

The Mir Centre for Peace: An Exploration of Building Social Justice in the Community

by

Sarah Layla Robbie
B.A., University of Victoria, 2009

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies

© Sarah Layla Robbie, 2017
University of Victoria

All right reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

The Mir Centre for Peace: An Exploration of Building Social Justice in the Community

by

Sarah Layla Robbie

B.A., University of Victoria, 2009

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Darlene Clover, Supervisor
Department of Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies

Dr. Catherine McGregor, Departmental Member
Department of Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies

Abstract

This study explores how the Mir Centre for Peace community programmes in Castlegar, BC, respond to the calls from critical and feminist perspectives in adult education toward social justice. These perspectives call for conscientization, democratization and active citizenship, personal and social transformation, emancipation and empowerment. They also call for processes that use the arts, creativity and imagination, and pay attention to issues such as gender, race, class and the environment. Lacking from these calls is attention to peace, particularly how it is understood and taught, and in areas where a relative peace seems established.

To conduct this study, I used a case study design that consisted of five semi-structured interviews with study participants who were involved at the Mir Centre as educators/facilitators, organisers, advisory board members, or a combination of these roles. I also used content analysis of relevant documents found on their webpages, and my participatory observation from nine of their events held during the 2015-2016 year. Through these I glean how this centre organises, educates, and acts for social justice and for peace.

Four areas emerged as significant to the literature in critical and feminist perspectives in adult education. These are their attention to reconciliation as a practice of building peace, their attention to 'place' as a teaching tool, how they integrate and pay attention to spirituality, and how they construct 'peace' as an orientation that includes 'conflict.' Recommendations based on my understanding of the calls from critical and feminist adult education are also made to the Mir Centre.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgements	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	1
Statement of the Problem: A Landscape in Turmoil	3
Critical and Feminist Approaches to Adult Education	5
Understanding Peace Education in Discourse of Adult Education	6
Perspectives on Educational Spaces	8
Research Design	8
Research Question and Objectives	9
Significance	10
Overview of the Research	10
CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE	11
Defining Social Justice	12
Challenging Oppression and Transforming Power Relations	13
Emancipation	14
Transformation	15
Conscientization and Consciousness-Raising	17
Democratization and Active Citizenship	18
Hope and Safe Spaces for Risk Taking	19
Action or Praxis	20
Empowerment	21
Creativity, Imagination and the Use of the Arts	22
Experiential Learning and Embodiment	23
Tackling Gender Inequality	23
Indigenous Knowledge and Anti-Colonialist Perspectives in Adult Education	24
Environmental Adult Education	26
Peace Education and Critical Adult Education	26
Summary of the Calls from Critical and Feminist Adult Education	29
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS	30
Building a Case Study	30
Research Paradigm	31
Binding my Case: My Research Question and Purpose Refined	32
Methods	33

Semi-Structured Interviews	34
Participant Selection	35
Observations and Field Notes	38
Lectures Series	40
Peace Cafés	41
Education Workshops	44
Spontaneous Events	46
Content Analysis	47
Coding the Data	47
CHAPTER FOUR: CONTEXT AND RESULTS	50
Context and History: The Mir Centre for Peace	50
Transforming the Culture toward Peace	54
Levels of Peace	54
Meeting Needs	55
Valuing and Promoting Risky Spaces of Learning	56
The Creation of Safe Spaces	57
Nonviolence	58
Reconciliation	60
Transforming the Culture Through Learning, Dialogue and Action	61
Education as Personal and Social Transformation	62
Mir Centre for Peace as Action, and to Promote Action	62
Levels of Dialogue: Information Sharing and Engagement	63
Diversity of Content, Presenters and Events	65
Timeliness	65
Diversity of Presenters and Events	66
Spirituality: Leaving it out, and Weaving it in	67
Making Connections	68
Human Connections	68
Connecting Ideas to Peace	69
Connecting Local Place to Peace	70
Pedagogy of Hope	71
Legacy and Inspiration	71
Hope for the Future: Planting the Seeds of Possibility	72
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	74
Case Study as a Strategy for Qualitative Research	74
Challenging the Climate and Purpose of Education	75
Shifting worldviews	76
On Content and Pedagogy	78
The complexity of gender and attending to the local and global	80

Spirituality	82
Reconciliation: Indigenous knowledge(s)	86
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION	89
Responding to the Calls in Critical Adult Education	89
Learning from the Mir Centre’s Community Programmes	91
Learning from Critical and Feminist Calls in Adult Education	92
A Mir Story	93
REFERENCES	94
Appendices	105
Appendix A: Certificate of Ethical Review	105
Appendix B: Interview Questions	106
Appendix C: Email Script	107
Appendix D: Permission from Mir Centre for Peace	108
Appendix E: Overview of Other Community Education Events at Mir Centre	109
Appendix F: Philosophy of Mir Centre for Peace	111

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all the people throughout this journey who have inspired me to seek understanding and to ask questions. To the study participants at the Mir Centre for helping me to understand further how to enact our ideals for peace. To my mother, Kathryn Soloveoff-Robbie who taught me to listen and listened to me and helped me find the questions. To Myler Wilkinson who encouraged me to think philosophically, and to live inside my hopes. To Linda Wilkinson who included me at a young age in the peace building project. To my passionate supervisor, Darlene Clover whose enthusiasm for the work of building social justice and peace helped keep me constant and alive to the project of understanding what it means to engage in this work. And, to Ross Davidson, whose love and support throughout this undertaking has been unfailing.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Context

This is a study about adult education, about peace education, about social justice and change. The site of study was the Mir Centre for Peace in British Columbia. My interest in the Mir Centre stems from my growing understanding of praxis, or what it means to translate and understand theory in practice. It also originates from my educational experience with critical and feminist understandings of the world in which we live and their search to understand and dismantle power imbalances in society and to create more room for expressions of social and gender justice. I draw inspiration from Audre Lorde's words that "the master's tools can never dismantle the masters house" (1983, p. 25) and believe therefore, that we must think creatively, and aim to reimagine and rebuild the world in which we live.

In my personal history, I come to this study because it is the place where I grew up, at the confluence of two large rivers in a small town in the Kootenays. It is an idyllic setting that sees the changing of the seasons, where local bear populations feast off the old orchards and fish in the rivers. In this setting the intersections of a few diverse human populations also meet. The land at the confluence is traditional territory of the Sinixt peoples, land that was cultivated later by Doukhobor peoples, and where they built their traditional communal homes. It is also land upon which Selkirk College was built and remains as the local community college serving the Kootenay area. It is now where the Mir Centre for Peace resides.

I was raised in this area as a Doukhobor and as a Baha'i. Doukhobors come from a tradition and a vision orientated toward a community of peace based on the foundations of hard working individuals. Their motto explains this as 'Toil and Peaceful life' rooted in a foundation or ethic of what they call 'Universal Brotherhood.' Their name in Russian means 'Spirit

Wrestler’ and it was instilled in me that the process of community building was one that has me looking outward to my community and one where I must develop my capacities and refine my character as an individual. As Bahai's my parents were also committed to a process of community building through ‘unity in diversity.’ Where the Doukhobor community felt small, my parent’s commitment to ‘unity in diversity’ expanded my community to include the many visitors from around the world and peoples we met along the way from different racial, ethnic, and social systems. Also as Bahai's we were raised on an ethic that fundamentally believes in investigating reality, and the equality of women and men. So, it was instilled in me to look inquiringly after the way women and men were treated in society. Community building from these perspectives meant developing patterns of community life, and individual life skills that orientated toward more social justice, toward peace.

I learned from an early age to aim for a higher vision of ‘justice’. This vision was built on the ideals of my cultural and religious upbringing, and symbolically represented in the natural surroundings of where I grew up. But how is it that we translate vision and ideals into reality? How do we transform the patterns of our community life, and develop the skills we need to orientate toward and enact social justice? What exactly do ‘justice’ and ‘peace’ mean and what do they look like pedagogically?

My interest in the Mir Centre for Peace, a part of Selkirk College, located on this land in a rebuilt Doukhobor home, stems from my interests in what it means to be committed to a process and vision of the ideals of ‘justice’ and, of building a community dedicated to peace. I chose the Mir Centre for Peace as a space to research these themes because it is an educational institution and forum dedicated to the pursuit of peace.

Statement of the Problem: A Landscape in Turmoil

The political, social, economic, physical and spiritual landscape of humanity is experiencing devastating upheavals. Every continent is plagued with unique and overlapping turmoil. Understandably humanity is experiencing a state of apparent confusion as to which direction to take, and how to solve any one of these problems. Education is pivotal in both transforming and reinforcing the current landscape.

The political, social and cultural landscape has always had a major impact on the vision, goals, practices and strategies of adult education. We are organic with our environment, mutually influencing and shifting as we interact. Current neo-liberalist perspectives orientate adult education toward individualistic models focussed on economic imperatives (English & Mayo, 2012; Kirby, Curran & Hollet, 2009; Nesbit, 2013). Currently, this status quo is problematic.

Individualistic mentalities, that lack both critical assessment tools and a socially aware and transformative worldview, all contribute to a deepening and interconnected global crisis. English and Mayo (2012) articulate that today, both the world and the field of adult education are “under assault from a variety of capitalist and neoconservative forces pressuring us to opt for the lowest common denominator and to turn away from the causes of criticality, lifelong learning, and education for freedom” (p. 1). Hall, Clover, Crowther and Scandrett, (2012) describe this march toward capitalist goals as “deeply destructive [in] the willingness of most political regimes to sacrifice both human and natural welfare in the interest of economic growth” (p. ix).

This is not difficult to see, though often we blind ourselves because it is difficult to admit (Klein, 2015). The ways these ‘sacrifices’ manifest in the world are as an interconnected web of oppressions that humanity is suffering, including but not limited to, violence against women and patriarchal traditions, poverty, racial prejudice and systemic forms of marginalization, a history

of colonialism, the destruction of the environment and the maintenance of these oppressions that contribute to local and global conflicts, to a lack of peace.

English and Mayo (2012) believe that critical and feminist perspectives in adult education provide ways to disrupt and transform these oppressive forces, despite the current political and cultural climate, that reinforce them. The result of these competing narratives and needs of the world is the creation of two often divergent approaches in adult education that value different aspects of educational content and pedagogy, simplified into adult education ‘for life’ (critical adult education) and, a neo-liberal, individualistic model for job skills and economic earning (English & Mayo, 2012; Johnston, 2005). English and Mayo (2012) also believe in the need to provide what they call ‘education for life and living’ “alongside professional and vocational education” (p. 1), arguing that both types of learning are important. This coming together, they suggest, has a greater capacity to create opportunities and spaces to address underlying issues at the root of unequal societies, whilst preparing people from all spheres of professional and vocational training with not just the tools of their chosen occupation but the critical tools to question, challenge, and creatively imagine and enact possibilities for a better more just future. Further, this shift in educational practice can more adequately challenge the limitations of the neo-liberal market-based orientation of adult education and training, all too often imposed.

Yet missing from many of the critical discourses of adult education is an emphasis on ‘peace’. While it has been recognized that ‘peace’ is a more expansive term than simply the absence of ‘war’ or ‘conflict’ (Dijkstra, 1989) it is still an area that is under-explored, theorized and analysed in the adult education literature (English & Turay, 2008). This study is an exploration of what constitutes an attempt at the composition of a broader critical, ‘peace’ education and practice.

Critical and Feminist Approaches to Adult Education

I lean on critical and feminist perspectives in adult education to guide the framework of this study. There is an approach that Mayo and English (2012) describe as “committed to the promotion of social justice and to providing the space for a critical examination of our ideas and our practices” (p. 1) through challenging “hegemonic assumptions and ideologies” (p. 1). Its purpose is “to name and promote the interests and concerns of underprivileged sectors of... society” and to promote social and political change through action, reflexivity, and learner participation (Nesbit, 2013, p. 13). A critical and feminist approach pays attention to identity and the individual, but in essence, it is a socially focussed process. It is therefore fundamentally different than the neo-liberal status quo outlined above.

The elements that make up a critical adult education practice are numerous. Carpenter and Mojab (2013) argue that critical adult education "must be many things all at once" (p. 167) encompassing a lens that looks at history, race, gender, the community, and be “based... in the goal of revolutionary praxis" (p. 167). Clover, de O. Jayme, Hall, and Follen (2013) echo this perspective describing that critical adult education and learning are viewed as a set of “instruments or tools for critical discovery, a means to challenge problematic normative values and assumptions, and a call to action and activism” (p. 12).

These approaches to adult education collectively call for and create spaces for conscientization (new knowledge-making and understanding), democratization and active citizenship, personal and social transformation, emancipation and empowerment. Using critical and creative approaches, such as the arts, and processes of critical inquiry and participatory research, illuminates problematic issues and opportunities for dialogue pertaining to gender, race,

class, ability, citizenship and the environment (Clover & Sanford, 2013; Clover & Stalker, 2013; Coare & Johnston, 2005; Nesbit, Brigham, Taber & Gibb, 2013).

I describe these calls in my conceptual framework.

Understanding Peace Education in Discourses of Adult Education

As would be expected the tension between neo-liberal models for education and more critical and emancipatory leanings impacts the discussion of peace in the adult education literature. Neo-liberal parameters of peace like neo-liberal education is built on a “framework or governmentality that readily situates our definition of peace and security within market-based economic agreements and partnerships” (Peters & Thayer, 2013, p. 41). Neo-liberal economics encourages militarism in the pursuit of peace, and development of “good governance” understood as westernized democratic nations (p. 36). Neo-liberal versions of peace education tend to lack the type of reflection needed “to perceive and articulate” the dynamics of social, economic, and political processes needed to contribute to “constructive social and political change” (Reardon, 2013 p. 4). The way critical thinking has been taught has been reduced to “argument construction— not connection across difference” (Gould, 2013, p. 59). But increasingly critical peace educators (and critical adult educators) are moving toward “reframing our difference” to “lead to the transformation of identities and relationships- key to an enduring peace” (Gould, 2013, p. 60).

My review of the critical and feminist adult education literature, conducted for this study, made evident a lack of consistent publications regarding peace education, especially in a Canadian context. A few authors also noted this gap (Cohran, 2005; English & Turay, 2008; Trifonas & Wright, 2013). But there is potential for adult education practices to contribute to

peace as Cochran (2005) articulates when she says "the direction adult educators are taking is significant in a world with too much instruction contributing to conflict and too little education directed toward peace" (p. 102). The studies that appear emerge at times of conflict, or from direct experience by the authors, in conflict zones. My study is neither in a space of obvious conflict nor does it stem from my own experience with this type of engagement. I believe peace education is needed not only in times or places of war, but as a preventative medicine, to combat the injustice and misunderstandings that lay at the root of greater conflicts.

Linda Wilkinson, a peace educator and scholar who helped to build the Mir Centre, notes that peace education in Canada evolved from a focus on militarism and de-militarism in previous decades to encompass ideas of social justice (2006). She references, Harris, Fisk and Rank (1996) who elaborate on the continued evolution of peace education that:

At the end of the millennium a new way of thinking will be required to eliminate the threats of war, violence, and environmental destruction, a transformation of the human animal--from a brute using violence to get one's way to a compassionate, caring person who understands how to manage conflicts without resorting to force. Professors involved in peace studies at colleges and universities provide students knowledge and skills that support such a transformation (para. 11).

I use critical and feminist perspectives in adult education because they emphasize this shift toward social justice and support this 'new way of thinking' toward peace (Cochran, 2005; English & Turay, 2008; Trifonas & Wright, 2013).

Perspectives on Educational Spaces

For the purposes of this study, it is important to understand the ‘space’ because in its essence this study is an exploration of an educational space, the Mir Centre for Peace. Critical adult educators such as Welton (2013) understand where education happens along a broad spectrum that includes formal, non-formal, and informal spaces. For him, this includes not only the formal academic sphere of knowledge generation and dissemination, but non-formal workshops, discussion groups, experiential learning, and social movement learning, as well as informal knowledge gathering that a person does throughout their experiences.

The context of this study is at the Mir Centre, a formal institution, where all of these spaces for education are present. My focus is on the non-formal community adult education programme within the Mir Centre for Peace, in Castlegar British Columbia. It exists within our current neo-liberal context that calls from adult education and peace education to focus on jobs-skills training and the advancement of the market. However, there are also progressive calls by critical adult educators and peace educators for processes based in social justice that aim to democratize, transform, emancipate, and that include the arts, imagination and creativity, and trouble, gender, race, class and environmental problems. An underlying question of this study given these contexts is: How does the Mir Centre for Peace position and enact adult education and what are the challenges, implications and contributions of their work to social justice?

Research Design

For this study, I used multiple methods inside a case study design. Generally, taking a qualitative constructivist and interpretivist approach, and by using a framework built from critical and feminist adult education I used the tools of semi-structured interviews, content

analysis, and participatory observation at events and spending time on location to grasp a fuller understanding of the Mir Centre for Peace community education programmes (Lichtman, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2009).

Research Question and Objectives

The question that guides this study is: How do the Mir Centre for Peace community programmes (as constructed in this case study), through their education practice and content, respond to the calls from critical adult education? in what ways does the Mir Centre differ from these calls? And, what ways does a careful examination of their practices reveal about how their peace education practice and content might build the critical adult education paradigm? These critical calls from adult education include a socially focussed, transformative and emancipatory orientation toward education, and processes of conscientization, democratization, praxis, empowerment, use of the arts and experiential learning in spaces that are both ‘safe’ but promote ‘risk-taking’, and trouble issues pertaining to gender, race, and the environment. In this study I explore how the Mir Centre enacts their practice and education for ‘peace’ using this critical adult education framework, and given the political and cultural climate of neo-liberalism. I explore this research question by developing a bounded case study of the Mir Centre for Peace’s non-formal community education practices. Objectives related to this case study are:

- 1) To explore the viewpoints of the adult educators, community program coordinators and the advisory board as to their vision, hopes and perspectives regarding the centre.
- 2) Use website content to explore the history and development of the program.
- 3) To participate as a participant-observer in community programming to gather data related to the content and the pedagogical approach of the educators in action.

Significance

This research is important because it contributes to the discourse of adult education as a peace-building endeavour within a specific context in British Columbia. Secondly, it contributes to a growing understanding of the diverse forms of non-formal adult education practice in the community, inclusive of a peace education orientation. Thirdly it is useful to the Mir Centre for Peace as a document that captures the complexity and importance of an area of their work that has previously never been given attention. Fourthly, it is a document that can be used to stimulate hope, discussion and creative ideas toward further possibilities for social justice, peace, and adult education practices. And lastly, it serves me as an achievement of my goals, and further develops my understanding of possible ways to translate our ideals into practice.

Overview of the Research

In this chapter I gave an overview of the current turmoil we are facing in the world and how education can serve both to transform and enforce these issues. I describe the focus of my research, the Mir Centre, and how I approached its study, through critical calls in adult education. My purpose is to find out the unique offerings that the Mir Centre has to offer to our understanding of critical adult education in practice and to peace adult education. Chapter two continues to elaborate on my conceptual framework of critical adult education, and build an understanding of social justice and peace. In chapter three I develop my methodology as a bounded case study of non-formal education work at the Mir Centre for Peace. Chapter four is a description of my results and chapter five, a discussion of the results given the literature and the calls from critical adult education. I conclude this thesis in chapter six.

CHAPTER TWO

Conceptual Framework and Review of Relevant Literature

In this chapter, I outline the conceptual framework for this study, and review the literature on critical and feminist adult education and peace education. These perspectives and studies in many ways do what Clover et al. (2013) suggest – they intersect and interact in action and in theory. They do so because together, they form a scaffolding to build (educate and enact) social justice. I framed it under social justice because this concept appears in the literature as a readier vision for what critical adult educators are attempting to achieve, though references to peace, and utopia do exist. Trifonas and Wright (2013) two adult educators who contributed to and edited a book titled *Critical Peace Education* argue that “deconstructing the silos of the often-isolated critical pedagogies requires the development of a kaleidoscopic lens capable of producing multiple focal points that collectively reveal the image(ry) of peace” (p. xiii). In a sense, what I attempted below is my own version of a kaleidoscope, or as I have chosen the word, scaffolding. My scaffolding helps me to see how peace might be understood in adult education, and what peace education models have to increase and illuminate understanding in critical adult education practices. Having said this, I recognize that ‘social justice’ is a vast concept that means many things to many people. I begin, therefore, with a working definition for social justice and build on this definition throughout the chapter to explore further its elements from an adult education perspective. From there, I explore the construction of oppression and how it informs the orientation of social justice education and practice. Next, I discuss the calls from critical perspectives in adult education regarding pedagogical processes and dynamics. I begin this discussion with the philosophical underpinnings of this perspective, that of transformation and emancipation. I then move on to describe pedagogical tools used to create

conditions conducive to such change. These tools include hope and risk-taking, the need for action and theory, embodiment or experiential learning, empowerment, conscientization, democratization and active citizenship, and creativity and imagination. Then I describe key themes discussed in the adult education literature of gender inequality, the environment, colonialism and indigenous perspectives. I conclude this chapter with a review of the limited ways that peace education is taken up in critical perspectives in adult education.

Defining Social Justice

The late Patricia Cranton (2013) wrote that unlike in other parts of the world, the historical roots of Canadian adult education and learning theory and practice actually emerged from a social justice orientation. That is, adult education was developed through, and thus supported by, social movements that aimed to challenge and change the circumstances and practices of people whose needs were not being met by formal education and training services or lack thereof (Welton, 2013; Carter & Martin, 2013; Hall et al., 2012). This pedagogical act was therefore, a practice in support of social justice. But having said this, it begs the question: What is social justice? Like justice itself, it is a multi-faceted idea that is difficult to grasp the nuances of in a simple definition.

For the purposes of this study, I draw on Lee Ann Bell's (2013) description as it provides an excellent introduction to the ideas and goals of social justice:

The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. We envision a society in which individuals are both self-

determining (able to develop their full capacities) and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others). Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others, their society, and the broader world in which we live. These are conditions we wish not only for our own society but also for every society in our interdependent global community (p. 21).

The following sections unpack ideas mentioned in this quote, and further build on the concept of 'social justice' from a critical adult education perspective.

Challenging Oppression and Transforming Power Relations

Central to all forms of critical adult education is the act of challenging various oppressions, and naming, illuminating and transforming, problematic relations of power. Oppression fundamentally implies a misuse of power, where people constructed as 'normal' benefit from the systemic advantages this creates, while those constructed as 'other' suffer inequitable distribution and access to resources. It creates social injustice. Oppression operates on multiple levels of human organisation both consciously and unconsciously. Hardiman, Jackson and Griffin (2013) describe these different levels; at the level of the individual they manifest as attitudes and behaviours; for institutions, they manifest through laws, policies and practice; at the level of culture and society they manifest as patterns of 'normal.' Bell (2013) describes oppression's conscious and unconscious nature because it is pervasive, restrictive, hierarchical, and often internalized in the complex relationships linked to forms of identity such as gender, race and class.

It is possible to perceive oppression, meaning that by using critical tools we can identify the ways it manifests and act to transform these oppressive realities toward ideals rooted in justice rather than oppression. Marion Young (2013) identifies five ways oppression manifests. She names these as exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. Each scenario is a power imbalance, and a misuse of it. Because oppression can be unconscious and systemic, it can be difficult to perceive, and therefore difficult to transform. The difficulties in perceiving oppression also stem from the difficulty in identifying power imbalances by those with power. Feminist scholar and educator, bell hooks (1984) describes this in her theory of margin and centre. She describes that those on the margins of power can see within the circle of power that is the dominant discourse pervading society. She argues that those in the centre of power often cannot see their privilege and that it is their responsibility to step outside the circle and make efforts to transform the power imbalance. She recognises, however, that historically those on the margins have taken up this responsibility.

The calls from critical perspectives in adult education are intended to identify oppressive power imbalances (at all the levels they operate at), redistribute power and find channels to create more social justice.

Emancipation

Emancipation and transformation (discussed in the next section) form the philosophical underpinnings of critical perspectives in adult education. Emancipation is essentially understood, Cranton (2013) suggests, as freedom from oppression. Paulo Freire was immensely influential to developing and understanding emancipatory transformation and education (Lange, 2013). Freire (2002) viewed adult education as ‘the practice of freedom;’ that education can serve to free

people from oppression through disruption and transformation. Further, rather than personal transformation as the goal of education, seen as an inevitable process, the goal, he calls for, is social transformation (Lange, 2013). This goal is not achieved by education alone, but central to emancipatory practice and process is active work for social change through engagement in social movements (Lange, 2013). Like social justice, emancipation, as constructed in critical perspectives in adult education, is both a goal and an active process. I discuss some more of Friere's ideas and tools for educating and enacting emancipatory practice in following sections.

In some of Brookfield's (2005) more recent work he describes the purpose of critical adult education as emancipation. He outlined seven tasks involved: challenging ideologies, contesting hegemony, unmasking power, overcoming alienation, learning liberation, reclaiming reason, and practicing democracy. He also emphasised the importance of including gendered, and race perspectives and the practice of criticality. Many of the following sections I describe include Brookfield's themes and rest philosophically on the foundations articulated by Freire and contemporary transformational perspectives discussed next. That is to say that the following calls are rooted in transformative and emancipatory understandings of education; they are processes or dynamics involved in moving toward social justice and being free from oppression.

Transformation

Theories around transformation also undergird many critical perspectives in adult education (Cranton, 2013; Lange 2013). These theories stem from a tradition to use multiple perspectives and disciplines to 'critique' the construction and assumptions of social life and to stimulate people to act for change (Lange, 2013). In adult education, these theories developed in to pedagogical practice for social justice and democratic practice (Lange, 2013; Weiner, 2003). I

rely on Lange's (2013) work as she provides an overview of the development of transformative learning in Canadian adult education practices and draws connections to its emancipatory aims. She critiques the individualistic modernist viewpoint that the term 'transformation' comes from and argues that the Canadian understanding is "evolving and expanding toward more integrative and inclusive conceptions" (p. 116). For example, she outlines how educators and theorists are including spiritual understandings and ways of knowing as meaningful sites for transformation; how feminists use gender as a lens to better understand differences in ways women and men transform; how postcolonial understandings have led to a process of decolonization; and how ecological understandings have shifted transformation from a human centred process to include non-humans.

Contemporary Canadian transformative educators describe transformative education as creating:

a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class race and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy (Morrell, & O'Connor, 2002, p. xvii).

For most critical adult educators, transformation and emancipation are linked perspectives that develop alongside one another and both inform and describe the process of freeing individuals, society and its structures from oppressive worldviews and actions.

Conscientization and Consciousness-Raising

What Freire (2002) called conscientization, appears in the critical adult education literature as a continued and established call for practice and as a tool to teach and engage with students (Clover et al., 2013; Freire, 2002; Lange, 2013; Johnston, 2005; Welton, 2013). It is a critical analysis process, intended for emancipation and transformation, to address people's real needs by working with their lived experience. It creates new knowledge and contests what counts as knowledge. Conscientization, through dialogue, is intended to uncover hidden oppressive realities created by unequal and inappropriate uses of power embedded in society, culture and ourselves. Freire (2002) illustrates this by describing how education systems are politically and socially motivated, not neutral. In one of his foundational texts, he writes:

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (p. 34).

This statement describes conscientization as a cyclical process of action, reflection, and learning to transform society. Lange (2013) further describes conscientization as a reflective and engaged process that counters hegemonic educational practice and demands that students and teachers both participate in co-construction of understanding and an equalization of power in the classroom. She also describes that in conscientization, engaged effort and reflection must extend beyond the classroom to the inequity in society. She (2013) describes several areas of reflection that include sociological process, technical knowledge, understandings of the self and its relation to others, and epistemological, ethical, habitual, and aesthetic perspectives.

One feminist contribution to critical discovery akin to conscientization is the consciousness-raising group. It is a method of sharing personal experiences, created and used by feminists to understand common social inequality and oppression, and the need to change it (Butterwick, 1987). Butterwick (1987) in her work understanding the differences and similarities between conscientization and consciousness-raising noted that the latter traditionally did not include men because the power differential between women and men might shift the focus of the discussion. Understanding that power dynamics affect genders, races, classes, abilities, and even age is important to keep in mind when trying to enact a critical space for reflection and knowledge generation.

Conscientization and consciousness raising are tools to understand how issues are interrelated, locally and globally (Clover et al., 2013), tools to begin the process of dismantling power imbalances through awareness and knowledge, and tools to continue the process of thinking and engaging with the world around us. It is practiced on an individual level through stimulating critical thinking and with others through dialogue and reflection.

Democratization and Active Citizenship

A fourth tenet of critical adult education is democracy and active citizenship. Weiner (2003) drawing on Freire's work, builds a case for adult education as an ongoing democratization process that includes all voices, including marginalized voices, in knowledge forming. Clover et al. (2013) describe the process of knowledge forming, where knowledge is not imposed, but is constructed with people, starting with their lived experiences and abilities to assess their needs and come up with solutions. Etmanski's (2013) study illustrates that democratic knowledge generating processes can also be contributed to from avenues such as the arts. This practice of

valuing and including the knowledge of diverse voices, Weiner (2003) argues, redistributes individual power and disrupts the status quo. He (2003) argues that democratization needs to happen to transform and disrupt both the internalized ideology for individuals and in the structures of society from exclusion and devaluing diverse voices, toward inclusion.

Citizenship marks individuals as valuable contributors. A goal of adult education is to develop “the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for citizens to participate meaningfully in society” (Johnston, 2005). However, the actions expected of ‘good citizens’ who offer ‘meaningful contributions’ depends on the normative values of society. This means if people are different or challenge the status quo, they may be constructed as a ‘bad citizen’ and excluded from democratic processes (e.g. Atleo, 2013; Moore, 2005).

Alternatively, ‘active citizenship’ is outlined as the active participation in community affairs, and social movements, that connects people more deeply to issues, increasing their understanding and willingness to make sacrifices for what matters (Johnston, 2005). Active participation is a valuable site of learning (Johnston, 2005) as it challenges people to engage in critical analysis with others and in practice, creating opportunities to enact social justice, and perhaps challenge the status quo. Participating in this way is difficult because it requires a critical look at individual patterns of thought and behaviour as well as social structures and patterns that need to be challenged and transformed. This difficulty makes both hope and risk-taking essential elements of critical perspectives in adult education.

Hope and Safe Spaces for Risk Taking

Hope and risk taking are often cited elements of a critical adult education practice (Clover et al, 2013; Hall et al., 2012; English & Mayo, 2012; Weiner, 2003). Hope is linked to

ideas of transformation and emancipation that imply we are changing from something, toward something else. It provides a vision for the future. Budd Hall (2002) argues a goal toward "utopia" encourages imagination and possibilities toward such a transformation. In order to keep momentum and interest in change there must be hope that change is possible; that we can move from injustice toward social justice and possibly even peace. Raymond Williams (as cited in Hall et al., 2012) adds that "to be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing" (p. ix). Hope motivates action, which is essential for personal and social change.

Risk taking is another element involved in critical practices in adult education that is the practice of hope. In their book, Clover et al., (2013) explore how spaces for education must be cultivated in ways that promote a safe environment to challenge problematic assumptions and teach people to take risks and make mistakes not "simply create learning environments which are safe, comfortable and simply uncritically affirm or validate all learner experience" (p. 13). In other words, risk taking is important because modern societies are habituated to the societal standards in which they live (Welton, 2013), for both oppressed and non-oppressed peoples (though oppressed might feel more urgently the desire for change). Without risk taking, and a culture that encourages learning from mistakes, society may recreate itself rather than imagine and create new possibilities for organisation and interaction. Risk taking involves action.

Action or Praxis

Taking action instigates change and is therefore part of the scaffolding of a social justice orientation in adult education. For critical adult educators, action is linked to theory and learning through implementation (Brookfield, 2005; Carpenter & Mojab, 2013). Freire (2002) described

the link between action and learning as praxis, or the translation of theories into action. That is, scholarship informs action and action informs scholarship.

Mayo (2012) articulates the need for a theoretical understanding for developing strategies for change and providing tools to help activists understand their worlds. She says:

Individuals and communities can and do come to develop critical and more creative understandings of their situations, just as they can and do come to develop critical and creative strategies for change. But praxis doesn't automatically occur spontaneously. Nor do new generations of activists necessarily acquire the theoretical tools that they need in order to make sense of their rapidly changing worlds, providing them with the theoretical basis for developing strategies that effectively demonstrate that another world is possible.

In other words, theories demonstrate possibilities and inform how and what actions people might take. In turn, actions inform theory, as their outcomes are not always predictable (Nolan, 2007).

Empowerment

In critical perspectives in adult education, empowerment is an important stimulus for action toward social change because it eases the burdens of oppression. Aspects of empowerment include recognizing the contributions of marginalised groups (e.g. women) as educators and initiators of community building (Clover et al., 2013; Batliwala, 2013), and learning to identify as potential agents of social and political change, with the awareness that personal knowledge and experiences are valuable assets (Clover et al., 2013). Empowerment is both a process and an outcome that Batliwala (2013) describes as,

The powerless or less powerful members of a society gain greater access to and control over material and knowledge resources; Challenge the ideologies of discrimination and

subordination; and Transform the institutions and structures through which unequal access and control over resources are sustained and perpetuated (p. 46).

Creativity, Imagination and the Use of the Arts

Creating a future that is different needs an imaginative outlook and applied creative solutions that are based in hope and practised through taking risks. One way to catalyse creativity and imagination as a stimulus for change, is through using the arts (broadly defined and inclusive of theatre, visual arts, music, and poetry among others). Adult educators use art (with and without artists) as a tool to spur on creative and reflective thinking, to imagine different possibilities for the future and to open possibilities to showcase, discuss, and understand difficult themes and topics with different audiences (Clover & Craig, 2009; Clover, 2013; Clover & Sanford, 2009; Clover & Stalker, 2013).

The understanding and use of art for educational purposes beyond artistic achievement are “grounded in complex, often contradictory discourses and understandings of the social, educational, cultural and political function and place of the arts in society” (Clover & Sanford, 2013, p. 1). For example, museums and galleries have been elitist and exclusive, but art has also been used to critique and challenge these same practices. Art can help people process and approach difficult ideas and themes by representing reality in altered or highlighted ways and adds elements of fun, while still grappling with the serious nature of a topic (Etmanski, 2013; Fremeaux & Ramsden, 2013). Activist art is one form of art used in adult education practices. Some argue that because all art is a product of its time and culture and can be used to maintain or transform the status quo it is essentially a political act (Etmanski, 2013). Activist art in particular explicitly engages political and cultural themes which make it apt as a tool for conscientization

(Clover et al, 2013). Art can also be used to help people transform their understandings through experiential learning (e.g. Fremeaux & Ramsden, 2013; Lane, 2012).

Experiential Learning and Embodiment

Experiential learning forms another tool used by critical adult educators to build the scaffolding toward social justice. Experiential and embodied learning are tools in adult education practices for transformative or social justice purposes (Lane, 2012; Clover et al., 2013; Cranton, 2013). Though often described as separate processes, they are connected (Cranton, 2013). Embodied learning is where the body is “a site for change and awareness of new possibilities” (p. 102) where the senses, movements, emotions and spiritual awareness all contribute to learning and development (Cranton, 2013). Experiential learning is when active engagement and reflection on your experience with activities informs and potentially deepens learning. The experience or embodiment is used as a consciousness raising catalyst for transformation of attitudes, beliefs, and skills (Clover et al., 2012; Lane, 2012).

Tackling Gender Inequality

Women, their voices, issues and presence, was missing from much critical adult education literature despite being essential contributors to culture and the process of social change (Clover et al. 2013; English & Irving, 2015). From this absence, has emerged the theory and practice of feminist adult education, a process that highlights women’s experiences that have been ignored and marginalised. These theories help us to understand the dynamics of power through a gendered lens, by understanding patriarchy, and through including the voices of marginalised peoples. In feminist perspectives in adult education, the call for tackling gender

inequality is in part a pedagogical approach that encourages a new way of seeing through a gendered and social analysis, but it is also a call for increased content related to feminist issues, for empowering women, and educating for social change (English & Irving, 2015).

One of the key elements of a feminist approach to adult education is to participate actively in a collaborative (inclusive of marginalized voices) knowledge construction and generation (English & Mayo, 2012). Nancy Tabor (2013) suggests that the questions of "whose stories are being told, from whose point of view?; How are they constructed?; Whose stories are missing or deemed unimportant?" (p. 146) are helpful feminist analytic tools. These questions help to understand the dynamics of power that exclude in the generation of knowledge in educational practices and in society.

Feminists use the concept of patriarchy to understand how social hierarchies and power relations have tended to privilege men and oppress women (Clover et al., 2013; hooks, 1984). Through the development of feminist theories the concept of patriarchal oppression has expanded to include the intersectionalities of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989) that includes people from diverse, social, economic, and racial backgrounds, different abilities, ages, religious backgrounds, sexual orientations and other variations of what is deemed 'different.' Using a feminist lens and including feminist issues in adult education practices is important because it highlights hidden oppressive realities, and engages democracy and empowerment.

Indigenous Knowledge and Anti-Colonialist Perspectives in Adult Education

The critical adult education literature regarding Indigenous knowledge and anti-colonialist perspectives is limited (Atleo, 2013). I include it because it informs an important

aspect of activity at the Mir Centre, and it is an important site for growth in the critical adult education literature.

Canadian Indigenous adult education is tied to a history of colonialism where Indigenous people and thought were marginalised, made invisible, or co-opted through a history of systemic violence that viewed Indigenous ways as inferior and in need of civilizing (Atleo, 2013; Sumner, 2008). Marlene Atleo (2013), an Aboriginal scholar and adult educator, describes Aboriginal Education as a social movement that intersects with and is a part of adult education toward “a more humane and just society” (p. 47). She argues that building trust, and valuing and developing Aboriginal methods and perspectives for education needs to happen to repair the colonial legacy. She articulates:

The intersection of lives lived in the project of Aboriginal adult education in Canada and the development of institutional bridges is under-documented even by the non-Aboriginal allies that live in the borderlands. One trusts that the “cunning pedagogy” (Welton, 1995) has been put away and an innovate, mutually defensible approach is negotiated to become a new norm (p. 47).

This “cunning pedagogy” that Atleo (2013) references is the history of colonialism. Moving beyond this history while simultaneously understanding its legacy are important facets of an Aboriginal approach (Atleo, 2013; Hudson, 2016; Sumner, 2008). Also, building formal education practices (Atleo, 2013) and recognizing and valuing the informal, non-formal, oral traditions, and links to land and spirituality as knowledge sources are a part of the structure of an Aboriginal adult education (Atleo, 2013; Hudson, 2016; Sumner, 2008).

Environmental Adult Education

Environmental adult education is one of the ways scholars have attempted to create ‘bridges’ to Indigenous forms of knowledge (e.g. Sumner, 2008; Lane, 2012). It focuses on environmental issues and their connection with social, economic and political concerns while simultaneously deepening the connection and experiences that individuals have with their outdoor or human environment (Clover et al., 2013). One of these issues is environmental racism, when the land is valued (often for recreation of the wealthy) over Indigenous peoples’ rights, who may use the land for their livelihoods (Clover et al., 2013). Another issue environmental adult educators pay attention to, is that nature cannot advocate for itself and humans must act in this role (e.g. Moore, 2005). At the core of environmental adult education is a process and goal of “transformation of human/earth relations” (Clover et al., 2013, p. 28) and an awareness that if we do not transform these relations, we might be doomed on a path of environmental destruction (Clover et al., 2013; Sumner, 2008). Environmental adult educators use nature as a tool and space for learning and for reflection.

Peace Education and Critical Adult Education

Adult educators that have looked at peace, echo many of the themes of current social justice orientations, in that they view peace as not simply a state to arrive at, but a process or journey toward a goal (Boanas, 1989; Dijkstra, 1989). This process, of educating for peace, requires more than a focus on technical skills development, status and credentials, and stems from hope for the future of the world (Dijkstra, 1989; Floresca-Cawagas & Swee-Hin, 1989). Peace education is seen to deal with societal structures and patterns of social life, societal values and norms, and the attitudes and behaviours that inform how people relate to one another and

their surroundings (Dijkstra, 1989; Floresca-Cawagas & Swee-Hin, 1989). It is a process that encourages empathy and critical thinking (Dijkstra, 1989) and a critical approach to education, inclusive of and understanding that “knowledge is never value-free” (p. 15). Peace education uses conscientization through dialogue, that is democratic and nonviolent in nature (Floresca-Cawagas & Swee-Hin, 1989). It also teaches how to manage conflict (Boanas, 1989) and seeks to identify the root causes of injustice and includes the environment in the construction of peace, as this is where peace happens (Swee-Hin & Burns, 1989).

The critical and feminist adult education literature that speaks to peace is stimulated by a recognition that the world (or specific places) is in great turmoil, and that education plays a role in transforming this strife (e.g. Cochran 2005; Ide, 2015; Nolan, 2007; Nyannango, 2009; Spencer, 2006). The pressures of war in various contexts still motivate academic interest and activity related to peace (in Israel, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, see Cochran, 2005; Nolan, 2007, and Harris & Lewer, 2008, respectively). Boanas (1989) argues that this may be because the cultural and political climate, at those times, calls for more peace education.

The literature which includes peace, grapples with the questions of what peace is. In a recent paper, Ide (2015) explores the issue of definition and describes how the terms “peace” and “education” must be constantly examined, understood, and maintained in context so that their meaning does not decay or become distorted into slogans to suit the political interests of those who might use them to maintain power over others. Other studies divide peace and education for it into four common themes. These are, a focus on human rights, a focus on training conflict resolution skills, a focus on a democratizing process of inclusion and awareness of issues, and a focus on transformation of worldviews or some confluence of these themes (Habibi-Clarke,

2005; Nyannango, 2009). Habibi-Clarke (2005) though her work deals largely (though not exclusively) with school aged children, asks the question:

Does the pooling (in this case) of conflict resolution skills training, democracy education, and human rights awareness ultimately create an effective conceptual and methodological basis on which to transform the culture of participating communities from conflict and violence to unity and peace (p. 36)?

For Habibi-Clarke (2005), educating to transform worldviews from conflict-orientation to peace-orientation is an essential element of peace education. However, Spencer (2006) wonders if ‘peace’ is too distant a concept to relate to and notes that academics are increasingly pressured to adopt individualistic models intended for skills development, rather than worldview transformation.

English and Turay (2008) two academic-practitioners articulate that “peace and peace education are themes that are consistent with the overall social and transformative goals of adult education theory and practice” (p. 286). Their recent inquiry into adult education peace practices, acknowledges the gap in the literature indicating that there are few models for peace education outside of formal education institutions. I explore their model briefly here because it gives a recent understanding of what adult peace education might look like in practice and in theory.

English and Turay (2008) built a model for adult peace education, based on a comparative analysis of three international peace education models. Their model uses lifelong transformational learning theories informed by adult education, with a goal of being practical to practice. The five dimensions of their proposed model are: 1. spiritual understandings inform the practice; 2. globalized perspectives that attend to the local and the global community; 3. Indigenous knowledge(s) rooted to the place of education; 4. diversity as a tool and opportunity

to expand worldviews; and 5. participatory learning to engage participants. My study builds on the work of English and Turay's by contributing a single case of an adult education institution, the Mir Centre, and what important and different offerings it makes to adult peace education.

Summary of Calls from Critical and Feminist Adult Education

Critical and feminist adult educators call for educational spaces that transform and emancipate situations of oppression toward social justice through the application of theory in action. It is a socially focussed process rooted in hope that change can happen and knowledge of where injustice occurs. To achieve transformation and emancipation, critical and feminist adult educators use processes of conscientization, democratization and active citizenship, and empowerment, and use tools that include the arts and experiential learning, to create opportunities for dialogue in a space that is both safe to participate, but encourages people to take risks to transform themselves and their society. Themes from gendered, Indigenous and environmental perspectives in the adult education literature are taken up in ways to highlight where oppression and injustice occur, and where change needs to happen.

Based off the work of Cochran, (2005) English and Turay (2008), and Trifonas and Wright (2013), who indicate that the critical and feminist perspectives and approaches in adult education are in line with goals for peace and can illustrate a vision for peace, in this this study, I use these critical and feminist perspectives in adult education, as a framework for how peace education in practice might happen in the community. I use this framework to aid in my analysis by comparing and contrasting it with what I found at the Mir Centre for Peace. I review my methodology for how I did this, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology and Methods

This chapter outlines my study design. I begin by describing case study and why I chose this method. I then describe my epistemological framework inside the qualitative research paradigm. I do this because it locates my work within a framework that uses situated forms of knowledge to glean understanding about different contexts, rather than a model aimed at “objective truth” or generalizability. I then reiterate the purpose and highlight the analytical questions that guided this study, describe the methods I used to gather my data, the participants and the numerous events in which I participated such as workshops, film screenings and Peace Cafés, and discuss how I analysed and coded the data.

Building a Case Study

Qualitative case studies are designed to intensely and deeply explore and describe complex interactions between a multitude of related variables and aim for holistic understandings of the case and its context within the case boundaries (Lichtman, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2009). I use Stake’s (1995) classic writing about case studies to describe the type I conducted. My study is a single case, contextually bound, needing an in-depth exploration and description. It is intrinsically motivated, instrumental in that it tells about an underrepresented aspect of adult education, that is peace education in practice, and it is descriptive in nature. Stake, along with others such as Baxter and Jack (2008) and Marshall and Rossman (2016), outlines intrinsic case studies as interesting to the researcher because of their own interests to understand the phenomenon better. This is the case here, as I have personal history in the area and interest in social justice and peace education. It is also an instrumental

case that is illustrative of an issue (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Stake, 1995). I also lean on Yin's (1994) definition of a descriptive case study, as I describe facets of the Mir Centre to better understand the practice of peace and social justice. Further to this, my study is as Thomas (2011a) describes, an exploration of *subject* and *object*. The subject is the case, its boundaries and historical context; the object is the analytical or conceptual framework used to illuminate (and at times explicate) the case.

The conceptual framework (the object) is an axis for a case study. It provides a construct to sort data based on previous theories and experiences and informs who will and will not be included in the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Identifying the conceptual framework or object is important because it helps avoid simply describing a case; it gives a backdrop to compare, contrast, and develop richer understandings (Thomas, 2011a; Stake, 2009).

My conceptual framework rests in critical and feminist perspectives in adult education. However, conceptual frameworks evolve and thicken with data collection and analysis (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Thomas, 2011a). This was true for me as I reflected on my data, and spoke with my supervisor, and realized I needed to look over the literature again. Refining the parameters of my case, both object and subject, was an important part of its development. I discuss this further below, but first I develop the research paradigm of this study.

Research Paradigm

In my research, I lean away from the positivist standards of objectivity toward a constructivist and interpretive understanding of valued subjective knowledge. However, on the surface my approach aligns with the post-positivist goal to “capture reality” (Lichtman, 2013, p. 10), in that I attempt to illustrate the essence of experience at the Mir Centre, as is an intended

purpose of case studies (Baxter & Jack, 2008). It is tempting to align my understanding of knowledge and the research I did with the post-positivist framework, because in the shifting landscape of scientific understanding, objective truth, and generalizability have traditionally been valued over subjective knowledge and situated understandings.

In my approach, I acknowledge my subjectivity and value my participants' knowledge and experience. I did this by relying on the voices and knowledge of interview participants, my own interpretations and meaning-making of the data I collected, and by recognizing as the literature indicates that my study is historically bound (Simons, 2009). In this way, I use a constructivist and interpretive approach as I acknowledge that my context, values, and beliefs, influence the knowledge I create and represent through my interpretations at a given time. By doing this I challenge what can be known and how we come to know, and my research aligns with a paradigmatic shift in research toward multiple subjective understandings and ways to construct and interpret reality (Hesse-Biber, 2012; Lichtman, 2013).

Binding my Case: My Research Question and Purpose Refined

Knowing what your case study is not, is an important part of building one (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Lichtman, 2013; Stake, 1995). This is because the amount of data collected in a case study can be overwhelming (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Lichtman, 2013; Stake, 1995). I set parameters on my study by understanding its limitations and reflecting on my research question.

My research question - How do the Mir Centre for Peace community programmes respond to the calls from critical adult education? - refines my case to the Mir Centre programmes that are offered to the general community rather than just registered students at Selkirk College. I refined this further by focussing on the voices of their community educators

and organisers, rather than participants in events. To help answer my research question, I considered the kinds of information I needed. I wanted to know how the organisers and educators constructed their ideas of peace, and their perspective of how they educate for this. I kept in mind the question, what is important to this individual? From the events I posed the various questions: What kinds of topics are covered?; How do they approach the topics pedagogically?; How do they educate for peace and how do they practise peace through education? These questions and keeping my overall purpose in mind, of understanding better the practice and vision of adult education for peace, helped me refine my case and sort data into meaningful themes when the time came.

Further, I used the guidance of several authors such as Baxter and Jack (2008), Lichtman (2013) and Stake (1995) to identify binding factors to my design; the first was duration. It is difficult to know when to stop a case study in part because depth of understanding can happen over time. Stake (1995) suggests that narrowing the timeframe is useful for binding a case. My timeframe was from September 2015 to May 2016. A variety of activities happened at the Mir Centre during this time. I began any human informed data collection from the time my ethics approval was granted on October 29th, 2015 (see Appendix A). Although I attempted to immerse myself at the centre, limiting my time there impacted the amount of data I collected, because of awareness of potential documents, and my access to potential participants.

Methods

Case studies are not defined by a specific method, but use multiple means to gather data and insure depth (Lichtman, 2013; Thomas, 2011a). The research tools I used to illuminate the Mir Centre were semi-structured interviews, participant observation and field notes, and content

analysis in relevant documents. I also include my observations and participants' observations from spending time on the Mir Centre grounds. These methods, of listening, looking, documenting and interpreting are commonly used in case study practice (Simons, 2009).

For case studies gathering data from multiple sources in multiple ways enhances the credibility of the data and the overall strength of the study, as Baxter and Jack (2008) explain:

In case study, data from these multiple sources are then converged in the analysis process rather than handled individually. Each data source is one piece of the "puzzle," with each piece contributing to the researcher's understanding of the whole phenomenon. This convergence adds strength to the findings as the various strands of data are braided together to promote a greater understanding of the case (p. 554).

This process of gathering data together can also be thought of as triangulation that builds the trustworthiness of the data (Gibson & Brown, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Below I describe the different methods I used and how I used them in my case study.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews offer an opportunity to find out the participants' thoughts and experiences relating to the topic, active engagement with the topic, potential for learning for both interviewee and interviewer, and flexibility to go deeper into certain topics or change topics if necessary (Lichtman, 2013; Simons, 2009). I used semi-structured interviews because they provided a set of guideline questions to follow while still allowing for flexibility to inquire about topics as they arose (Lichtman, 2013). I followed Lichtman's (2013) suggestion to develop a list of topic areas/questions to cover in the interview. These can be found in Appendix B. As well, casual comments made during my participant observation, were occasionally documented in my field

notes. These were generally related to the topic discussed at the event. For the interviews, I followed the analogy of interviews as conversations, as suggested by Simons (2009). I brought a purpose to the conversation (my topic) but I also attempted to “equalize the relationship between interviewer and interviewee” (p. 4) with friendliness, ease, attention to my tone and effort to establish rapport. I wanted the participants, including myself, to feel comfortable sharing and communicating. This was important to me because scholars remind us that unequal power distribution between researcher and participant can influence the dialogue and the perception of the research (e.g. Hesse-Biber, 2012). To help relieve the burden of power differences, I viewed the research process as a collaboration between collaborators (myself as researcher and interviewer, and the participants).

Participant Selection

To find participants, I used the Mir Centre webpages, on the Selkirk College website, to locate those who were closest to the organisation first. I contacted the Chairperson of the Mir Advisory Board and the coordinator of the community programmes via public emails from the website. I used an email script to inform them of my intentions for research (see Appendix C). Through email we decided to hold a phone conference to discuss my study further. These two participants wanted to know what would be required of them, if anything.

This initial phone call detailed my intentions and went over my participant consent forms. I also outlined my conceptual framework from critical perspectives in adult education with a social justice lens, as they were interested. I also asked for the Mir Centre’s permission to undertake my study, which the Chairperson gave verbally, saying I had his “blessing” and later via email (see Appendix D). After this conversation, I sent them participation consent forms.

They both sent them back (through email) signed and we began to make plans for interview times and dates.

I went about contacting the other interview participants the same way. I searched the Mir Centre webpages and identified individuals who had participated as facilitators of Peace Cafés, educators for community education workshops, or speakers in the lecture series. I narrowed my search to individuals who had performed one of these roles in the last year, or would be conducting an event in the coming year. Two individuals that I contacted were on the Mir Advisory Board. As this information is not listed online, this was information that either came out of the interview process, or through dialogue at one of the Peace Cafés. I found both their emails doing a Google search of their names.

I contacted a total of 13 participants through email using the script. Three people did not respond. Five responded but were unable to participate. Five people responded and we were able to set up interview times. Four of the interviews took place at the Selkirk College library in a private study room. These four participants were all full-time, part-time or casual employees of Selkirk College. One participant and I met over SKYPE, this participant was not an employee of Selkirk College, but an active community member. I emailed all of them consent forms and brought hard-copies for them to sign and go over at the time of their interview. For the SKYPE interview this was completed via email. All participants signed the consent forms.

Each participant held multiple roles at the Mir Centre. A brief description of the participants at the time of this study, with their pseudonym follows.

Ali: She participated in the peace studies program at Selkirk College. She has since taught peace studies classes, and summer seminars. She was involved with a noon hour “lecture series” that was stimulated by her desire to create spaces to learn more at Selkirk College and to

use the Mir Centre more as a space. She has hosted Peace Cafés, taught ‘summer institutes’ and has been a member of the advisory board in previous years.

Kate: She also participated in the peace studies program. She has participated in sub-committees to help plan Peace Cafés and she has hosted Peace Cafés. She worked as a librarian at Selkirk College, and was an active member of the apiary community in the Kootenays.

Max: He worked as the Chair for the Advisory Board of the Mir Centre. He has been involved with the Mir Centre since its earliest days. He has acted as host for lecture series and workshops. He also organised the peace studies formal program and dialogued with the Advisory Board and with the Community Education Coordinator about the community education programmes.

Gwen: She worked as the coordinator of the community programming at the Mir Centre. She acted as a liaison for participants in the Peace Cafés, and organised many community events related to the centre. She was also the community education programmer for Selkirk College. Every event that I attended she was also present for, and she often acted as a host for the Mir Centre during these events.

May: She has served as a community member on the Mir Advisory Board. She has been involved in the Mir Centre activities as a participant and has been an active volunteer particularly in the early stages of the Mir Centres development. She published a book of poetry through the Mir Centre Press, the proceeds of which were donated to the centre.

For each interview, I used an iPad and an iPhone to record the data using software called Dictaphone. After each interview, I wrote notes about my initial thoughts in my research journal on my computer, and I transcribed the interviews using Microsoft Word. I then listened to each interview a second time while reading my transcription to edit any errors I may have made. I sent

each participant a copy of the transcription, and invited her or him to make any changes to answers if they felt it necessary. No one made any changes to the original transcripts.

Observations and Field Notes

I also used observation and gathered data with field notes. Marshall and Rossman (2016) argue that “observation is central to qualitative research” (p. 143), and case study in particular, because it engages the researcher in a process of discovery in a natural setting allowing for different or similar data than other research forms such as interviews.

Participant observation as a process of discovery is filtered through the lens of the researcher and can be obtrusive (Lichtman, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Although I chose (with ethical approval from the University of Victoria and consent from the event hosts) to participate in the Mir Centre activities and to walk their grounds, I did not attempt to steer the activities in any particular way. Rather, I participated as a collaborator in the attempt to further understandings of peace, and specifically trying to further my own understanding of the various topics and pedagogical approaches from the events that I participated in. In other words, I tried to approach the research in a way to avoid and equalize any power imbalances created by my presence as a researcher. At times, this meant when participants were invited to do so, to ask questions if I had any. At other times this meant participating in arts activities such as painting, role-playing and drawing or voicing my understandings of what we were doing. At other times this meant sitting quietly watching a film, listening to poetry or prose or a lecture. The aim of other events was to socialize, to eat together and to donate to the cause. I was invited to participate activity in all of these activities.

The data gained during participation and observation is abundant and difficult to capture entirely and difficult to keep focused to what is relevant (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I used field notes to help capture this information. For my field notes I followed general guidance from the literature, noting that no specific method for gathering field notes is agreed upon (e.g. Walford, 2009). I used a notepad and pen that I brought with me to each event and made note of the date, event title and host name and brief notes about how many people attended, their approximate age range, and potential gender balance present. During the presentation, when appropriate I noted questions I might have, what we did, what the topic unfolded as, and any comments or ideas that I understood as relevant to my overall purpose.

Immediately after the event, when I arrived home, I wrote more detailed field notes in my notepad about my overall impressions and any relevant details. I then took my notes and put them on to my computer by typing them out and adding additional thoughts and reflections that I separated from the initial notes by using the initials MT or MQ, which stands for my thoughts or my questions. These were later sorted as initial codes, of my understandings of the data.

Immersing myself in the Mir Centre community programmes was an important aspect of my study. This action permitted me to gain a greater understanding of their activities. It enabled me, as Marshall and Rossman (2016) suggest, to take what I heard in the interviews about people's perspectives and to see how this was translated in reality and to take what I observed and ask individuals questions about my perspectives.

The following sections detail the different events that I participated in. I follow this description of events with how I made sense of all of the data, transcriptions, field notes, and content analysis (through coding).

Lecture Series

One of the activities I took part in was the lecture series. There were five lectures that occurred during the time of my research from September 2015-May 2016 and I was able to attend two of these within my study's timeframe. For each lecture, I emailed the speakers beforehand (using emails I found through Google searches). I also spoke with each speaker at the conclusion of his or her talk to indicate who I was and to get permission to include the lecture as part of my study. Of the five lectures two of the speakers were women, and three were men. There was a modest registration charge (\$13 for students and seniors and \$16 for adults) for the lectures, to help subsidize the cost of the speakers. I paid these fees. Each lecture had a question and answer period and between 20 to over 200 people in attendance. The lecture series was in fact seen by my participants as central to the identity of the Mir Centre.

Lecture One: Positioning Indigeneity: Syilx Ways of Knowing tmixwCentrism

The lecturer gave a talk that focused on the concept of Indigeneity and understanding a Syilx way of knowing. She argued that society can change through knowledge and that understanding Indigenous knowledge will affect the transformation. The lecturer described how her Indigenous language holds knowledge in the ways that words are constructed and in the ways that the land is used to develop the language. She also described Indigeneity as a social paradigm for developing conscious human relationships that involve "environmental ethics" where humans are integrated with nature, where ideas about self are not separable from community and nature.

Lecture Two: Truth Telling Toward Justice: Ferguson is Everywhere

In this lecture the speaker, an African American man from Ferguson, described the context in the United States, specifically the context that gave rise to the conflict in Ferguson. He talked about the truth telling project and about how having people share their experiences and stories is a way to change the hearts of people and affect social change. He used films to illustrate the “righteous indignation” of individuals on the streets, but also the non-violence of many of the protests and how they can be misattributed as violent because of the presence and articulation (through music, or body language) of anger. He argued that having people tell their stories is a learning opportunity for both them and the audience; that through “truth-telling” marginalized voices can be heard and can then contribute meaningfully to recreating social systems that are more just.

Peace Cafés

As noted, Peace Cafés are part of the community education programmes. Eight of these were held during the time of my research. As with the lectures, I gathered some limited information about the topics of each event, Appendix E offers brief descriptions of events that occurred during the 2015-2016 year that I did not attend. I attended three Peace Cafés to understand better their pedagogy. For each Peace Café, I arrived early to indicate who I was and my role as a researcher and participant and asked permission from the facilitators to use their Peace Café as a part of my study. I asked them to sign a consent form. During each Peace Café, as there was a space provided to do this for each person there, I indicated my reasons for being there as interested in further understanding how we build peace and as a researcher studying how

the Mir Centre is engaged in this process. These events were free to the public, or by donation for the continuation of the Mir Centre community education programmes.

The Town of Nothing: Changing the World Through Creative Collaboration!

In this first Peace Café, a small group (six) of locals (the West Kootenay region), and myself, gathered in the upstairs meeting place at the Mir Centre building in Castlegar. We sat in the corner of the room on couches in a circle. We began by chatting with one another and introducing ourselves. Then the facilitators, an author and an illustrator of a children's book about the contested area known as Jumbo, read and performed this book to the group. We discussed its inspiration (the protection of the natural area from building commercial resorts), and the role of art in activism. We then moved our discussion over to a large table covered in paper, where we engaged in creating a collective art piece using paint and markers.

Facilitated by the author and illustrator, we first identified key words that indicated what we valued around the topic of the environment. Our themes were renewable energy, environmental sustainability, community connections and spirituality. We agreed on an overall theme of "agency through connection." Around the large table covered in paper we were asked to practise moving around the table drawing circles in the air with our pens, to warm up to the idea of doing art together. Eventually we were asked to draw any image that came to mind on our discussed topic. We continued to draw and then paint, moving spots every few minutes circling the table. Eventually we created a colourful art piece that indicated our values and theme. The facilitators kept the art piece and said they were conducting this activity with other groups and would eventually make a larger artwork with all the contributions put together.

Honduras after the 2009 Coup

At the second Peace Café, held at the 10th Street Selkirk College campus in Nelson BC, a group of locals (16) gathered in a semi-circle in a classroom and listened to a talk given by a Honduran native about the 2009 coup in Honduras, and engaged in a discussion. The speaker used a PowerPoint presentation and gave an historical context of Honduras before the Coup and examined ideas of colonialism, notions of disaster capitalism and Canada's political involvement, efforts for social change from activists and government, and impacts on Indigenous populations and the environment. Discussion arose around ideas of corruption being framed by who you know and where you get your information, and the complicated reality and intersections of politics, human and environmental rights, and economics. At the end of the discussion the question was posed by the speaker and the community education coordinator for the Mir Centre events, of what can we do? Lists of alternative news sources were provided, and suggestions made about taking action through sending letters to "Rights Action," and finding information about corrupt business practices and boycotting or protesting these businesses.

Echoes of Dispersal

The third Peace Café I attended was hosted at the Mir Centre building in the upstairs meeting room. A group of locals gathered (18) to hear a reading of a book published by a local author about her experiences in the area being interned in the Japanese Internment camps. A short film about these experiences was also shared, as were readings by two other writers in the area. The main facilitator (and author) provided an opportunity for questions to be asked. The questions lead to an explication by the author of her experience around notions of citizenship complicated by racism, about a culture of fear, how art has a potential to be a tool for healing,

and how common shared experiences and oppressions can provide an opportunity to engage in healing when you put yourself out there.

Education Workshops

The Mir Centres offers education workshops. People pay to attend but the workshops are subsidized by other College departments and scholarships raised by the Mir Centre. Where necessary I paid the fees to participate. There were also two other adult education programmes that fell under the category of “summer institutes” that were outside my research framework, but were also offered as courses to further the understanding of peace to both students for credit, or for non-credit learning. The following were specifically non-credit workshops, though in the second workshop a certificate was given to those who completed the training.

Experiencing Syilx Way of Knowing

This educational workshop, with local participants was a day long, where participants had the opportunity to work *with* the knowledge system and worldviews presented to them through experiential forms of learning. The facilitator (an Indigenous person from British Columbia’s Okanagan region) used a story to describe different strategies for decision making from a Syilx perspective that she linked to Indigeneity, a way of knowing through language rooted in knowledge of the land. In the story four chiefs that represent different facets of life, work together to make an important decision. These four chiefs were black bear (the land and traditions), bitter root (relationships), saskatoon berry (vision and innovation), and king salmon (action). The facilitator had us use magazine images to describe why we were attending the event. She then, based off our descriptions put us in to one of four groups based off the four

chiefs. We then worked in our groups to create a collage, using images from magazines, to describe the role of the being whose group we were in to solve conflicts. We then came together as a larger group and described our collages. After this we shared what we learned from this experience of working together and had time to reflect. Though this was a basic introduction to a complex idea, it offered a theory on how to perceive and resolve conflicts, and gave the participants a chance to practise these skills. Also, important to this workshop was the use of time to ‘get to know one another’ which the facilitator described as important to her Indigenous worldview, where relationships formed the foundation for interaction.

Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping

For this educational workshop, the facilitators invited me to participate in the training. I attended the first day and a half to get a sense of how they conducted the workshop and their focus. The Mir Centre for Peace and a nongovernmental group called the Nonviolent Peaceforce designed the course, wherein students (locally and globally) spent time (January 23rd to March 31st 2016) learning online the principles of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. The workshop portion was designed to practise and learn the practical skills of unarmed civilian peacekeeping over a period of two weeks. This program offered theoretical frameworks around what peacekeeping is and is intended to help “students with the skills of cultural awareness, communication and violence de-escalation” (Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping, n.d., para. 15).

The workshop began with participant introductions, and collective setting of group expectations guided by principles set out by the facilitators. Later, a facilitator led us through theatre activities based off principles of Theatre of the Oppressed. The workshop used theatre to enhance the learning of skills to de-escalate violent situations. We also used problem solving

tasks and group activities to help us identify what levels of violence and confrontation we were comfortable with, as well as triage situations given certain contexts. Over the course of the workshop they also connected with schools in the area to give presentations about unarmed civilian peacekeeping, and hosted a dinner open to the community to share about this new skill and program at Selkirk College through the Mir Centre for Peace.

Spontaneous Events

Alongside the above was what I call ‘spontaneous events.’ For example, there was a film entitled *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* shown one afternoon. Two young people hired by the Mir Centre’s peace studies program to create events to stimulate dialogue and discussion on campus about peace and justice, organised this event. They advertised on the Mir Centre’s Facebook page as a free event hosted at Selkirk College. I arrived early, introduced myself to the hosts and asked permission to use the activity as part of my study. They agreed. Seven people attended and the student hosts gave a short introduction to the film describing it as one groups efforts to build social justice. After the film, a short discussion followed that focussed on audience members’ recollection of the confusion surrounding the Black Panthers and highlighted the overall positive perspective in the film.

Another spontaneous event was a fundraiser dinner initiated and coordinated largely through the efforts and promotion of the Mir Centre community education coordinator. The event was motivated by an assassination of a dedicated environmental activist and human rights advocate in Honduras, Berta Cáceres. The proceeds were for the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras and the family of the deceased. The fundraiser included dinner, live musical entertainment, a silent auction, and a talk about the 2009 coup in Honduras.

Content Analysis

Marshall and Rossman (2016) believe that documents increase information about a case and supplement participant observation and interviews. Particularly relevant to my case study, were five documents that served as historical accounts that gave perspective and context to the Mir Centre. Four of these documents were from the “Mir Centre Resources” webpage, plus an additional document located on the Mir Centre webpage. I also asked the community coordinator and the Mir Chairperson for any relevant documents. They both indicated the “Mir Centre Resources” page. I also include content from the Selkirk College and Mir Centre webpages.

Coding the Data

All of the data I collected I transcribed. I followed Lichtmans (2013) generic approach to analysing the data for key themes. She describes this as a six-step process of developing codes, categories and concepts. The first step is initial coding. I did this by reading through the transcripts and my typed field-notes, and the PDF documents from the Mir Centre webpage while keeping my research question in mind, that is, how does the Mir Centre respond to the critical calls in adult education. Because I wanted to attend to how the Mir Centre responds, and not just what is indicated as possible themes from my conceptual framework, I also kept the question in mind of “what is important to the Mir Centre.” Using Microsoft Word, I highlighted passages, and created notes in the margins, regarding passages, that I felt responded to these questions.

The second step, after I had read through all of the material and made my initial comments in the margins was to revisit my initial codes. I took these to be my notes in the margins and any particular word that I may have highlighted. While I revisit them, I kept a list on

a separate sheet of paper of codes that recurred or seemed similar throughout all of the documents, transcripts and field notes that I had gathered. If codes seemed different but related I would draw a line between them and on that line, I would describe how I thought they were related. As I developed this list, I also kept a Word Document that I called ‘codes together’ wherein I ‘copied’ and ‘pasted’ quotes from the various documents (that each had a corresponding colour so that I could identify where they came from). In this document, I pasted quotes together that addressed similar topics.

My list and my ‘codes together’ document helped me with step three, which was to develop an initial list of categories. As I grouped codes together I began to see themes that often came up together. Sometimes these themes were described best by one of the participants and I would use their words to categorize multiple codes, other times I came up with words that seemed to hold multiple codes together.

After I had done this with all of my data, I began step four, to modify the initial list based on rereading the transcripts and documents. I did this by asking myself the questions of “what is this document trying to tell me? and, what have I left out?” As I did this I modified some of my categories, and shifted some codes from one category to another, and sometimes found words from my participants or in the documents that more aptly described the theme.

This is where I began step five, which was to revisit your categories and subcategories. I continued to shift them around, putting them together in meaningful ways and placing the separate categories I had created on different sized post-it notes. I used a 60cm by 90cm canvas to group the categories together with more ease.

Step six, was to move from categories to concepts. I did this by looking broadly at all the data and asking, what do these data tell me about what the Mir Centre is trying to do? How are

they engaged in doing this? As I grouped the categories together they began to fit together under concepts that came from the Mir Centre's stated purpose.

In the next chapter I explore these concepts and themes as my study's results.

CHAPTER FOUR

Context and Results

As context is critical to adult education and to the findings of this study, I begin this chapter by outlining the context and history of the Mir Centre and Selkirk College and how they inform the Mir Centre's identity, vision and thus, pedagogical work. Next, I move to the thematic areas that emerged from my data. I begin with 'transforming the culture toward peace' a key part of the Mir Centre's vision. In this section I describe the 'levelled' understanding of peace, the commitment to understanding the 'root causes of violence' and 'needs,' the construction of 'conflict' in peace, and the use of safe-spaces, nonviolence and reconciliation. From there I explore the second part of the Mir Centre's underlying vision to use 'learning and dialogue' to transform the culture toward peace. Here I discuss the different degrees of engagement and dialogue, including skills development, the role of the Mir Centre as a site for action, and their dedication to diversity of content, presenters, and events, and how spirituality is woven in. In the next section I discuss building peace through connections. I conclude the chapter with the Mir Centre's 'pedagogy of hope' and how this is understood to leave a legacy and inspire.

Context and History: The Mir Centre for Peace

Selkirk College hosts the Mir Centre for Peace. It is the oldest regional college in British Columbia and was created through a community referendum stimulated by educational needs, particularly for local trades (Selkirk Overview, n.d.). It began as a vocational school in 1964 and now serves the Kootenay and Boundary area, with over 10,000 students at 8 different campuses, in 30 different programs, including university transfer (Selkirk Overview, n.d.). The Mir Centre

for Peace opened in 2007. They began with a diploma in peace education. Their programming now includes non-credit community workshops, lectures, Peace Cafés and other events, that inspire connection, and offer a venue to investigate, practise and learn skills for peace. Detailed historical accounts of the Mir Centre can be found on Selkirk College's website. I offer a version, taken mostly from Myler Wilkinson's *Mir Centre for Peace at Selkirk College: Understanding and Building Cultures of Peace* (2006). My focus, is on their process of reconciliation and the efforts of individuals involved.

The first articulated vision for a peace centre happened in 1999 when two colleagues out walking, marvelled at the rich history embedded in the land they were on at the confluence of the Kootenay and Columbia rivers where Selkirk College sits (Wilkinson, L., 2006). On the land was once a Doukhobor village “which stood for, if not always achieved, a radical pacifism, a radical utopian ideal of community, and radical spiritual unity among all peoples,” (Wilkinson, M., 2006, p. 2) that was now reduced to a few buildings, in need of repair, but still inhabited by three Doukhobor women. Selkirk College, “inherited these beautiful lands [as caretakers] for education beginning in 1966” (Wilkinson, M., 2006, p. 1). Sinixt people also used this land to fish, trade and live; few remnants are now seen of their important historical contribution (Wilkinson, M., 2006). As they walked, they imagined a space dedicated to the promotion of and education for peace in the Kootenay area, stemming from many of the ideals that inspired people who had cultivated this land. They offered this idea to the then president of Selkirk College who responded that it was “an idea whose time has come” (Wilkinson, L., 2006, p. 23).

With that support, the spark of vision ignited and a committee formed with Selkirk College and the broader community to develop what would become the Mir Centre for Peace. The name ‘Mir’ was chosen, as it is “an ancient Russian word with the complex meaning of

peace, community and world” (Mir Centre for Peace, n.d., para. 7) They developed a vision and philosophy (See Appendix F), secured grant money, fundraised for the restoration of the buildings, and realized, to build peace, they needed to engage in reconciliation with the custodians of that land (Wilkinson, L., 2006; Wilkinson, M., 2006).

To stimulate reconciliation, a number of activities took place. In the autumn of 2000, a letter was sent to the residents of the Doukhobor village, to inform them of the vision for this land. But, given the complex history of the Doukhobor population that “had been misunderstood and mistreated by provincial and federal governments” (Wilkinson, M., 2006, p. 4), this letter produced concern from the residents about what would happen to them and their homes. Rather than leaving them confused and angered they met with leader of the Doukhobor community, John J. Verigin, a member of the committee dedicated to developing the Mir Centre. At this meeting a process of understanding and sharing occurred, and a transformation from “confusion and anger to positive acceptance” (Wilkinson, M., 2006, p. 4). The family ended up donating their homes to the Mir Centre endeavour after they left the site (Wilkinson, M., 2006).

The Mir Centre land, before the time of the Doukhobors was land the Sinixt peoples lived on and contained their sacred burial sites. The government had in 1884 “staked [the land] as an Indian Reserve but the Indian agent failed to register it” and later, in 1956, the government declared the Sinixt Nation extinct (Walton, & Wilkinson, 2009, p. 2). One Sinixt family, the Christians, attempted to secure the land from the government, to protect it, but they discovered that the government sold the land to the Doukhobors (Walton, & Wilkinson, 2009). This created tension between the communities. In the summer of 2001, over 300 people gathered at the Mir Centre site to “bless the land” (Wilkinson, M., 2006, p. 5) and honour those who had lived there and shaped it. Particular invitations were made to the Sinixt and the Doukhobors. At this event, a

Sinixt elder spoke and held a smudge ceremony. Then, John J. Verigin, asked to honour the Sinixt peoples, and he bowed his forehead to the ground, a profound form of recognition from a Doukhobor. In 2009, a memorial stone dedicated to the Christian family was erected. Lawney Reyes an author, artist, and grandson of one of the last Sinixt to live at the confluence, agreed to speak at this event and several other Christian family descendants also attended.

According to Linda Wilkinson (2006), “grassroots involvement from the community” was important for the Mir Centre development (p. 28). Myler Wilkinson (2006), a key collaborator at the Mir Centre, elaborated on what this meant. He argued that “while formal institutional events continue to be a focus for Mir, there is also a more human, cultural energy...” (p. 9). He referenced events held at the “First Nations open air Arbour” built in 2003, next to the Mir Centre building for events and classes “related to peace and social justice” (p. 7). These events, hosted by Sinixt people, were opportunities to share food, give gifts, and learn about “Aboriginal traditions and teachings” (p. 10). He also mentions volunteers who helped with interior demolition, brick organising, or as advisory group members.

In 2004, the first lecture series and for-credit course began. In 2005, the Mir Centre outer-building reconstruction completed. On September 21st 2007, the Mir Centre for Peace opened, with the first courses offered in the building that fall (Mir Story, 2009). Since that time, the Peace Cafés began in 2010 as a community initiative and other events continue, stimulated by activities in the greater community. The community education workshops also started. These include, international trips to “raise awareness about and support for people in countries of the global south whose communities and environmental well-being are often desecrated by so-called “First World” economic development projects” (Mir Centre for Peace CE Course, n.d., para. 19), the summer institutes that offer non-credit and for credit workshops, the Unarmed Civilian

Peacekeeping Program, and, hosted in the autumn of 2016, the Peace and Justice Studies annual conference, with attendance open to the broader community for a fee.

The history of the Mir Centre is important for a number of reasons. Many of my study participants referred to it, their webpages document the history, and the very buildings and land symbolize its rich history. This history is used as a pedagogical tool to build peace and to connect with various communities in the area.

Transforming the Culture toward Peace

The Mir Centre for Peace webpage states their mission as to build and understand cultures of peace (n.d.). Peace, at the Mir Centre, was understood as a *levelled* construct. The most complex level of peace was understood as a transformation of culture, inclusive of how we meet people's needs, respond to and view conflict, take a nonviolent approach and engage in reconciliation.

Levels of Peace

Linda Wilkinson (2006), a former collaborator at the Mir Centre, wrote that the Mir Centre illustrates a trend in peace education to move from studying “‘negative’ peace (the cessation of war or direct violence) to ‘positive’ peace, based on justice and equity” (p. 26). Study participant May in fact built on this when she argued that the idea of peace could be expressed both simply, where negative peace was where – “people would not be shooting at each other” – to something much more complicated, like positive peace where “[peace] is much more about the way that we live with each other... it is a continuum, much more than a black and white situation.” Max, another study participant, elaborated on ‘positive’ peace, the more

‘complicated’ understanding, with this: “a culture of peace, [is] not an end point but... a dynamic process.... That, is the highest level of peace where people are working together.”

From these quotes, peace at the Mir Centre, can be understood as having multiple levels. The simplest, or lowest level is understood as ‘negative’ peace, or the absence of war and violence. What the community programs at the Mir Centre intend is to practise and study peace not as this end, but as a process that fosters a ‘culture of peace’ defined by positive interactions free of violence but more importantly, dynamic, something that must be ‘worked’ and educated for, rather than reached. This of course parallels thoughts by adult education scholars who characterize peace as a complex and dynamic process (e.g. Boanas, 1989; Dijkstra, 1989; Floresca-Cawagas & Swee-Hin, 1989; Nolan, 2007; Nyanungo, 2009).

Meeting Needs

If peace is not simply the absence of war, as participant May noted, the question becomes: How does the Mir Centre construct the conditions for peace? Peace, in the community education programmes focussed on, as Gwen, another study participant, described, “in terms of nonviolence and the root causes of violence and injustice.” She described these as “social justice issues, human rights issues, environmental issues or violence issues, political violence” and include "class issues, race issues, gender issues, sexual orientation, all those things, that can lead to conflict... [including] climate change.” Kate, another study participant also included “how we organize our institutions” as contributing to violence. What they are saying here is a belief that the “root causes of violence and injustice” are shaped by social, political, environmental, class, race, and gender, embedded in the structures of society. This is also evidenced in the event’s varied content, and includes spiritual concerns, which I discuss later in this chapter.

The root causes of violence were understood as ‘unmet needs.’ Max describes the goal of a culture of peace as “to reach everyone’s needs” and Gwen expanded this idea that “peace is the conditions... we create... When you have, your primary needs met, and you feel safe.” These imply that without safety and meeting people’s needs, potentially violent conflict, can arise.

Nyanungo (2009) describes the similarity between peace education and adult education as “the concern with oppressive social structures” (p. 272). The practice of educating to uncover and dismantle oppression is one of the central aims of critically-focussed adult education (e.g. Brookfield, 2005; Cranton, 2013; Freire, 2002; Lange, 2013). Though my study participants did not explicitly reference ‘oppression,’ concepts such as ‘unmet needs’ and the issue of violence’, are key elements of oppression and thus, as Young (2013) notes, indicate one is working to address the inherent oppression that lie behind them.

Perhaps most importantly, the Mir Centre recognized reconciliation, early on, as an ‘unmet need’ for peace in their area. They identified “the struggles of peoples such as the First Nations Sinixt and the Doukhobors, and the Japanese-Canadians who were interned in the Slocan Valley” (Wilkinson, M., 2006, p. 4) as sources to grow, heal and learn from. This broad idea of reconciliation is underdeveloped in the field of adult education, but equally, in peace education. I return to this shortly and take it up in more detail in my discussions in Chapter five.

Valuing and Promoting Risky Spaces of Learning

Interestingly, the study participants viewed conflict as different from violence, and as an opportunity to engage in the process of ‘building a culture of peace’. Ali, for example, articulates this when she says, “peace is about responding to conflict” rather than the absence of conflict. Max described education as “a way to balance” one-sided perspectives that might contribute to

conflict. Ali gave an example of this when she mentioned feminism, and how she tries “to be open and not critical [with her students], but [wants] people to open their eyes... which is hard sometimes.” She indicated that education can be “uncomfortable.” Max built on this with his idea of ‘balancing knowledge’ by which he meant bringing in previously excluded ideas such as feminism. Max brought together ideas of ‘balance’ and ‘discomfort’ like this: “I don’t want us to shy away from people who bring controversy or contention. We also need to push, and challenge. There is a big difference between safety and discomfort, right. Education should make people uncomfortable at some point.” Interestingly, he is arguing for ‘conflict’, rather than ‘peace’ or calm; for ‘conflict’ as a stepping stone to building peace. I will return to this paradox in the next chapter.

But what he is also arguing for is what some critical and feminist adult educators call ‘intentionality’ (e.g. Clover et al., 2013; English & Mayo, 2012; Freire, 2002; Floresca-Cawagas & Swee-Hin, 1989). That is, the intention to not be neutral, and the intention to teach difficult issues. This of course requires educators and facilitators to unpack their own assumptions biases, not just those in the group (Clover et al., 2013; English & Mayo, 2012; English & Turay, 2008). As educators remind us, this can be challenging because it requires self-reflection and critique, and taking risks. However, from what I saw and heard in the process of this study, Mir Centre adult educators see this as an opportunity for active disruption, in an effort to build peace.

The Creation of Safe Spaces

In what may seem at first like a contrast to the above, feminist adult educators remind us that we must have both risk and a sense of safety in learning if we are to be able to ‘listen’ to each other, to challenge our own assumptions and to really see the ideologies that so invisibly

govern our lives (e.g. English & Irving, 2015). For the Mir Centre, risk, as noted above, and developing safe spaces where dialogue, learning and healing could be fostered, was equally the essence of educating for a culture of peace. In their ideals, Max described the Peace Cafés as “a facilitated safe space [to] engage in conversations” with potentially disparate perspectives “and come together, listen to each other and seek understanding.” Here, he returns to the idea of the need for ‘intentionality’ for a deliberate education process that is both safe and risky in its bringing together differing viewpoints be those of society, of gender, or even, of peace. Kate takes this further when she speaks of the Mir Centre being “a place for people to discuss *contentious* issues” (emphasis mine) and the role a safe space plays in creating respect for different views, whether or not they are shared.

Nonviolence

The study participants understood ‘practising nonviolence’ as an alternative way to respond to conflict and essential to building a culture of peace. Max illustrates this when he says peace is, “working together collectively... *through* (emphasis mine) nonviolent means to solve conflict.” It was also understood as a condition of peace where Gwen noted that peace is “living sustainable lives... with nonviolence” and she mentioned nonviolence as a focus for the content of the community education programmes.

During the “Town of Nothing” Peace Café, I reflected in my field notes that, “the presenters spoke about the use of art for nonviolent activism.” During this Peace Café, we created an art piece to articulate our values. The facilitators intended to use our art piece and other pieces they had created in other workshops, to illustrate what people in the Kootenays

valued about their environment and showcase it at the upcoming Peace and Justice Studies conference. Here, art was constructed as a voice to articulate values in a nonviolent way.

The lecture about the truth-telling project, also spoke to nonviolence. The lecturer showed the audience a video of a protest march, in the United States and asked them to comment on what they saw in the video. Many people commented on how “angry” and “violent” the protestors seemed. The lecturer however, challenged this. He said that no violence had occurred and discussed how “righteous indignation” can be uncomfortable, but still be nonviolent. The media often misconstrues protest as ‘violent’ in order to create a ‘story’ or turn people against the protestors. This is not to say there are not violent acts, but what the lecturer did was question the images we see, and link protest not with violent ‘conflict’ but as a valid form of expression.

In these two examples nonviolence is a method to articulate and to protest, and can be practised through the arts or through marches. During the Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping training, participants learned and practiced nonviolent reactions, interventions and de-escalations of conflict and violence through the use of theatre. Participants role played both ‘aggressors’, and ‘peacekeepers’ and debriefed their experiences afterward. The participants focussed on peacekeeping as creating a safe space, through nonviolence, for people during political, civil, or military conflicts, and an initial stage in the process toward building a culture of peace.

The study participants took up nonviolence as did the events, as a condition for peace, a skill to use to create a safe space, and a tool to protest or give voice to concerns. In the adult education literature, nonviolence is referred to as an important strategy for peace (Hsu, 2007; Nyanango, 2009), and for activism (e.g. Moore, 2003; Hall, 2012).

Reconciliation

As noted above, I return to the idea of reconciliation as it is critical to the work of the Mir Centre and their broad idea of ‘peace’, and therefore, woven in to their practice and ideals of peace. Though their mission statement does not explicitly reference reconciliation, it does value “the recognition of heritage and historical values connected with local community and specific cultures of peace” (Wilkinson, M., 2006, p. 4). I understand this statement as an acknowledgement that the local cultures are important to developing a culture of peace in the area, and they focused particularly on those that were mistreated, with deep historical wounds. Central to their practice of reconciliation was recognising past mistreatment. For example, during the memorial stone unveiling (2009), the then president of Selkirk College, speaking to the Sinixt people present said, “we cannot expect your family to forget your losses and mistreatment, but we can assure you that you are very welcome here today, and we can ask for your forgiveness.” After this, John J. Verigin, again bowed his head to the ground, this time an act of asking the Sinixt for forgiveness for “any hardships that the new immigrants may have caused” (Walton & Wilkinson, 2009, p. 7). They created an opportunity to apologise and begin the process of moving forward. Marilyn James, the then spokesperson for the Sinixt People spoke to the importance and value of these efforts and apologies, but also mentioned that now was time for “real collective work to redress historical injustices” (Wilkinson, M., Sutherland, D., Barkely, L., James, M., & Verigin, J., 2007). This statement reflects a desire for reconciliation to move beyond apologies toward efforts to address systemic exclusion and injustice.

In the beginning, reconciliation included apologising, building a First Nations ‘arbour’ on the property and including these three communities (Sinixt, Doukhobors, and Selkirk College) in events, namely, the memorial stone unveiling (2009), and the blessing of the land ceremony

(2001). Since then, reconciliation has continued at the Mir Centre through building and continuing relationships with the three aforementioned communities and persists in their intentions, particularly through the purpose of their Peace Cafés, which is in part, to “encourage “reconciliation and connection” through dialogue” (Peace Cafés, n.d., para. 1). During my time with the Mir Centre, they used the Brilliant Cultural Centre, a Doukhobor hall, with permission from that community, and as Kate said, “if it is [an event] that the Doukhobor community has decided they are going to be a part of, they are there, en masse.” Courses for credit and not for credit have also been given on the Doukhobor community as Summer Institutes, part of the Mir Centre’s community education programmes. The relationship with the Sinixt nation also continues with, on occasion, a representative from the Sinixt nation beginning lectures with an acknowledgement of the traditional territories. Occasionally another representative, affiliated with the Mir Centre would give this acknowledgement, though, not at the Peace Cafés I attended. In the past at least one Peace Café and one lecture were given by or on the topic of the Sinixt people. It is important to note here that the Sinixt population in the Kootenay area is small, in part due to the history and “extinction” by the Canadian government. The Doukhobor population in the area is larger.

Transforming the Culture Through Learning, Dialogue and Action

The Mir Centre for Peace’s mission statement emphatically states their goals and methods are “to build and understand cultures of peace through learning and dialogue” (Mir Centre for Peace, n.d., para. 1). Education, at the Mir Centre, is the pivot point around which this transformation toward a culture of peace is built, or as Max stated, “the actual process of education can build into a culture of peace.” This education includes dialogue, skills

development, the use of diversity, and a commitment to action. Undergirding this process of education is a philosophy of education built on transformation. I discuss these themes below.

Education as Personal and Social Transformation

As Gwen, and many others I interviewed noted, The Mir Centre is fundamentally an educational centre engaged in the work of transformation at both personal and social levels. Kate described this when speaking to why she became involved, as a way to challenge and transform ways of being, “as much for myself as anyone else.” For Gwen, personal transformation and societal transformation are linked through action. She indicated that education,

can help change the world, it can help change human hearts, because people do develop better understandings, critical understandings of why things are the way they are. And when you are empowered with that understanding that is the first step to saying ‘okay well, this is bad’ or ‘what are we going to do about it’.

Similar to beliefs in critical and feminist adult education (Clover, et al., 2013; Cranton, 2013; English & Mayo, 2012; Hall et al., 2012; Lange, 2013) education is seen as a potentially rich source for the transformation of individuals and culture. The Mir Centre community programmes, through education challenge individuals to develop critical understandings and take action to identify, challenge and change problematic structures, laws and norms that reinforce how we interact.

Mir Centre for Peace as Action, and to Promote Action

One of the important aspects of the pedagogical work of the Mir Centre is ‘action’. As Gwen states “the community education part [of the work or Mir], is not just the theory it’s the

actual action.” The community program is intended to “promote and use the principle of participation to help restore and build positive relationships” (Mir Centre for Peace CE Courses, n.d., para. 1). Where restoring and building positive relationships are actions to build peace. They do this, as May noted by providing “time and space and equipment” to connect and engage with one another and with ideas about peace and justice. But also, the process of education through nonviolence is viewed as a way to practise peace. Where through practising creating spaces where people can safely explore contentious topics is part of a practise for peace.

The Mir Centre also engages in action through “community based solutions” (Peace Cafés, n.d., para. 1) or as Kate put it, “to come up with something that people felt they could do, or commit to.” Sometimes, facilitators and speakers prepared a list of solutions, such as donating money, seeking more information, writing to government officials, or joining groups dedicated to that issue, or this question was posed to the group, and similar suggestions were made.

Action to create social change and refine theory is important to critical and feminist adult educators (Clover et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2012; Freire, 2002; Lange, 2013; Mayo, 2012). For the study participants, the Mir Centre is an act that contributes to building peace but also, a tool to promote further involvement from participants toward peace. This is important because the intention is not insular (with the Mir Centre as the sole place to create peace), but outward looking to see how else to engage with the community and world. Further refinement of this practice is taken up in the discussion chapter.

Levels of Dialogue: Information Sharing and Engagement

Dialogue and information sharing undergird the Mir Centre community education programmes process of transformation toward peace. All of the events shared information about

various topics, and always attempted creating a space to participate in dialogue. However, the degree of dialogue and methods used to engage dialogue depended on the type of event and the skill and purpose generated by the facilitator/speaker. For example, the lecture series tended to use ‘question and answer’ participation, where the speaker shares information to the audience. The Peace Cafés and education workshops, as Gwen confirmed, “have more engagement more participation... they have this really rich interdisciplinary way to, not just the topics, but the methodologies that they use.” These activities stimulate dialogue and engage the participants or audience members in more than listening, through question and answer, facilitated conversations, arts, and skill development where there are more opportunities to share. The community workshops I attended in particular, offered skills development through experiential learning, particularly through art. These workshops (described in Chapter three) cost money, and were marketed as skill developing workshops, but also as ways to explore topics related to developing peace and other ways of being in the world.

Though the amount of dialogue seemed dependent on the type of event, and the skill of the facilitator, the level of engagement in Peace Cafés, in particular seems to be an area the community programmes have developed over the years. Kate told me that Peace Cafés had evolved where, “in the beginning [members of the committee to organise the Peace Cafés] did everything, mostly it was films” and now people outside the Selkirk College community offer Peace Cafés, in a variety of formats. She also spoke to her own learning to create more engaged spaces “than just asking questions... you know like having a big sheet of paper that people could write on or draw on, or having a bunch of images that people can select from and respond to what’s happened.” This indicates that transformation and learning occur with the structure of the program (at least in terms of Peace Cafés) and for individuals, and that ways to engage are

expanding toward including other methods. Max, speaking to developing and hosting an engaged and safe space said that, “we don’t always do a good job of it... but we strive for it.” This indicates that they are aware that refinement of these spaces is necessary. I discuss striving for and developing a strong pedagogical practice in the next chapter.

Diversity of Content, Presenters and Events

Gwen pointed out the difficulty that, “what’s a peace issue to one, is not a peace issue to another” implying that not everyone agrees what constitutes peace. Max similarly added that they aim for a “balance on the issues” and that, “peace and justice are very broad topics. So, you know people come to us with a lot of really broad ideas, and we tend to err on the side of letting people.” Their framework for engagement, rather than restricting peace to a particular topic, focussed on diverse ‘timely’ issues, locally and globally, with different ways to engage with the topics and, from a variety of voices (from different gender, races and ethnicities). The Mir Centre’s community programmes, like what English and Turay (2008) advocate for, is a framework for transformative model of peace education, “celebrates diversity and difference” (p. 292) but does so through topics that are relevant to the current global discourse.

Timeliness

Gwen said that using “timely” issues was part of their practice. That is, they tried to include current local, national, or international discourses in the Mir Centre community programs. She also mentioned that it is often serendipitous in that interest in global affairs stimulates people to present on timely topics. For the lecture series, timely issues were certainly taken up, with Ferguson a focus of one talk, while police brutality and issues with the justice

system in the United States and Canada persist. In another lecture, Muslim violence was a topic, while, even since that time the global political sphere has seen newly elected governments put into policy actively discriminatory practices against Muslim populations. As well, given the calls from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in Canada, to speak to Indigeneity in another talk seems apt. The Peace Cafés orientation to content offered more local issues, but also international issues. Given that these are generated largely by locals this makes sense. The variety of topics offered through the community programmes attests to their efforts to keep “a balance on the issues” as well as keep the topics relevant.

Diversity of Presenters and Events

Gwen and Max mentioned they aim for a diverse group of presenters, paying attention to gender, race and ethnicity. The lecture series, Peace Cafés and workshops reflected this. Speakers were both local and international and represented Burundi, Israel, Canadian First Nations, African-American, Pakistani-Canadian, Japanese-Canadian, Brazil, Honduras, and Canada. Gender representation appeared balanced with seven female and six male speakers.

On the Mir Centre for Peace webpage it states, “world peace will come, not through one simple act but rather as the final outcome of thousands of smaller undertakings” (Lecture Series, n.d., para. 1). The community programs offer multiple ways to interact with the community from lectures, workshops, Peace Cafés, fundraising dinners and films. Gwen spoke of how “people devoting their lives through...tiny acts” could “actually make change. You just have to know that it’s for the long haul. The short term gains you’re probably going to see very few, of those.” In other words, change can occur over time, through people’s combined efforts (small and big). Gwen also went on to talk about the world as dynamic, as “not a static place, and there are things

that were once seen as radical” like, “public health care,” now exist. From this we see the process of peace conceptualized as an endeavour that is achieved through persistence and time. The variety of efforts that they spoke to and illustrated through their events offers the encouraging perspective that multiple avenues of practising and participating can contribute to peace.

Spirituality: Leaving it out, and Weaving it in

One area that the chair of the Mir Centre and the community education coordinator indicated that they do not focus on is spirituality. Max explained that this was because in “Nelson there are a tonne of workshops going on around, more of the inner peace, spirituality, meditation, contemplation, inner work.” Thus, the Mir Centre tends not to duplicate these actions. However, though ‘spirituality’ was not explicitly taken up at events, it was mentioned or alluded to during interviews as an integral part of peace, came up in a dialogue at a Peace Café as connected to nature, and during the lectures about Indigeneity and Syilx ways of being as an integral part of their experience and language. Spiritual practices are embedded at the Mir Centre. An example from their history documents the “joining of spiritual symbols” between the Doukhobor peoples and the Sinixt, where “the three elements necessary to spiritual and physical life from a Doukhobor perspective: bread, salt, and water. To this was added the First Nations ceremonial tobacco” (Walton & Wilkinson, 2009, p. 8). What is important here are the ‘symbols’ that are connected to an integrated spiritual understanding of human experience, and were offered in the process of developing peace, through reconciliation, in the Kootenays, and at the Mir Centre. Linda Wilkinson’s thesis perhaps, brings these ideas together when it says that although it is “not a religiously-based institution... religious and/or spiritual communities such as the Doukhobors, Buddhists and Quakers have had varying degrees of significant impact on the

directions for peace at Selkirk College” (p. 24). I discuss the importance of the spiritual/non-spiritual in relation to English and Turay’s (2008), Tisdell’s (2000, 2008) and English and Cameron’s (2016) work in the next chapter.

Making Connections

May described the educational process at the Mir Centre as “coming together, bridge building.” The types of connections found in the Mir Centre community programmes were, the connections of people with one another, the connections of ideas and content to peace, and connecting to peace through the local history and place.

Human Connections

For several of the study participants making connections with people was an important aspect of building peace at the Mir Centre, and an area to improve upon (discussed later in this chapter). For May, the connections were about reaching “out across cultural and ethnic divides...about being involved with each other.” In Gwen’s interview, the connections were between “activists, educators, and academics.” These illustrate the space as a nexus for people to connect from various backgrounds, cultural, ethnic, and professional. For May, continuing the dialogue outside the Mir Centre events was an important way she connected. Kate remarked how after events “people... they stay for another hour... and you can see that people are meeting each other and making those networking connections there” indicating that she saw the social space created post-event to be important to the process of building community. I also noted that after events people stayed and introduced themselves to speakers, asked one-on-one questions, and

engaged in conversations with other participants. The social aspect, where diverse people can connect and continue conversation is important to how the Mir Centre constructs peace.

However, it was difficult to know what populations the Mir Centre reached through activities, as it was not an area of focus for my study. In terms of reaching out to the local population, Gwen mentioned that their lecture series information goes out through the Selkirk College catalogue to 30,000 homes from Nakusp to Big White, and the Mir Centre has a Facebook page and a listserv with access to at least 300 people, where they advertise events, plus information is hosted on the Selkirk College website. She felt that turnout was typically good as “it’s not that hard to generate interest in the Kootenays, because inevitably people are interested in some of the issues that we are bringing forward.” However, Kate indicated that attendance was “the usual suspects, it’s preaching to the choir... strengthening those communities.” These observations about the community programmes offer insight into the challenge of offering community education to a diverse population. Though attendance may be regarded as good, perhaps only certain types of people may access these types events, or in this particular venue.

Connecting Ideas to Peace

Participants viewed connecting issues to peace, and transforming how we understand issues as important to the development of building peace. In May’s words, she says part of peace is, “the way that we understand larger issues, like the role of women in the community, how we relate to children.” She suggests here that peace is about how we understand and relate. And for Kate challenging “people to make connections, where they didn’t think...” like asking the question of “what the heck does the environment even have to do with peace?” was important to the process of building peace. During lectures, Peace Cafés and community workshops, though

they were hosted by the Mir Centre, and an acknowledgment of peace was implied, it was rare that a direct discussion that links the topic discussed to the concept of peace occurred. Instead, it was an exploration of the topic and what people had done to transform, challenge or resist injustices. One exception was the Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping program where, ‘peacekeeping’ was linked to building cultures of peace, on a spectrum.

In this way, connecting peace to the issues covered may be presumed to be done by individual participants. By creating the opportunity to discuss issues in a safe space, creating the potential for balancing perspectives, understanding issues more deeply, and coming up with suggestions or solutions to the issues, these might be seen as connecting to peace through process (by developing a culture of peace), rather than theory or content.

Connecting Local Place to Peace

There is very little written in the adult education literature that connects place to peace. English and Turay (2008) suggest a model for peace education that includes local histories and literacies and others indicate that the history of a place is important to understand in their localized efforts for peace (e.g. Cochran, 2005; Nolan, 2007). The aboriginal adult education literature (Atleo, 2013; Hudson, 2016; Sumner, 2008) and environmental adult education (Clover et al., 2012), connects place to themes in social justice. At the Mir Centre this connection is important. Gwen indicates that the Mir Centre “came about in a very organic way, [that] people really identify with” implying that their connection to the local people, place and history is important to their success. Ali takes this further suggesting that the Mir Centre is “a physical manifestation of the ideals that it stands for.” She, along with other study participants connected the physical buildings and land to peace, where next to the Mir Centre, a rebuilt Doukhobor

home, sits the First Nations arbour, a community garden, an apiary, and an artistically sculpted bench under a thatched open air roof called “the conversations bench.” The two rivers that come to a confluence below the Mir Centre land, were seen by Kate and May, as both a metaphor for competing conflict and coming together in peace. These buildings, garden space and land juxtaposed together illustrate difference and shared space for “conversations that matter” (Peace Cafés, n.d., para. 1). They act as symbols that illustrate needs, for different kinds of spaces to have conversations, to incorporate history into our current understandings, for nature, for beauty, for food, shelter, and for community. The space represents their efforts toward peace.

Pedagogy of Hope

I would argue that educating for peace at the Mir Centre involves what Freire once called ‘a pedagogy of hope’. Hope is seen as central in critical and feminist adult education practices (Clover et al, 2013; Hall et al., 2012; English & Mayo, 2012; Weiner, 2003). It is described as a source of encouragement and imagination for future possibilities (Hall, 2002). But what stimulates hope? Hope, at the Mir Centre, was the longing that looks into the future, and asks how can it be better, but also the empowering impact that knowledge of previous efforts lends.

Legacy and Inspiration

The Mir Centre draws inspiration and hope, not only from a longing for the future as the peace literature in adult education indicates (Dijkstra, 1989; Floresca-Cawagas & Swee-Hin, 1989) and the next section describes, but looks to its past to see what has been done. The story of the Mir Centre, beginning when those two colleagues imagined what was possible, is a symbolic gesture of hope and what is possible when you act on it. Kate remarked, that her own hopes

seemed possible because of, “Myler and Linda taking a walk out there and saying 'you know what we could do with this' from this rotten falling down building. And it happened.” Ali recounted how, at first, she thought the “vision... for a peace centre” was a “lofty [impossible] dream” but was inspired by the dedication and efforts that transformed the “pile of rubble” into the Mir Centre. Gwen added, “I mean it was the vision of Linda and Myler Wilkinson, but that vision was inspired by the identity of this region” based on the history of the local inhabitants. Linda and Myler’s hopes helped shape the Mir Centre, and were built on previous hopes and visions for peace in the area. Hopes, as a vision for the future, build on each other at the Mir Centre.

Hope for the Future: Planting the Seeds of Possibility

I end this chapter with the recommendations or perhaps better said, the hopes of my study participants for the future. To begin, Kate suggested building more “partnerships here in the community” with different groups of people, schools, or college programs. May echoed this adding, “I love the idea that people from very far away could be made to feel more welcomed and included in our local community” suggesting that special attention be given to international students and community members, to invite them and even, “offer rides to go to the different Peace Cafés.” These illustrate that although connection is an area that the Mir Centre Community programmes value, it is an area participants feel could be improved to be more inclusive. Looking to the critical perspectives in adult education literature we see how the concepts of ‘citizenship’ and ‘active citizenship’ include and exclude people depending on definition and how citizens are involved in their community (Johnston, 2005). But how easy is it for people to become involved in the affairs of their community? How the Mir Centre includes

people, and makes their space accessible to others is important. These participants suggested ways to make what the community programmes offer, more accessible and inclusive to those who might not otherwise be interested or aware.

Gwen's hopes articulated her appreciation for strong mentorship from Max, and a hope that he would stay on and continue to build the legacy of the Mir Centre. She also hoped for "doing more research... an applied research project on Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping." Max's hope was to continue "internationalizing our community offerings so anyone in the community can take this [the trip to Honduras]." Kate also suggested having "a scholar in residence, an artist in residence, for the Mir centre." These illustrate a continued hope to build on past and current legacies, but also to connect more with the outside community, and contribute to a growing dialogue on peace beyond their own community, and have others contribute to building their ideas about peace, by bringing people in who might stay for a time.

I conclude with Ali's hopes, to continue with the Mir Centre Community programmes. Her hopes were that the space would be used more, because, it "provides a way for us to start to talk about processes of colonisation here in the West Kootenays." She continues with, "I think that every campus should have a peace centre that is localized like ours is. Places where conflict is acknowledged, and safe places where dialogues are created, [that] builds on your own story, not these vague broad ideas." Her hopes articulate a desire to make the process of transformation relevant to people, localized, and used for reconciliation, a fundamental aspect of what she views as peace, and how the Mir Centre has practised peace in their community.

In the next chapter, I discuss the implications of my findings on the work of the Mir Centre in relation to the literature, and promoting pedagogy of peace and change. I also illustrate what this brings to the field of adult education.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

I begin this discussion by providing a framework for how case studies can be used to further knowledge and what this case study offers. I reiterate my research questions to guide this chapter, and then I take up particular areas from the results of my study that respond to my research questions and are relevant to the calls from critical and feminist adult education. Specifically, I address how the Mir Centre positions and enacts its process of education in the current political context and how their work contributes to a potential shift in worldviews and particularly, the concept of 'peace'. I address their use of content and pedagogy, looking at how they use diversity, and attend to the global and the local with specific reference to their use of gender in relation to peace and change. I discuss how they take up spirituality, and I conclude with a discussion of their attention to reconciliation with local Indigenous and non-indigenous people in their practice of 'peace'. What I argue based on findings, is that overall, the Mir Centre community programmes offer new insights into how peace education is being practised with adults in the community, not just to educate for peace, but to build peace through education.

Case Study as a Strategy for Qualitative Research

Case studies are often critiqued for lacking generalizability (Lichtman, 2013; Flyvberg, 2010; Thomas, 2011b). However, this critique must be understood in the context of the paradigmatic shift in research from valued quantitative models to valued qualitative models. From a positivist perspective, 'objectivity' is created by being outside the research and without bias. It is intended to create generalizability and is validated through testing based on theories. For qualitative, constructivist researchers, the goal is not necessarily generalizability. Rather they

aim for the development of phronesis, or as Marshal and Rossman (2016) describe, “a means to construct practical knowledge that is responsive to its environment” (p. 20). In other words, case studies expand knowledge and understanding (Stake, 2009) and offer tacit and situated knowledge (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2009; Thomas, 2010).

Thomas (2010) argues that, a case study’s “validation comes through the connections and insights it offers between another’s experience and one’s own” (p. 579). Throughout this chapter I situate, compare and contrast, my research findings within the academic literature of critical and feminist perspectives in adult education, to develop a sense of phronesis based on my research questions. From the findings generated through my research question of how do the Mir Centre community programmes respond to the critical calls from adult education, we can see what the Mir Centre offers as a unique contribution to the field of critical calls in adult education, and, what the field of critical perspectives in adult education, said to collectively provide a lens that reveals pathways to peace (Trifonas & Wright, 2013) offer as insights to a community programme for peace in a small community nestled in the Columbia river basin. So, through situating my work in the critical and feminist adult education literature, I develop richer understandings of how we might apply an education for peace.

Challenging the Climate and Purpose of Education

Critical adult educators indicate that fundamentally it is important to analyse the greater political structure (Clover et al., 2013; Torres, 2012) that influences the activities and purpose of education. One of my underlying research questions related to the greater political structure of my study was to inquire about how the Mir Centre for Peace positions and enacts adult education in a troubled, neo-liberal world, and what the challenges, implications and contributions of their

work is to social justice and change. From the start, the purpose of the Mir Centre's community programmes is understood as a means to 'create cultures of peace.' The study participants' commitment to a process of adult education that contributes to both personal and social transformation, the varied content of their events and their efforts to create safe spaces for dialogue and taking action, illustrate how their purpose of 'creating cultures of peace' aligns with a critical approach to education that facilitates 'learning for living;' learning that encourages criticality, imagination and action toward a more just future (English & Mayo, 2012).

The Mir Centre exists within a greater political climate of neo-liberalism that pressures, particularly formal institutions, to adopt skills based, marketable programming and a push for financial incentives (Spencer, 2006). The Mir Centre is part of a formal institution, and Gwen acknowledges the pressure that most community education programmes in Canada have, to make money, but states that the Mir Centre's community programmes are unique in that their main mandate, is not to make money (they have endowments for their lecture series, have partnered with other college programs to bring in workshop facilitators, and volunteers offer Peace Cafés). Because of their orientation toward education and that they have money and ways to share the costs of activities, and have volunteers, they can position themselves to challenge the purpose of education to be about more than 'skills development' for financial gain, but to promote an education toward a more just future, toward peace.

Shifting Worldviews

At the Mir Centre, education and building connections, are seen as tools with the potential to 'balance perspectives,' increase understanding, create dialogue and transform, *toward* peace. In that their practice is toward peace it is an intentional process where 'balancing'

is not validating all perspectives, but rather practising a form of education that challenges assumptions and takes up difficult issues in an attempt to further social justice. However, in the act of challenging, confronting and including marginalized albeit, needed perspectives (like feminism) the potential for conflict may increase as individuals and groups come to terms with their own and others problematic perspectives. It is an uncomfortable process. In this way, the Mir Centre community programmes approached potential conflict and discomfort (at least in the context of education), not as something to be avoided but as opportunities to learn, and transform, in the process of building peace. The understanding is that, like Ali said, how you respond to conflict helps to build peace. A recurrent example of how to respond to conflict at the Mir Centre was through nonviolence.

The type of conflict described here is not violent and arises from disparate or contentious views. The Mir Centre promotes safety, but also education that is ‘risky’ and may make people uncomfortable. Other critical and feminist adult educators call for these ‘risky,’ uncomfortable, yet ‘safe’ spaces for education (e.g. Clover et al., 2013; Freire, 2002; Welton, 2013). However, the Mir Centre does so as a peace centre. The concept of peace is often thought to be void of conflict, and therefore without feelings of discomfort. Understanding ‘peace’ as an *intentional* practice that is potentially uncomfortable, shifts the common understanding of what peace means. Peace, in this sense can be seen as an orientation that shapes perceptions and interactions with the world even when there is conflict and discomfort.

This shift in understanding may be a part of what Habibi-Clarke (2005) describes as a necessary shift in worldviews toward a peace-orientated model. This orientation toward peace, she argues (2005) focuses on the human “capacity to create unity in the context of diversity, to establish relationships based on truthfulness and respect, and to administer the affairs of human

life in a spirit of service and in a manner that is just” (p. 40). What she is saying is that a peace-orientated worldview seeks opportunities to create ‘peace’ and incorporates concepts of unity, diversity, relationship-building, service and justice. At the Mir Centre, understanding of the potential that ‘conflict’ and ‘discomfort’ has in educational settings to be a site of transformation that leads to peace, when approached in both a ‘risky’ but ‘safe’ way, indicates that for them, the stimulus of tension should not be avoided but worked through to increase understanding and bring people together, in a version of unity inclusive of justice. In other words, they too are engaged in a process that seeks opportunities to create peace.

On Content and Pedagogy

Content and pedagogy both offer contributions to individual and social learning. Content is a way to learn about and be exposed to diversity, but how one engages with that content allows for people to challenge and transform themselves and social injustice. Through the Mir Centre’s community programmes, they offer varied and interesting content that illustrates and exposes participants to diversity but does not necessarily have them working with diversity, though this I believe is one of their goals, along with transformation both at the individual and social levels. English and Turay (2008) talk about working *with* diversity “requires considerable reflective practice on one’s own experience with difference and one’s own capacity to engage the other and to experience transformation” (p. 294). In other words, it is difficult to determine how exposure to diversity impacts individuals, especially if they have not yet developed their critical and reflective capacities, and also depending on the skills, opportunities, and purpose provided by the facilitators, and type of event to stimulate participants in further engagement.

What English and Turay (2008) imply is that including diversity may not be enough to catalyse both personal and social transformation toward social justice and peace, but that participation that includes both educators and students in the process, and acknowledges their knowledge and ability to find, enact, and refine solutions, locally and globally, is necessary. Also, given the venue of the Mir Centre as a space that is attached to a community college, a space that traditionally has held a lot of exclusionary power, 'inclusion' through 'diversity' may not truly be enough to destabilize dominant ways of engaging, as the space too, represents the dominant exclusionary powers in society. Even though, as Max suggests community colleges, as opposed to 'elite' universities, offer a space that has more access to "non-elite populations," and "immigrant populations" that also need access to this type of education.

As mentioned, at the Mir Centre, though lecture series are generally a popular venue that the greater community tends to access, the type of learning delivered is largely from speaker to audience. The ability of the audience to offer their own understandings, and work in dialogue with others, or even to address local and perhaps related issues that came up through the talk, is more limited in that type of setting. Though presumably, in all the community education efforts at the Mir Centre, through exposure to various 'timely topics', the people who attend are interested to learn more through them, and may experience personal transformation related to this process of engagement, and may even take this further to seek out avenues to engage in the particular issue more socially. That the Mir Centre seems to always include the question of "what can we do about this" illustrates an awareness that taking action is what affects the social transformation required for further social justice and peace. Even just by asking this question of their audiences and participants, may empower them to do more, as Gwen mentions, when she

speaks to how education can help change the world through better and critical understandings, and asking questions of what can we do.

The Peace Cafés and workshops have more opportunities to engage with participants in dialogues in a safe space, use their local, individualized knowledge, use experiential forms of knowledge construction, attend to and engage with diversity, and catalyse participants to take risks for action to transform themselves and the world around them. However, though workshops may have educators who are trained to work in these ways (which was my experience of the workshops), the Peace Cafés are largely facilitated through volunteers who may or may not have experience engaging in these ways. This is one of the strengths of the Mir Centre community programmes in that, they provide an opportunity for individuals to practise engaging and creating these kinds of spaces, regardless of their training. As the Mir Centre views the space itself as an action for peace, this is one of the ways that building peace happens through the activities, by providing individuals with an opportunity to practise participating in and facilitating a space where dialogue can happen, where people can use their own knowledge, and where momentum can build toward, and initiate individual and collective action. However, other than ‘pitching’ Peace Café ideas to the Mir Centre, there is no formal or non-formal process or training that happens to help facilitators learn these skills, reflect on their own process with others or offer unique contributions for how to expand and grow opportunities for peace through the centre.

The Complexity of Gender and Attending to the Local and Global

Though the Mir Centre does not indicate that it is a feminist organization, and by that, I mean that it uses a feminist lens in all its activities, gender is included in their definition of diversity and gender issues are acknowledged as important to any discourse of building peace or

cultures of peace. But this is not easy and English and Turay (2008) remind us “much of the literature on peace education for many decades was authored by men, which often resulted in a silence on gender and feminist issues” (p. 289). For this reason, I paid particular attention to how "gender and feminist issues" were taken up in the Mir Centre community programmes. I would argue that gender was largely taken up from the perspectives of ‘diversity’ and ‘inclusion’, and not necessarily ‘gender’ specifically. However, a number of women were guest speakers, and facilitators and one lecture specifically spoke to gender-based violence and issues that women face in central Africa. What is problematic about this, and Kate noted this out in her interview, women’s issues seemed to be presented as issues that exist ‘outside’ of the local context. In other words, gender issues are from ‘somewhere’ else and not part of the Canadian context or discourse, or part of the Kootenays. But feminist adult educators remind us that we need to work both locally and globally, and use local knowledge to root out injustices and make efforts for social change (English & Irving, 2015). Certainly, Canadian examples exist of issues that face women, for example the ongoing sexual assault of and violence toward women on university campuses, and the hundreds of missing and murdered Aboriginal women across the country.

Having said this, Max reminded us that paying attention to, and critiquing issues that seem outside of our own community can be easier than dealing with issues that impact local peoples, but it is important to do both. And participants in my study indicated that it is important for the Mir Centre community programmes to pay attention to both local and global issues. Locally they have made efforts toward reconciliation to build peace. Also, their focus on “timely” issues, illustrates a concern for issues that are relevant in the public discourse locally and globally. When they focussed on global issues, they often related it to Canadian policy and involvement in global affairs. However, learning from global issues in a way that participants

question their own community and look for ways to take action to fight injustice locally was less visible. For example, asking the question of what kind of issues affect women in our community? Or as discussed later in this chapter, asking how to uncover the ways colonisation has impacted not just the Indigenous population in the area but implicates and impacts settlers in a continued process of colonisation? English and Turay's (2008) model for peace education calls for these kinds of connections, between the global and the local, as do other adult educators (e.g. Clover et al., 2013).

Spirituality

One of the findings from my study was the embedded quality of spirituality in the Mir Centre's community programmes, and their acknowledgement that they tend not to address spirituality as a topic. Their reasoning for this was that it is an area that is addressed by other groups in the local community. This being said, Max also acknowledged that environmental activism was popular in the local area and he felt it should not be a priority, but still was included as part of their framework for topics they address related to peace. The limited discourse around spirituality in the adult education literature does offer some insights into the difficulty of taking up 'spirituality' and suggests that adult educators make an effort to extend spiritual understandings beyond personal development toward social justice themes.

Spirituality is an area that is underdeveloped in adult education practises, but is beginning to be taken up, explored, and acknowledged as a part of human experience and therefore part of what adult educators need to address (English & Cameron, 2016; English & Turay, 2008; Tisdell, 2008). One of the difficulties for adult educators in learning to include spirituality is navigating the definitions of it and the difficulty of addressing the topic of religion which

English & Cameron (2016) remind has been “taboo in academe” (p. 20). While Tisdell (2008) separates the definition of spirituality from religion, where the former describes an “*individual’s* personal experience with the sacred” and the latter is about the “*organized community* of faith, with an official creed, and codes of regulatory behavior (sic)” (italics in original, p. 28) she recognizes that in practise, religion and spirituality are intertwined as many people’s experiences with spirituality are influenced by religious sources. English and Cameron (2016) discuss how in an attempt to avoid conflict, topics around spirituality have been made more “palatable” for classes and in academic literature by avoiding “religion in our discussion and [focussing] on the middle ground through the use of terms such as spirituality, meaning, wholeness, and searching” (p. 20), that appear to leave out a critical discussion of where spirituality and religion intersect with gender, race, class and identity. Broadly, spirituality in adult education has been defined as a way people make meaning and includes concepts of interconnectedness, personal development, a connection with something greater than ourselves and working for social justice (English & Cameron, 2016; Tisdell, 2000).

English and Turay (2008) view one of the important contributions that their model for peace education offers is its inclusion of spirituality, but they recognize that is a difficult area to talk about, asking educators “to brave the treacherous terrain of the spirit and to legitimate its presence in adult learning, moving beyond rhetoric” (p. 299). Max described that the only time they “have discouraged a certain kind of Peace Café is when there is a very specific ideology attached to it that doesn’t fit into the broad scope of peace and justice.” When asked to describe what he meant by this, the example he gave was “peace, where the underlying purpose is evangelization.” He went on to describe further how they aim for the creation of safe-spaces, where challenging topics can come up, and that peace is a difficult topic to determine the

parameters of. But it is interesting to note that he, like the adult education literature, acknowledges that religion and spirituality (in his case speaking to evangelization) is a difficult topic to navigate, particularly delivered through certain avenues like Peace Cafés where the *process* of education is important to the delivery of a topic to build peace, and where the process is less controlled than in a lecture, and even in workshops, where typically the facilitators have more experience delivering topics and working with the individuals present.

In terms of including spirituality, Tisdell (2008) suggests that it does not need to be explicitly brought up in adult education practices, but can be addressed through the creation of spaces where participants feel comfortable to bring it up as a topic. She discusses how use of experiential and artistic teaching tools can stimulate discussion of spiritual topics because symbols and metaphors are often employed by spiritual traditions and connected to how people speak about their own spiritual experiences. She describes that people “construct knowledge in powerful ways through spiritual experience” (p. 34), and that when and if these topics arise their meaning can be reflected on and they can become catalysts for personal transformation. During one of the Mir Centre events, through experiential learning and the arts, spirituality came up, but dialogue was limited as this was not really the focus.

My study participants acknowledged that spirituality contributes to building peace for individuals, but it was not taken up as a social concern. English and Cameron (2016) suggest that the discussion of spirituality needs to move beyond conceptions of “personal bliss” (p. 22) and personal development, to include the various ways spirituality/religion connects to the work of social justice. They suggest developing a “critical spirituality” through asking questions, challenging assumptions about religion and spirituality and making links between spirituality, work, education, personal and global issues. They suggest that key social justice concerns around

spirituality include discussions of religion and its various cultural expressions, the links of spirituality and religion to different and marginalised expressions of identity, the impact of social class on the expression and experience of spirituality and religion, and how “religious and spiritual traditions may be an integral part of healing and restoration” (p. 23).

At the Mir Centre, spirituality has served in healing and restoration through the exchanging of spiritual symbols between the Doukhobors and the Sinixt. Also, religion was explicitly discussed through the lecture about Islam and Muslim violence. In this lecture, racism, prejudice and the roots of Muslim violence were discussed, as well as the diversity within the religion, and how it like all religions and ideologies provides pathways to violence and to peace (Selkirk College, 2016). In these ways, they brought the topics of religion and social justice together and brought spirituality to the practice of social justice through reconciliation. Also, Similar to critical adult education practices that are beginning to acknowledge that several of their foundational authors and practitioners had a strong spiritual and religious foundations or affiliations (English & Cameron, 2016; Tisdell, 2008), it is also acknowledged, through Linda Wilkinson’s (2006) thesis, that the foundations of the Mir Centre’s history, was influenced by spiritual and religious traditions.

Overall the Mir Centre acknowledges spirituality through their historical roots and in their history as part of reconciliation and healing and as a part of peace for individuals. Though religion and spirituality can be difficult to take up, the Mir Centre did address religion and how it can offer ‘pathways to peace or war.’ However, though they look to their community to see that they offer various educational topics around spirituality, the Mir Centre may want to consider taking up issues of spirituality that includes religion beyond personal development and how it relates more to social justice themes and perhaps through creative and experiential methods.

Reconciliation: Indigenous Knowledge(s)

The Mir Centre's attention to reconciliation and using their local context is important to their work to build peace and offers an example of how to practise this in the community.

Reconciliation is an area that Canadian academics, politicians and society are being called to engage with from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015); As we respond to this call, we are learning what this means, and how to apply the work in our various contexts.

English and Turay (2008) include the importance of "indigenous knowing" which they describe as, "contextualizing and locating peace education in the literacies and localities in which participants are found" (p. 296). This means that their proposed model intends to work with the local experiences of participants as a starting point to discussing peace, and that they use the local ways of knowing, language systems, and potentially different worldviews to explore notions of peace. Within the critical and feminist calls, working with the experience of the participants is essential to transforming and challenging problematic power hierarchies and oppressive systems within education. However, it is important to note that the language of "indigenous knowing" and "Aboriginal or Indigenous knowing" articulate different, though connected ideas, where the lower case 'indigenous' refers to local knowledge (often accrued over time), regardless of cultural or hereditary ties to the land, and 'Aboriginal' or upper case 'Indigenous knowledge', refers their own knowledge systems (Sumner, 2008). The Mir Centre engages with both and includes both as part of their process toward reconciliation.

The Mir Centre offers, what I view as an extension of 'indigenous knowing' in that they weave their contextual history together, through the experiences of the Sinixt, Doukhobors, and government historical accounts (e.g. Wilkinson, M. 2006; Walton & Wilkinson, 2009). They view their history as a pedagogical tool to understand colonisation and peace-building in their

area. That history includes, apologies and stories of relationship and trust building in the area. A collective history, and addressing past mistakes through an analysis of history, forms a part of what their ‘indigenous knowledge’ is, and its use as a tool to educate for peace, connects with notions in adult education that call for using the local knowledge of participants.

Marilyn James mentioned at the Mir Centre, who was the Sinixt spokesperson at Selkirk College, that now was the time to engage in the real work to “redress historical injustices” (Wilkinson et al., 2007, p. i). This call to further the work beyond apologies also came out of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). Other scholars make suggestions for how to redress the historical injustices; Susan Dion (2007) calls for the decolonization educational spaces and learning to work together, and D’Arcangelis and Huntely (2012) explore how to work together and the role(s) of non-aboriginal allies. Marlene Atleo (2013) calls for trust to be established, and Aboriginal perspectives to be developed and valued in education practices.

One area where the Mir Centre contributes to understanding what it means to apply reconciliation beyond apologies was through continuing to build relationships with the Sinixt through invitation and performing territory acknowledgments and through continued connection with the Doukhobor community in the area. Another example was how they included Aboriginal educators and their practices and perspectives. Specifically, Aboriginal perspectives were taken up through a lecture and worked *with* in a workshop (Syilx ways of being). The type of event, and the skill and knowledge of the facilitator, enabled the participants to move beyond exposure to the material, and engage more with the diverse content and perspective.

One area that Susan Dion (2007), a Canadian Aboriginal educator and scholar advocates as a critical way to engage ‘settlers’ in the process of decolonizing and disrupting the dominant discourses in education is to engage in a type of “remembrance” where learners can understand

better from the “biography of their relationship with Aboriginal people” (p. 330) and begin to understand and dismantle how dominant discourses impact their understandings and contribute to what she calls a “perfect stranger” mentality. The “perfect stranger” being someone who thinks they have no awareness of or contact with Indigenous people, but in fact, do. Finding ways to decolonize education by further understanding how colonisation has impacted all peoples including settlers and their understandings of Aboriginal people, uncovering those understandings and disrupting problematic ones, is one area that the Mir Centre could move into.

Overall the Mir Centre community programmes illustrate reconciliation as central to their efforts to create peace in their area through attending to the local, by including and building connections with others, acknowledging past mistakes, and with a hope to use their reconciliation efforts more, as a tool to explore colonisation in their area. They illustrate that reconciliation can be integrated as part of their identity through their history, and for how they build peace both with Indigenous and non-indigenous local populations. The field for learning and applying different strategies toward reconciliation is vast, and the Mir Centre has positioned itself well to continue to delve into further practices of reconciliation.

I conclude this thesis in the next chapter by summarizing what I see as the Mir Centre’s contributions to the field of adult education and what I see as contributions that the field makes to their efforts. I frame my conclusion with the perspective that the field of critical perspectives in adult education, inclusive of peace, are an evolving process.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

The very least you can do in your life is figure out what you hope for. And the most you can do is live inside that hope. Not admire it from a distance but live right in it, under its roof.

Barbara Kingsolver (2013, p. 445)

The above quotation describes what the Mir Centre community programmes are engaged with; not only do they have hopes for peace, but they live inside their hopes by attempting to build peace through their educational practices. Freire (2002) reminds us that, “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p. 72). I understand that part of living inside our hopes is to inquire, where our questions become the best provision for learning, and therefore transforming ourselves and the world we live in, toward the future we hope for. Therefore, what the Mir Centre community education programmes offer to the fields of critical and feminist adult education is through their successes and asking how these might be applied in other contexts, but also from asking how to further refine their process in light of what we know and do not know from critical and feminist adult education perspectives.

Responding to the Critical and Feminist Calls in Adult Education

The Mir Centre for Peace serves as an example of critical education in practice. They too, are rooted in a hopeful practice in that they actively imagine a more just world, and take actions to achieve that. Like the critical perspectives in adult education, the Mir Centre, approaches

education from a transformative and emancipatory orientation in that they are seeking to “build and understand cultures of peace through learning and dialogue” (Mir Centre for Peace, n.d. para. 1), and that they have an intentional practice for peace, that aims, not to reaffirm problematic worldviews but seeks to transform them through education and dialogue. In this way, they aim to practice what critical adult educators call for with both ‘safe’ and ‘risky’ spaces, in that they want to encourage participation, but also intentional transformation that can be uncomfortable. This process of ‘intentional transformation’ that the Mir Centre attempts to engage in, through all of their community education programmes, can be seen as a process of conscientization, where issues are taken up in a critical way, to potentially create new knowledge and ways to promote social justice and therefore peace, through possible actions. This can also be viewed as ‘empowering’ an important facet of critical adult education. The Mir Centre’s activities can be viewed as a process of empowerment in that they are making efforts to learn about injustice and how they can challenge and transform ideologies and structures that contribute to the injustice and include previously excluded voices in their discourse.

The Mir Centre, like critical perspective in adult education, also has a focus on social transformation in that they ask how they can take meaningful actions to promote change, but also promote individual learning and transformation through participation in their activities. The Mir Centre understands their practice of education as a practice for peace. In this way, their practice could be seen as a social act for more social justice. Though, learning from efforts in critical adult education practices, the Mir Centre’s efforts toward social action, could be more locally focussed and their ‘practice’ for peace could be refined more by introducing more theory and refinement, particularly into their Peace Cafés, as praxis is called for in the literature.

The Mir Centre has attempted a process of democratization by being inclusive in their programming and attending to various timely topics (ranging from environmental, Indigenous, religious, political, and including how the arts can be used for social justice) as well as keeping ‘diversity’ in mind with attention to gender and race in their speakers. However, their inclusion of ‘diversity’ in some cases, could move beyond inclusion to working *with* the perspectives offered from the various diverse orientations. Also, as in the hopes of the study participants the Mir Centre could improve upon making efforts to be more inclusive and provide means for community members to participate more fully in the activities at the Mir Centre. These hopes, echo calls from the critical adult education literature around notions of ‘citizenship.’

Learning from the Mir Centre’s Community Programmes

Areas of the Mir Centre’s work that offer insights and expand the scaffolding to build and educate for social justice and peace include their use of reconciliation and spirituality, how they use ‘space’ as a teaching tool, and their understanding of the role of ‘conflict’ in peace. The Mir Centre includes reconciliation as a part of peace, as a way to attend to and address local historical injustices through working with Aboriginal worldviews and continuing relationships. Their inclusion of spirituality illustrates it as important to their foundation as a peace centre and they link religion to social justice. They also illustrated that spirituality can be used for reconciliation. And, by not including spirituality as a topic, they illustrated how their efforts for peace can complement what the broader community offers. Further, how they use ‘place’ illustrates how both history and symbolic representations of peace fit into their space, and can be used to teach about peace. Lastly, reframing peace as a practice that includes tensions offers a shift in

understanding where peace is not without difficulties, but is worked at and struggled for, in safety.

These areas above are ripe with potential for further insights through more research. For example, exploring how symbols of peace serve as teaching tools or exploring the relationship of reconciliation to peace. Finally, though this list is not exhaustive of the potential questions that exist, another area for future research might explore the relationship between spirituality and reconciliation in the process to build and educate for peace and social justice.

Learning from Critical and Feminist Calls in Adult Education

Like all practices for social justice, the Mir Centre, requires refinement as more is learned from dedicated and diverse efforts. Based off my inquiry into critical and feminist calls from adult education, and my time spent with the Mir Centre, I recommend refinement of their Peace Cafés and how the Mir Centre attends to the local, expanding their process of reconciliation, diversifying their use of spirituality, and looking to the hopes of their participants for new ideas. The Mir Centre can help refine Peace Cafés by introducing non-formal reflection and theory into their action, so participants can better learn to create both ‘safe’ and ‘risky’, transformational space. Another area for refinement, is to learn from global issues in the local context (Clover et al., 2013; English & Turay, 2008) by specifically asking questions about how local people are impacted by global issues, and asking not only ‘what can we do to help them?’ but ‘how can we help each other?’ Further, the critical adult education literature encourages educators to continue asking questions about how to include Indigenous peoples and develop their educational practices from their perspectives (Alteo, 2013; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). This is an important area for the Mir Centre community programmes to continue to engage with,

question and learn about. One example might be through understanding how ‘settler’ mentalities affect de-colonisation (Dion, 2007). The Mir Centre community programmes may also want to reassess taking up spirituality given its ‘taboo’ discourse in academia, and find ways to introduce spirituality as a topic beyond personal development to include social justice as this is an area for growth called for from adult education (e.g. English & Cameron, 2016). Finally, I suggest that they continue to build on their legacy of hopes, and look to the community members and participants in their events to come up with new and creative ways to stimulate peace.

A Mir Story

I conclude with a story told to me by a family friend about the reconstruction process of the Doukhobor home that now houses the centre. She described how they thought the foundation of the old building would hold the future reconstruction. But, as they continued to rebuild they discovered it too, would have to be rebuilt. She related this story to peace, in that sometimes, the foundation of knowledge has to be revised and expanded as we discover new ways to practise peace and new perspectives that add to it. In other words, like the story of the building itself, this case study of the Mir Centre offers possibilities for how we might increase our vision for peace, and rebuild our foundation to accommodate the weight of an increased vision.

REFERENCES

- Atleo, M. (2013). The zone of Canadian Aboriginal Adult Education: A social movement approach. In T. Nesbit, S. Brighman, N. Tabor & T. Gibb, (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 39-50). Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Batliwala, S. (2015). *Engaging with empowerment: An intellectual and experiential journey* (2nd ed.). New Delhi: Women Unlimited.
- Baxter, S., and Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559.
- Bell, L. (2013). Theoretical foundation: What is social justice? In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, C. Castaneda, H. W. Hackman, M. L. Peters & X. Zuniga (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice* (pp. 21-26). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Boanas, K. (1989). Peace education for adults in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Convergence*, 22(1), 37-47.
- Brookfield, S. D. (2005). *The power of critical theory for adult learning and teaching*. Maidenhead, Berkshire England: Open University Press McGraw-Hill.
- Butterwick, S. J. (1987). *Learning liberation: A comparative analysis of feminist consciousness raising and Freire's conscientization method* (Master thesis). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia. Retrieved from <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/831/items/1.0055827>
- Carpenter, S., & Mojab, S. (2013). What is "critical" about critical adult education?. In T. Nesbit, S. Brighman, N. Tabor & T. Gibb, (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult*

- education and learning in Canada* (pp. 160-170). Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Carter, S., & Martin, D. (2013). Equip, engage, expand, and energize: Labour movement education. In T. Nesbit, S. Brighman, N. Tabor & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 270-280). Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Clover, D. E. (2013). The art of adult learning and community cultural engagement. In T. Nesbit, S. Brighman, N. Tabor & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 204-214). Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Clover, D., & Craig, C. (2009). Street life's creative turn: An exploration of arts-based adult education and knowledge mobilization with homeless/street-involved women in Victoria. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, 22(1), 21-35.
- Clover, D. E., de O. Jayme, B., Hall, B., & Follen, S. (2013). *The nature of transformation: Environmental, adult and popular education*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Clover, D. E., & Sanford, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Lifelong learning, the arts and community cultural engagement in the contemporary university: International perspectives*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- Clover, D. E., & Stalker, J. (Eds.). (2013). *The arts and social justice: Re-crafting adult education and community cultural leadership*. Leicester: NIACE.
- Coare, P., & Johnston, R. (Eds.). (2005). *Adult learning, citizenship and community voices*. Leicester: NIACE.

- Cochran, J. A. (2005). Adult education providing leadership pathways to peace through adult education in Palestine and Israel. *Convergence*, 38(1), 91-104.
- Cranton, P. (2013). Adult learning theory. In T. Nesbit, S. Brighman, N. Tabor & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 95-106). Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139-167.
- D'Arcangelis, C. L., & Huntley, A. (2012). No more silence: Toward a pedagogy of feminist decolonizing solidarity. In L. Manicom & S. Walters (Eds.), *Feminist popular education in transnational debates: Building pedagogies of possibility*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1057/9781137014597
- Dijkstra, P. (1989). Adult education for peace. *Convergence*, 22(1), 5-9.
- Dion, S. (2007). Disrupting molded images: Identities responsibilities and relationships-teachers and indigenous subject material. *Teaching Education*, 18(4), 329-342.
- English, L. M., & Cameron, P. (2016). Social justice and spirituality: Educating for a complicated workplace: Social justice and spirituality. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2016(152), 19-27. doi:10.1002/ace.20209
- English, L. M., & Irving, C. J. (2015). *Feminism in community: Adult education for transformation*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- English, L. M., & Mayo, P. (2012). *Learning with adults: A critical pedagogical introduction*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

- English, L. M., & Turay, M. (2008). Toward a global culture of peace: A transformative model of peace education. *Journal of Transformative Education, 6*(4), 286-301.
- Etmanski, C. (2013). Voyeurism, consciousness-raising, empowerment: Opportunities and challenges of using legislative theatre to 'practise democracy.' In D. E. Clover & J. Stalker (Eds.), *The arts and social justice: Re-crafting adult education and community cultural leadership* (pp. 105-124). Leicester: NIACE.
- Floresca-Cawagas, V., & Swee-Hin, T. (1989). Peace education in a land of suffering and hope: Insights from the Philippines. *Convergence, 22*(1), 11-23.
- Freire, P. (2002). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th ed.). New York, NY: Continuum.
- Fremaux, I., & Ramsden, H. (2013). We disobey to love: Rebel clowning for social justice. In D. E. Clover & J. Stalker (Eds.), *The arts and social justice: Re-crafting adult education and community cultural leadership* (pp. 21-37). Leicester: NIACE.
- Gibson, W. J., & Brown, A. (2009). *Working with qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Gould, R. (2013). The transformative power of engaged thinking for peace education. In P. P. Trifonas & B. L. Wright (Eds.), *Critical peace education: Difficult dialogues* (pp. 59-68). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Habibi-Clarke, S. (2005). Transforming worldviews: The case of education for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Journal of Transformative Education, 3*(1), 33-56.
- Hall, B. (2002). The right to a new utopia. In E. O'Sullivan, A. Morrell & M. O'Connor (Eds.). *Expanding the boundaries of transformative learning* (pp. 35-46). New York: Palgrave.
- Hall, B. L., Clover, D. E., Crowther, J., & Scandrett, E. (2012). Introduction. In B. L. Hall, D. E. Clover, J. Crowther & E. Scandrett (Eds.). *Learning and education for a better*

- world: The role of social movements* (pp. ix-xvi). Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Hardiman, R., Jackson, B. W., & Griffin, P. (2013). Conceptual frameworks. In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, C. Castaneda, H. W. Hackman, M. L. Peters & X. Zuniga (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice* (pp. 26-35). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Harris, I. M., Fisk, I. J., & Rank, C. (1996). A portrait of university peace studies in North America and Western Europe at the end of the millennium. *The International Journal of Peace Studies*. Retrieved from http://www.gmu.edu/academic/ijps/vol3_1/Harris.htm
- Harris, S., & Lewer, N. (2008). Peace education in conflict zones: experience from norther Sri Lanka. *Journal of Peace Education*, 5(2), 127-140.
- Hesse-Biber, S., & Leavy, P. (2007). *Feminist research practice: A primer*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Hudson, A. (2016). Here we are on Turtle Island: Indigenous young adults navigating places, spaces and terrain. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 35(2), 188-202.
- Ide, K. (2015). For the sake of peace: Maintaining the resonance of peace and education. *Ethics and education*, 10(1). 73-83.
- Johnston, R. (2005). Adult learning and citizenship: Clearing the ground. In P. Coare & R. Johnston (Eds.), *Adult learning, citizenship and community voices* (pp. 3-21). Leicester: NIACE.
- Kingsolver, B. (2013) *Animal dreams*. [iBooks Version]. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

- Kirby, D., Curran, V., & Hollet, A. (2009). Non-formal adult learning programs at Canadian post-secondary institutions: Trends, issues, and practices. *Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education*, 35(2), 63–86.
- Klein, N. (2015). *This changes everything: Capitalism vs. the climate*. Toronto, ON: Vintage Canada.
- Lane, J. (2012). Toward a model of embodied environmental education: Perspectives from theatre and indigenous knowledges. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 35(3), 395-411.
- Lange, E. (2013). Interrogating transformative learning: Canadian contributions. In T. Nesbit, S. Brighman, N. Tabor & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 107-118). Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Educational Publishing
- Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA; London; New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Lorde, A. (1983). The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. In C. Moraga & G. Anzaldúa (Eds.), *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color* (2nd ed.). (pp. 94-101). New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2016). *Designing qualitative research* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA; London; New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Mayo, M. (2012). Preface. In B. L. Hall, D. E. Clover, J. Crowther & E. Scandrett (Eds.). *Learning and education for a better world: The role of social movements* (pp. vii-viii). Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

- Mir story: Mir Centre for Peace at Selkirk College (2009). Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/sites/default/files/About%20Us/Mir%20Centre/selkirk-college-Mir-Story-2009-lr.pdf>
- Moore, N. (2005). Ecological citizens or ecoterrorists? Learning through environmental activism in Clayoquot Sound. In P. Coare & R. Johnston (Eds.), *Adult learning, citizenship and community voices* (pp. 92-107). Leicester: NIACE.
- Morell, A., & O'Connor, M. A. (2002). Introduction. In E. O'Sullivan, A. Morrell & M. A. O'Connor (Eds.), *Expanding the boundaries of transformative learning. Essays on theory and praxis* (pp. xv-xx). New York & Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.
- Nesbit, T. (2013). Canadian adult education: A critical tradition. In T. Nesbit, S. Brighman, N. Tabor & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 1-18). Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Nesbit, T., Brighman, S., Tabor, N., & Gibb, T. (Eds.). (2013). *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada*. Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Nolan, P. (2007). Difference, diversity and difficulty: Problems in adult peace education in Northern Ireland. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 2007(27), 282-291.
- Nyanungo, H. N. (2009). The question for peace and justice: Examining the nexus between peace education and adult education. *Adult Education Research Conference*. May 28th, Paper 47. 270-275.
- Peters, M. A., & Thayer, J. (2013). The cold peace. In P. P. Trifonas & B. L. Wright (Eds.), *Critical peace education: Difficult dialogues* (pp. 29-44). Dordrecht: Springer.

- Reardon, B. A. (2013). Meditating on the barricades: Concerns, cautions, and possibilities for peace education for political efficacy. In P. P. Trifonas & B. L. Wright (Eds.), *Critical peace education: Difficult dialogues* (pp. 1-28). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Selkirk College. (n.d.) Lecture series. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/mir-centre-for-peace/education/mir-lecture-series>
- Selkirk College. (n.d.). Mir Centre for Peace. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/mir-centre-for-peace>
- Selkirk College. (n.d.). Mir Centre for Peace CE courses. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/ce/courses/mir-centre-peace-CE>
- Selkirk College. (n.d.). Peace cafés. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/mir-centre-for-peace/events-workshops/peace-cafés>
- Selkirk College. (2016). Scholar to discuss violence and Islam at Selkirk College Mir lecture series event. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/news/scholar-discuss-violence-and-islam-selkirk-college-mir-lecture-series-event>
- Selkirk College. (n.d.). Selkirk overview. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/about-us/about-selkirk/selkirk-overview>
- Selkirk College. (n.d.) Unarmed civilian peacekeeping. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/unarmed-civilian-peacekeeping>
- Simons, H. (2009). *Case Study Research in Practice*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Spencer, B. (2006). The problems and possibilities for peace studies. *Convergence*, 39(4), 123-132.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Stake, R. E. (2009). The case study method in social inquiry. In R. Gomm, M. Hammersley & P. Foster (Eds.), *the Case Study method* (pp. 18-27). London: SAGE Publications.
- Sumner, J. (2008). Protecting and promoting indigenous knowledge: Environmental adult education and organic agriculture. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 40(2), 207-223.
- Swee-Hin, T., & Burns, R. (1989). Educating for peace: The Australian experience. *Convergence*, 22(1), 61-75.
- Tabor, N. (2013). Learning war through gender: Masculinities, femininities, and militarism. In T. Nesbit, S. Brighman, N. Tabor & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 139-148). Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Thomas, G. (2010). Doing case study: Abduction not induction, phronesis not theory. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(7) 575–582.
- Thomas, G. (2011a). A typology for the case study in social science following a review of definition, discourse, and structure. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(6), 511-521.
- Thomas, G. (2011b). The case: generalization, theory and phronesis in case study. *Oxford Review of Education*, 37(1), 21-35.
- Tisdell, E. J. (2000). Spirituality and emancipatory adult education in women adult educators for social change. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 50(4), 308-335.
doi:10.1177/07417130022087062
- Tisdell, E. J. (2008). Spirituality and adult learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2008(119), 27-36. doi:10.1002/ace.303
- Torres, C. A. (2012). Preface. In L. M. English & P. Mayo, *Learning with adults: A critical pedagogical introduction* (pp. xiii-xiv). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Trifonas, P. P., & Wright, B. L. (Eds.). (2013). *Critical peace education: Difficult dialogues*.

Dordrecht, New York: Springer.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Honouring the truth, reconciling for

the future. Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication. Retrieved from

http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/Reports/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf

Walford, G. (2009). The practice of writing ethnographic fieldnotes. *Ethnography and*

Education, 4(2), 117-130.

Walton, M., & Wilkinson, M. (2009). Closing the circle: Descendants of Alex Christian- the

White Grizzly. Retrieved from

<http://selkirk.ca/sites/default/files/Mir/Closing%20of%20the%20Circle-web%20v2.pdf>

Weiner, E. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory

of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 35(1), 89-106.

Welton, M. (2013). A bird's eye view of Canadian adult education history. In T. Nesbit, S.

Brighman, N. Tabor & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 19-28). Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Educational

Publishing.

Wilkinson, L. (2006). *The Mir Centre for Peace: A search for values in an age of transition*

(Masters thesis). European University Center for Peace Studies: Stadtschlaining/Burg,

Austria. Retrieved from [http://selkirk.ca/sites/default/files/Mir/Selkirk-College-Mir-](http://selkirk.ca/sites/default/files/Mir/Selkirk-College-Mir-Centre-for-Peace-Age-of-Transition.pdf)

[Centre-for-Peace-Age-of-Transition.pdf](http://selkirk.ca/sites/default/files/Mir/Selkirk-College-Mir-Centre-for-Peace-Age-of-Transition.pdf)

Wilkinson, M. (2006). Mir Centre for Peace at Selkirk College: Understanding and building

cultures of peace. Castlegar, British Columbia: Mir Press Selkirk College. Retrieved

from <http://selkirk.ca/sites/default/files/Mir/Selkirk-College-Mir-Centre-for-Peace-History.pdf>

Wilkinson, M., Sutherland, D., Barkley, L., James, M., & Verigin, J. (2007). *Being on the land: Histories at the confluence*. Castlegar, British Columbia: Mir Press Selkirk College.
Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/sites/default/files/Mir/Selkirk-College-Mir-Centre-for-Peace-People-of-the-Kootenay-Columbia-Rivers.pdf>

Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Young, M. (2013). Five faces of oppression. In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, C. Castaneda, H. W. Hackman, M. L. Peters & X. Zuniga (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice* (pp. 35-45). New York, NY: Routledge.

Appendix

Appendix A: Certificate of Ethical Review



Office of Research Services | Human Research Ethics Board
 Administrative Services Building Rm B202 PO Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
 T 250-472-4545 | F 250-721-8960 | uvic.ca/research | ethics@uvic.ca

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Sarah Layla Robbie	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER 15-362
UVic STATUS: Master's Student	Minimal Risk Review - Delegated
UVic DEPARTMENT: EPLS	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 29-Oct-15
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Darlene Clover	APPROVED ON: 29-Oct-15
	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 28-Oct-16
PROJECT TITLE The Mir Centre fo Peace: An Exploration of Building Social Justice in the Community	
RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER None	
DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None	
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL	
<p>This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.</p> <p>Modifications To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.</p> <p>Renewals Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.</p> <p>Project Closures When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.</p>	
Certification	
<p>This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Signature Removed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Associate Vice-President Research Operations</p>	

Certificate Issued On: 29-Oct-15

15-362 Robbie, Sarah Layla

Appendix B: Interview Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviews will be conversational, semi-structured, and guided by the questions below. The purpose of the interview is to find out how the community programs at the Mir Centre for Peace contribute to the calls from critical adult education toward social justice. The purpose is also to understand how peace contributes to these calls and why it is important to include.

Interview Questions:

I begin the interview with specific questions about their backgrounds (who are they), and their role(s) with the Mir Centre, how long they have been affiliated and what brought them to the Centre

- 1) How do you understand the term Peace? How do you take it up? Can you describe a typical event you facilitate?
- 2) What do you see as important aspects of the content of the community programs/ your talk/ Workshop?
- 3) What do you see as important pedagogical processes (ways you teach/facilitate) and goals in the community programs/ your talk/ workshop?

Prompt: are there specific kinds of tools or techniques you encourage in the participants?

- 4) What do you consider to be the purpose(s) of Your talk/workshop?

Prompt: are there any areas you feel you would like to see the purpose/vision expand into?

- 5) Are there any challenges you face in giving the talk/presentation/ workshop?
- 6) What is done to “outreach” to the community? Who do you notice come to these events/ your event?
- 7) What are some of your hopes for the Mir Centre or what you would like to see?
- 8) Is there anything else that you would like to share today before we end?

Appendix C: Email Script

Dear,

Hello, my name is Sarah Layla Robbie. I am a Master of Arts student doing a study under the supervision of Dr. Darlene Clover from the University of Victoria. The study is entitled *The Mir Centre for Peace: An Exploration of Building Social Justice in the Community*. I am attempting to understand how the Mir Centre for Peace responds to the calls from adult educators to use nonformal process toward social justice, to democratize, conscientize, transform, and emancipate. They also call for processes that use the arts, creativity and imagination, and pay attention to issues such as gender, race, class and the environment. What is missing, however, from these calls is attention to peace, and how it is being understood and taught. This I feel is a major contribution your centre and your work can make.

I am contacting you because, as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Mir Centre for Peace, or an instructor, an organiser, or a coordinator you have knowledge and insights into Mir Centre for Peace community education programs. I would like to invite you to participate in an individual interview of approximately 45 minutes to one hour in length, to share your knowledge on this topic. If you are interested in participating in an interview, please contact me. I will then send you an electronic copy of the Participant Consent Form to peruse, and will organise a meeting to speak with you further about the study and to set up an interview either in person, via SKYPE or telephone, depending on your preference.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely...

Sarah Layla Robbie
Graduate Student, Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies
University of Victoria

Appendix D: Permission from Mir Centre for Peace

Dear Sarah:

This email is to confirm that as Chair of the Mir Centre for Peace, I am aware of the research being conducted by Sarah Layla. I am aware that she has received ethics approval from the University of Victoria and thus I support her endeavor to better understand peace, social justice and adult education. She will have my support when she receives approval from University of Victoria ethics board.

Best regards

[name removed]

[name removed]

Chair Mir Centre for Peace

Selkirk College

301 Frank Beinder Way

Castlegar, BC V1N 4L3

[email, name and phone number removed]

Appendix E

Overview of Other Community Education Events at Mir Centre September 2015-May 2016

Peace Cafés

1) Addressing the Global Issue of Missing Persons: The Work of the International Commission on Missing Persons

This Peace Café looked into the complex global issues surrounding missing persons, including the political, social and scientific challenges, bringing closure and pursuing truth and justice. It was given by the director of DNA laboratories division of the International Commission of Missing Persons.

2) Peace BEE with you: Compassion, Sustainability and the Honey Bee

During this Peace Café, the relationship between bees and humans was explored. Bees and their social structure were used as a metaphor for peace. The plight of bees was used as a stimulus to explore other global issues around environmental issues, gender issues, economics and human trauma.

3) Canada in Africa: 300 Years of Aid & Exploitation

In this Peace Café, a recent publication of a book that critically explores Canada's policies involving Africa, was discussed. It addressed issues of the slave trade, neo-liberal economics involved in the mining industry, missionary involvement, and the reactions of African communities.

4) Investment and Divestment Forum: Part One

This Peace Café, explored what and how Canada can invest in new economies that look to the future.

5) ¡Café Justicia!

In this Peace Café the relationship between coffee farming, buying and drinking, and social justice was explored.

Lecture Series

1) A Muslim Scholar of Islam Responds to Muslim Violence.

During this lecture, the complexities surrounding the perceptions in Western society of Islam as a violent religion were taken up, and how many Muslims view Islam as a pathway to peace.

2) From the Heart of Zionism

During this lecture, a pacifist and former Israeli air force pilot spoke to his desire for both justice and peace for the Israelis and Palestinians.

3) Transforming African Communities by Addressing Gender-Based Violence

In this lecture, a female Quaker pastor from Burundi spoke to her project to provide health care to those affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly the women. This project also aims to help women who have experienced gender based violence through social and economic programs to help them become part of their communities.

International Seminars

1) Education-seminar trip to Honduras

In this internationally based seminar learners travel to Honduras and stay for a week along with Rights Action, a non-governmental organization dedicated to helping those impacted negatively by environmental exploitation. One of the learning goals is to see how global economic choices impact people in Honduras.

Selkirk College. (n.d.) Lecture series. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/mir-centre-for-peace/education/mir-lecture-series/past-lectures/2015-lecture-series>

Selkirk College. (n.d.) Lecture series. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/mir-centre-for-peace/education/mir-lecture-series/past-lectures/2016-lecture-series>

Selkirk College. (n.d.). Mir Centre for Peace CE courses. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/ce/courses/mir-centre-peace-CE>

Selkirk College. (n.d.). Peace cafés. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/mir-centre-for-peace/events-workshops/peace-cafés/2016-peace-café-archives>

Selkirk College. (n.d.). Peace cafés. Retrieved from <http://selkirk.ca/mir-centre-for-peace/events-workshops/peace-cafés/2015-peace-café-archives>

Appendix F: Philosophy of Mir Centre for Peace

The Philosophical Goals of the Mir Centre for Peace

The original philosophical goals of the Mir Centre for Peace included the following: the fostering of non-violent interaction at all levels, the acceptance of cultural, socio-economic, and gender inclusion across communities, the recognition of heritage and historical values connected with local community and specific cultures of peace, the commitment to consensus-based community building, the recognition of the crucial importance of peace keeping and peace making at local, national, and international levels, the fostering of student awareness and character through courses, programs, and research which contribute to an understanding of peace and an awareness of the mechanisms which lead to peaceful societies, the recognition that peace and violence issues and potential solutions may include all of the following dimensions—the individual, the family, the community, civil society, government, and NGOs, the awareness that global environmental and ecological issues are linked to human rights, social justice, and, ultimately, peace, the understanding that any study of peace and human rights must also include an awareness of their dark opposites: war, violence, and oppression, the recognition that the United Nations designation of the year 2000 as the Year for the Creation of the Culture of Peace presupposes a global human commitment to active preparation for peace, rather than a passive acceptance of the inevitability of war and aggression, the final recognition that all of the above values and commitments must be subjected to the highest standards of intellectual, ethical, and practical endeavour on the part of all those connected with the Mir Centre.

Myler Wilkinson, 2006, *Mir Centre for Peace at Selkirk College: Understanding and Building Cultures of Peace*