

12-24-2025

Teachers' Perspectives on Humane Education Implementation

Rebecca Ann Bartaway
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Rebecca Ann Bartaway

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Jamie Patterson, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Steven Wells, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University

2025

Abstract

Teachers' Perspectives on Humane Education Implementation

by

Rebecca Ann Bartaway

MA, Valparaiso University, 2017

MA, Madonna University, 2014

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2026

Abstract

Humane education (HE) encompasses multiple concepts, including animal ethics, ecological environment, and social justice. The problem prompting this study was that individuals who have graduated from a higher education HE program face challenges successfully integrating HE into their K–12 classrooms. Grounded by Weil's solutionary approach to HE, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the teaching experiences of individuals who graduated from a higher education HE program and successfully integrated HE into their classrooms. Participants were purposefully sampled from a small population of educators who completed a U.S. degree or certificate program in HE and successfully implemented HE subjects into their classrooms. Semistructured interviews were conducted with six participants who met inclusion criteria. Thematic analysis using inductive, open coding was conducted. Results revealed that participants found creative and resilient ways to integrate HE principles into their teaching practice including using strategies aligned to solutionary processes, adapting K–12 teaching practices to include HE, emphasizing HE-oriented critical thinking, and focusing instruction on HE-related, real-world problems and topics in their classrooms. Participants reported experiencing challenges related to integrating HE topics in the classroom including lack of stakeholder awareness, curricular rigidity or overload, financial and resource constraints, pushback over fear of controversy, and feeling isolated or being unsupported. The study may promote positive social change by highlighting the importance of empowering educators to provide HE and help students develop empathy and compassion for all living things on this planet.

Teachers' Perspectives on Humane Education Implementation

by

Rebecca Ann Bartaway

MA, Valparaiso University, 2017

MA, Madonna University, 2014

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2026

Dedication

To all the animals who have inspired me to be their voice and demonstrate their sentience, cognizance, and innate value daily, I will always love you! I dedicate this work to you, especially Lucky, Bandit, Smokey, Zorro, Blaise, and Xena, my beloved husky canine pets who always put a smile on my face when I was feeling down.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of many individuals for whom I am grateful.

To begin, I was extremely fortunate to have guidance from Dr. Andrew Domzalski and Dr. Michelle Proctor from Madonna University, who introduced me to humane education. To Mary Pat Champeau, Director of the Humane Education program for the Institute of Humane Education, who has provided continued support, and the faculty and founder of the Institute of Humane Education, Zoe Weil, who further opened my eyes and heart. My thesis advisor, Dr. Kristine Tucker, directed me to Walden University to pursue my Ed.D. Thank you.

I can claim the best dissertation committee: Dr. Jamie Patterson, who assisted me in completing my proposal and finally obtaining my doctorate. To Dr. Wells, you helped me over the hump.

To my best friend, Vanessa, I thank you for your true partnership. Your belief in the importance of my work and ability to complete it makes this dissertation yours as well. In the loving memory of my parents, Dorrance and Marjorie Bartaway, and beloved sister, Jackie, I thank you for setting high expectations. You have demonstrated the importance of education throughout my entire life. Moreover, I hope that you are proud of my accomplishments. Furthermore, to my oldest brother, Bill, and my youngest brother, Tim, who always encouraged me. I share this achievement with all of you.

Thank you to all the humane educators worldwide who continue to improve outcomes for other people, animals, and the planet through learning experiences.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background.....	1
Problem Statement.....	1
Purpose of the Study	1
Research Questions.....	2
Conceptual Framework.....	2
Nature of the Study	3
Definitions.....	3
Assumptions.....	4
Scope and Delimitations	4
Limitations	4
Significance.....	5
Summary.....	5
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	7
Literature Search Strategy.....	8
Conceptual Framework.....	8
Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables.....	11
Teaching Methods and Learning	11
Animal Protection and Animal Rights Education.....	11
Humane Education Today.....	12

Environmental Education.....	14
Character/Global Education.....	17
Humane Education and Social Change.....	18
The Uniqueness of Humane Education.....	18
Challenges in Humane Education.....	22
Proposed Strategies in Humane Education.....	25
Summary and Conclusions	27
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	29
Research Design and Rationale	29
Role of the Researcher	31
Methodology	32
Participant Selection	32
Instrumentation	32
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.....	33
Data Analysis Plan.....	33
Trustworthiness.....	34
Credibility	35
Transferability.....	35
Dependability.....	35
Confirmability.....	36
Ethical Procedures	36
Summary.....	36

Chapter 4: Results	38
Setting	39
Data Collection	40
Data Analysis	40
Results	40
Theme 1: Strategies.....	43
Theme 2: Challenges.....	49
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	55
Summary	56
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	57
Interpretation of the Findings.....	57
The Findings in Relation to the Research Questions and Literature	59
Limitations of the Study.....	61
Recommendations.....	62
Recommendations Based on Strengths.....	62
Recommendations Based on Limitations.....	62
Recommendations Based on the Literature	63
Implications for the Individual and Families	63
Implications for Organizations and Policy	64
Implications for Social Change.....	64
Conclusion	65
References.....	66

Appendix: Interview Protocol.....80

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Demographics.....39

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

Humane education (HE) is considered a newer pedagogy that continues to grow and needs further understanding through research (Saari, 2020). Since the implementation of HE in the late 1800s, there has not been a clear, concise definition of HE or its purpose. Further research may improve humane education through better strategies and efficacy. Itle-Clark and Comaskey (2020) provided an understanding of HE. HE, which adopts a humane pedagogy, presents a new pathway for learners to address social issues using a systematic approach that considers other fields and factors.

Problem Statement

The problem prompting this qualitative study is individuals who have graduated from a higher education HE program face challenges successfully integrating HE into their classrooms. which could provide insights regarding effective HE-based curricula. The study is based on the HE conceptual framework designed by Weil. This theory is appropriate for this study, which explores the appropriateness of strategies for implementing HE subjects in classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the teaching experiences of individuals who have graduated from a higher education HE program and have successfully integrated HE into their classrooms. The data were collected using semistructured interviews and analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The population were graduates from HE programs who have successfully implemented HE

subjects into their classrooms. Utilizing the qualitative approach provided personal experience descriptions of educators' strategies to implement HE subjects into their classrooms.

Research Questions

I sought to answer two research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What strategies do higher education graduates use to implement HE topics in their classrooms?

RQ2: What challenges do graduates from an HE higher education program experience in implementing HE topics in their classroom?

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study is Weil's solutionary approach to HE. Ascione (1997) defined HE this way: "Instilling, reinforcing, and enhancing young people's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior toward the kind, compassionate, and responsible treatment of human and animal life are examples of the shared components of most humane education programs" (p. 57).

Therefore, HE educators are faced with the challenges of what the best teaching methods and measurements they can use to teach HE topics in their classrooms. One element of HE is developing critical thinking skills by becoming a solution, which is the fourth element of Weil's solutionary approach to HE. According to Arslan (2022), "critical thinking is the ability of individuals to reason against events, facts, and situations, as well as to analyze and evaluate problem situations" (p. 638). Expanding on this, Schendel et al. (2023) concluded that although critical thinking is a primary goal of

higher education, critical thinking can only be taught or transferred in specific conditions and curriculums (pp. 733-734), which HE could create or provide. This is a logical connection to the problem and key research questions that prompted this study, because the focus is on teachers who have successfully implemented HE into their classrooms.

Nature of the Study

This study has a basic qualitative design. Qualitative research focuses on human behavior (Creswell, 2013). A qualitative study enables participants to share their views and experiences regarding their strategies for implementing HE subjects in classrooms. The basic qualitative study also helps to describe the issues as they are, without many inferences and analyses from me as the researcher. Interview questions were developed based on the HE theory. Semistructured interviews used predefined open-ended questions, as shown in the interview protocol (Appendix). By using semistructured interviews, I followed a set order that would allow easy comparison between the respondents while also limiting the number of respondents who would remain within the scope of the study. Subsequently, the data collected were analyzed qualitatively to establish emerging themes from the study.

Definitions

Adult learner: For the purposes of this study, an adult learner will be an individual who is at least 25-years-old and attends school full- or part-time (Iloh, 2019).

Humane education (HE): “An approach to teaching and learning that promotes an interdisciplinary understanding of human rights, animal rights, animal protection,

environmental ethics and environmental stewardship, and cultural issues for social change” (Tucker, 2016, p. 7).

Sustainability: The ability to maintain and support a process over a continuous period while ensuring a balance between the environment, equity, and economy (Shutaleva et al., 2020).

Assumptions

Assumptions relating to the fundamental portions of the research are taken for granted (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). I assumed that participants responded openly, thoroughly, and honestly. I also had to assume that the participants did not feel pressured to meet with me and did not feel obligated to answer in a specific way.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study was first limited to its purpose, which was to explore the best teaching methods used by graduates from an HE higher education program who have successfully implemented HE topics into their classrooms.

The delimitations of the study included a focus on higher education graduates who graduated from an HE higher education program. Not only this, the participants were required to have successfully implemented HE topics into their classrooms. All of the participants met this defined scope and delimitations.

Limitations

Limitations detail the study's weaknesses based on the methodology and design that may influence the findings and conclusions (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). For example, the limitations of this study might have included access to participants.

Measures such as expanding to include teachers who had graduated from any U.S., HE program helped to ensure easy access to participants and to ensure that a broad population was represented so that saturation could be met. After expanding to include teachers from any U.S. HE program, seven participants agreed to interview but only six were able to complete interviews. Despite the small sample, the interview with the sixth participant revealed no new data and, therefore, saturation was reached.

Significance

This study's positive social change implications include valuable knowledge for administrators, educators, policymakers, and other researchers looking for ways to implement HE topics in classrooms and curricula. The fourth element of developing critical thinking in individuals will contribute to creating social change in the interconnection between animal welfare/protection and environmental and social issues. Also, to bring positive social change by helping students develop empathy and compassion for all living things on this planet earth.

Summary

This study was founded on the need to understand the best teaching practices used by educators who have successfully implemented HE topics into their classrooms. Despite employing various methods with their humanities students, teachers often fail to instill values essential to positive human interactions, including empathy, love, respect, gratitude, and peace (Saari, 2020). Ineffective pedagogical practices by educators were to blame for the lackluster results in HE (Bretzlaff-Holstein, 2018). Lack of administrative backing is likely the reason for Ross's (2020) observation that environmental studies

suffer from a lack of strategic planning. The focus of this dissertation stems from the IHE's HE framework, which emphasizes Grades Kindergarten–12 and college. As Weil (2004) stated, "Humane education has as its goal the creation of a humane world through humane citizenship" (p. 59). In Chapter 2, I will examine literature and theories that pertain to this study's objectives.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

HE may contribute to an improved educational system in the future. According to Itle-Clark and Comaskey (2020), HE will support advancement toward signature pedagogy. HE requires a specific teaching style and instructional approach in class due to the nature of the discipline and the way HE curricula are communicated (IHE, 2019). HE is unique as it seeks to provide instruction to students based on a curriculum that covers diverse aspects, including environmental ethics, protection of animals, human rights, culture, and change of processes and understanding of social change.

The problem prompting this study is individuals who have graduated from a higher education HE program face challenges successfully integrating HE into their classrooms. Despite the faculty applying numerous strategies to their humane subject students, they still do not manifest some of the key human relations attributes, such as empathy, love, respect, gratitude, and peacefulness, to human and non-human beings as expected outcomes of their learning (Saari, 2020). The following subsection describes the literature research strategy and discusses the conceptual framework.

I relied on the conceptual framework section to justify selecting the HE framework. In the next section, there is a critical review of the relevant studies on HE, organized from a broad to narrow perspective on matters relevant to the study problem. Additionally, there is a discussion regarding the various teaching methods used and the challenges educators have experienced. Finally, a summary will be included that discusses and describes the research gap the current study seeks to fill.

Literature Search Strategy

This study was based on a review of the literature on HE and HE strategies applied by the teaching faculty. I used the Walden University Library and searched several databases, including ProQuest and Eric. I used the following search terms: *humane Education, Earth education, environmental education, sustainability education, animal rights education, animal welfare education, animal protection education, human rights education, citizenship education, service learning, teaching global citizenship, critical literacy education, teaching critical literacy, media literacy, teaching strategies, teaching methods, and media literacy education*. The following categories emerged from the literature: humane education, environmental education, animal protection/animal rights education, human rights education, citizenship/global citizenship education, solutionary, uniqueness of HE, challenges in HE, proposed strategies in HE.

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study is Weil's solutionary approach to HE. Ascione (1997) defined HE as orienting students toward kindness and responsibility to others. Weil's (2016) solutionary framework suggests that graduates of HE programs are effectively enacting the transformative goals of the discipline. Through the elements of HE developed by Weil (Weil, 2004, 2010, 2016), educators can use strategies through IHE to assist their students' learning and make connections with animal protection, human rights/social justice, and environmental issues. Most importantly, the framework aids in the understanding of the challenges faced by HE educators.

One element of HE is developing critical thinking skills by becoming a solution, which is the fourth element of Weil's conceptual framework. Schendel et al. (2023) concluded that critical thinking can only be taught or transferred in specific conditions and curriculums, which HE could create or provide.

Related Theories: Transformative Learning and Freirean Pedagogy

Mezirow's transformative learning theory, Freire's critical pedagogy, and Weil's solutionary/humane education contain similar elements. By situating humane education within the merging of systems thinking, critical awareness, and solution-focused action, the study highlights its capacity to cultivate ethically grounded, critically conscious, and systemically aware agents of change. Furthermore, the importance of HE teachers utilizing the strategies available and being equipped to face the challenges in implementing HE topics into their classrooms.

Freire's (1970) ideas go against traditional education by focusing on conversation, critical consciousness, and social justice. According to Takona (2025), by integrating Freire's themes into the curriculum, educators have the chance to motivate students and encourage them to understand their position as agents of change, able to promote a fairer and more sustainable future. These two theories are the initial framework of HE and are further developed by incorporating the Solutionary framework and System Thinking into the curriculum. Because of their influence on the development of the HE framework, I have included them here.

Humane Education

Chaaban et al. (2024) highlighted the educational benefits of applying systems-based approaches in higher education by showing improvements in students' analytical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and capacity to develop sustainable solutions. This comprehensive viewpoint supports the core aim of HE to prepare learners to transcend disciplinary boundaries and contribute to ethical, systemic transformation.

Therefore, HE educators are faced with the challenge of determining the best teaching methods and measurements to use in their HE classrooms. Expanding on this, Schendel et al. (2023) concluded that although critical thinking is a primary goal of higher education, critical thinking can only be taught or transferred in specific conditions and curricula, which HE could create or provide. Mezirow's transformative learning, Freirean pedagogy, and Weil's (2016) solutionary framework suggest that graduates of HE programs are effectively enacting the transformative goals of the discipline.

Summary

This framework informed both the study's design and analysis, serving as a lens to explore how graduates of humane education programs implement transformative principles in their teaching and professional practices. By situating humane education within HE, the importance of HE teachers utilizing the strategies available and being equipped to face the challenges in implementing HE topics into their classrooms is defined.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables

Teaching Methods and Learning

Various teaching methods include in-class instruction, service learning, blended learning, and dedicated online teaching and learning. Traditional teaching is considered a classroom experience that benefits student learners. As Berlin and Weaver (2021) discussed in their study, “online courses require more course preparation than face-to-face courses” (p. 320). Blended learning aligns the closest with andragogy service-learning provides the participant with practical hands-on experience and is a useful method for teaching adults. More specifically, I discussed how they can develop and promote a sense of social justice for nonhuman animals. Service learning is not new (Pacho, 2020).

Today’s service learning represents a variation of traditional paper-and-pencil and computer education. It is a type of education based on experience that involves recognizing a societal issue, setting goals, planning, collaborating with group members, implementing, reflecting, revising goals, sharing experiences with others, and celebrating accomplishments. Scholars have indicated that today’s service learning in high schools and universities reflects a unique set of variables, including a linkage with problem-based learning and academic subjects. (Brand, 2020, p. 79)

Animal Protection and Animal Rights Education

From the limited evidence that chronologically documented the progression to the 20th century, it was evident that there was a shift in the ways animals were protected in

the 20th century (MacKay, 2020). Although the Humane Society started with a focus on dogs and cats, they expanded in the 1960s and 1970s to include broader animal-related concerns. This shift in priorities helped to expand the awareness and research surrounding HE (Phillips & Carla, 2020).

There is a lack of a chronological description of the evolution of HE and the protection of animals. However, the available evidence, such as one documented by Phillips and Carla (2020), suggested that during this period most humane education was related to outdoor experiences and animal experiences. Most HE programs were still “run primarily through shelters, rescues, and local humane societies working independently, meaning that the general focus of these programs continued to be on companion animals” (Bexell et al., 2020, p. 124). Despite the lack of coherent evidence on animal protection and its relation to HE, little evidence associates the period between the 1960s and 1970s with elementary learning.

HE continued to evolve, as documented in the limited literature available with the formation of relevant associations. There is no consensus from scholars as to the exact period when professional bodies were formulated, as Fung and Zhou (2020) indicated, the 1960s, while Saari (2020) documents 1970.

Humane Education Today

The level of literacy in HE in the United States has remained low over the years despite the gradual growth. The most recent review of U.S. HE programs revealed that “HE programs were taught by educators outside of the public system and, most frequently, by employees of animal welfare and shelter groups” (Unti & DeRosa, 2003,

p.33). This problem is aggravated by the very low number of youths engaged in animal control and HE in general. HE remains a new field that is neither widely studied nor embraced.

Today, the growth of HE is hindered by the reluctance of the youth and community to embrace formal education. In a study where organizations dealing with animals responded to a quantitative study by Fung and Zhou (2020), it was reported that they had a median of one paid human education staff member with a full-time mandate, while the paid staff exceeded five people. However, the people responsible for youth education are often overburdened with diverse responsibilities.

Scholars have also documented that numerous efforts have been made to promote HE. Despite the lack of recent literature regarding the institutions formed recently, scholars have described different approaches (Hawes et al., 2022). There is a lack of chronological interpretation from the literature on how the institutions and programs in HE have evolved to the current situation. This further supports the position that this is a new field that continues to evolve. From scholarly evidence, there is an indication that there is a lack of proper definition of the scope of HE, which some scholars have attributed to the lack of focus on higher education and research-based evidence in HE. According to Holfelder (2019) humane education is not recognized in the education field at large. Since 1996 empirical and expertise-based research has indicated that limited focus on improving HE has led to inconsistencies in its scope. Although postgraduate education for HE lacks great focus from scholars, there is little evidence to indicate that some small steps are being taken to grow the HE field of study around the world.

Environmental Education

Environmental education has attracted considerable attention in HE because it addresses every aspect of living on this planet. Environmental education is a crucial part of HE as it covers diverse aspects, and there is a need to protect the current ecosystem. The importance of environmental education has also been documented in the literature. There is an indication that integrating wildlife into HE practices can help educators engage in activities that inspire their attachment to animals. These forms of bonds stimulate perception transformations and pro-environmental behaviors, both of which are important for ecological conservation (Dos Santos et al., 2020). There is scholarly evidence from different aspects that justify the popularity of environmental education.

Teacher education programs must effectively educate preservice teachers for these 21st-century difficulties (Reddy, 2021). There is a need for active participation in order to achieve a more meaningful learning experience regarding environmental issues and the development of knowledge to foster more appropriate learning on environmental and social justice during curriculum implementation (Reddy, 2021). There is a need to enhance the level of environmental teachers, which could affect their implementation of HE (Wanchana et al., 2020). Scholarly evidence covering diverse aspects of environmental education has indicated a dire need to improve environmental education to resolve most of the problems that affect human life.

Scholars have documented the various strategies that are used in teaching environmental education at various educational levels. The available literature focuses on two environmental education strategies, Giroux's and Miller's approaches (Kalsoom &

Hasan, 2022), which have been critiqued and merited by researchers. According to Kalsoom and Hasan (2022), Henry Giroux's strategy proposition is that learning institutions are not perfectly isolated from the other components of society and the curriculum design, implementation, and assessment inevitably reflect judgments about the nature of knowledge, relationships in the classroom, and power allocation. Strapasson et al. (2022) interpreted Henry's argument as based on the assertion that teaching strategies in environmental education should not be static but rather be defined by the numerous factors that are at play during the implementation of the curriculum.

Based on Henry's assertion, several educational theorists have created frameworks to characterize and clarify the methodologies of diverse curricular studies. While Strapasson et al. (2022) agreed with Henry's assertion that curriculum models tend to deal with characterizations that have the ring of validity, as stereotypes commonly do, they find these models useful because they show the dominant patterns in curriculum theory and practice with broad strokes. In contrast to Henry, the John Miller method, as reported by Miller (2020), has established a paradigm in which he outlines three typical educational approaches: transmission, transaction, and transformation. While it focuses mostly on pedagogical issues, this framework broadly matches other curricular approaches (Miller, 2020). These three viewpoints reflect diverse beliefs about nature and the proper relationship between humans and nature, shaping the varied approaches to environmental education.

While the reviewed literature indicates that John Miller's strategy in environmental education was the most popular, it has attracted views from other scholars.

Based on John Miller's original assertion, the transmission position is the first phase. The transmission perspective is seen as a traditional approach to education in which the learner is viewed as a passive recipient of material that has been decided by the authoritative adults as being essential to civilization (Miseliunaite et al., 2022). Miseliunaite et al. (2022) described this approach as a banking model. This perspective is fragmental because it divides material into smaller, more readily consumable pieces (Fokides & Chachlaki, 2020). Miller's Trans-mission viewpoint connects to the technical vision of education by Miseliunaite et al. (2022) that, irrespective of the subject, education should be disseminated from above and be gradually transmitted.

The transaction position focuses on the specific learner: what he or she contributes to the learning setting and how he or she may interact with the curriculum. The method described in "Experience and Education" by John Dewey (1938) is frequently recognized as a standard illustration of the transaction position (Gruber & Boreen, 2003). The primary objectives of learning are cognitive growth and the enhancement of the learner's skills to solve problems, which is the fundamental pragmatic position (Shutaleva et al., 2020).

Miller's transaction viewpoint relates to the viewpoint by Tsevreni (2021) that curriculum emphasizes the development of cognitive processes and that it is the fundamental object that learner uses to enhance understanding and comprehension of the subject matter. Based on this, Miller (2020) indicated that the curriculum for environmental education should be well-designed to fit society. This approach to environmental education is still anthropocentric since nature is still viewed as a tool for

learners to develop skills or a resource to be controlled (Shutaleva et al., 2020). From the scholars who reviewed the transaction position as indicated by Miller, there is a clear indication that this approach seeks to value how the learner interacts with the curriculum.

Based on the proposition by Miller (2020), transformation position is essential to consider the psychological, social, ethical, and spiritual demands of the learner in addition to the learner's cognitive ability. The education curriculum tries to cover all these different aspects of the student, and as a result, it is regarded as taking a holistic approach (Miller, 2020). However, Miller has suggested that there is frequently a propensity to favor either personal or social transformation within the transformation stance. While reviewing this approach, Tsevreni (2021) indicated that while learning environmental education, the learner should not just focus on their cognitive ability but also on the moral, physical, or spiritual aspects. However, Owen (2021) critiqued the transformation position by Miller (2020), noting that focusing on self-actualization and social responsibility conflicts with environmental education. The transformation position by Miller has attracted mixed reactions from scholars regarding its application in HE learning.

Character/Global Education

Global education promotes “the study of global issues and themes, such as sustainable futures, quality of life, conflict and security, and social justice, across an integrated, interdisciplinary, or trans-disciplinary framework” (Fuller & Stevenson, 2019). Scholars have established the need for the programs offered from a global perspective. To enhance the education programs offered, Brennen and Widdop (2020)

indicated that there is a problem facing higher education in establishing the framework that enables students and teachers to engage in addressing ethical issues that concern their knowledge in action for environmental issues (Brennen & Widdop, 2020). In learning, knowledge-creating students, teachers, and other educators have to develop a culture that shares their knowledge with the schools, local communities, universities, and other agencies (Brennen & Widdop, 2020). Despite the interspersed studies on avenues to improve global education, scholars of different statures have indicated the need to improve programs to make them more impactful and ethical. Pedagogy can be used for demonstrating racial, cultural, and linguistic integration (Pacho, 2020). According to Aspray (2023), three groups have criticized the growth of character education.

Humane Education and Social Change

HE is an effective tool for social change (Cieslak, 2019). Cieslak (2019) looked at how increasing students' understanding of diverse situations, together with the cultivation of empathy, might serve to foster compassion in the classroom. Additional, in-depth research into the efficacy of HE programs is also needed, as these results are largely qualitative. These results corroborate the argument made by Cuanalo-Contreras and Benkmann (2022), who argued that HE is an efficient instrument for social change because it takes a systems approach to improvement. Therefore, HE is a dependable tool for social change.

The Uniqueness of Humane Education

According to scholars, the dissemination of HE by the faculty should be based on appropriate strategies because it is unique. Educators in HE should work toward ensuring

that learners distinguish between facts and opinion (Saari, 2020). Learners should also focus on solutions by giving opportunities for collaborative problem-solving, concept implementation, and evaluation and improvement (Saari, 2020). It is also unique in the sense that the ideal HE in the classroom includes a study of human, animal, and environmental rights to instill in students a feeling of personal responsibility and a caring attitude toward one another, animals, and the planet on which they live (Saari, 2020). The four aspects described by Saari (2020) indicate the uniqueness of the HE field.

HE is also reviewed by scholars on different aspects as to how it impacts the learners. Since many students have affection for animals, HE teachings are more likely to attract students' interest (Wolff, 2020). HE enhances students' intellectual and social development by capitalizing on their interest in and interactions with animals. According to research, animals can aid the development of learners (Bones et al., 2019). Students in HE are incredibly responsive, their minds are inquisitive and lively, and they have a great deal of innate excitement (Verene, 2018). The impact that HE has on the learners and subsequently affects how they relate to the environment, animals, and other social beings indicates the uniqueness of this field of study.

The uniqueness of HE is also explored by scholars based on the benefits that it has on various aspects. HE may be helpful to children at various stages of their education, regardless of whether it is taught as a distinct topic or incorporated into the current curriculum, if it is presented in an age-appropriate manner, fostering kindness and compassion for all living beings on Earth (Arnaudova-Otoubirova, 2022). It also encourages learners to live harmoniously with nature in an environmentally responsible

manner and promotes responsibility towards humans and other creatures, including animals, and the environment, while fostering the growth of critical thinking, empathy, and pro-social behavior (O'Connor & Samuels, 2018). In addition, some studies assert that HE can eventually lead to active citizenship and appropriate dispute resolution as well as to more cooperative convivial methods of peaceful living since it fosters empathy and pro-social conduct (O'Connor&Samuels, 2018). In addition, findings in a study showed that HE might be especially advantageous for young people with low starting pro-sociality levels (O'Connor&Samuels, 2018). Indeed, scholars have demonstrated the benefits of studying HE, making it a unique discipline.

HE is an educational field that can have strategies that are comparable to other instructional approaches, such as eco-pedagogy, sustainable education fields, value-oriented education, and liberatory pedagogy; however, it is also distinct from these other educational approaches (Bretzlaff-Holstein, 2018). O'Connor and Samuels (2018) noted that HE attempts to determine all forms of injustice holistically and consider these issues from a variety of perspectives, in contrast to other pedagogies that attempt to address the issue of oppression and injustice; this is one of the things that distinguishes HE as a form of instruction from other similar disciplines (Bones et al., 2019). The strategies applied in HE have been documented by scholars to be comparable to other fields, but with some significant differences.

Individual students need to learn about what is happening to this planet, people, and other species to achieve this goal. They must also know reverence and respect for others and deeply understand that all life forms are interconnected (Cochrane, 2023).

Students must also learn to think critically and creatively to arrive at wise, intelligent solutions and make smart choices. HE may be considered philanthropic and altruistic in this sense since it educates students to think about the needs, feelings, and suffering of others, to examine the impacts of their footprint on the globe, and to reflect on the world critically and their position in it (Saari, 2020). It is believed that HE cultivates learners the qualities of respect, reverence, and responsibility while simultaneously encouraging their curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking abilities, which enable them to analyze and solve challenges (Arnaudova-Otoubirova, 2022). While scholars have shown the importance of HE to society, they call for the inclusion of individual students into this profession, noting the dire deficiency in this demographic group, as evidenced by the scholarly evidence from empirical studies.

HE, by its inherent interdisciplinary nature and the extensive range of real-world issues it attempts to solve, makes a positive contribution to the improvement of the educational standard in the 21st century. One of the Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations is that all people have access to excellent education that is both inclusive and equitable, and that they have opportunities to continue their education throughout their lives (United Nations, 2024; see also Bones et al., 2019; Saari, 2020). The Sustainable Development Goals are also linked to human rights, equality of people based on gender and culture, and promotion of nonviolent acts, which leads to diversity. Arnaudova-Otoubirova (2022) noted that one of the targets of this goal is directly linked to HE. Arnaudova-Otoubirova indicated that despite the benefits that appear to be self-evident that have been described so far, HE faces several challenges that

need to be addressed to clarify some of the obstacles that stand in the way of its acceptance as a method of education that is centered on universal values.

Challenges in Humane Education

One key challenge in HE is curriculum implementation. According to Arnaudova-Otoubirova et al. (2020), the issue of practice in HE is a significant one that must be resolved for better delivery. Implementing HE programs often takes the form of either an optional course or an after-school program (Arnaudova-Otoubirova et al., 2020). HE is not necessarily included as a required subject in preschool, elementary, or secondary school curricula. According to Saari (2020), HE will not be able to live up to its full potential until it is either given its class or integrated into the educational frameworks that are already in place. This indicates that HE should be more fully integrated within the other school subjects, either as a stand-alone subject or the key HE themes should be incorporated into other major subjects. This can be done either as a stand-alone subject or as a combination of HE themes and topics within the context of other subjects (Bretzlaff-Holstein, 2018).

The full integration of HE within other school subjects is attainable through the coordinated efforts of several professors working together from the perspective of multiple disciplines. Unfortunately, empirical evidence from Saari (2020) has indicated that there is limited cooperation between the stakeholders in HE and the authorities. The literature review indicates that the curriculum remains a key challenge in HE. Furthermore, concerns remain over the approaches to implementing HE in high schools and the pedagogies that are applied in higher education (Juliadilla, 2020). Samuels et al.

(2018) contended that to become an effective, humane educator, one must first acquire a comprehensive personal education on various topics, including animal welfare, cultural and societal norms, human rights, and environmental ethics. To be well-prepared and have the self-assurance necessary to teach HE-related topics (Russel, 2019).

In either scenario, educators will need to devote additional time and energy to acquiring the essential information and capabilities, and they will need to be either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to do so (Russel, 2019). Teaching about injustice toward humans, animals, and the environment generally necessitates a great deal of preparation and commitment because this type of teaching involves exploring contentious issues (Samuels et al., 2018). However, effective teaching and learning depend on educators' professional experience and pedagogical knowledge (Russel, 2019; Samuels et al., 2018). Diverse scholarly sources indicate a lack of adequate preparation and ability for secondary and higher education instructors in relation to HE fields.

Scholars have identified numerous setbacks that hinder the appropriate implementation of HE. Horsthemke (2018) identified several significant flaws in the manner in which human education programs communicate the problems associated with social injustice. It seems that Horsthemke's primary concern is with educators' narrow perspectives toward different types of human oppression. This corresponds with the assertion by Arnaudova-Otoubirova (2022) that while educators are focusing on some minor forms of slavery, such as sweatshops, warfare, lack of resources, water, and food in developing countries, poverty, and terror, there are wide arrays of issues that have not yet been explored and studied. There is also the challenge that educators and

administrators in the field do not engage with the tensions and contradictions (Saari, 2020), which have led to irreconcilable relationships between animal, ecological, and human justice in conjunction with one another. The narrow focus on some aspects of HE has limited the progression of HE pedagogy and curriculum.

Developing carefully structured higher education HE preservice and in-service academic courses for teachers could make it possible for educators to meet some of the obstacles that have been discussed thus far (Oakley, 2019). Educators committed to HE must receive adequate training to cultivate new generations of responsible and caring young people who are eager to discover meaningful solutions to issues and repair the damage humans have inflicted on the Earth (Saari & Gómez-Galán, 2019). Rigorous academic research that focuses on closer cooperation between researchers and HEs, as well as an increase in the number of scientific publications on the effects of HE programs on the social and psychological development of learners, as well as their behavior and learning outcomes, will be an additional step in the right direction (Saari, 2020). Scholars have noted the deficiency in HE training strategies and proposed improvements.

Given the small number of recent studies that have been conducted to date to address the pedagogical issues that relate to HE (Oakley, 2019; Saari, 2020; Saari & Gómez-Galán, 2019), there is an urgent need for additional research that is based on a solid methodological design. In doing this, it becomes possible to address the issues and challenges that are faced in the delivery of an HE curriculum and meet the needs of diverse learners. The gender, age, socioeconomic background, and personal history of students' human-animal connections should also be considered to analyze educational

outcomes from many aspects (O'Connor & Samuels, 2018). This will allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the situation. At the same time, conducting well-designed studies with randomized controls, defined aims, and accurate findings is likely to fill in the gaps left open by research carried out so far (O'Connor & Samuels, 2018). Scholars have highlighted the lack of literature concerning the improvement of pedagogical issues, hence the need for more research on this aspect.

The reliance on animal usage in HE jeopardizes the learning-teaching process. This situation has repercussions for forming a humanitarian attitude (Juliadilla, 2020). Students are concerned that they will miss out on theoretical and professional skills if they choose substitute choices, compared to those who effectively drop out of their studies owing to grave ethical issues caused by animal exploitation (Toquero, 2021). Professors rely on their previous educational experiences and make little attempt to alter their teaching methods (Valeau & Raby, 2022). While some of the studies must be conducted using animals, there is a challenge as calls are made to replace them to avoid harming them, which makes learning in HE a significant challenge.

Proposed Strategies in Humane Education

Solutionary has been documented in HE to address some pedagogical issues from a general field dimension. A solutionary is someone who can advocate for the wellness of all beings and bring about a world with more compassion (Cochrane, 2023). IHE has developed a program that has been implemented in several schools. According to this process and the four elements of HE, educators will inspire young people to become critical thinkers by identifying issues affecting them and finding solutions that will

benefit them, the local community, and the environment (Cochrane,2023). The solutionary process advocated by scholars in HE advocates the need to address key elements such as educators, the local community, learners, and the environment.

Scholars have also investigated the optimal solutions that could be used in handling HE curriculum implementation issues. Collaborating with government authorities and bodies responsible for collecting scientific data, including animal usage (Bretzlaff-Holstein, 2018). The primary objective of forming this network is to bring together science education researchers working on or interested in the replacement of harmful animal usage in teaching and training activities (Bretzlaff-Holstein, 2018). A survey revealed that approximately 44% of 1st-year undergraduates would rather use alternatives to animals for training than animals themselves. From the diverse studies, solutions for pedagogical issues could be attained through collaboration to meet the needs of all stakeholders.

Current scholars in HE may be educated in new teaching technology, thereby enhancing the adoption of new ideas and methodologies. The development of alternative learning techniques and tools to replace harmful animal exploitation has already produced a few isolated projects and courses (Ngai et al., 2021). When teaching the idea of toxicity testing in the 21st century, efforts to introduce HE and in vitro sciences in cell biology classrooms presented a new approach to problem-based learning (Cuanalo-Contreras & Benkmann, 2022).

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 focuses on the history of HE and the components defined in the existing literature. With the history of HE, there has been a focus on the need to prevent animal cruelty while also focusing on the benefits of having companion animals. History indicates a shift toward using education programs, such as shelter rescues, and working with local humane societies (Saari, 2020).

Scholars have also explored the current state of HE, noting that only a few universities specialize in this field of study (Holfelder, 2019). A key division of HE, environmental education, has also been studied by scholars, indicating that it addresses every aspect of living on this planet earth, yet there is lack of proper documentation on the strategies that faculty apply in this area (Reddy, 2021; Ross, 2020; Wanchana et al., 2020).

HE is unique and hence requires better strategies in curriculum implementation. Currently, numerous challenges are associated with the need to shift from reliance on animals, yet there is no adequate information on how to proceed. Key challenges related to the implementation of teaching strategies as efforts are made to replace animals to avert harming them. In addition, scholars have indicated that there could be a lack of cooperation between trainers and administrators, which could have led to the aggravation of the problems.

HE is a newer pedagogy that continues to grow despite its inability to be recognized. While most of the studies were based on expert opinions and surveys from different HE programs, adequate information on the strategies that the faculty should

follow in the implementation of curriculum and classroom based on their experiences and perceptions is lacking. I addressed the gap by examining the strategies that the faculty apply in their implementation of the curriculum in the classes and investigating whether administrators provide adequate support.

Chapter 3: Research Method

HE is a growing field of study covering aspects of education related to environmental ethics, human and animal rights, culture, and social change. Because HE is teacher-driven, it is necessary to evaluate the strategies and approaches the faculty use in their classroom lessons. This basic qualitative study explored the teaching experiences of individuals who have graduated from an HE higher education program and have successfully integrated HE into their classrooms. Samuels (2018), Saari (2020), and Oakley (2019) explored the continued growth in HE and the different approaches used by the faculty in this subject area. However, the available literature has not explored the appropriateness of the strategies and support from administrators for implementing HE subjects in their classrooms.

In this chapter, I discuss the research method and design for the study, including why the research design choice was appropriate. The chapter also includes an elaboration on my role in this study. Next, the methodology is elaborated, with a detailed explanation of the steps and procedures used to collect the data, analyze it, and provide a response to the RQ. I also describe the measures I took to ensure trustworthiness. Ethical considerations are also discussed. The conclusion is a summary of the critical content discussed in the chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

I used a basic qualitative research design for this study. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the teaching experiences of individuals who have graduated from an HE higher education program and have successfully integrated HE

into their classroom. This purpose was attained using basic qualitative research method. Basic qualitative research study involves the collection of abstract or noncountable data in the form of audio and then assessing this data to point out themes about the topic of study and the study's research questions. A basic qualitative research design is not overly dependent upon setting and deals with practical questions. Basic qualitative design was also chosen because scholars such as Saari (2020) and Oakley (2019) have alluded that HE is considered a newer pedagogy, which may require in-depth exploration since little information is available.

Using the qualitative research method, I was able to examine the issue by conducting semistructured interviews. I applied a basic qualitative research design based on the description of the phenomenon under this perspective. I used a basic qualitative study because it was the logical design for the current study targeting HE faculty members. The basic qualitative research design enabled the participants to share their experiences firsthand and provided the necessary data to answer the research questions.

A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study, as the research problem required data interpretation, as opposed to data measurement. Quantitative research methods often include Likert-type scale questions that require the respondent to respond on a scale. This approach was not appropriate for the current study, because it would have limited the kind of responses that the researcher would receive from the respondents. For objective studies that require the researcher to test a hypothesis based on collected numerical data, quantitative research is most appropriate, which is not the case in the current study. Moreover, a mixed method was not appropriate as it combines

quantitative and qualitative study attributes. The mixed method was rejected for the current study because of its quantitative aspect.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the study instrument responsible for recruiting participants, collecting and analyzing data, ensuring reliability, and interpreting the findings (Sacks, 2018). In this study, I ensured that the participants were protected from physical, mental, or psychological harm.

In this study, I refrained from judging participants based on their experiences. When prejudices, viewpoints, or preconceptions emerge, the researcher must set them aside to allow interviewees to freely share their views and experiences (Askerud et al., 2021). During the interview, I followed the appropriate sequence by asking general questions first, followed by more detailed or delicate inquiries as necessary. I also ensured that the participants were not led by the questions, causing them to give answers that support the dominant prejudices and ideas.

The researcher must also take precautions to prevent unauthorized persons from accessing the data once it has been obtained (Sacks, 2018). Setting up passwords for all study data devices is a good security step (Sacks, 2018). The data were saved on the Zoom media platform and secured by a username and password, as this qualitative study comprises online interviews using Zoom. The data will be discarded after 5 years (see Sacks, 2018).

Methodology

Participant Selection

The research population entails a selection of individuals with similar characteristics and forms the basis for the study by providing answers to the RQs. For this study, I was interested in graduates from an HE higher education program who have successfully implemented HE subjects into their classrooms. Therefore, the target population was the graduates of HE programs who would be study participants. From the target population, I sampled six participants. Researchers acknowledge saturation has been achieved when there is no additional insight on the topic and duplication-related qualities or notions (Dworkin, 2012). Because this is such a niche and focused topic, each of the recruited participants were highly aligned with the research problem and, therefore, with each other. I chose the purposeful sampling technique because it allowed me to select the most suitable participants to address the RQs.

The participants who were included in the study met the selection criteria, had graduated from an HE higher education program, and had successfully implemented HE subjects into their classrooms. Second, they had the necessary teaching experience. Most importantly, they had successfully implemented HE lesson topics into their curriculum.

Instrumentation

I used semistructured interviews as instruments to collect data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Semistructured interviews for a conversational flow with the participants. The interview protocol is attached in the Appendix. Each semistructured interview did not exceed 60 minutes.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Upon meeting the requirements, I received Walden University Institutional Review Board approval to begin the data collection process. With approval from the director of programs at IHE, I was provided with the participants' email addresses, with which I contacted them with an invitation email. Each participant who responded to the invitation email was required to respond to my email with, "I consent," which indicates the agreement to participate in the study. After individuals consented to participate, a second email was issued. The Zoom platform was used to conduct semistructured interviews. Audio recordings were made using digital media for subsequent transcription and analysis. Participant numbers were produced beginning with (P1) to protect individual privacy and maintain confidentiality. I took notes during each interview.

Data Analysis Plan

After collecting data, I analyzed the data in three major stages: reading data to become familiar with it and identify potential themes and categorizing and coding data while also grouping them into themes (Jackson et al., 2021). After each interview I listened to the recording several times, then I transcribed the interviews and compared the audio file to the transcription to confirm that all responses were accurately documented.

Researchers must be mindful of the study environment because it influences the perceptions and behaviors of the participants (Jackson et al., 2021). Therefore, I offered the participants a copy of the transcripts so that they could check their statements. Participants were asked to respond to the email by verifying the content of the interviews or correcting any incorrect replies. None of the participants had additional comments or

corrections after reviewing the shared transcript. This method was followed for each interview.

As per Saldaña's (2016) manual on qualitative coding, I employed a process for concept-driven coding, in which I used Zoom to record and transcribe interviews, then later exported the data to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet template to analyze and code according to themes. Finally, I used deductive coding, a top-down method that starts with creating a codebook containing the first set of codes. The collection was constructed in line with the RQs and framework. I then subsequently examined the data and assigned extract codes; at the end of the analysis, the codes should closely resemble those in the codebook. This method is more appropriate when a preset framework for the results is required.

I identified relevant themes by combining interviews with similar code sets. Identifying themes will assist the material's understanding and explanation (Jackson et al., 2021). Finally, I composed a narrative report summarizing the data analysis and results. Participants' specific remarks and examples will be included in the narrative, that is a description of the lives of participants via their experiences (Jackson et al., 2021). This requires a discussion of the relevance of the individual's experiences.

Trustworthiness

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability comprise trustworthiness's four components (Mills & Gay, 2016). I addressed each of these factors.

Credibility

To ensure credibility of the study, researchers must provide enough detail that readers can understand the topic of study through reading alone (Haz et al., 2023). To ensure credibility, I consistently reflected on what could be my own biases recorded my initial reactions to participant responses. Participants were also invited to do a transcript review to ensure that there were no gaps or anything additional they would like to add or items they would like to clarify. By keeping the reflexive journal and employing transcript reviews I was able to provide thick, detailed descriptions of the participant experiences.

Transferability

I presented detailed descriptive data in the findings so that, as Ahmed (2024) said, participants could transfer the findings of this study to their own environments. The thick, rich descriptions provided could help readers understand and place the findings in their own situations.

Dependability

For dependability, Dempsey (2018) raised the following question: "Would these results be replicated again with comparable individuals in similar settings?" (p. 364). I addressed the dependability issue by describing the data-gathering process. Then, for readers to decide if they can answer Dempsey's question, I have provided a full explanation of the data-gathering procedures. Throughout the research process I provided clear step-by-step explanations of the steps I took as a researcher to gather and analyze data. In order to ensure dependability, a qualitative researcher must be as transparent as

possible (Ahmed, 2024). Additionally, I employed an interview protocol to ensure that even though the interviews with participants were open conversations, inviting them to share about their experiences, that each interview followed a similar outline. The interview protocol also helped to ensure that even if the conversation deviated, we returned to a standard line of questioning.

Confirmability

According to Dempsey (2018), confirmability entails addressing the following question: "How did researchers manage their biases, motives, interests, and perspectives?" (p. 364). In addition, a researcher's reflexive journal can be used to record reflections and biases as the data is collected (Ahmed, 2024). My reflexive journal was used in this way.

Ethical Procedures

A key ethical concern is safeguarding privacy rights, protecting the identities of individual participants (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of participants. Data collection, analysis, interpretation, and raw data will be stored securely on my personal laptop for 5 years following graduation. After 5 years, the data will be destroyed by deleting all related files. I also completed ethics training and secured Walden University Institutional Review Board approval. Walden University's approval number for this study is 01-22-25-0746181. It expires on January 21, 2026.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I explained how I formulated the qualitative research methodology and interpretive research design from the problem statement and RQs. The qualitative

research tradition is described, followed by a description of basic qualitative research. The justification for using qualitative research methodology and basic qualitative design was provided and compared with other possible research traditions and corresponding designs. The purposeful sampling strategy, procedures for participant recruitment, methods of gaining access to participants, and processes for establishing working relationships and ethical protections. A specific plan for data collection, analysis, and interpretation, verification of findings, management of discrepant cases, and procedures for disseminating the results was also presented. In Chapter 4, I discuss the results from the interviews I conducted with the six participants. The descriptive analysis reveals the participants' professional experiences with implementing HE topics in their classrooms.

Chapter 4: Results

I conducted this basic qualitative study to understand the experiences of individuals who have successfully integrated HE into their classrooms and what teaching methods were successful. understand the teaching experiences of individuals who have graduated from an HE program and successfully integrated HE into their classrooms. I collected the data using semistructured interviews and analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The population consisted of graduates from an HE program who have successfully implemented HE subjects in their classrooms. The qualitative approach provided personal experience descriptions of educators' strategies to implement HE subjects into their classrooms.

I sought to answer the following RQs:

RQ1. What strategies do higher education graduates use to implement HE topics in their classrooms?

RQ2. What challenges do graduates from an HE higher education program experience in implementing HE topics in their classroom?

The study findings may benefit educators who are implementing HE into their classrooms and provide them with a better understanding of the issues they may face. In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the processes and procedures used in this study, including the setting, demographics of the participants, and the data collection and analysis methods.

Setting

I interviewed all six participants using the Zoom platform with audio enabled. Participants' privacy and confidentiality were maintained using identifiers. Participants are referred to as P1 and P2, for example. All participants graduated from universities in the United States and had varying backgrounds (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Educational field (highest degree)	Professional role	Teaching context
P1	Modern and Romance languages (PhD)	Spanish professor	Higher education
P2	International adult education (MEd)	Graduate program instructor	Graduate human education program
P3	Science education and conservation (PhD)	Program director	University certificate program
P4	Geography and environmental studies (MEd)	Middle/high school teacher	Secondary education
P5	Linguistics and humane education (PhD)	Nonprofit director	Travel and adult learning
P6	Education and humane education (MEd)	Elementary science teacher	Grades Kindergarten–5 education

Note. PhD = doctor of philosophy degree; MEd = master of education degree.

Additionally, before the data collection process began, I acquired Institutional Review Board approval from Walden University. All participants seemed comfortable with the interview process.

Data Collection

I used audio interviews of six participants using the Zoom conferencing platform. Before beginning the interviews, I assigned participant numbers for each person (P1–P6). The duration of the interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes, depending on the participant. The transcripts were automatically created using the Zoom application. After each interview was concluded, I downloaded the audio file to my computer and generated a Microsoft Word file for review. The automatic transcript was compared with the actual audio file of each participant to verify the verbatim recording. No variations were found in the data collection presented in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

I organized the data into categories related to the interview questions and the following interview headings: Background and Motivation, Strategies for implementing HE, Challenges and Obstacles, Impact and Reflection, and Support and Recommendations. Using the coding method presented by Saldaña (2016), I began with initial (open) coding, defined as using open, meaningful words and passages that were labeled directly in participants' language, where possible. The first round of coding yielded 23 codes. From there, a second round, pattern coding (second cycle), condensed the initial codes to five commonalities or categories. Two themes emerged from the five categories, representing participant experiences.

Results

Across all six participants, a powerful connection emerged around the themes of personal values, transformative experiences, and ethical awakenings as motivating forces

for pursuing and implementing HE. These educators did not stumble into HE by accident; rather, their pathways reflect deeply rooted personal commitments to justice, compassion, and meaningful teaching. The theme reveals that participants were not simply responding to institutional mandates or professional trends; they actively sought pedagogical models that aligned with their values. Their backgrounds ranged from linguistics and science to chaplaincy, nonprofit organizations, and higher education. However, each found a framework that gave ethical direction to their teaching in HE (see Table 1).

HE is the central theme discussed in terms of its discovery, training, implementation, challenges, impact, and support. Participants commonly cited the IHE as their point of entry into the field. Their discovery was often described as a moment of alignment or even relief, finally finding a framework that integrated animal ethics, human rights, and environmental sustainability.

P1 said,

I was always looking for ways to reconcile my interest in languages, my vocation to teach, and my passion for helping animals. I was conversing with some animal advocates in my area. The expression “humane education” came up, and I had never heard of it, so I googled it, and that led me to IHE’s website, which led me to complete a summer HE certification class.

P2 said, “I didn't know what humane education was... I attended an event at IHE and felt completely excited. I also thought, why didn't I think of this?”

P3 supported the interconnection of HE, stating

There was a big missing gap in conservation education in that, plenty of people in humane education learned from their writings and teachings, and I created my own, and so eventually ended up helping to create a certificate in humane education through the [university name redacted].

P3 then shared, “That’s when I discovered humane education, I was self-taught at first... I created my own path.” P4 spoke about the various grade-level aspects of teaching HE,

I teach middle and high school geography; part of that was looking at environmental and human rights issues. But the Animal Protection piece has been missing. I searched for a program and found the Institute for Human Education through [university name redacted].

P5 had a different approach to the discovery of HE, even though P5 held a PhD in linguistics and felt that this degree could not apply to the real world. P5 stated,

I found myself making very little contribution in terms of social change in the world. My niche in the HE field is through sustainable travel. I would say that my experience in humane education is not really like a normal one. It’s an online curriculum for travelers, and some materials that we design are for tourism professionals. But it's always approached through a humane education lens.

P6 also shared a unique pathway to HE. P6 stated,

I went to college right after High School. I came back to education when I wanted to become a chaplain. I'll say, side note, I've always loved animals. And at the Children's Hospital, before I left, they started to have a service dog program. I

mean, I was always just aware of the human-animal connection being so important. I thought I would be directly combining animals and education, but I was called to be in the classroom.

Educators were often driven by profound personal commitments to justice and compassion, frequently catalyzed by experiences with animal welfare or systemic oppression. These motivations led many to pursue additional study through the IHE or engage in self-directed research.

Theme 1: Strategies

Theme 1 was: The strategies higher education graduates use to implement HE topics in their classrooms include using solutionary processes, adapting Grades Kindergarten–12 practices, emphasizing critical thinking, and focusing on real-world problems.

Implementation Strategies

The results detailed various strategies for implementing HE, including using solutionary processes, adapting Grades Kindergarten–12 practices, emphasizing critical thinking, and focusing on real-world problems. P1 said, “I mostly teach courses in Spanish, but I also teach 1st-year experience in English. And that has been an opportunity for me to implement the full solutionary process from start to finish. This supports what P3 offered, which included the insight that “We discuss everything from human rights to animal protection, even broader than just animal protection, but all species protection.” P6 also shared that right now, “I am a science specialist at a school here in the western

U.S. I was using a lot of literacy, especially with the literacy standards of retelling a story. Any books I would use had humane education themes.”

P4 shared that “my seventh-grade class studies various animal institutions, comparing zoos, animal theme parks, aquariums, shelters, wildlife sanctuaries, and rehabilitation centers. We try to get a better understanding of how animals are treated by these institutions.” The final project they undertake is to create their own animal sanctuary. However, P4 stated,

But then, as we move up into grade 9, grade 10, we start to look a little bit more at some of the harsh treatment of these animals. The human impact of this includes working conditions, the contribution of climate change from animal agriculture, environmental aspects, and the protection of animals and their sentience, aiming to foster empathy in students toward these animals. Finally, I usually begin with a student-led salon at the university level. I would provide a curated list of readings and videos that all the students would have completed before coming into the class. This primary grade school educator has described numerous teaching strategies used successfully in teaching humane education topics in their classrooms.

Also, P4 taught HE at the university level, their syllabus includes readings, videos of different subjects, and discussions that would enhance their students' understanding of HE.

These methods of teaching HE are d in addition to the methods described by P2:

My students are graduate students, many of whom are teachers. I introduce students to four different strands. The first is to look at the very purpose of schooling. The whole idea of schooling as a system in need of transformational change is the first strand, the second, social conditioning, and the third is systems thinking. The 4th Strand is a solutionary strand where we look at the role of kinship, the way, if we position ourselves as kin to the earth, kin to other animals. And we practice a solutionary mindset where we involve all stakeholders. We identify the problem we want to solve. We go through a process of trying to solve this from a systems point of view. I would say that the strategies are conversational.

P5 stated that they work in the tourism industry and that their way of engaging with HE is different:

But our approach is very different in the sense that we want people to understand sustainability, holistically understanding that without caring for the communities at the destinations that we travel to their economies, whether they're benefiting from tourism from the money that we spend, and whether tourism activities address some of the social justice issues present in those destinations.

This perspective highlights the unique role HE can play beyond traditional classrooms, extending into industries like tourism where ethical awareness and sustainability intersect. By fostering a holistic understanding of social justice and environmental impact, such approaches exemplify the broader societal relevance of HE.

Curriculum Design and Integration

The design and integration of HE into the curriculum are frequently discussed, including alignment with disciplinary goals and the challenges of embedding interdisciplinary ethics. P3 stated that “We created a curriculum in partnership with a sanctuary, summer camp for kids, and so they went from meeting the individual animals at the sanctuary as individuals.” P3 also explained that

Programs are very hands-on, outside in nature, with other species, with their peers. One of the things we always ask the students is to find issues in their community to specialize in, so that they can visit these places. They could get to know the people working on these issues.

P5 added,

In addition to all our online programs and courses, we continually produce resources. We maintain a blog, host a podcast, and invite guests to discuss various travel ethics. Furthermore, we've created a downloadable eBook that teaches travelers to approach travel through a colonial lens, emphasizing the importance of recognizing that we are guests, especially with respect to locals and Indigenous people.

The participants all described various methods of implementing HE lessons in their classrooms and the challenges of creating curricula related to HE.

Support and Recommendations

The results of this study provide recommendations for supporting and promoting HE, such as providing resources, advocating for curriculum integration, and promoting

problem-solving. The participants discussed several different ways they have promoted higher education degrees in HE. P1 offered the following suggestions:

I would encourage them to read the 'Solutionary Guidebook', or that you know how to be a solutionary version of it. I would also encourage them to read. "The World Becomes What We Teach." So those two things are fundamental for me.

P1 also noted two different ways they promoted higher education: "professional conferences and social media." They also noted that talking to their colleagues and presenting, in addition to always sharing "the link to the grad programs and the impact that they had on me."

P6 also agreed and noted that conferences were important, stating, "I think something we need to do is attend conferences and events with administrators. We need to speak at that level and have administrators see the value." P2 highlighted the importance of "Administrators being informed about what HE is." They expanded that "education needs to happen at the administrative level because the teachers need support." This approach of improving support through discussing with the community is aligned with what P5 mentioned:

It's important for the humane education teacher...not to feel lonely and alienated, because if most teachers are only doing things in the old way, in a conventional way, there may be a little bit of struggle for those who want to adopt a humane education approach.

Overall, the participants discussed the importance of promoting HE and integrating it into the curriculum. P5 said, “There's always a way to subtly, yeah, to suddenly integrate things.”

On discussing the importance of integration, P3 agreed that one of the things that “I've always dreamt of is to have humane education integrated into preservice teaching.” Having them be able to take some courses in humane education, even if they're not educators, but just having that sort of philosophy that pedagogy of, and the communication styles that we know bring people in, instead of chasing people away. I think it would also be helpful. The participants favored bold solutions like this. As P6 said, “Be bold. Follow your gut and heart. Get creative about how you can include humane education topics.” One thing all participants agreed upon is the importance of sustainability in HE curriculum implementation. As P6 noted, this is “not like implementing yet another trendy curriculum, but just a paradigm shift.”

Summary of Theme 1

In summary, the first theme reveals that graduates of HE programs employ a diverse range of strategies grounded in critical and transformative pedagogy. Their methods emphasize meaningful student engagement, ethical inquiry, interdisciplinary integration, and systems thinking. HE is implemented in flexible, context-responsive, and values-centered ways that support both intellectual and emotional development. These insights expand existing scholarship by illustrating how HE is effectively applied beyond traditional classrooms, including in adult education, online platforms, and international

contexts. The second theme explores the persistent institutional, structural, and cultural challenges that educators face when introducing HE into the formal curriculum.

Theme 2: Challenges

Theme 2 was: The challenges higher education graduates experienced in implementing HE topics include a lack of awareness, curricular rigidity or overload, financial /resource constraints, pushback, or fear of controversy, and feeling isolated or unsupported.

Challenges and Obstacles

There are several challenges noted, such as difficult or sensitive material content, time constraints, faculty uncertainty, and lack of institutional support. The initial challenge that P1 shared is “finding the right material for the appropriate student and the course you're teaching.” P 3 emphasized,

It was recruiting. But nobody knows what humane education is. We don't have any research proving that it's effective. Yes, of course, we have an array of 10 studies total that say that there were, maybe some positive outcomes of implementing a program and then doing evaluation research, but it's not a tried-and-true intervention, so that makes it harder to get a school to buy into it.

Resources are a main obstacle and challenge for all educators. P 2 supports how resources affect the teacher's ability to provide course material instruction. “Well, early on ... We did not have Zoom. The main obstacle was the delivery system. How can we do this program?”

Actual physical field trips would be beneficial for younger students, however, according to P4:

I have a dream. I would love to go on a field trip to a sanctuary with my grade sevens, but that's expensive, and a lot of the sanctuaries aren't set up to have school groups, and understandably so, for a lot of reasons.

Funding, just like for all nonprofit startups, is challenging, and securing funding to help support that work. “It's about building the organization, having human resources, having the financial resources to sustain what we do., and trying out different ways of using different media tools” (P4).

P6 stated, “I feel like the culture of schooling in the United States is still inherently oppressive.” Although I haven't struggled against this a lot, I know some administrators want kids to sit in rows and be quiet. For example, P6 shared:

That I did have an obstacle when I was teaching about what it was like during Covid, just at the end of Covid. The George Floyd protests and things like that. “And I taught kids about rights, fights through Protest. I let them make these little protest signs, and they could put anything they wanted on them. That was what school-appropriate meant that they cared about it. It was still COVID time, so we were still all masked, six feet apart. We couldn't go on field trips, but we just walked around the block around our school in the city with our signs to have that experience. And there was a parent who was upset with me.

P1 discussed the resistance or challenge that they had:

I didn't have any resistance because I've presented about humane education and solutionary education at workshops on campus. I think the challenge with higher ed is really that we're so much more accelerated in terms of how much content we have to pack into a semester, that it's hard to help people get their heads around.

P1 said they received support from students: "I haven't had resistance to these topics."

Administrative support for HE topics is important, as P1 shared that

I feel like I have had a fair amount of support here from the institution. "I would say that it was a little slow at first in terms of getting traction. I have also been trying to propose humane education for years as a focus for a faculty learning community. And I would argue, we need a lot more of it in higher Ed as well. And I feel like it's been harder to get it into higher Ed, because again, we're also specialized in what we teach. And we have so much content that we're trying to get through.

As P2 discussed,

The main obstacle is that most of us are not taught to think in systems; we just see the very tip of the iceberg, like the event, thinking in a way that makes it seem like a practical, helpful tool in solving problems in our lives and in the world, rather than an abstraction.

All the participants agreed that the policies that are in use at their institution affect their ability to teach HE. P6 observations regarding policies were "they make it more difficult. You must be creative to get around them sometimes. I think that sometimes I feel like there's what needs to happen is curriculum at the top." P6 advocated for not

using any animals in the classroom to use models or videos, and to allow students to opt out of live dissections.

P6 shared their reflection,

I had a great Pyrenees dog as my animal companion, and she came to school with me every Friday to my 1st grade classroom, She is a big dog, but gentle, and the kids loved her, so I would always have a lesson that was about her, and my principal was so supportive, if we were writing poetry, they would write a poem about her, or if we were doing math and like studying, measuring, they would measure her ears and her tail, and it was so cute. My current school won't allow animal-assisted education.

All the participants concurred with P6's statement that "the standards must change. That's where there's only so much we can do until that happens. But there are things we can do."

Impact and Reflection

The results also reflect on the positive impact of HE, including student interest, success in coursework, and engagement, while also acknowledging issues like a lack of faculty understanding. P1 discussed the observed changes in students' attitudes, stating that

It's been better. It's been the most popular senior seminar topic that I've taught. And it's also worked well with my 1st-year students. I haven't had pushback against the themes or the process that I'm leading them through. They get it. I just wish more of my colleagues got it.

P1 shared a positive experience, “Some of my students got to go and help enhance a flight cage, a large flight cage at a wildlife rehab facility, and they got to interact with an owl. And they were just so excited.” P2 emphasized that with all of us,

The first thing would be to recognize that our actions perpetuate systems, our actions. consequences, even if we choose to do nothing. Can we consider something sustainable? If you know the labor that creates it is not being fairly paid, I think that thing is really important that we learn the information we need to make informed choices in our lives, that we understand the impact of what we do on animals, people, and the planet.

One impactful moment occurred when P4 shared that they did a virtual tour: “It started in their living room, and Esther was sleeping like a dog on the carpet, and they were kind of lying kind of on top of her, propped up on her, and stroking her belly.” P4 continued:

And you know she was snoring, and they just had never seen that before. They'd never seen a pig that was being treated with the same love that these students would be used to treating a companion animal, like a dog or a cat. and that jarred them in a good way. You know, they just didn't know what to make of it, but that's in an effective way!

Additionally, P6 shared their animal connection with the students.

I mean, what's coming to me is going back to my work with when I brought my pet companion to the classroom, like having been in the classroom every Friday, impacted those kids. I'm sure that impacted them for the rest of their lives. They

would have a different respect for dogs, at least. And that school was in the refugee community in a southern state. For 1 year, I had like 13 different languages in my classroom. There were kids from all over the world. And so not all cultures respect animals the same way, either, or even have pets. So, I feel like, yes. Having her in the classroom was the most impactful thing.

All participants shared that their methods of measuring the effectiveness of the HE lessons consisted of P3, end-of-program interviews, and surveys. Furthermore, stated that it is the feedback on the HE programs with children.

We would then talk with the parents and send a survey home to the parents and ask them, what is your child talking about after this camp experience? And you know, by and large, all the parents would say, “this is all my child is talking about, you know, for the like couple of weeks after camp, you know, they're referring to each of the animals by names and wondering how they're doing and teaching their parents about. You know the needs of the animals, the personalities of the animals.

Summary of Theme 2

The second theme highlights the significant institutional, structural, and cultural barriers that HE graduates encounter when implementing HE content in their classrooms. These challenges include resistance from administrators, rigid curriculum requirements, and broader societal discomfort with topics such as animal ethics, climate change, and activism. While these findings confirm existing critiques of neoliberal and depersonalized education systems (Fuller & Stevenson, 2019), they also expand current scholarship by

showing how HE educators persist through creative adaptation and advocacy. Their commitment to values-driven pedagogy underscores the resilience needed to promote justice-based education within unsupportive environments.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I established credibility through prolonged data engagement. The strategies proposed in Chapter 3 were upheld throughout the study, with the participants provided opportunities to review and verify the transcript excerpts' accuracy and interpretations. Transferability was addressed through rich descriptions of participant experiences and contexts. As planned in Chapter 3, demographic and professional details were included to allow readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings. No major adjustments to this strategy were needed, as participant responses naturally offered contextual detail.

I supported dependability by maintaining a consistent and transparent coding process using initial (open) coding and thematic synthesis, as described in Chapter 3. An audit trail was maintained, and coding reliability was enhanced through periodic review and reflection. No modifications were required to the dependability strategy during data analysis. Reflexive journaling was used, as well as the use of direct participant quotes to ground interpretations, and regular consultation with peer reviewers. The study design adhered to the confirmability strategies described in Chapter 3. Researcher bias was minimized through conscious bracketing and by maintaining a clear chain of evidence.

Summary

This study addressed two primary RQs. First, it revealed that graduates from HE programs use diverse and student-centered strategies, such as experiential learning, critical reflection, creative projects, and systems thinking, to integrate HE content into various classroom contexts. Second, the study identified persistent challenges faced by these educators, including institutional resistance, curriculum constraints, and sociocultural discomfort with justice-based topics. These findings offer valuable insights into both the opportunities and barriers associated with HE. They also reinforce the importance of empathy, ethical inquiry, and transformative pedagogy in preparing learners to engage meaningfully with global and local issues. The next chapter presents a deeper interpretation of these findings, organized by theme and framed within the study's conceptual foundation. Chapter 5 also provides conclusions, recommendations, and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the findings from this qualitative study exploring how graduates from an HE higher education program implement HE principles in their classrooms, the challenges they encounter, and the impacts of these practices. The findings are interpreted in the context of the study's conceptual framework, Weil's solutionary approach to HE. I also compare the results to the existing body of peer-reviewed literature reviewed in Chapter 2, drawing connections between the current findings and established knowledge. The chapter concludes with a summary of the conclusions, practical and scholarly recommendations, and a discussion of the potential for positive social change.

I explored how HE, an interdisciplinary approach that fosters critical thinking about human rights, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability, is applied in real-world educational settings. Through the lived experiences of six graduates teaching at various educational levels and in nontraditional contexts, this study aimed to uncover both effective practices and persistent obstacles, offering insights into how humane education might be better supported and integrated across disciplines.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this study affirm and expand upon existing literature in the field of HE, while also introducing new dimensions that highlight the evolving role of educators in justice-centered, systems-aware pedagogy. First, the study confirms key tenets identified in the literature regarding HE's interdisciplinary and values-based approach (Waldron et al., 2020; Weil, 2004). Across participants, there was consistent

emphasis on integrating social justice, environmental sustainability, and animal protection through experiential learning, narrative, and critical reflection. These practices align with Weil's (2016) solutionary framework, suggesting that graduates of HE programs are effectively enacting the transformative goals of the discipline.

Second, the findings extend the literature by revealing how HE is being implemented in unconventional and underexplored contexts, such as online adult education, tourism, chaplaincy-informed pedagogy, and refugee-supportive classrooms. These settings go beyond the traditional K–12 or university environments commonly studied (Noddings, 2012). For example, Participant 5's work in ethical tourism demonstrates how HE principles are being translated into public-facing, cross-cultural education, while Participant 6's integration of animal-assisted education and trauma-informed practice builds upon literature emphasizing empathy and care in pedagogy (e.g., Zembylas, 2015).

Third, the study challenges and complicates earlier assumptions in the literature by showing how structural constraints, such as policy restrictions, funding limitations, and sociopolitical backlash, shape educators' ability to implement HE (Spring, 2016). While previous research has acknowledged institutional challenges, participants in this study illuminated how such barriers necessitate strategic adaptation, including the selective use of terminology (e.g., omitting "DEI" or "anti-oppression" from course titles) and the creation of parallel, grassroots initiatives. This reflects the need to frame HE not merely as curricular content but as a paradigm shift requiring systemic support, as highlighted by Kahn (2008) and Gruenewald (2003).

Finally, when interpreted through the study's conceptual framework (systems thinking, Freirean pedagogy, and solutionary education), the findings reinforce the transformative potential of HE. Participants consistently employed systems-oriented analysis to help learners connect personal experiences to larger ethical, ecological, and social systems. This validates the effectiveness of systems thinking as both a pedagogical tool and a mindset shift, echoing Capra and Luisi (2014). Simultaneously, the data reflect the challenges of nurturing agency in environments constrained by standardization, revealing the ongoing tension between critical pedagogy and institutional inertia.

In summary, this study broadens the scholarly understanding of HE by offering practitioner-based insights that underscore the promise and complexity of its real-world application. While the findings confirm many core claims in the literature, they also point toward underexplored pathways in nontraditional educational contexts that merit further investigation.

The Findings in Relation to the Research Questions and Literature

Research Question 1

RQ1 was, What strategies do higher education graduates use to implement HE topics in their classrooms? Graduates employed a wide range of strategies to integrate HE, many of which align with transformative and critical pedagogy. Participants described the use of project-based learning, arts integration, literature analysis, community engagement, reflective writing, and nature-focused activities. These strategies are consistent with Mezirow's (1978) theory of transformative learning, which emphasizes reflection leading to perspective transformation, and with Freire's (1970)

pedagogy of the oppressed, which calls for dialogic and problem-posing education. P1, for instance, integrated the solutionary process into a Spanish-language course, enabling students to explore global ethical issues and propose actionable solutions. This approach aligns with Weil's (2004) concept of solutionary education and is supported by Benavides et al. (2022), who highlighted the value of service-learning in promoting ethical and engaged learning.

Creative strategies, such as using novels told from the perspective of animals (P6) and nature journaling (P3), have extended the literature on holistic and empathy-based education (Miseliunaite et al., 2022; Tsevreni, 2021). Participants also adapted HE to adult and online contexts through flexible, self-directed activities and relational learning, echoing connectivism approaches (Al Maawali, 2022; Corbett & Spinello, 2020; Hendricks, 2019). These findings confirm and extend the existing literature by illustrating the adaptability of HE to diverse modalities and content areas. They show that HE strategies are not confined to a specific discipline but are inherently interdisciplinary and relational.

Research Question 2

RQ2 was, What challenges do graduates from an HE higher education program experience in implementing HE topics in their classrooms? Participants reported facing structural, institutional, and cultural obstacles when implementing HE. These included curricular restrictions, administrative pushbacks, and societal resistance to topics deemed controversial, such as animal rights and climate justice. These findings confirm

Arnaudova-Otoubirova's (2022) work on the systemic challenges HE faces in formal education settings.

Participant P4 expressed frustration when their department rejected a unit on animal agriculture as being "too political." This view aligns with Fuller and Stevenson (2019), who argued that neoliberal education systems often marginalize social justice-oriented content. Participants also noted that the emotional and relational dimensions of HE were often dismissed as nonacademic, echoing Brennan and Widdop's (2020) critique of curricula that exclude affective learning.

Online educators (P2, P5) noted additional barriers, such as building trust and engagement in virtual spaces. These findings are consistent with those of Abusalem et al. (2024) and van der Stap et al. (2024), who highlighted the relational and motivational challenges of online learning. Despite these obstacles, educators demonstrated resilience and adaptability, reinforcing the idea that HE educators engage in a form of ethical resistance (Cieslak, 2019). The findings extend the literature by detailing how HE educators navigate resistance while remaining grounded in pedagogical values.

Limitations of the Study

Some weaknesses in the study's methodology and design include limited participants, as humane education is a developing field, and the unwillingness of individuals who met the participant requirements to engage in the study. Measures such as expanding to include teachers who had graduated from any U.S. HE program helped ensure easy access to participants and that saturation was met. Although participant responses were anticipated to be a possible limitation (as participants could be influenced

by a desire to advocate for the benefits of HE), participants provided robust answers that demonstrated the challenges and benefits of HE. The expected limitations were mitigated and not met. Although only six educators were interviewed, their responses were consistent, suggesting saturation had been reached. A final imitation is that findings may have been influenced by participants' desire to justify HE's value.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this qualitative study, I have developed recommendations for practice, policy, and further research. Future studies could be expanded to include current HE students to obtain their perspectives. The recommendations for future research are grounded in the strengths and limitations of this study, and the related literature.

Recommendations Based on Strengths

Several strengths of the research include depth of participant responses, their willingness to share candid reflections, and the discovery of shared strategies and barriers, which could offer guidance for future research. Given these strengths, one recommendation is to replicate this study outside of the United States to examine how cultural, institutional, and sociopolitical differences might affect the implementation of HE.

Recommendations Based on Limitations

The limitations of the current study could have included access to participants, but this limitation was mitigated by using measures such as expanding to include teachers who had graduated from any U.S. HE program. Expanding the study in this way helped

to ensure easy access to participants so that saturation was met. Although saturation was achieved, future research could expand beyond national boundaries or incorporate additional stakeholder voices to include current students, administrators, or policymakers. Therefore, future research might consider mixed methods designs or multistakeholder studies that include perspectives from those indirectly affected by HE implementation, which would capture the ripple effects and systemic implications of humane pedagogy.

Recommendations Based on the Literature

The alignment between this study's findings and existing literature, specifically in areas such as environmental education (Dos Santos et al., 2020), global education (Fuller & Stevenson, 2019), and the barriers of institutional resistance (Arnaudova-Otoubirova, 2022). However, more research is needed in areas such as online implementation of HE, cross-cultural adaptations, and the long-term effects of HE on students' ethical development and civic engagement.

Implications for the Individual and Families

Institutions can actively support HE implementation by offering curricular flexibility and professional development opportunities that emphasize transformative, justice-centered pedagogy. Educators can enhance the effectiveness of HE by engaging in collaborative planning, employing interdisciplinary curriculum design, and incorporating empathy-building strategies tailored to learners' developmental levels and sociocultural backgrounds.

Implications for Organizations and Policy

Educational policy frameworks should recognize and formally legitimize HE as a critical component of holistic and ethical education systems. State-level mandates and district-wide initiatives could be modeled after those outlined in the "Humane Education Laws by State" database (2022), thereby encouraging the widespread adoption of HE across various educational settings.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study underscore the transformative potential of HE to foster positive social change at multiple levels. At the individual level, HE empowers learners to cultivate empathy, develop ethical awareness, and take socially responsible actions. These capacities contribute to the formation of engaged citizens with compassion and critical thinking who are prepared to address complex global challenges. At the institutional level, the integration of HE practices challenges traditional norms that prioritize standardized testing and content over relational and justice-centered pedagogy. HE supports the evolution of education systems toward inclusivity, sustainability, and equity by foregrounding systemic thinking and ethical inquiry.

As educators model and teach solutionary thinking, learners are better equipped to participate in movements for social justice, ecological responsibility, and democratic engagement. Thus, HE functions as both a pedagogical method and a method for broader transformation toward a more sustainable world.

Conclusion

From the perspective of educators, HE emerges as a powerful vehicle for reimagining the role of educators, not just as content deliverers, but as facilitators of empathy, critical consciousness, and social transformation. The teachers in this study consistently emphasized that HE allowed them to connect deeply with their students, foster real-world relevance, and align their teaching with their core values. Despite systemic constraints, they found creative and resilient ways to integrate humane principles into their practice, underscoring the profound impact of empowered, reflective educators in shaping a more just and compassionate future.

The key essence of the study is clear: HE is a necessary, transformative paradigm that equips learners to understand, care for, and act for a more humane world. Despite systemic obstacles, visionary educators can lead the way, cultivating compassion, critical awareness, and positive social change across generations. They may bring positive social change by helping students develop empathy and compassion for all living things on this planet.

References

- Academy of Prosocial Learning. (n.d.). Humane education training.
<https://www.prosocialacademy.org/>
- Ahmed, S. (2024). The pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, 2.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100051>
- Al Maawali, W. S. (2022). Experiential writing through connectivism learning theory: A case study of English language students in Oman higher education. *Reflective Practice*, 23(3), 305-318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2021.2021167>
- Ames, H., Glenton, C., & Lewin, S. (2019). Purposive sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example from a synthesis on parental perceptions of vaccination communication. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 19.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0665-4>
- Arafah, B., Room, F., Suryadi, R., La Ode, M. I. H. B., Juniardi, Y., & Takwa. (2024). Character education values in Pullman's The Golden Compass. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 15(1), 246-254.
<https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1501.27>
- Arslan, O. (2022). Comparison of critical thinking dispositions of gifted students in support education (enrolled with SACs) and formal education. *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists*, 10(4), 627-636.
<https://doi.org/10.17478/jegys.1212406>

- Arnaudova-Otoubirova, A. (2022). Humane education - Benefits and challenges. *Pedagogy/Pedagogika*, 94(3), 363-370. <https://doi.org/10.53656/ped2022-3.07>
- Ascione, F. (1997). Humane education research: Evaluating efforts to encourage children's kindness and caring toward animals. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs*, 123(1), 59-77.
- Askerud, A., Jaye, C., Doolan-Noble, F., & McKinlay, E. (2021). What do they get out of it? Considering a partnership model in health service research. *Primary Health Care Research & Development*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1463423621000141>
- Aspray, B. (2023). New challenges to character education. *Journal of Character and Leadership Development*, 10(2), 49-59. <https://doi.org/10.58315/jcld.v10.268>
- Benavides, A. D., Keyes, L., Linares-Hernández, I., Martinez-Miranda, V., & Romanazzi, P. G. (2022). Service-learning in higher education: Andragogy in Argentina, Mexico, and the United States. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 34(4), 275-304. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v34i4.745>
- Berlin, K., & Weavera, K. V. (2021). Teaching strategies students find helpful in online learning courses. *College Teaching*, 70(3), 319-327. <https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2021.1940814>
- Bexell, S. M., Lantzy, M., Senecal, J. E., Buckman, A., MacInnis, E. M., & Lee, H. (2020). State of humane education in the United States: 2018-2019. *International Journal of Humane Education*, 1(1), 120-160.

https://www.prosocialacademy.org/files/ugd/cdf752_7a4a1dfbaa644ffc997eb0c35e75a1.pdf

- Bhakuni, H. (2021). Beyond anthropocentrism: Health rights and ecological justice. *Health and Human Rights Journal*, 23(2), 7-12. <https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.harvard.edu/dist/f/680/files/2021/12/bhakuni.pdf>
- Bones, V. C., de Cássia Garcia, R., Alves, G. G., Paixão, R. L., Rocha, A. A., Capilé, K., & Bachinski, R. (2019). Humane education: The tool for scientific revolution in Brazil. In K. Herrmann & K. Jayne (Eds.), *Animal experimentation: Working towards a paradigm change* (pp. 567-582). https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004391192_024
- Brand, S. (2020). Service-learning and social justice for college and university students: replacing memorization with meaning. In J. Keengwe (Ed.), *Handbook of research on diversity and social justice in higher education* (pp. 78-104). <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-5268-1.ch005>
- Brennan, M., & Widdop, H. (2020). An ethical re-framing of curriculum for sustainability education. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 40(1), 105-110. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41297-019-00095-z>
- Capra, F., & Luisi, P. L. (2014). *The system's view of life: A unifying vision*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511895555>

- Chaaban, Y., Al-Thani, H., & Du, X. (2023). A systems-thinking approach to evaluating a university professional development programme. *Professional Development in Education*, 50(2), 296–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2023.2193199>
- Cochrane, S. (2023). Urgency and opportunity: Preparing a generation of solutionaries. *Childhood Education*, 99(1), 6–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2023.2169543>
- Cieslak, A. (2019). Humane education as a tool for promoting empathy and societal progress. *Honors Capstones*, 632. <https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/studentengagement-honorscapstones/632/>
- Corbett, F., & Spinello, E. (2020). Connectivism and leadership: Harnessing a learning theory for the digital age to redefine leadership in the twenty-first century. *Heliyon*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e03250>
- Creswell, J. W., & Guetterman, T. C. (2019). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (6th ed). Pearson Education.
- Creswell, W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. (3rd ed). Sage Publications.
- Cuanalo-Contreras, K., & Benkmann, D. (2022). Towards more human and humane testing: The role of the device supplier industry. *Alternatives to Laboratory Animals*, 50(1), 62-70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02611929211073132>

Dempsey, P. R. (2018). How LIS scholars conceptualize rigor in qualitative data. *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 18(2), 363-390.

Libraries and the Academy, 18(2), 363-390.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2018.0020>

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education* (New York, Collier Books).

Dworkin, S. (2012). Sample size policy for qualitative studies using in-depth interviews.

Archives of Sexual Behavior, 41(6), 1319-1320. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-012-0016-6)

[012-0016-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-012-0016-6)

Englander, M. (2012). The interview: Data collection in descriptive phenomenological

human scientific research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 43, 13-35.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/156916212X632943>

Fokides, E., & Chachlaki, F. (2020). 3D multiuser virtual environments and

environmental education: The virtual island of the Mediterranean monk seal.

Technology, Knowledge, and Learning, 25(1), 1-24.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10758-019-09409-6>

Ford, D., John, C., Daniel, F., & Keith, R. (2012). Complex trauma and aggression in

secure juvenile justice settings. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 39, 694-724.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854812436957>

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press.

Fuller, K., & Stevenson, H. (2019). Global education reform: *Understanding the*

movement. *Educational Review*, 71(1), 1-4.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2019.1532718>

- Fung, S. & Zhou, S. (2020). An investigation of pre-service teachers' attitudes toward animals and empathy toward humans: Implications for humane education development. *Anthrozoös*, 33(3), 415-426.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08927936.2020.1746531>
- Fusch, P. & Ness, L. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(9), 1408. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2281>
- Gruber, S., & Boreen, J. (2003). Teaching critical thinking: Using experience to promote learning in middle school and college students. *Teachers and Teaching*, 9(1), 5-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354060032000049878>
- Gruenewald, D. (2003). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher*, 32(4), 3-12.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X032004003>
- Haq, Z. U., Rasheed, R., Rashid, A., & Akhter, S. (2023). Criteria for assessing and ensuring the trustworthiness in qualitative research. *International Journal of Business Reflections*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.56249/ijbr.03.01.44>
- Hawes, S. M., Flynn, E., Tedeschi, P., & Morris, K. N. (2022). Humane communities: Social change through policies promoting collective welfare. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 44(2), 259-271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2019.1680244>

- Hendricks, G. P. (2019). Connectivism as a learning theory and its relation to open distance education. *Progressio*, 41(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.25159/2663-5895/4773>
- Herrmann, K., & Jayne, K. (2019). Animal experimentation: Working towards a paradigm change (p. 752). Brill. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004391192>
- Holfelder, A. (2019). Towards a sustainable future with education? Sustainability Science, 14:943-952. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00682-z>
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00682-z>
- Humane Education Laws by State (2022). <https://awionline.org/content/humane-education-laws-state>
- Itle-Clark, S. & Comaskey, E. (2020). A proposal for humane pedagogy. *International Journal of Humane Education*, 1(1), 1-31.
- Jackson, C., Manley, K., Webster, J., & Hardy, S. (2022). A thematic analysis of system-wide learning from the first wave of COVID-19 in the East of England. *BMC Health Serv Res.*, 22(1), 552. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-022-07797-7>
- Juliadilla, R. (2020). Humane education as a method of empathy character for children in school. *WASKITA: Journal Pendidikan Nilai dan Pembangunan Karakter*, 4(2), 101-112. <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.waskita.2020.004.02.2>
- Kahn, R. (2008). From education for sustainable development to ecopedagogy: Sustaining capitalism or sustaining life? *Green Theory & Praxis: The Journal of Ecopedagogy*, 4(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.3903/gtp.2008.1.2>

- Kalsoom, Q., & Hasan, S. (2022). Pedagogy for living in harmony with nature-sustainability in higher education. In Higher Education for Sustainable Development Goals. River Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003333036-8>
- MacKay, D. (2020). Discipline-based education research for animal welfare science. *Front Veterinary Science*, 7, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2020.00007>
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (2003). Transformative learning as discourse. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 1(1), 58-63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344603252172> (Original work published 2003)
- Mezirow, J. (2012). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In E.W. Taylor, P. Cranton, & Associates (Eds.), *The handbook of transformative learning: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 73-95). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Designing your study and selecting a sample. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 67(1), 73-104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07417136166671930>
- Miller, J.P. (2020). Key Instances of Holistic Curriculum as an Alternative to National Curriculum. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1144>
- Mills, G. E., & Gay, L. R. (2016). Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications. (11th Ed.). Pearson Educational, Inc.

- Miseliunaite, B., Kliziene, I., & Cibulskas, G. (2022). Can holistic education solve the world's problems: A systematic literature review. *Sustainability*, *14*(15), 9737. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14159737>
- Ngai, J. T., Yu, R. W., Chau, K. K., & Wong, P. W. (2021). Effectiveness of a school-based programme of animal-assisted humane education in Hong Kong for the promotion of social and emotional learning: A quasi-experimental pilot study. *PloS one*, *16*(3), e0249033. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249033>
- Noddings, N. (2012). The caring relation in teaching. *Oxford Review of Education*, *38*(6), 771-781. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2012.745047>
- Oakley, J. (2019). What Can an Animal Liberation Perspective Contribute to Environmental Education? In: Lloro-Bidart, T., Banschbach, V. (eds) *Animals in Environmental Education*. Palgrave Studies in Education and the Environment. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98479-7_2
- O'Connor, J., & Samuels, W. (2021). Humane education's effect on middle school student motivation and standards-based reading assessment. *Social Science*, *10*(10), 376. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10100376>
- Owen, R. (2021). Broadening the circle of holistic education. *Holistic Education Review*, *1*(1). <https://her.journals.publicknowledgeproject.org/index.php/her/article/view/1197>
- Pacho, T. O. (2020). Global citizenship education in the era of globalization. In j. keengwe (eds.), *Handbook of Research on Diversity and Social Justice in Higher*

Education (pp. 274-291). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-5268-1.ch016>

- Pathak, A., & Intratat, C. (2012). Use of semi-structured interviews to investigate teacher perceptions of student collaboration. *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, 8(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526424136>
- Phillips, C., & Molento, F. (2020). Animal welfare centers: Are they useful for the improvement of animal welfare? *Animals (Basel)*, 10(5), 877. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani10050877>
- Reddy, C. (2021). Environmental education, social justice, and teacher education: Enabling meaningful environmental learning in local contexts. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 35(1), 161-177. <https://doi.org/10.20853/35-1-4427>
- Ross, N. (2020). Anthropocentric tendencies in environmental education: a critical discourse analysis of nature-based learning. *Ethics and Education*, 15(3), 355-370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2020.1780550>
- Saari, M. H. (2020). Re-examining the human-nonhuman animal relationship through humane education. *Research Handbook on Childhood Nature: Assemblages of Childhood and Nature Research*, 5(3), 1263-1273. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-67286-1_69

- Saari, M. H., & Gómez-Galán, J. (2019). Innovative educational models for nonhuman animal protection: A case study on a European school scheme. *International Journal of Education Excellence*, 5, 95-114. <https://doi.org/10.18562/IJEE.045>
- Sacks, J. (2018). On militancy, self-reflection, and the role of the researcher. *Politikon*, 45(3), 438-455. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2018.1523349>
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE
- Schendel, R., McCowan, T., Rolleston, C., Adu-Yeboah, C., Omingo, M., & Tabulawa, R. (2023). Pedagogies for critical thinking at universities in Kenya, Ghana and Botswana: the importance of a collective "teaching culture." *Teaching in Higher Education*, 28(4), 717-738. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1852204>
- Shutaleva, A., Nikonova, Z., Savchenko, I., & Martyushev, N. (2020). Environmental education for sustainable development in Russia. *Sustainability*, 12(18), 7742-7746. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187742>
- Spring, J. (2016). *Globalization of education: An introduction*. Routledge.
- Strapasson, A., Ferreira, M., Cruz-Cano, D., Woods, J., do Nascimento Maia Soares, M. P., & da Silva Filho, O. L. (2022). The use of system dynamics for energy and environmental education. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 19(1), 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00309-3>
- Sytnik, I., & Stopochkin, A. (2023). A modern student behavior styles. *Education Science*, 13, 693. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13070693>

- Takona, J. P. (2025). Transformative education: Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed and its contemporary resonance. *Journal of Global Education and Research*, 9(1), 87-107. <https://www.doi.org/10.5038/2577-509X.9.1.1351>
- Theofanidis, D., & Fountouki, A. (2018). Limitations and delimitations in the research process. *Perioperative Nursing-Quarterly Scientific, Online Official Journal of GORNA*, 7, 155-163. <https://www.spnj.gr/en/limitations-and-delimitations-in-the-research-process-p160.html>
- Toquero, D. (2021). 'Sana all-inclusive education amid COVID-19: Challenges, strategies, and prospects of special education teachers. *International and Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(1), 30-51. <https://doi.org/10.17583/rimcis.2020.6316>
- Tsevreni, I. (2021). Nature journaling as a holistic pedagogical experience with the more-than-human world. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 52(1), 14-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2020.1724854>
- Tucker, K. (2016). Teaching through the lens of humane education in U.S. schools. *Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies*. 2626. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/2626>
- United Nations. (2024). The Sustainable Development Goals report 2024. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/>

- Unti, B., & DeRosa, B. (2003). Humane education past, present, and future. n D.J. Salem & A.N. Rowan (Eds.), *The State of the Animals II: 2003* (pp. 27-50). Washington, DC: Humane Society Press.
- Valeau, E. J., & Raby, R. L. (2022). Introduction: Shaping a humane world. STAR Scholar Book Series, 1-18.
- van der Stap, N., van den Bogaart, T., van Ginkel, S., Rahimi, E., & Versendaal, J. (2024). Towards teaching strategies addressing online learning in blended learning courses for adult-learners. *Computers & Education, 219*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2024.105103>
- Verene, D. P. (2018). *The art of humane education. In The Art of Humane Education*. Cornell University Press. book
- Wanchana, Y., Inprom, P., Rawang, W., & Ayudhya, A. J. N. (2020). Environmental education competency: Enhancing the work of teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability, 22*(2), 140-152. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jtes-2020-0021>
- Weil, Z. (2004). *The power and promise of humane education*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.(pp.19-22)
- Weil, Z. (2010). The word becomes what you teach. *Green Horizon Magazine, 24-27*.
- Weil, Z. (2016). *The world becomes what we teach: Educating a generation of solutionaries*. Brooklyn, NY: Lantern Books

- Wolff, N. (2020). Severing a historical bond: The implications of divorcing human rights from Holocaust education. *Holocaust Studies*, 26(3), 306-328.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17504902.2019.1581493>
- Wrenn, C. L. (2018). College student literacy of food animal slaughter in the United States. *The International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, 24(2), 215-228. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742170514000441>
- Zembylas, M. (2015). 'Pedagogy of discomfort' and its ethical implications: The tensions of ethical violence in social justice education. *Ethics and Education*, 10(2), 163-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2015.1039274>
- Zeng, H & Luo, J. (2024) Effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous online learning: a meta-analysis, *Interactive Learning Environments*, 32:8, 4297-4313, <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2023.2197953>

Appendix: Interview Protocol

Introduction

- Thank the participants for their time.
- Explain the purpose of the study: “The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the teaching experiences of individuals who have graduated from a higher education HE program and have successfully integrated HE into their classrooms.”
- Reassure the participant of confidentiality: “Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and your responses will be kept confidential.”

Core Interview Questions

Background and Experience

1. Please share a bit about your background in education and your specific training in humane education.
2. How long have you been integrating humane education into your curriculum?

Implementation Strategies

1. What specific strategies have you found to be effective in teaching humane education concepts to your students?
2. How do you incorporate these concepts into various subject areas (e.g., science, social studies, language arts)?
3. Please describe a successful humane education lesson or project you've implemented.

Challenges and Opportunities

1. What challenges have you encountered while teaching humane education?
2. How have you overcome these challenges?
3. What opportunities does humane education provide for student learning and growth?

Student Engagement and Outcomes

1. How have your students responded to humane education topics?
2. What positive changes, if any, have you observed in your students' attitudes, behaviors, or knowledge as a result of humane education?
3. How do you assess student learning and understanding of humane education concepts?

Professional Development and Support

1. What kind of professional development or support would be helpful to you as a humane education educator?
2. What resources or organizations have been particularly helpful in your work?

Probing Questions

1. Please elaborate on that.
2. Please provide a specific example.
3. What do you mean by that?
4. How did you feel about that?
5. Why do you think that is?

Note. The interviewer should be flexible and adapt the questions to the flow of the conversation. The goal is to encourage open-ended responses and to delve deeper into the participant's experiences and perspectives.