From Militaristic Discipline to Collaborative Pedagogy

Anarchist and Pacifist Alternatives in Education

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Abstract

This literature review examines how educational philosophies rooted in anarchist and pacifist traditions offer alternatives to the militaristic and disciplinary foundations of modern schooling. Drawing on historical, philosophical, and contemporary pedagogical literature, the review analyzes how coercive models—such as those shaped by the nineteenth-century Prussian system—continue to influence educational structures that privilege obedience, surveillance, and hierarchy. In contrast, anarchist and pacifist thinkers have articulated pedagogies grounded in autonomy, mutual aid, dialogue, and nonviolence. Using a thematic approach, this review identifies three areas where these traditions contribute to contemporary educational theory and practice: critiques of authoritarian schooling, the development of collaborative and dialogical forms of learning, and emerging practices such as restorative approaches that embody relational accountability. The analysis highlights how these noncoercive pedagogies challenge dominant notions of order and discipline, offering pathways toward more participatory and ethically grounded forms of education. The review concludes by discussing implications for educators and educational institutions seeking to move beyond punitive or hierarchical models toward collaborative, community-oriented learning environments.

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1. Introduction

Education is often portrayed as a means of personal and civic empowerment, yet its historical development reveals deep entanglements with coercive structures of discipline and hierarchy. The nineteenth-century Prussian model of schooling, for example, introduced regimented systems of instruction designed to cultivate obedience, punctuality, and uniformity, traits deemed essential for nation-building, industrial efficiency, and military readiness (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). These principles significantly influenced the emergence of public schooling across Europe and North America, embedding assumptions about authority, surveillance, and behavioral control into modern educational institutions. As scholars such as Foucault (1977) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) have demonstrated, the architecture of schooling has long functioned as a system for producing compliant subjects, relying on practices that mirror other disciplinary institutions such as prisons, factories, and barracks. Elements of this legacy continue to appear in contemporary systems through strict behavioral codes, surveillance mechanisms, and punitive disciplinary frameworks that prioritize compliance over collaboration (Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

In contrast to these militaristic and disciplinary foundations, anarchist and pacifist educational traditions have articulated radically different visions of schooling. Anarchist thinkers such as Godwin (2013), Ferrer (Avrich, 1980), and Kropotkin (2006) critiqued hierarchical authority and promoted forms of learning grounded in autonomy, voluntary cooperation, and mutual aid. Pacifist educators, including Tolstoy (1967), Gandhi (1993), and King (2010), emphasized moral development, nonviolence, and dialogue as essential dimensions of education. While emerging from distinct historical and philosophical contexts, both traditions challenge coercive assumptions embedded in mainstream schooling and argue for pedagogies that cultivate freedom, ethical responsibility, and collaborative community life.

These commitments have gained renewed relevance in recent decades, as educational researchers and practitioners explore approaches that move beyond authoritarian or punitive discipline. Dialogical pedagogy (Freire, 2000), relational ethics (Noddings, 2013), and community-oriented practices,

including restorative approaches that emphasize dialogue and relational accountability (Evans & Vaandering, 2016; Gregory et al., 2016), illustrate contemporary efforts to cultivate empathy, cooperation, and shared responsibility in schools. Such practices reflect broader philosophical commitments to noncoercion and participatory learning, positioning them as contemporary expressions of anarchist and pacifist pedagogical principles.

This literature review examines the historical, philosophical, and pedagogical significance of anarchist and pacifist traditions as alternatives to militaristic models of schooling. It explores how these noncoercive frameworks critique the disciplinary foundations of modern education and how they inform emerging collaborative approaches in contemporary educational contexts. The review is organized into four sections. First, it outlines the methodological approach guiding the review. Second, it analyzes the militaristic roots of modern schooling, with particular attention to the Prussian model. Third, it examines key contributions from anarchist and pacifist pedagogies. Finally, it considers how contemporary collaborative practices, including dialogical and restorative models, embody these principles and discusses implications for educators seeking to move beyond authoritarian or punitive structures.

2. Methodological Approach

This paper employs a thematic literature review methodology to synthesize scholarship on militaristic models of schooling and the anarchist and pacifist pedagogies that challenge them. Thematic reviews emphasize conceptual interpretation rather than exhaustive cataloging of all available studies, making them well suited for examining historical, philosophical, and pedagogical traditions across diverse sources (Snyder, 2019). The objective of this review is not to measure the effectiveness of specific educational interventions but to analyze how alternative pedagogical frameworks illuminate the ethical and structural assumptions underlying modern schooling.

The literature examined for this review encompasses three primary bodies of work. First, historical and sociological analyses of militaristic and

disciplinary models of education—including scholarship on the Prussian system, industrial-era schooling, and disciplinary technologies, provide the foundation for understanding coercive practices embedded in educational structures (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Foucault, 1977). Second, writings from anarchist and pacifist traditions offer philosophical perspectives on autonomy, mutual aid, nonviolence, and the ethical aims of education (Godwin, 2013; Kropotkin, 2006; Avrich, 1980; Tolstoy, 1967; Gandhi, 1993; King, 2010). Third, contemporary pedagogical literature on collaborative, dialogical, and relational approaches, including restorative and community-oriented practices, provides insight into how these traditions inform present-day educational theory and practice (Freire, 2000; Noddings, 2013; Evans & Vaandering, 2016; Gregory et al., 2016).

Sources were identified through academic databases such as JSTOR, ERIC, Google Scholar, and major university library systems, supplemented by monographs and influential theoretical works. Inclusion criteria emphasized materials that address: (1) historical or philosophical analyses of schooling; (2) anarchist or pacifist perspectives on education; or (3) contemporary collaborative pedagogies informed by principles of noncoercion, dialogue, or relational accountability. While restorative justice literature is included, it is treated as one example of collaborative pedagogy rather than the central focus of the review.

By organizing the literature into themes that connect historical structures, philosophical critiques, and contemporary pedagogical developments, this review highlights conceptual linkages across traditions that are rarely examined together. This approach also brings forward ethical questions about the aims and practices of education, particularly the tension between coercive models and collaborative, community-oriented alternatives.

3. Historical and Philosophical Background: The Militaristic School

Modern public education systems did not emerge as neutral spaces of learning but were shaped by social, political, and military imperatives. Nowhere is this more evident than in the influence of the nineteenth-century Prussian model, which established one of the earliest centralized, compulsory systems of mass schooling. Developed in the aftermath of Prussia's military defeats in the Napoleonic Wars, this model aimed to cultivate disciplined, obedient, and nationally unified citizens capable of contributing to state stability and military readiness (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Educational theorists such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte argued that schools should function as instruments of national formation, molding children's minds and behaviors to align with state objectives. Although Wilhelm von Humboldt advocated a more humanistic vision of education, the administrative structure that developed in Prussia emphasized uniformity, hierarchical authority, and standardized curricula.

Several key features of the Prussian model became foundational to modern schooling. These included age-graded classrooms, regimented schedules marked by bells, centralized inspection and certification systems, and pedagogical methods designed around repetition, surveillance, and teacher-centered control. Scholars such as Foucault (1977) later identified these features as disciplinary technologies— mechanisms that simultaneously instruct and regulate, producing "docile bodies" adapted to the needs of industrial and military institutions. Bowles and Gintis (1976) similarly argued that early public schools functioned as preparatory sites for capitalist labor systems, instilling habits of compliance, punctuality, and deference to authority. The architecture of schooling, straight rows of desks, rigid routines, and hierarchical classroom relationships, reflected this broader goal of maintaining social order through discipline.

Although the historical conditions that produced the Prussian model differ significantly from contemporary educational contexts, remnants of this

militaristic orientation persist. Strict behavioral codes, zero-tolerance policies, and surveillance-oriented technologies such as hall sweeps, metal detectors, or punitive monitoring systems continue to echo the logic of control embedded in early state schooling (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Even in countries where corporal punishment is illegal or where student-centered pedagogies have gained prominence, institutional structures often retain disciplinary features that privilege order, uniformity, and compliance over autonomy or collaboration. These continuities illustrate how deeply disciplinary assumptions are woven into the fabric of modern schooling and underscore the difficulty of transforming educational systems built upon coercive foundations.

This historical backdrop also reveals why anarchist and pacifist traditions emerged in explicit opposition to the aims and structures of militaristic education. Both intellectual traditions, though distinct, challenge the assumption that obedience and hierarchy are necessary for learning or social cohesion. Their critiques and proposed alternatives form the conceptual basis for the next sections, which explore how noncoercive pedagogies developed in response to the disciplinary logic of modern schooling and how they offer pathways toward more collaborative and participatory educational models.

3. Anarchist Pedagogies

Anarchist educational thought emerged in direct response to the hierarchical and disciplinary structures that characterized nineteenth- and early twentieth-century schooling. Early anarchist thinkers argued that coercive forms of education not only suppressed intellectual freedom but also reproduced social inequalities by conditioning learners to accept domination as natural or inevitable. William Godwin (2013) offered one of the earliest articulations of this position, contending that coercion undermines the development of reason and moral agency. He advocated for instructional environments grounded in voluntary engagement, where learners develop autonomy through open inquiry rather than through imposed authority.

These ideas were later expanded by Peter Kropotkin, whose writings on mutual aid emphasized cooperation, reciprocity, and collective responsibility as natural foundations of social and educational life (Kropotkin, 2006). For Kropotkin, education should cultivate these social instincts rather than suppress them through competition or authoritarian discipline. The principles of mutual aid also informed the Modern School movement founded by Francisco Ferrer in Spain and later adopted in the United States. Ferrer's schools rejected rote memorization and rigid discipline in favor of critical inquiry, experiential learning, and egalitarian relationships between teachers and students (Avrich, 1980). These practices reflected a broader anarchist commitment to dismantling hierarchical authority in educational settings.

Twentieth-century anarchist theorists such as Murray Bookchin (1995) extended these critiques by emphasizing the importance of education for developing participatory democratic capacities. Bookchin argued that hierarchical forms of schooling mirror authoritarian political structures and therefore hinder the cultivation of citizens capable of self-governance. For anarchist educators, the purpose of schooling is not the production of obedient subjects but the formation of critically engaged, socially responsible individuals who can contribute to cooperative communities.

Across these diverse contributions, several themes define anarchist pedagogy: an emphasis on learner autonomy, a rejection of coercive authority, and a belief in the transformative potential of cooperative social arrangements. These principles challenge militaristic models of schooling by proposing forms of education grounded in freedom, equality, and collective responsibility. They also provide philosophical foundations for contemporary collaborative approaches, which seek to replace compliance-based discipline with practices that honor student agency and foster mutual respect.

4. Pacifist Pedagogies

Pacifist pedagogical traditions offer a distinct yet closely aligned critique of coercive and militaristic schooling. While anarchist educators challenge hierarchy and domination on political and social grounds, pacifist thinkers ground their educational philosophies in the moral imperative of nonviolence. These traditions argue that schooling should cultivate empathy, compassion, and ethical discernment, qualities incompatible with punitive or authoritarian practices that normalize control and aggression.

Leo Tolstoy articulated one of the earliest comprehensive pacifist critiques of schooling. In *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1967) and in his educational experiments at Yasnaya Polyana, Tolstoy rejected all forms of coercion, arguing that compulsory schooling corrupts both teachers and students by replacing intrinsic moral development with imposed authority. For Tolstoy, genuine education arises from voluntary engagement, mutual respect, and the cultivation of personal responsibility. His schools emphasized freedom of movement, collaborative learning, and an atmosphere of moral fellowship rather than discipline.

In the early twentieth century, Mahatma Gandhi developed an explicitly nonviolent theory of education through his Nai Talim ("basic education") program. Gandhi (1993) envisioned schools as communities rooted in cooperative labor, self-reliance, and service, where students learned not only academic content but also the ethical practice of nonviolence. Education, in Gandhi's view, should prepare individuals to resist domination without reproducing it, cultivating inner discipline grounded in truth and compassion rather than fear or obedience.

Later, Martin Luther King Jr. expanded the moral and social implications of pacifist education through his concept of the "Beloved Community." King (2010) emphasized that nonviolence is not merely a strategy for social change but a comprehensive ethic that shapes how individuals relate to one another. Freedom schools and civil rights education

initiatives inspired by King's work placed dialogue, empathy, and mutual recognition at the center of learning. These practices aimed to form individuals capable of confronting injustice while upholding the dignity of all persons.

Across these thinkers, several themes define pacifist pedagogy: the rejection of violence and coercion; the cultivation of empathy, dialogue, and moral responsibility; and the belief that education should nurture the capacity for peaceful and just relationships. Like anarchist pedagogies, pacifist approaches challenge the militaristic legacies of modern schooling, offering ethical frameworks that support collaborative and community-oriented educational practices. Together, these traditions illuminate how nonviolence can function not only as a political stance but also as a foundational educational principle.

Summary

The historical and philosophical backdrop illustrates that contemporary collaborative pedagogies are not isolated innovations but part of a long genealogy of resistance to coercive and militaristic models of schooling. Anarchist pedagogy contributes commitments to voluntary cooperation, mutual aid, and the dismantling of hierarchical authority, while pacifist traditions emphasize nonviolence, moral responsibility, and the centrality of dialogue. Together, these frameworks illuminate how educational practices can move beyond compliance and control toward forms of learning grounded in ethical relationships and shared agency. Contemporary approaches, such as dialogical, relational, and restorative practices, draw upon these principles to challenge punitive models of discipline and open possibilities for more humane, participatory, and community-oriented educational environments.

6. Thematic Literature Review: Contemporary Collaborative Pedagogies

6.1 Dialogue and Critical Engagement

Paulo Freire's theory of dialogical pedagogy offers a powerful counterpoint to the hierarchical and disciplinary structures that characterize militaristic schooling. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000), Freire criticized the "banking model" of education, in which teachers deposit knowledge into passive students, arguing that such practices reproduce domination by positioning learners as objects rather than subjects of their own learning. Freire proposed instead a dialogical approach that affirms learners as co-creators of knowledge and situates education as a practice of freedom. Dialogue becomes not simply a teaching technique but a relational process that challenges authoritarian dynamics within the classroom.

Although Freire's work is not explicitly rooted in anarchist or pacifist theory, his emphasis on shared authority, critical inquiry, and humanizing relationships resonates strongly with both traditions. From an anarchist perspective, dialogical pedagogy destabilizes hierarchical power structures and fosters learner autonomy. From a pacifist perspective, dialogue functions as a nonviolent relational practice, cultivating empathy, mutual recognition, and ethical engagement. In this sense, Freire's pedagogy operates at the intersection of noncoercive and collaborative educational ideals, demonstrating how education can cultivate critical consciousness while rejecting forms of control that mirror broader systems of domination.

6.2 Relational and Ethical Approaches

A central contribution of contemporary collaborative pedagogies is their emphasis on relationships as the foundation of educational practice. Whereas militaristic or punitive systems rely on control, surveillance, and

exclusion, relational approaches seek to cultivate empathy, mutual recognition, and shared responsibility. Restorative circles, conferences, and peer mediation exemplify this orientation by creating dialogical spaces where individuals articulate harm, listen to others' experiences, and collaboratively develop solutions (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). Dialogue is not merely a technique but an ethical commitment that positions participants as active contributors to communal life.

This relational focus resonates strongly with Paulo Freire's (2000) theory of dialogical pedagogy, which rejects authoritarian models of instruction and affirms learners as co-creators of knowledge. Freire's critique of the "banking model" and his insistence that education must be a practice of freedom provide a conceptual foundation for collaborative approaches that prioritize voice, agency, and shared inquiry. Restorative and relational practices enact these principles by ensuring that all participants, students, teachers, and community members, have a meaningful role in addressing conflict and fostering justice.

Empirical research underscores the significance of these relational dimensions. Riestenberg (2012) found that restorative circles support the development of empathy and social-emotional competencies, while Gregory et al. (2016) demonstrated that restorative approaches strengthen relational trust between students and teachers, contributing to more equitable and inclusive learning environments. These findings reflect broader philosophical commitments found in anarchist and pacifist traditions. For anarchists such as Bookchin (1995), education prepares individuals for participatory democratic life by cultivating mutual responsibility rather than hierarchical obedience. Pacifist thinkers, including King (2010), emphasize empathy and moral accountability as essential components of the "Beloved Community," grounding social transformation in relational ethics.

Community emerges as both a process and an outcome of these relational practices. Morrison (2007) describes restorative and dialogical approaches as fostering a sense of belonging that counters the alienation often produced by punitive systems. By addressing harm relationally

rather than bureaucratically, collaborative pedagogies strengthen the bonds among students, teachers, and families, reflecting Kropotkin's (2006) principle of mutual aid and aligning with pacifist visions of cooperative community life articulated by Gandhi and Tolstoy.

Taken together, relational and ethical approaches demonstrate that collaborative pedagogy is not limited to improving disciplinary outcomes but embodies a deeper reorientation of educational practice. These models emphasize empathy, dialogue, and interconnectedness, embodying anarchist-pacifist commitments to noncoercion and offering concrete pathways for transforming school communities.

6.3 Restorative Practices as a Case Example

Restorative justice has become a prominent example of how contemporary educational practices can move beyond punitive and exclusionary disciplinary systems. In many U.S. schools, restorative approaches emerged in direct response to zero-tolerance policies that gained traction in the 1990s. These policies mandated automatic suspensions or expulsions for designated offenses, regardless of context or intent, and were justified as necessary for maintaining safety and order (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Yet decades of research have shown that zero-tolerance practices frequently intensify inequities, disproportionately targeting students of color, students with disabilities, and those already marginalized within school systems (Advancement Project, 2010). Rather than improving school environments, exclusionary discipline often accelerates students' detachment from school and contributes to what scholars describe as the "school-to-prison pipeline" (Wald & Losen, 2003).

Restorative practices offer a clear alternative to this punitive legacy by focusing on repairing harm, strengthening relationships, and reintegrating students into the school community. This approach refuses the assumption that punishment and exclusion are necessary for maintaining order. In doing so, restorative justice aligns with principles found in anarchist and pacifist educational traditions. From an anarchist

perspective, restorative practices challenge coercive authority by emphasizing communal decision-making, shared responsibility, and voluntary participation. From a pacifist perspective, restorative processes model nonviolent responses to conflict, affirming dialogue and mutual recognition as pathways to understanding and accountability.

A growing body of empirical research demonstrates the positive effects of restorative approaches. Gregory et al. (2016) found that restorative practices improve teacher–student relationships, reduce disciplinary disparities, and promote more equitable classroom climates. González (2012) argued that restorative justice represents a critical intervention for disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline by keeping students engaged in learning rather than pushing them out. Additional evaluations highlight substantial reductions in suspensions and expulsions (Morrison, 2007; Riestenberg, 2012). In Oakland, California, schools implementing restorative practices reported a 47% decline in suspensions over three years, along with notable improvements in school climate and community trust (Jain et al., 2014). These findings suggest that restorative justice is not only a moral alternative but also an effective one.

Yet anarchist and pacifist genealogies caution against reducing restorative justice to a set of efficiency metrics. For Kropotkin (2006), cooperation is valuable not because it achieves compliance more smoothly, but because it affirms human interdependence and dignity. Tolstoy (1967) similarly argued that nonviolence derives its worth from its alignment with moral truth, not merely from pragmatic outcomes. Viewed through these lenses, restorative justice becomes more than a disciplinary reform, it becomes a pedagogy of refusal. Anarchist theorists such as Graeber (2004) emphasized that the refusal of domination opens space for new social forms, while pacifist thinkers like Gandhi (1993) understood nonviolent resistance as an educational project that shapes character and cultivates justice.

In this sense, restorative practices challenge the coercive foundations of traditional school discipline by modeling alternative ways of addressing harm, ways grounded in dialogue, cooperation, and ethical responsibility.

Rather than treating conflict as a disruption to be eliminated, restorative approaches frame it as an opportunity for communal learning and relational repair. This orientation echoes the deeper philosophical commitments of anarchist and pacifist traditions, demonstrating how education can move beyond punitive logics toward more humane and participatory forms of school life.

6.4 Risks and Limitations

Although collaborative pedagogies hold significant promise for transforming school culture, scholars caution that these approaches are vulnerable to co-optation when implemented within institutional structures still shaped by punitive or bureaucratic logics. McCluskey et al. (2011), examining restorative practices in Scottish schools, found that educators often adopted the language of restoration while applying it unevenly or reducing it to a behavior-management strategy. Rather than reshaping relationships or redistributing power, restorative approaches sometimes became assimilated into existing disciplinary systems. This dynamic echoes pacifist critiques of "negative peace," where the absence of overt conflict obscures deeper injustices (King, 2010), and aligns with anarchist warnings, from theorists such as Graeber (2004), that radical practices can be absorbed into state logics, stripped of their transformative intent.

These risks are amplified by broader institutional constraints. Schools operate within accountability regimes characterized by standardized testing, hierarchical decision-making, and externally imposed performance metrics. Such structures can conflict with the ethos of dialogical, relational, or restorative approaches, which require time, flexibility, and shared agency. Teachers may also lack adequate preparation or administrative support, leading to inconsistent or superficial implementation (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). Cultural tensions further complicate adoption when restorative or dialogical models are imported without attention to local understandings of community, conflict resolution, or authority (Vaandering, 2011).

To preserve the transformative potential of collaborative pedagogies, scholars argue that practices must remain rooted in deeper ethical frameworks rather than reduced to managerial interventions. Evans and Vaandering (2016) emphasize grounding restorative approaches in relational theory, while Zehr (2015) warns against treating restorative justice as a set of techniques divorced from its paradigm of relational accountability. Anarchist and pacifist genealogies reinforce this caution. By situating collaborative practices within traditions that reject coercion, affirm nonviolence, and cultivate mutual responsibility, educators can resist pressures to instrumentalize these approaches merely to improve efficiency or compliance.

Taken together, these critiques highlight a central challenge: collaborative pedagogies cannot achieve their transformative aims when implemented within institutional contexts that remain fundamentally hierarchical or punitive. Their effectiveness depends not only on specific practices but on the broader cultural and structural conditions that support or constrain meaningful relational engagement.

5. Contextual Reflections

Although the literature on collaborative and restorative pedagogies is often grounded in North American contexts, educational systems around the world vary significantly in their disciplinary structures, cultural traditions, and institutional constraints. These differences complicate any universal claims about the persistence of militaristic schooling or the applicability of restorative and dialogical practices. Many nations have formally abandoned punitive or exclusionary disciplinary practices and have adopted relational or community-based approaches that align more closely with collaborative pedagogies. For example, several European countries have prohibited corporal punishment for decades and have implemented national frameworks that emphasize social-emotional learning, student participation, and community building. Other nations, such as New Zealand, have integrated restorative approaches at a systemic

level, embedding relational practices within both school governance and curriculum design.

At the same time, institutional and cultural legacies can still reflect hierarchical or disciplinary logics, even where overtly punitive practices have declined. In some educational systems, standardized testing regimes, centralized accountability structures, or rigid curricular controls continue to constrain the adoption of collaborative pedagogies. These tensions highlight that militaristic or bureaucratic dimensions of schooling do not always appear as explicit punitive measures; they can also manifest through organizational norms that prioritize efficiency, compliance, or hierarchical decision-making. Thus, while the Prussian model no longer serves as a literal blueprint, its influence persists in more subtle forms across varied educational contexts.

Cultural frameworks also shape how collaborative approaches are interpreted and enacted. Restorative or dialogical practices may conflict with local traditions of authority, conflict resolution, or communal responsibility, requiring adaptation to align with community values and expectations. Vaandering (2011) notes that restorative justice can lose its ethical grounding when imported into contexts without attention to cultural meanings of relationship and responsibility. Conversely, some communities possess longstanding traditions of collective problem-solving or nonviolent conflict resolution that resonate deeply with the principles of anarchist and pacifist pedagogies, providing fertile ground for relational approaches.

These contextual differences underscore the importance of situating collaborative pedagogies within broader social, political, and cultural landscapes. Anarchist and pacifist educational traditions highlight the ethical commitments, noncoercion, mutual aid, dialogue, and moral responsibility, that can guide the adaptation of these practices across diverse settings. At the same time, these traditions remind educators that relational or restorative models cannot be fully realized in systems whose structures fundamentally conflict with the values they embody. Understanding how institutional, cultural, and historical conditions shape

the possibilities for collaborative pedagogy is therefore essential for sustaining practices that aim not only to reform discipline but to transform educational relationships.

6. Conclusion

This literature review has examined how anarchist and pacifist pedagogical traditions offer compelling alternatives to the militaristic and disciplinary frameworks that have shaped modern schooling. The historical influence of the Prussian model demonstrates how educational institutions became sites for cultivating obedience, hierarchy, and social conformity. Against this backdrop, anarchist thinkers emphasized autonomy, mutual aid, and the dismantling of coercive authority, while pacifist educators advanced visions of nonviolence, moral responsibility, and relational ethics. Although distinct in origin, these traditions converge in their critique of domination and their commitment to educational forms that honor human dignity and shared agency.

Contemporary collaborative pedagogies, including dialogical, relational, and restorative approaches, embody many of these principles. They challenge punitive conceptions of order by fostering dialogue, empathy, and community as foundations for learning. Empirical research demonstrates that such practices can strengthen relationships, promote equity, and create more inclusive school environments. Yet these approaches also face significant risks, particularly when implemented within institutional structures that remain oriented around compliance, efficiency, or hierarchical control. Without grounding in deeper ethical commitments, collaborative practices may be reduced to managerial tools, losing their transformative potential.

The broader implication of this review is that meaningful educational transformation requires more than adopting new techniques; it requires reexamining the assumptions that underlie how schools define authority, discipline, and community. Anarchist and pacifist pedagogies offer conceptual resources for imagining schooling beyond coercion, where relationships, dialogue, and mutual responsibility shape the conditions for

learning. At the same time, contextual differences across educational systems reveal that these principles must be adapted thoughtfully, with attention to cultural and institutional conditions.

Ultimately, the movement from militaristic discipline toward collaborative pedagogy is not merely a shift in practice but a reorientation of educational purpose. By foregrounding relational accountability, ethical engagement, and shared agency, collaborative approaches reflect a broader commitment to education as a practice of freedom. These frameworks invite educators, policymakers, and communities to consider how alternative traditions can inform more humane and participatory approaches to teaching and learning, contributing to educational environments where students and teachers alike can flourish.

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8. Short biography

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