

Nirmal and Tara Sethia Graduate Scholarship Fund in Curriculum Studies for Doctoral Dissertations on Nonviolence

Recipients (2024-2025):

Jennifer Williams, PhD in International and Peace Curriculum

Lindsay Wessinger, PhD in International and Peace Curriculum

Nonviolence Curriculum: Self-(re)creation and (Re)connection

Jennifer Williams

Our world seems to be increasingly violent and divided, including our classrooms, and one cannot deal with violence without relying on nonviolence as a positive force. But it is difficult to engage in outer nonviolence work without also engaging in inner nonviolence work. My dissertation plumbs the many ways nonviolence has transformed, and continues to transform my life, my self, and my approach to education; for how can one be nonviolent with others (including those with whom one disagrees) if one has not done work to be nonviolent with/in oneself?

As I share parts of my personal journey, I will use theories such as deconstruction, phenomenology, feminist analysis, Jungian theory and psychoanalysis, historical and current ideas of nonviolence, and queer theory for creative interweaving. I draw on narrative inquiry, personal poetry, and other writing techniques to travel through the complexity of diverse theories for personal and social transformation. I imagine this dissertation as a way to build bridges through the sharing of autobiographical writing and the power of nonviolence for educators and students, inviting others to read my words, open their arms, and cavort with me under the starlight of nonviolence.

Peaceful Pedagogy: The Role of Yoga in Creating Nonviolent Classrooms

Lindsay Wessinger

This dissertation explores the profound connection between nonviolence, mindfulness, and education, aligning closely with the purpose of the Nirmal & Tara Sethia Doctoral Dissertation award. This research investigates the integration of yoga and mindfulness practices into classroom environments to foster nonviolence as a positive force that transforms individuals and communities. By rooting my work in the principles of *ahimsa* (nonviolence), empathy, and community connection, I aim to significantly advance the understanding and application of nonviolence in education. It is also vital for addressing pressing societal challenges, including violence in schools, community disconnection, and the need for sustainable relationships within and beyond the classroom.

Through narrative inquiry, my research explores the lived experiences of educators who incorporate yoga into their classrooms, shedding light on strategies for creating nonviolent learning environments. These environments emphasize emotional regulation, inclusive practices, and a sense of interconnectedness, promoting ecological sustainability. By fostering mindfulness not as instrumental but existential, this study goes beyond the focus on mindfulness as a strategy but prioritize it as promoting loving relationships and empathy and creating educational conditions for nonviolent relational dynamics.