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## **Master or Steward Degree Designations: Implications for Cultures of Peace**

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### **Introduction**

Universities offer graduate programs in education (both master and doctoral) that prepare people for peace education, peaceful schools, social justice, and conflict management, resolution, and transformation. This paper is about the possibility of a stewardship paradigm being adopted into these mainstream graduate programs. It was prompted by personal reflections about what paradigm is behind the label *Master's* degree? What does the word master connote? What would a steward's degree look like, and how would one go about convincing mainstream graduate education of its merit? How would people react if they encountered someone in Education with an SED or SAED rather than a MED or

MAED (with the A referring to a degree with a thesis)? Indeed, why *do* people call the product of graduate school a thesis, instead of a synthesis?

These are some of the questions shaping this discussion. Critically analyzing the import of the labels master and steward is a way to unhook people from their tacit assumptions about control, compliance and dominance, notions that are embedded in the current graduate school infrastructure. After discussing the history of why university degrees are called bachelors, masters and doctorates, the paper critically analyzes the import of the *labels* master and steward. A principle-based case is made for the merit of creating a Steward of Education degree designation.

### **History of Three Levels of Academic Degrees**

There is an interesting history behind why degrees obtained from universities are called bachelors, masters, and doctorates. Although this paper is concerned with the master label, it is interesting to place it in the context of the other two labels. One usually obtains these degrees in a certain order: bachelor, master, and then a doctorate (Knowles, 1977; Spurr, 1970). There are reasons for this sequence, stemming from the Middle Ages, when trade guilds emerged. People moved through being an apprentice, a journeyman, and then a master. The whole history of regulated professions is entwined with the history of the guilds in Europe (James, 2002; Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2015e).

### **Bachelor Degree**

Traditionally, bachelor was the name given to a younger, inferior member of a trade guild, a yeoman, or to the lowest, poorest grade of knighthood. The term bachelor also referred to someone who was inferior, which means belonging to a lower rank or class. *Junior*, which also means inferior, is still used to refer to first year students enrolled at a university in a bachelor degree. *Baccalaureus* is Latin for Bachelor's Degree, first appearing in the 13<sup>th</sup> century at the University of Paris. It referred to the preliminary degree needed to proceed to a master level so that people could become teachers; that is, become masters.

Chilton (1998) explains that someone with a Bachelor degree has an interest in a particular field and some understanding of, and facility with, its methods (and I would add familiarity with its principles, theories, and content). The student starts out as an apprentice, and is willing to forgo wages for the opportunity to study with the masters of the field. Apprentice stems from the Latin root *apprendensus*, meaning to seize or apprehend (Harper, 2015). To apprentice someone is to bind them into the care of a master for the purpose of

instruction. Apprentices are in training for a future time when they may become a master. The system of apprenticeship dates at least to the medieval days of guilds. It is a traditional way to train a new generation of skilled practitioners.

When someone actually graduates with a baccalaureate degree, this person becomes more of a journeyman (the question about the gender neutrality of this term is acknowledged). The person is able to do routine work in the field, and is interested enough in the field to find this work. The word “journeyman” comes from the French word *journée*, meaning a period of one day (Harper, 2015). The journeyman was expected to train in the master’s workshop without pay. The journeyman was allowed to charge others for any work done on Sundays, or in the evenings. So, this term refers to the right to charge a fee for each day’s work (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2015g). Also, once a term of apprenticeship was completed, former apprentices traveled from employer to employer earning wages as journeymen (*journeying* from one employer to another). When, or if, they accumulated enough capital, journeymen could set up shop as independent masters, and became members of craft guilds (Jacoby, 2001), defined as an association of artisans or merchants who controlled the practice of their craft in a particular town or jurisdiction (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2015e).

Also of interest to this discussion is the link between the terms *degree* and *graduate*. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe, anyone who completed three to four years of university received a Bachelor’s *degree*, a practice still continued today. Degree stems from the Latin *gradus*, for step (Harper, 2015). A degree is only a step on the way to becoming a fully-qualified master; hence, we now have the English word *graduate* for higher learning. Universities still echo the apprenticeship/journeyman/master schema in their production of scholars. Bachelors can choose to move onto a master’s degree, a doctorate or both (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2015a,b).

## **Master Degree**

The term masters stems from *magister*, Latin for teacher or license to teach (Harper, 2015). It was first applied to the field of education as a noun in the Middle Ages. Magister was a title given to someone with a license from a university to teach philosophy and the liberal arts (which at that time comprised grammar, logic, rhetoric, mathematics, music, and astronomy). Originally, there were two basic types of master degrees: *Magister Artium* (Masters of Arts), and *Magister Scientiæ* (Master of Science). Later, it became popular for master degrees to be named for a particular discipline. Masters now exist for education, law, family and consumer sciences (home economics/human ecology), fine arts, engineering, divinity, business, public administration, peace, conflict studies, et

cetera (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2015h).

In principle, people with a master's degree learn all they can about what has been written in a field to date. With this knowledge, they are supposed to be able to do *original* work. The term original comes from the time of the guilds, and does not mean that an original work as it is understood today; rather, it means the application of existing techniques in new ways. From the guild perspective, being able to replicate the *same thing*, using the same technique, with each one being a little bit different because there is no mold, is not being original. These works would not be masterpieces. Being *original* means being able to take what one has learned and use it in different settings, with no supervision (i.e., use it in new ways). Then, one would have *mastered* the ability to create new pieces of work. Masters are always improving their mastery of the foundations and principles of the field, continuing to learn from their experiences, but not necessarily from additional study. Someone with a master's degree is continually trying to find *new ways to use* the principles of the field, whereas someone with a doctorate of philosophy (PhD) is continually trying to *find new principles* (Chilton, 1998).

## Doctoral Degree

Less than 1 percent of the population attains a doctorate degree (Comer, 2011). Only half of those who enter a doctoral program actually complete their studies (Elgar, 2003). Although people with a Master degree learn all they can about what has been written in a field, the doctorate extends the knowledge in the field by conducting research; that is, they explore, investigate, contemplate, interpret, and gain deep understanding. The search is to uncover principles that can be applied in new ways. The research is intended to further human understanding, and further the body of knowledge already compiled in the profession or discipline.

Indeed, the key difference between a masters and a doctorate is that a master is learning the field while a doctorate is learning the profession or discipline, with intentions to continually learn the profession or discipline. Chilton (1998) explains that the PhD can be taken quite literally to mean that the person with this qualification can *doctor* (minister to, repair and foster) the *philosophy*, the underlying tenets, of the discipline, and profession. The person both knows, and stands apart from, the philosophical underpinnings of the field. The PhD cuts deeper than a Master because it examines the very tenets of the discipline with the *intention* of improving or redesigning them.

Also, awarding (note the competitive paradigm term) someone an 'earned' doctorate implies that the person is seen as an equal by the university faculty

under whom the person studied. In order to qualify to hold a doctorate, the person has to complete a thesis or dissertation of publishable standard, or has to publish a coherent body of literature, usually in the form of two to three separate, but sequential, papers. The older style of honorary doctorates is rare. Called *honoris causa* (Latin ‘for the sake of the honor’), they are usually given to people who have shown themselves to be leaders in their field, and have contributed considerably to society, not necessarily through academic study but more through their lived experiences. This degree is known as *Hon Causa* (e.g., Doctorate of Peace Studies Hon Causa) (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2015 d,f).

### **The Paradigm Behind the Label of *Master* Degree**

The previous section teased out three degrees, and the meaning of their labels. The discussion now continues, based on the assumption that the master’s label is the most problematic of the three. While it may have been appropriate for the Middle Ages, using the label Masters for graduate work is not in tune with the leading edge trends in educational reform. What is assumed when people leave graduate school with a *Master*? What have they mastered? What assumptions does this term connote? What images are created in peoples’ minds? How does the mental perception that one is a master of education translate into one’s daily practice? How does it affect one’s pedagogy?

The word *master* has many meanings, as an adjective, verb and noun. As an adjective, it can mean:

- something that is principle or paramount (a master plot),
- something that controls all other parts of a mechanism (a master switch),
- being highly skilled or proficient (a master thief), and
- being an original from which copies are made (a master recording).

As a verb it can mean:

- being an expert of something, proficient in something (mastering a language);
- overcoming or defeating something (master an addiction);
- reducing to subjugation (master an animal); and,
- being seasoned or aged (dyed goods or alcohol).

As a noun, it can refer to:

- the captain of a ship (master mariner);
- a man who serves as head of a household;
- someone who defeats another (masters them in tennis);
- an employer (of a slave); and,
- a title for young boys, male officers in the Royal households, the male head of service clubs, or titles for military ranks and male court officers (Dictionary.com, 2015).

Just **stop for a moment**, and examine the words being used in association with being a

*master*: control, domination, ownership, defeat, binding, copying, victory, lower rank, inferior, subject (subjugation or subordination), competition, expert, proficiency, skill, head up, or have charge over. These are all words stemming from the mechanistic, scientific, Social Darwinism, neoliberal, positivistic, and competitive paradigms and ideologies (McGregor, 2006).

In a nut shell, these paradigms hold that humans have dominion over the earth, and others. People who cannot compete and succeed deserve what they get when they fail and lose - survival of the fittest. Everything in a neoliberal, capitalistic, consumer-oriented world can be commodified and put up for sale - even intellectual property and indigenous knowledge. There are experts, and there are those who are dependent on them for their well-being. People running schools see students as empty vessels waiting to be filled up with information from the master - the teacher. Then, students are expected to master the material and pass the tests, or they have failed. Any other type of learning is not valued because it cannot be empirically measured.

It is presumed that people do not have free will. There is no such thing as chance or fate; everything is determined by past events (cause and effect). Things and property are more important than relationships. Things and people are seen as separate, disconnected and fragmented, meaning they are easily manipulated and controlled. Only knowledge gained from the scientific method is true. There is no room for narrative, stories, myth, spirituality, or the mystery of life because these cannot be proven true or valid. There is no room, in these paradigms, for sharing, caring, compassion or stewardship because these get in the way of the competition, survival-of-the-fittest, winner-take-all mind set.

If the label *Master* is used for the middle layer of graduate school, universities implicitly, sometimes explicitly, perpetuate this world view, this set of assumptions about the world, and our place in it. The following text teases out several deeper issues attendant to this situation, setting up the discussion of how graduate school could be labeled and done differently, under a stewardship paradigm.

### **Association with Control and Manipulation**

The meaning of *masters* that has most significance to this part of the discussion is that of a master being someone who has control over, or ownership of, someone or something. Indeed, the Latin root of masters is the prefix *dominus*, meaning lord or master, domineer (Harper, 2015). Dominion means control; it means the power (authority) or right (ownership) to use or dispose of property. In an information society, knowledge is seen as property. People can hold *intellectual* property rights via patents, trademarks, and copyrights. If there is even the slightest chance of graduate students perceiving that they are in control of the knowledge and the learning process, then there is no room for the voices of the children, adults, or co-learners in the

classroom. People are familiar with the metaphor of the student being the empty vessel waiting to be filled up with information from the teacher, the master who is the expert. This phenomenal teacher-control can lead to unintended, or intentional, manipulation of the learning process, to cooption of students into the control paradigm.

### **Association with Expert Mode**

If educators leave graduate school with the label *Masters of Education*, there is the possibility they may see themselves as the experts with all of the answers. An expert has a high degree of knowledge and expertise or skill in a field of study. If educators approach their teaching role assuming they are the experts holding all of the knowledge and information that matters, then the knowledge that students have gained from their lived experiences is deemed not valid because it has not come from an expert. The students may have no say in the creation of knowledge, or of the learning environment. In these cases, they become the receptor of information, expected to memorize it (master it), and spit it back on normative tests (comparing one test taker to another). This socialization to be experts can cripple them as learners because they learn it is alright not to critically analyze power relationships in society. They can become complacent and complicit in oppression and marginalization. They can become apathetic citizens who feel powerless, and may not even know it. Things are just supposed to be this way. An expert told them.

### **Association with Competition and Failure**

If educators think they are *masters* of education, it is natural for them to expect others to master what they know, too. The aforementioned concept of normative testing stems from the competitive paradigm. Normative testing refers to all students learning the same thing, and then taking the same test. Their results are then compared against the other students; that is, they are compared against *the norm* (the teacher-determined acceptable answers). Any deviation from this norm is interpreted as either a failure, or a great success. Being in the middle is not enough because it is too close to failing, and too far away from succeeding.

In light of all of this, the atmosphere in the classroom can become very competitive. There is no room for celebrating independent student advancement when their learning is gauged against other students. Instead, students are expected to overcome their failures by defeating others who have beaten them (i.e., obtained a higher score). Some teachers go so far as to post grades on classroom doors. Awards are given for the highest grade in topics, best improvement in marks, et cetera. Competition is deeply entrenched if teachers think they have mastered the field of education, and feel a responsibility to teach others how to master things as well. Students can easily become alienated from other students, and become dependent on the teacher for more

knowledge so that their individual success is assured. The competitive paradigm is perpetuated.

### **Association with Maleness**

Another issue with the word master to identify a graduate degree is the common association of the word master with man (versus a woman). These automatic masculine connotations, in an educational setting, are counterproductive to the trend toward gender neutral writing and gender inclusiveness in education. Not to make too big an issue of it, but it *is* a component of the larger ideology of patriarchy, and its entrenchment in society and world views. Although most educators are women (71% in the United States and 65% in Canada), if they progress to graduate studies, they leave university with a label with masculine connotations. This unbidden mental link with patriarchy can perpetuate the notion of men being superior to women. Furthermore, because the majority of university educators are men (Catalyst Inc., 2015), the use of the label *masters* compounds this problem.

### **Roadblock to Further Studies**

The Canadian Association for Graduate Studies [CAGS] (2004) reports that 79% of masters' students finish their degree. But, once students finish their master's degrees, most stop there, and do not move onto doctoral studies. Comer (2011) notes that less than 1 percent of the population holds a PhD. If they continue with professional development, graduates tend to do another master's degree. This last statement is anecdotal in nature. There is a paucity of information on this issue, partly because only 32% of the deans and faculty offices of graduate studies in Canada (for example) compile completion rate information on a comprehensive basis, or compare rates across time (Elgar, 2003).

This paper offers another interpretation of these statistics. *Maybe* students get multiple masters degrees, instead of a doctorate, because they feel they want to master something else, instead of discovering new principles and advancing a whole field of knowledge, or a profession. Maybe they get a sense of power from the control implied from having a *Master* degree. Remember that to master something is to be able to control it, to bind something to you, to be highly proficient, or to be an expert. Maybe, albeit stretching the idea a bit, graduates do not complete doctoral studies because they feel they have mastered the field already. They do not see themselves as finding new principles, just using existing ones. This is all speculation, of course. But, it does raise the same interesting point. Would approaching graduate education from another paradigm change this scenario?

### **Thesis as Proof of Mastery**

Historically, one became a master within a guild by producing a “masterpiece” - a set of assigned tasks demonstrating one’s mastery of the techniques in the field. One would be an apprentice, working for an expert to learn a trade, an art, or an occupation. In graduate education today, one is expected to complete a thesis - a masterpiece if you will - to show that one has mastered the arts of the field, and understands the major approaches, or at least those used in one’s specialty (Chilton, 1998). From the master’s paradigm, educational institutions have relied upon Hegel’s thesis, antithesis, synthesis triad (i.e., dialectic system of inquiry). This approach works in contradictions. An idea is presented, countered by its opposite, and then followed by the creation of a new hybrid of the two ideas - a new entity that did not exist before the conflict was resolved. The conflict is resolved when the two opposing ideas can be appreciated for their interdependency. This approach to building a field of knowledge inherently involves a never-ending sequence of contradiction, conflict, and a temporary resolution (Spencer & Krauze, 1996).

One problem with using the thesis as an indicator of *mastering* the foundations and principles of a field of study is that it perpetuates a never-ending sequence of contradictions and conflict, assuming that the answer - the ultimate truth - is out there somewhere. The person who finds it, wins. Also, a thesis involves a search for information from other experts. Although a good academic thesis will entail the student providing a critique of the underlying assumptions that shape existing literature in the field, many students simply criticize or find fault with what has already been written. Finding fault sets the student up for more conflict and contradictions. This is not a healthy way to see oneself - master of a flawed field of study. Again, this idea may be stretching things a bit. But, it also raises that interesting question again, namely, ‘How could graduate school be done differently, outside the master’s paradigm?’ The answer might be found in the stewardship paradigm.

### **Stewardship - A Different Paradigm**

The Carnegie Foundation supported work that explores the role of stewards at the doctoral level (Golde & Walker, 2006). This paper brings the stewardship paradigm to bear on the step or level of learning *before* the doctorate, historically known as the master’s level. Stewardship can apply to both (a) stewardship of the earth and each other, *and* (b) the world of ideas (Ford, 2004). Stewardship stems from the medieval times, Guilds again, when a “steward” was assigned to hone the skills and development of a young prince - to prepare him for his reign. The steward held the prince in trust so that he could be a successful ruler. Today, the term steward has taken a different turn, less about preparing a man to be a ruler, and more about preparing people for their destiny, usually for the betterment of society. Making a positive difference in the future is the mark of a steward, and the mentality of stewardship (Greenleaf, 2002).

Stewardship means holding a vision for oneself, community and the world, and being committed to the actualization of that vision (MG Taylor Corporation, 1997). This task should be easy enough in principle, if humans perceived themselves as stewards, responsible to themselves, other human beings, the earth, and the world (Pelcovitz, 2003). Stewardship is a balance between recognizing that people: (a) are created with special powers and the potential for their personal mastery; and, (b) have the responsibility and humility to live in ways such that their mastery is not their undoing, or the undoing of nature (Redfield, 2003). It encompasses caring for what one values, for one's creativity, personal growth, the growth of others, the health of communities, and the natural environment. Stewardship arises from the philosophy that all life is sacred, rather than everything is for sale (MG Taylor Corporation, 1997).

Some argue that a stewardship approach to graduate school is too idealistic, too principled, and not enough about results. Ford (2004) and Block (2003) suggest that the primary function of a steward is to balance the pragmatic results in the system with a principled dedication to ideals. Stewards must constantly encourage the broader, more conservative, masterful elements of society toward the higher ground. And, they must take up the tasks with which others will not bother. This principled stance is very different from the perception that one has mastered a body of knowledge. It sets educators up to instill in pupils (i.e., co-learners) a principled approach. Then, there is a chance that they will be less vulnerable to the competitive nature of the market, economy, and state, and will speak up as citizens against less principled approaches. They will speak up for compassion, caring, peace, justice, and ethics.

The challenge is that these principles are beyond what the world is ready to accept, so the world continues to suffer, more so under a Master mind set. The following discussion assumes a principled approach, sharing upwards of 10 guiding principles of stewardship.

### **Sharing and Gifting Principles**

Stewardship is about being a caretaker or keeper of gifts. From this perspective, graduate students would be socialized to be caretakers of the educational knowledge base - the gift to society. They would be taught to nurture it, to hold it in wonder and awe, and to spread it widely. This approach is so different from mastering, controlling, binding and exploiting knowledge in order to dominate classrooms, and society. From the stewardship perspective, knowledge in one person's possession does not have a separate existence from the profession of education. It is emergent. It requires dialogue, community, and time to develop and evolve. To make this happen, the knowledge has to be shared, rather than hoarded and protected as intellectual property (Grey, 1999). That way, it can be preserved, nurtured and stewarded. Graduates from educational programs would be caretakers of the intellectual assets of the profession of

education, of its professional knowledge base, even of peaceful cultures.

When educators commit to stewarding the knowledge base of education, they commit to: discussing novel ideas, working together on problems (rather than sharing best practices), and keeping up with developments inside and outside the field. They do not assume they have mastered anything. They recognize their kinship with others, and choose to teach in such a way that they foster the strength of future generations. This is a form of conscious stewardship over their own life in order to support and nurture life. The result is stewardship of life instead of mastery over life, or mastery of life.

### **Personal Mastery Principle**

Some people even suggest that people must have personal mastery before they can be a steward. This means that people have to know who they are a person, so they can be true to the principles of stewardship (personal communication, Marlene Ruck-Simmonds, October 7, 2004). Educators who are trained in a program where they learn to compel and direct students in all things, something a master degree might do, may end up teaching in such a way that pupils never gain the strength and growth they need, because they did not have a chance to exercise their own agency - find their inner power. If graduate schools decided to prepare stewards, they would have to socialize educators to the importance of being accountable for their actions. Personal growth comes from dealing with the demands that people place upon one's life. Preparing educators to be stewards would entail providing them with opportunities to find their inner power, exercise that power, and take responsibility for their actions (Smoot, 2002). If educators perceived themselves as stewards, they may be more inclined to prepare pupils to be stewards, and to be more accountable citizens.

### **Cooperation and Progressiveness Principles**

Stewards are bound by their own sense of responsibility to cooperate (Ford, 2004). Cooperation is the antithesis of competition, which can be a hallmark of a master's degree (discussed earlier). Preparing graduates to be stewards of education entails the collaborative approach to learning, rather than the practice of dominion over knowledge and learning. Collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of approaches in education that involve joint intellectual efforts by students and teachers. This approach negates the assumption that the teacher is the expert, the master of the learning process. It assumes that everyone has something to bring to the learning table.

The stewardship approach can help people gain a degree of autonomy that allows them to be educators who feel comfortable expressing and exhibiting progressive beliefs (Ford, 2004).

The basic progressive vision is that of community as family, a caring, responsible family. Progressives envision a community where people take care of each other, not just themselves (the antithesis of survival of the fittest). They act responsibly with strength and effectiveness for each other. Basic progressive principles include: equity, equality, democracy, a government acting in the name of community, and the presence of ethical business (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2015i).

### **Responsibility Principle**

Ford (2004) offers the useful idea that to be a steward is to assume responsibility for oneself, and to hold others accountable for their actions. In meeting these responsibilities, stewards would be called upon to act in one, or a combination, of four roles: (a) decision maker exerting influence in the course of events (arbiter); (b) ambassador and advocate; (c) activist; and, (d) a shield, as well as a sword, in the face of human or earth suffering (guardian). He argued that as long as the ultimate objective is the pursuit of truth and ethics, these four roles are justified.

### **Non-Violence Principle**

This paper takes issue with the guardian role as Ford (2004) defines it. He says that an arbiter has to be willing to make the hard decisions, which include using force and violence. Because this suggestion is grounded in the master's paradigm, it is necessary to recommend that non-violence be a perspective shared by a steward. Non-violence is a set of assumptions about morality, power and conflict that leads its proponents to reject the use of violence in efforts to attain social or political goals. From this perspective, a steward of education would appreciate that there are techniques for social struggles that rely on the collective power or a mobilized citizenry rather than on access to wealth, property, or weapons (Sharp, 1973). Peaceful pedagogies and non-violent classrooms would be the underpinnings of a steward degree.

Of special interest to this discussion is the meaning of power from a non-violent perspective. While the competitive and war paradigms assume that power *over* someone comes with the possession of armies and politicians willing to carry out a ruler's (master's) commands, non-violence assumes power depends on the cooperation of others. If people do not cooperate with the master, the master loses power. This loss can readily happen in a classroom when pupils do not cooperate with the teacher who is in control of the learning process. The teacher loses position power, feels threatened, and responds back with sanctions, disciplinary actions, and threats. The cycle of master over student is perpetuated, even when this is not the intention.

### **Abundance, Voice, and Sustainability Principles**

Good stewardship requires careful consideration of the needs of others, and respect for their voices and contributions. It involves encouraging everyone to give generously of their time, talents and resources, rather than hoarding them, and assuming that things are scarce, and in demand. The former promotes sharing and collaboration while the latter promotes competition and isolation. Stewardship is the experience of having one's basic needs met in spite of scarce resources. It involves socializing people to believe that stewardship means being treated fairly while they assume responsibility for their membership in a moral community, one that seeks to care for the most people over the longest time (Engel, 2000). This approach to socializing pupils is in direct contrast with the mastery notions of survival of the fittest, the economic concept of scarcity and the competitive paradigm - winners get all, losers get what they deserve.

### **Knowledge Management and Relationship Principles**

Stewards are not concerned with information, per se. They have a special conception of knowledge. Gottschalk (2002) provides a very useful distinction between information and knowledge. He notes that, while information can be stored on paper or in computers, knowledge can only be stored in the human brain. Information becomes knowledge when the human brain processes it - knowledge is what the knower knows. Knowledge is information *combined with* one's experiences, the context, one's interpretation of that information, critical reflection on the information, and one's intuition and creativity. Stewards are not the owners of knowledge; rather, they are acting on behalf of others, to maintain and assure their future. They are holding the future in trust (Sheldon, 2004).

This is a very different approach than the assumption that humans have dominion over earth and others (i.e., the master's paradigm). If educators were prepared to be stewards of knowledge, they would see themselves as caretakers of learning and teaching, rather than masters of information and facts. They would assume the responsibility of maintaining and enhancing the quality of knowledge shared with pupils in the school system, and in other learning environments. They would know that knowledge does not belong to anyone. It is meant to be shared, nurtured, and communicated widely. Indeed, stewardship is a practice of giving back to others, because stewards know that relationships sustain everything. Masters would assume that the relationship is one way, with the master being in control.

### **Trust, Transparency, and Letting-Go Principles**

Stewardship is about the responsibility for taking good care of something or someone that is entrusted to one. To entrust is to hand over to someone for care. It is common for parents to see themselves entrusting their children to the school system, and for teachers to perceive

themselves as a trustee. While teachers are not trustees in the true sense (they are not unpaid volunteers), they can be perceived as holding a fiduciary position, requiring them to act for the pupils' benefit within the scope of their relationship. In this role, educators acting as stewards are not looking for blind obedience, as is a master. They are looking for people with initiative who are doing what they do because they consider it a worthy objective for societal well-being. Rather than controlling, the steward uses persuasion, openness, and transparency. Rather than using one's positional authority (e.g., a teacher in front of a class), the steward facilitates consensus building through convincing instead of using coercion, threats and punishment (Spears, 2002). Stewards rely on bravery, and forgiveness. They believe in letting go of control, letting go of ego, and involving those affected by the work. Educators prepared to be stewards would create very empowering learning environments. They would create pupils (citizens) who are healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous (Wheatley, 2004).

### **Stewards as Leaders Principle**

Greenleaf (2002) developed the concept of servant leadership. One of the 11 characteristics of a servant leader is stewardship. He maintains that people are driven to be leaders so they can serve society better, not so they can increase their power over events, things and people (as would a master). They eschew the top-down hierarchical leadership style (so prevalent in today's school system and classroom), and opt for collaboration, trust, empathy, listening, foresight, and the ethical use of power. Their objective is to "serve others" while staying focused on achieving results in line with society's, or an institution's, values and integrity. Graduate school could be designed so that educators have a chance to reflect on this leadership philosophy. A strong sense of stewardship would mean that educators (in their role as leaders) would appreciate that their idealistic vision of the future works even in today's competitive world.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This paper assumed that, to build cultures of peace, people have to confront the issues of dominance, power, control, and dependency that perpetuate society. Part of this process involves examining the labels used for graduates within the higher education system. This paper purposely took issue with the use of label *masters of education*. The intent was to unhook people from the tacit assumptions that are embedded in the current graduate school infrastructure. Stewardship was offered as an alternative designation (destination?) to mastery. Stewardship provides new language, metaphors, values, and principles. It opens the door for dialogue about how people "label" graduates from higher education institutions, and the power this label holds over them, and society. Stewardship has ethical and moral dimensions. It implies a fiduciary role. A fiduciary acts with honesty and care, which are so urgently needed in society. Stewards are entrusted to imaginatively generate new knowledge, and to critically conserve valuable and

useful ideas, the intellectual assets of a discipline, even a peaceful culture (Golde & Walker, 2006).

This idea will not be palatable to everyone. Block (1993) agrees, noting that stewardship is, simultaneously, a radical treatise as well as a useful lens from which to revise educational practices. In order for people to embrace this idea, they must be convinced that it is a welcomed ideal, but also that it can muster the test of the marketplace; it must be practical and economical. It must inspire educators to be citizens of the world. If recent work commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation (Golde & Walker, 2006) is any indication, the academy may be ready to bring the notion of stewardship to bear on the emergent dialogue in higher education about the meaning of degree designations.

Imagine people lining up to enroll in *Stewards of Education* degrees with the intent to build sustainable cultures of peace. A whole new generation of citizens would be socialized to value the principles of a culture of peace, simply by being taught to be stewards instead of masters. They would respect and value the principles of: sharing, personal mastery, cooperation, care, peace, progressiveness, responsibility, non-violence, justice, abundance, sustainability, voice, transparency, relationships, and trust. As fiduciaries of the stewardship ideal, holders of a Steward of Education degree would be models to be emulated as leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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