators

The third innovative component of the peace education work at UKZN occurs outside of the official curriculum. Novice peace educators have the opportunity of joining a formally constituted network of AVP facilitators. This network of approximately 150 peace educators in KZN provides a forum for engagement and support for students after their formal studies at UKZN.

The network has a rich diversity in terms of membership, comprising community-based and NGO-based peace workers, UKZN students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and UKZN staff (academic and support). The on-going learning and development of educators within the network supplements their initial training gained from the three levels of AVP workshops and the practical facilitation skills gained during their service learning.



### TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY

This article uses transformative learning theory to theorise the findings on peace educator learning and development. A brief review of the theory is provided here to allow for such theorisation.

Transformative learning theory has developed into a major theory of adult learning with considerable support in the empirical literature (Taylor 1997, 2007) and a slowly growing body of literature in different cultural contexts, including Africa (see John 2010; Ntseane 2011). The theory was initially proposed by the American adult education theorist Jack Mezirow in 1978 and has since received practitioner-oriented, scholarly and some robust critical attention (Cranton 1994, 1996; Taylor 1997, 2001, 2007, 2008; Newman 1994; Pietrykowski 1996; Inglis 1997), all of which have contributed to the development of the theory. Such has been the interest and application of the theory that different strands of transformative learning theory have now been identified (Taylor 2008).

Mezirow (1975, 1991) explains that adults develop frames of reference or meaning perspectives. These structures, developed over the course of their lives, shape their thinking, beliefs, actions and sense of self. A person's sense of seeing and being in the world is thus mediated by frames of reference, a product of a lifetime of prior learning and socialisation. Meaning perspectives serve as efficient filters when interpreting new experiences. Transformative learning theory explains the process by which adults subject their meaning perspectives to critical reflection (Mezirow calls this *perspective reflection*), resulting in the transformation of such perspectives. When meaning perspectives are transformed, emancipatory learning has taken place, facilitating personal transformation. Adults in this way come to make major changes to their understanding of the world and their place in it.

Mezirow (1998:72) explains that transformative learning theory "deals with how individuals may be empowered to learn to free themselves from unexamined ways of thinking that impede effective judgment and action". While the theory does not appear to have been used in studies of conflict transformation, this quotation signals an immediate relevance for such studies given that the ways in which people respond to conflict are often habitual, unexamined and con-

straining. Destructive and violent responses to conflict often arise from such circumstances. Finding new ways to make judgments and to act in conflict, such as exploring non-violent alternatives, thus seems highly pertinent to an exploration from such a theoretical gaze.

Taylor's reviews (1997, 2007) and update of emerging conceptions (2008) attest to widespread engagement with transformative learning theory in studies of social and community transformation, participation in group experiences, personal illness, intercultural learning and lifestyle and career changes, among others. While acknowledging the value of Mezirow's version of the theory, Ntseane (2011) calls for a more Afrocentric perspective to transformative learning where greater attention is paid to the communal, metaphysical and gendered dimensions to knowledge processes. In a study within the African context, John (2010) examined the experiences and challenges faced by educators attempting transformative learning in a post-conflict context.

While there seem to be no studies using transformative learning to explore learning and development of peace educators, two studies explore learning of allied groups of practitioners. In the first, Kovan and Dirks (2003:114) reported evidence of perspective transformation among environmental activists, which reflected "a lived stance towards a sense of a call, a form of practice reflective of deep spiritual commitments, and gradual unfolding of the self". These findings are relevant to the context of peace education where a sense of calling and spiritual commitment often underpin involvement in such work. In another study, also supportive of the theory, Bennetts (2003) found that individuals within a fellowship scheme involving supportive and trusting relationships enjoyed significant transformations in motivation, career aspirations, relationships and quality of life. These findings appear to be relevant in that supportive and trusting relationships and improved quality of life are central goals in peace education.

While there is strong support of the theory, robust and constructive critique has been raised in relation to the role of intense emotions and prior stressful life events (Taylor 1997), contexts of systemic oppression (Newman 1994) and conceptions of 'self' and 'power' (Inglis 1997). Mezirow has responded to some of this critique, clarifying his positions and rebutting some cri-

tique. Despite a solid literature base and large community of scholars involved, there remains a strong 'developed world' and Northern hemisphere frame to the theory. The need for examination of the theory in more diverse contexts has been raised by Merriam and Ntseane (2008), John (2010) and Ntseane (2011). This study responds to such a gap in the transformative learning theory literature.

### NOVICE PEACE EDUCATORS' REFLECTIONS ON LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

This part of the article draws largely on data from novice peace educators, shared through course evaluations, reflective journals and interviews. It explores the learning experiences of these students and their development as peace educators within the programme.

Course evaluations and interviews with students on completion of the CEPD have consistently identified the AVP component of the curriculum as having had the most impact. This is the case with learners interviewed immediately after their studies and those interviewed two years after their studies. Analysis of the reasons provided by novice educators for their selection of AVP as being most impactful reveals that the inclusion of AVP in the CEPD curriculum created three important opportunities for learning about peace and conflict transformation and for the personal transformations and development of educator competencies and identities. While these opportunities could be seen as important in the development of adult educators in general, they are essential for peace educators. These three opportunities, namely the opportunity to learn conflict transformation skills in a deeply experiential manner, the opportunity for practice using a well-established curriculum and participatory pedagogy, and the opportunity to serve as an apprentice and to join a community of peace educators, are now discussed and illustrated using data from the study; in particular, the voices of educators.

#### **Opportunity to Learn Conflict Transformation Skills in a Deeply Experiential Manner**

While the CEPD pedagogy on the whole attempts to engage students in experiential learning, the AVP workshops are primarily and deeply experiential. Bar-Tal (2002:33) notes:

*Since peace education aims to form a state of mind, its principal modes of instruction target experience. Experiential learning is the key method for the acquisition of values, attitudes, perceptions, skills and behavioural tendencies, in other words, their internalization.*

Three sets of reflections from an educator Thembi (interviewed two years after the programme) illustrate the powerful learning and conflict transformation skills fostered by the experiential pedagogy of AVP. The three examples shared by Thembi refer to her learning about positive communication, building trust and collaborative teamwork and how she had implemented these lessons in her life since completing the programme two years earlier. It is important to note that these peace topics are covered in other parts of the CEPD peace curriculum, but it is the deeply experiential manner in which they are approached in the AVP curriculum which underpins the learning and impact shared by Thembi.

Thembi, who was working as a cleaner on campus during her studies recalled the volatile relationship she had with her supervisor. She says, "If [my] supervisor came to me and shouted at me, ... I would shout back at her ... now that makes the fight to spread." She recalls how one day she chose not to shout back in anger but to approach her supervisor after the incident where she then expressed her feelings using 'I' messages. This approach surprised her supervisor and helped to address the conflict. In the Basic AVP workshop participants are taken through an exercise on communication which teaches them how to reframe inflammatory and accusatory 'You' messages into 'I' messages which focus on the aggrieved person's feelings and needs. Participants get to practise this skill using role-play and then, in a reflection and dialogue session, get to compare the two styles of communication.

Bheka, another novice educator, also mentioned this 'I' versus 'You' exercise as having transformed the way he communicates. Bheka was highlighting the practical nature of what is learnt in AVP when he says,

*I could go to church but the thing that they taught at church was hard to put into practice. Now with peace [AVP] it came as like something practical. Like, I can face a person, like you see it was something very practical ... the 'I' messages whereby you say ... when you do*

*this, I feel like this. Then a person understands quite exactly what it is that you are feeling at that moment.*

The intensely experiential nature of learning about communication styles in a conflict situation had created powerful learning. The relevance and practical nature of such learning facilitates behaviour change and helps to build better relationships.

After the completion of her studies, Thembi was promoted to being a supervisor. She spoke about how she replicated 'The Blind Walk' exercise with her work colleagues. This exercise focuses on building trust. Participants have to close their eyes and allow themselves to be taken on a guided walk by another participant. Thembi explained that this exercise was relevant to her situation as workers needed to develop trusting relationships. She says, "I was trying to teach them ... as we work together we must learn to trust each other." Again, Thembi was able to apply what she had learnt through AVP in her work context to improve relationships with colleagues. On this occasion, she was informally moving into the role of educator in attempting to facilitate learning among colleagues.

A final example shared by Thembi referred to what she had learnt in an AVP group activity called 'Broken Squares'. This activity requires that participants make up a square using pieces of cardboard. The participants do not have all the pieces they need to create a square and have to rely on team members to succeed. Each person in a team of five needs to create a square and the activity ends when this is achieved. The activity raises a tension between individual goals and team goals and the need for collaboration and sharing to achieve both ends. Thembi found this a powerful lesson and was able to apply it in her work life by getting her colleagues to engage in the activity during a staff development workshop. She reported that the activity helped her to get her colleagues talking about collaboration and team work which is important to their work. She said, "Like as we [are] working as a team we need to help each other ... if you finish your work, you don't say, 'Oh, I am finished with my work'; you need to help the other one."

These examples of how AVP has influenced Thembi's work life reveal significant and durable transformations where she has come to understand herself and her colleagues differently. Of immense significance in terms of peace edu-

cation goals, Thembi's reflections also show evidence of her being able to apply her new learning in different contexts. Thembi's transformations are theorised in the final section of this paper.

### **Opportunity for Practice Using a Well-established Curriculum and Participatory Pedagogy**

The content of peace education must respond to the pressing concerns within the context in which it is practised as advocated by Bartal (2002). Novice educators find safety in having a ready-made, well-established curriculum to cut their teeth on. This advantage provided by the AVP framework was appreciated by all facilitators while facilitating their first workshop. They could thus avoid the challenges of curriculum development and curriculum piloting and focus on their facilitation skills using a curriculum which they had initially experienced as participants in a deeply experiential manner and were now facilitating using a tested pedagogy aided by a well-designed AVP trainer's manual.

As illustrated in the examples quoted above, AVP works on the basis of active participation in games, scenarios and role-plays followed by reflection and discussion after such activities. For novice educators whose formal education is likely to have exposed them to mainly traditional pedagogy of 'chalk and talk', exposure to the AVP pedagogy is an eye-opener. The significant shift in pedagogy is signalled from the very start of the basic workshop when participants are seated in a circle, alongside workshop facilitators and told that they will not need pen and paper but will participate in an experiential workshop that is fun (Alternatives to Violence Project 2002).

### **Opportunity to Serve as an Apprentice and to Join a Community of Peace Educators**

In addition to commenting positively about having a well-established curriculum, novice educators also expressed appreciation for the AVP model of initially serving as an apprentice to more seasoned facilitators.

While the AVP curriculum aids the transition to *doing* peace education, the transition in *becoming* a peace educator – clearly a nerve-wracking process according to educators – appears

to be aided by the presence of experienced AVP facilitators in the team.

Two facilitators spoke of their initial nervousness while facilitating their first workshops. Bheka had previously worked as an adult literacy educator where he had adopted a very traditional teaching style of standing in the front of the class when teaching. In AVP workshops, such hierarchies are flattened by a circular seating arrangement with facilitators seated amongst participants. Much of the facilitation and sharing takes place while seated. Bheka recalled that at some point in his first workshop he suddenly realised that he was the only facilitator who was standing. He realised that he was deviating from the AVP style of facilitation and adjusted his style accordingly. Later, while reflecting on this approach, he realised that he was standing up like a traditional teacher because that is the only way he knew how to *be* a teacher. He also observed that he was the only facilitator who was working from notes. Although this is perfectly acceptable in AVP workshops and understandable for a novice facilitator, Bheka expressed the desire to be more like the experienced facilitators, so he familiarised himself with his notes during the tea break and discarded them during his session. Both these examples of Bheka's early educator practice show that he learnt from observation in the safe and supportive environment of AVP apprenticeship. He was shaping his practice as he was learning to *do* peace education and to *be* a peace educator. This transition involved revising pre-established notions of what it is like to be an educator. Such pre-established notions which are referred to as frames of reference in transformative learning theory (Mezirow 1991) are discussed below.

Thembi also spoke at length about her nervousness when first facilitating. Since she worked as a cleaner on campus, part of Thembi's nervousness had to do with the perceived superior status of the workshop participants (university students), because of their race and educational levels. She commented, "... because I saw the white people, maybe it was many white people ... and then I was afraid that I don't have good English". She spoke of the support provided by the lead facilitator and the facilitation team: "I saw they are free, they help me and motivate me to be confident."

This is an important dynamic in the context of South Africa where dominant notions of ed-

ucator carry status and power. Such status and power is renegotiated in the classroom based on the perceived status of the participants and is often shaped by apartheid-engineered power asymmetries. Novice educators can struggle with such negotiations. In this case, Thembi's expertise in AVP was evaluated against the awareness that she, an African woman, was training "white people" who had better formal education and English language skills than she had.

With Thembi too, the transition to becoming an educator requires revision and sometimes abandonment of prior conceptions of self, social power and what one is capable of doing. This important transformation is aided by the supportive team-based approach to facilitation in AVP.

Claudia spoke about being confronted in her first workshop by a participant who said that she had never been hugged in her life. Claudia remarked, "At first I thought I wasn't trained enough to deal with this, but then again I thought, you know what, I could deal with anything." Claudia hugged this participant, went on to build good rapport with the participants and developed more confidence as an educator through dealing with challenges for which she was not prepared.

Nondu likewise spoke about a positive self-image and sense of growing confidence brought about by taking on the role of educator: "It makes me feel happy because it shows me that I mustn't get down on myself. I must always tell myself that, when I want to do something I will do that thing."

Waheeda and Saras, who had chosen to jointly run AVP workshops for a group of high school youth and their teachers, were also nervous at the start of their workshop. They were fortunate that two of the most experienced AVP facilitators in KZN led their workshop. In their reflections on this experience they commented that these experienced facilitators were "young enough to relate to the youth but also experienced enough to command the respect of everyone, including the teachers in the workshop".

These various reflections indicate that the AVP system of apprenticeship can help novice educators to grow in confidence gradually as they develop the skills, repertoires and identities of peace educators. Once educators gain the necessary experience and are ready to lead a workshop, they become a resource to other novice educators, thus growing the community.



Having explored the novice educators' reflections on the three types of opportunities introduced by the AVP workshops and apprenticeship system, the next section theorises these findings using the lens of transformative learning theory (Mezirow 1991). Of particular significance here is the conceptual space occupied by the concept of *transformative power*, so central within AVP, and the concept of *perspective transformation* in the theory of transformative learning. The educator reflections allow for this rich conceptual space to be explored.

### THEORISING EDUCATORS' REFLECTIONS

The example offered by Thembi of when she chose to engage her supervisor using 'I' messages provides fertile ground to explore and illustrate the conceptual synergy of AVP's *transforming power* and Mezirow's transformative learning theory. What Thembi was demonstrating is *transforming power* which lies at the centre of the AVP mandala (see Fig. 1). Thembi unleashed her transforming power by employing some of the AVP principles in the mandala, which in this case involved, 'Think before reacting', 'Expect the best' and 'Ask for a non-violent path'. By engaging her supervisor with a positive communication technique, Thembi was demonstrating both assertiveness and concern for the relationship. This is the duality of 'Respect for self' and 'Caring for others', the two principles which envelop transforming power in the AVP mandala.

Having explained Thembi's transformation of the conflict with her supervisor in terms of AVP principles and the central concept of transforming power, let us examine this via the theoretical lens of transformative learning (Mezirow 1991). Thembi explained that the engagement with her supervisor when in conflict was characterised by their shouting at each other. We do not know how Thembi and her supervisor learnt this form of handling conflict but it became a pattern for them. This, according to transformative learning theory, is a frame of reference, a habitual way of being and of doing things. Such patterns become so ingrained that we often become unaware of them, in other words they become so second nature that they are rarely brought into the realm of critical reflection. AVP workshops, through experiential activities such

as 'I' versus 'You' messages, do precisely this. They get participants to subject their everyday, normal thoughts and reactions to critical reflection. Participants then, in dialogue with other participants, develop a consciousness about their daily, taken-for-granted patterns and start to evaluate the appropriateness or inappropriateness of such behaviour. They simultaneously explore and practise alternatives. When they act on such learning by changing their behaviour, transformative learning has occurred. In Thembi's example, the process involved shedding a frame of reference that fostered hostility and violence, in favour of a new frame of reference learnt and practised in an AVP workshop. The goals of peace education are achieved when such behaviour change is sustained years after AVP workshops.

A further example of transformation in a sense of self was offered by Claudia. Claudia, working in a support service at UKZN, mentioned that she had never thought of herself as being an educator. She recalled during the interview that her primary school teacher had referred to her as "stupid". This clearly had a profound effect on Claudia's self-image and she believed that her good university results proved that her teacher was wrong. Her critical reflections on this unfortunate event in her life allowed her to state,

*... as a child you say these things to one and you don't realise the impact it has on them ... and that has really changed my mind and how I deal with my children as well ... So something that you are saying ... [creates] a particular image ... of yourself from your period at school.*

Adopting the role of an educator during her service learning appears to be a major moment of transformation for Claudia. This experience triggered a revision of how she saw herself and what she could offer her community. It was also a moment when she defied the frame of reference nurtured by her teacher. She referred to two principles of AVP as being the most significant learning for her, stating, "I am aware of the fact that, *bring out the best* in somebody rather than ... negativity and *think before you react*."

With Bheka, his attempts at being a peace educator required that he dramatically revise his sense of being an educator, shaped by his prior experience of teaching adult literacy classes. This revision was assisted by his apprenticeship to more experienced AVP facilitators, a process in-

volving observation, critical reflection, revision of frames of reference and new pedagogic action and transformative learning within peace education practice.

These educators' reflections indicate that AVP workshops trigger perspective transformation, the key criterion for transformative learning, according to Mezirow (1991). Perspectives on self, relationships and roles in these educators' personal and professional lives have been revised through deeply experiential learning and practice. Taking on the role of peace educator serves to reinforce such transformative learning as these novice educators attempt to foster such learning within their organisations and communities.

There is more than just an overlap in terminology in *transforming power* and *transformative learning*. In AVP workshops, participants' realisation of their transforming power through critical reflection, dialogue and practising alternative ways of responding to conflict is what Mezirow set out as transformative learning. This potent conceptual interplay between transforming power and transformative learning provides a rich and generative space for theorising educational programmes which endeavour to foster deep and empowering change. More empirical studies with larger samples and with a longitudinal gaze are required to pursue this important line of scholarship.

### CONCLUSION

This article explores the marginal yet important sub-field of peace education, thereby contributing to the neglected scholarship of teaching and learning in this area of education. The work of developing new cadres of peace educators to meet the challenges of fostering non-violence and peace requires innovative curricula which foster perspective transformation. It also requires opportunities for novice educators to gain authentic practice whereby they *learn to do* peace education and *learn to be* peace educators in safe and supportive environments. The inclusion of AVP within the peace curriculum at UKZN shows much promise in providing such opportunities and learning environments.

Reflections of novice educators who participated in this study show that learning to do peace education and to be a peace educator is

fostered by experiential learning, well-established curricula, participatory pedagogy and opportunities to gain authentic practice within a community of more experienced peace educators. In some instances the processes of developing the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes involve transformative learning as novice educators gain confidence and revise their sense of self and what they are able to do. These findings provide guidance to practitioners in terms of developing peace curricula. The explorations of these findings also open an exciting theoretical space for peace education scholarship around the concepts of transforming power and transformative learning.

The curriculum innovations discussed in this article emerge from creative blending of a formal programme (CEPD) with non-formal peace workshops (AVP) and a supportive community of peace educators where continuous informal learning takes place (AVP network). Together, these three types of learning explored in this article reveal a transformatory and heuristic space where teaching, research and community engagement come together to support the important development of educators for a more peaceful and just world.

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