

THE HOLISTIC EDUCATOR

Editors' Notes



Welcome to the Spring edition of the Holistic Educator. The above photo is a reminder of the glorious reawakening of the earth after a long winter's nap. This edition of the Newsletter will highlight a diverse group of articles and announcements from educators at both the K-12 system and the university level. The first article outlines an exciting grassroots initiative in Ottawa called the *Ottawa Public Education Remake Initiative* (OPERI) focused on breaking down the rigid schedules and structures of high school and providing more time for students to deepen their learning and connect with other students. In the second article, the author describes his efforts to bring contemplative practice to university classes and students and the create of a dedicated space for contemplative practice. In the same vain, the third article outlines the work of the authors in co-creating joy in their university courses. The next article outlines the author's presentation at an international holistic conference in Mexico. The final article is an introspect piece that is in memory of a troubled student the author tried to reach. We have included a book review and a host of announcements including a reminder to register for the 2nd Holistic Conference, *Exploring Wholeness: Connecting Voices and Visions*, in Ashland, Oregon in September of 2017. We hope you enjoy these articles and book review and find the announcements informative.

One final note; we would appreciate receiving your submissions for the newsletter. We have been receiving just enough articles to be able to publish but could use more. Please consider sending us your writing and refer to the "Call for Submissions" in the Announcement section for more details.

We warmly wish you a safe and relaxing summer with family and friends on the beach, camping, on the patio or wherever your travels may take you.

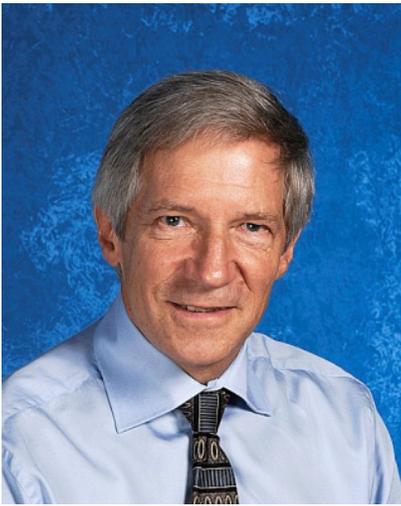
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Making Alternative Education More Than An Alternative by Richard Fransham

On a June evening in 2014, Ron Miller gave a keynote address at the annual AERO conference on Long Island, New York. He had retired four years earlier from a thirty year career in holistic education. His presence that evening was an unusual return to the alternative education scene after a long absence.

He began his address by saying that he was only 54 when he retired and that he may have followed Jerry Mintz's lifelong passion for the cause, but that his passion had run dry. He recounted how he began his career as a starry-eyed young idealist in the early 80's convinced that we could transform the world. "Thirty years later," he said, "I wakened from that trance to the realization that the world was not very much moved by my idealism."

It was probably Ron's respect for Jerry Mintz that had him agree to speak that evening. Jerry has been around for decades. As long ago as 1968 he started Shaker Mountain School based on the democratic learning model. In 1989 he founded AERO, the *Alternative Education Resource Organization*, and in the years since his commitment hasn't wavered. On stage that night, Ron repeated Jerry's words to him, "that maybe his work had more of an influence than he realized." He appreciated Jerry's point, but it hadn't swayed him. He couldn't shake the feeling that his ideas have had little impact.

Ron is not alone when it comes to being discouraged and frustrated with how traditional education grinds on despite so much evidence of the harm it is doing, and despite what we know about how to make things better. The disheartened teachers, resigned parents, and disengaged students so easily found today are examples of others who feel ignored and discounted. If John Dewey, with all that he had to say about progressive education a century ago, or Jean-Jacques Rousseau with the views he expressed in *Emile* long before Dewey, were alive today, they too might think that the world does not much care about the views they shared.

As Jerry told Ron, however, we don't know what influence we're having. In one of his talks, William Purkey, the author of *Inviting School Success*, shared a related sentiment. "If you are ever wondering whether or not to give a message," he said, "give it anyway. You never know when it will be received."

Ron continued his address at AERO painting a gloomy picture of turbulent times ahead. He described the dominant worldview of our technocratic culture as "so tenacious and powerful, that it will release its hold on our awareness only when the culture seriously descends into collapse. As long as this civilization stands," he said, "those of us who believe in educating for genuine humanity will be on the outside looking in. Our ideas will be alternative."

He did not rule out that clever ways might be found to save the day, and he suggested people not take him too seriously saying his gloomy outlook "does not mean that our work, well *your* work, is not vitally, crucially important. You are the worthy heirs of Freedom Summer and the free-speak movement, courageously standing for human freedom, dignity and authenticity. You are holding the vision of a better world and building the authentic communities that we are going to need whatever happens. You are empowering young people to be confident and adaptable enough to meet whatever challenges lie ahead, to learn the hands-on skills that they'll need if the world deindustrializes. You are nurturing individual human beings in ways that modern civilization does not, and every young person you touch is a victory for our humanity and a ray of hope for the future. I have not lost that hope. Where I have lost my hope is in the expectation that a few good ideas would make our civilization better."

A grassroots group in Ottawa calling itself the *Ottawa Public Education Remake Initiative* (OPERI) is pursuing a vision of a better world and authentic communities. Its formation is a testament to the ongoing influence of Ron and the multitude of others, past and present, who have grown the vision. The group also draws on the work of Thomas Kuhn for the clarity it brings to the struggle in education. Kuhn coined the term "paradigm

shift,” and knowledge of what he observed about the ways paradigms compete helps to take emotion out of the conflict and focus attention on problem solving.

The “few good ideas” Ron referred to at the conference form the basis of an alternative paradigm for education. Kuhn has unveiled how paradigms come with their own set of problems and are at first fuzzy. He refers to all of the activity that goes into theorizing and solving the problems of a particular paradigm as its “normal science,” and thanks to Ron and the countless other contributors, the alternative they pursue is no longer in its infancy. Their work has made it a legitimate contender to replace the dominant education paradigm that is widely recognized as having outlived its usefulness. Their work inspires and empowers OPERI.

The cornerstone of OPERI is a pilot program that can be easily implemented in a community school (OPERI, 2017). It is a refinement of a prototype that ran in an Ottawa secondary school for two semesters and its potential to further the normal science of the alternative paradigm is substantial. It’s based on the elimination of formal scheduling, the practice of dividing the school day into fixed chunks of time. It’s a practice that Larry Rosenstock, a co-founder of *High Tech High*, says is the greatest impediment to educational innovation (Abeles, 2015, p. 56). It breeds a student dependency on teachers and confines schools to assembly line learning and marching students to the bells. With the bells gone, opportunities abound to learn about the power of age-mixing, the benefits to cultivating diversity and the inclusion of all students as equals, the development of learning communities, the role of the teacher as facilitator, and the acquisition of skills required for lifelong learning, to name a few.

With the work OPERI is doing in the community, it is encountering what seems to be a growing number of educators who say, “I get it. I believe the alternative paradigm is what we need. What I don’t get is how to transition to it.” They often then cite with despair failed attempts to bring about real change, and that defines a problem. Good ideas often get discredited and forsaken because those charged with implementing them don’t know what they’re doing. Good change management is essential. A fundamental change to public education is something that needs to be finessed. It is not something that can be accomplished by decree, which is common practice in top-down authoritarian organizations.

Denis Waitley, an author and lecturer who has specialized in high performance achievement, says in one of his audiotape programs that only ten percent of people are proactive and want to ride the wave of change (Waitley, 1983). This may be an indictment of our school systems, yet still the emergences of new ideas begins with small groups of visionaries who run with the idea and make a success of it. Good change management builds on this reality. Organizations wanting to stay on the cutting edge empower their small groups of imaginative innovators to break boundaries. The pilot program promoted by OPERI is designed to do just that, to unleash educators yearning for change to explore a real alternative. Advantages of the pilot are that it starts small and is imposed on no one. Students and teachers choose to participate. It requires no new funding and it meets Ministry of Education requirements. It provides the “scaffolding” Daniel Pink says is necessary to help people transition from highly controlled environments to ones that provide considerable autonomy (Pink, 2009, p. 107). It is offered in community schools making it a visible choice and equally accessible to all students. It presents no risk to students and it significantly increases their opportunities to discover and pursue their interests. Most notably, it can grow incrementally, incorporating greater change and accommodating more students and teachers as its benefits become increasingly recognized. In short, it has the potential to be the game changer people are seeking.

This brings us to another major problem that is well described by John Gatto in his book *Dumbing Us Down*. He says, “It is the great triumph of compulsory government monopoly mass-schooling that among even the best of my fellow teachers, and among even the best of my students' parents, only a small number can imagine a different way to do things (Gatto, 1992, p. 12).” The achievement culture that Vicki Abeles exposes in her films *Race To Nowhere* and *Beyond Measure* is alive and well in Ottawa. The general mentality of those influencing the direction of public education is that schools need to be made better, not different. They don’t understand that to make them better, they need to be different. The solution is found in getting enough people calling for a thorough investigation of the pilot program that the authorities empower the appropriate educators to conduct it. OPERI is confident that once people begin to witness how it brings out the best in students, they will want to meticulously study the full potential of the alternative learning paradigm.

Ecology Ottawa provides an example of how to amass the required supporters. It's a local organization working to make Ottawa the green capital of Canada. It brings environmental concerns to the attention of Ottawa residents, which it then translates into support for city councilors committed to establishing environmentally friendly policies. OPERI is attacking the problem similarly. It is working to have Ottawa exemplify a community dedicated to democratic principles by transforming its schools into community learning centres that practice genuine equality and respect for the right of students to self-determination. To accomplish this, it is raising awareness of the alternative paradigm, which some people call the democratic learning model, and building support for educators and school board trustees who wish to implement the proposed pilot program. A document shared by Ecology Ottawa titled *Organizing: People, Power, Change* adapted from the work of Harvard University's Marshall Ganz by Leadnow, the David Suzuki Foundation and other activist groups provides a valuable guide to mobilizing for change.

The alternative paradigm is based on a different view of the learner than traditional education. Ron put some dimension to what it is when he quoted Derrick Jensen, author of *The Culture of Make Believe* and *Endgame*, during his AERO address. He said, "In order to keep moving forward each child must be made to forget what it means to be human and to learn instead what it means to be civilized (Miller, 2014)." He was talking about civilization moving forward on the path it is on, but the alternative paradigm is for people who want off that path and onto the one "educating for genuine humanity." It is the path seen to cultivate wellbeing and the joy of learning because students are treated as human beings instead of as objects to be programmed for economic growth. The irony is that civilization is more secure with human beings at the helm than it is with lesser beings. The conflict in education is just one part of a bigger struggle to get the world back on track. The struggle is ultimately between what John Dewey described as radical liberalism versus the neoliberalism controlling us today (Rogers, 2013). Public education, however, has a critical role to play. It is our best tool for shaping society.

Arundhati Roy who wrote *The God of Small Things* has said, "The trouble is that once you see it, you can't unsee it. And once you've seen it, keeping quiet, saying nothing, becomes as political an act as speaking out. There's no innocence. Either way, you're accountable (McPherson, 2012)." It is reasonable to say that people attending AERO conferences are those who cannot unsee the real alternative to traditional education and who cannot keep quiet. They, and their like-minded cohorts, are the movement to obtain the alternative, and how they act determines how quickly things can be turned around. Speaking at the AERO conference a year after Ron gave his address, Sugata Mitra, famous for his computer in a slum wall in India, said about change, "You've got to look after the culprits." It's advice that fits well with the alternative paradigm.

Age discrimination, discrimination of any sort, is not consistent with the democratic learning model. It follows that the adult perpetrators of traditional education are not malicious, insensitive people. They are children of the universe, products of their experiences. To deny them the compassion and understanding that is advocated for children would be an injustice. The alternative paradigm challenges them to recognize the possibility that they have unwittingly misled and possibly harmed children despite their good intentions. It presents for them a huge personal struggle that Kuhn observes some people conquer quickly, others take longer to conquer, and still others never conquer. This does not mean that anyone should be excused for misdeeds or misconceptions. It means being politely assertive about the too often ignored side of equality. Equality is not only about treating others equally. It is also about steadfastly requiring that others treat us equally. The following gives some idea of what it involves.

There is a strong propensity for people in positions of authority to be condescending and dismissive of others approaching them with ideas that do not fit their thinking. They search for problems and then use what they find to claim the ideas are unworkable. Advocates for alternative education must stand their ground when this happens. They are as entitled to their way of doing things as are those who perpetuate the status quo. This equality can be fostered by politely pointing out problems with traditional education that have persisted despite the protracted efforts of its most capable practitioners to come up with solutions. If problems were a reason not to do something, then we would have to shut down traditional education. We need for educational leaders to learn from history that it is unwise to permit dominant paradigms to power over legitimate contenders. The smart thing to do is to provide competing paradigms with equal opportunities to further their normal science. By operating as a school-within-a-school, side-by-side with traditional education, the OPERI pilot provides people with a real choice,

and good leadership will ensure that competing paradigms operating under the same roof are managed for the benefit of everyone.

A book titled *Education, Student Rights and the Charter* by Ailsa Watkinson supports efforts to make the alternative education paradigm more than an alternative. It looks at how the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* impacts education. In defining what her study had to consider, Ailsa gave considerable attention to the views of David Purpel, the author of *The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education: A curriculum for Justice and Compassion in Education*. He says the public school is “the only major institution specifically charged with the responsibility for nourishing and sustaining democracy.” She contrasts this with Canadian schools which she says “are by and large governed by a traditional authoritarian model that expects children to adapt or fit within the school environment.” She goes on to say, “Purpel has suggested that the need to control student behavior reflects an obsession within the traditional authoritarian model of education. The need to control has placed a higher priority on productivity, efficiency, and uniformity than on flexibility, diversity, rights and freedoms (Watkinson, 1999, pp. 38-39).” A quote from *Paradigm Shift* by Don Tapscott and Art Caston adds to what Purpel has alleged. They say, “If you want to control, you design organizations for accountability. If you want to accomplish, you design for commitment (Tapscott, Caston, 1993, pp. 35-36).”

Education, Student Rights and the Charter is not only significant for how it puts the alternative paradigm on the side of human rights, it also sets a professional standard for people who can influence the direction taken by public education. Ailsa quoted John Dewey advising teachers more than eighty years ago “to abandon the technical stance and the comfort of the rut (Watkinson, 1999, p. 39),” and he emphasized the importance of reflective thinking. “According to Dewey,” she wrote, “reflective thinking requires open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness. Open-mindedness is the active desire to listen to more sides than one; to give heed to the facts from whatever source they come; to give full attention to alternative possibilities; and to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs that are dearest to us.” To this she adds, “Educational scholar Vicky Kubler LaBoskey describes open-mindedness as an attitude that enables educators to question all assumptions and rationales, to become expert at alternative points of view, and to see things from the students’ point of view.” LaBoskey describes the reflective educator as one who feels “responsible for helping to fashion a more equitable and humane tomorrow (Watkinson, 1999, p. 12).”

To help get the alternative paradigm beyond being an alternative, its proponents might get rid of the word “alternative” and agree to call it something like “the democratic learning model.” It needs a name that conveys its attention to individual rights and freedoms, and problem solving together for the common good.

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Richard Fransham has been an educator for over 40 years, mostly at the secondary school level. He has a Masters of Education in Computer Applications In Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and has taught for several years at the University of Ottawa in the Faculty of Education. He is a co-founder of OPERI and now spends his time advancing its cause. He lives with my wife in Ottawa and has two children and five grand children.

For more information on OPERI visit their website at <http://operi.ca>





Reflections on my Contemplative/Holistic Journey in Academia: A Time Now for (Re)Sacralizing Space in the Public University?

by Ajit Pyati

As both an Associate Professor of Information and Media Studies and a trained yoga/meditation teacher, I have gradually been making contemplative inroads within my Faculty and university. I teach in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS) at the University of Western Ontario (Western University), with my primary teaching contributions in the Library and Information Science (LIS) program. After completing an intensive yoga teacher training program in India in early 2012, I returned to Canada and began teaching free weekly drop-in yoga classes to FIMS students, faculty, and staff. Over the years, I've added a weekly meditation class. Most recently, I taught a more structured eight-week course (with fixed and limited enrollment) entitled *Yoga for Stress Relief*, in collaboration with Western's recently created Wellness Education Centre. In addition to these activities, I taught two new academic courses in 2016 with a contemplative focus: *Contemplation and Mindfulness in the Information Age* (for graduate students at FIMS) and *Information Overload, Stress Culture, and the Contemplative Turn* (for graduate students at Western's Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism).

Reflecting on these positive developments, I feel amazed and humbled by how far I have come in bringing my interests in contemplative and holistic practices into the academy. Even more importantly, however, I am moved by the positive reception of these classes from students and others in the Western community. While I still feel at times like I am on a "contemplative island" when it comes to finding other like-minded people at Western, the encouraging feedback I have received points to a hunger for more holistic, contemplative, and "whole person" approaches to education at this university.

Looking forward, I feel I am only at the early stages of this journey. I am staying open to different possibilities for contemplative and holistic engagement both at FIMS and Western. One future direction I am considering regards the presence (or rather absence) of dedicated contemplative/meditative/reflective spaces in the university. This point is particularly salient, since FIMS has moved in December 2016 to a brand-new building on campus. This new building, the "FIMS & Nursing Building (FNB)," is an improvement on our previous home, with more open and flexible spaces and a labyrinthine design that allows for more encounters with students and colleagues. When I had asked members of the FIMS Space Committee about potential spaces in the new building for my yoga and meditation classes, I was reminded about the presence of these flexible spaces and classrooms with movable furniture. However, is the presence of these spaces enough for the promotion of contemplative community in our Faculty? What type of signal might it send to students, staff, faculty, and the wider university community if FIMS had a dedicated space for contemplation, meditation, and reflection? Our new building has research space, meeting space, and classrooms, but what about spaces to "simply be" and connect to our inner lives in a deeper way? Might the presence of this dedicated space lead to new forms of community and connection, particularly when increasing stress, anxiety, and isolation plague university life?

With this context in mind, a few colleagues and I have discussed the creation of this dedicated space in our new building. As of the time of this writing, we are in contact with our Dean regarding the re-use of this space, and are still waiting for a response. In the meantime, I imagine the potential different uses of this room. For instance, would this room be mainly an "always open" drop-in space for the university community to have quiet time for prayer, reflection, and meditation? Or should there be a combination of drop-in use and the types of structured yoga and meditation courses I have been running for the last few years? Can this space also be the setting for contemplative conversation circles in which those of us in the FIMS community can share what is moving in us? Might these types of conversations help build a greater sense of community, building solidarities and connections through our hearts and "whole selves," and not just through our intellects?

These questions excite but also challenge me. At any rate, this proposed space is still a work in progress, which has yet to even get approval. However, the interest of other FIMS community members in this potential development is heartening and encouraging. We will have to see where things go with this project, but some important contemplative seeds are being planted at FIMS, with the fruits still to be determined. To conclude, I find inspiration in the work of Thomas Merton, the great Trappist monk and social activist, particularly in his

understanding of the spiritual and contemplative roots of the university tradition. While we cannot return (nor would it be desirable) to the model of the university as a place for monastic education, we can imagine ways to (re)sacralize university space. The neoliberal and corporatist university is about competition, striving, and stress; might even the simple step of setting aside spaces for the cultivation of our inner lives and whole selves be an act of defiance in the face of this reality? I look forward to seeing what answers may emerge!

Ajit Pyati is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario. He is also a certified and trained yoga/meditation teacher.





Our Holistic Approach for Co-Creating Joy

by E.D. Woodford and Deb Martens



How do people find opportunities to co-create joy in a 21st century world focused on technology? How do you find co-collaborators when you live in rural areas of your country? Two introvert 40-something women from rural areas of Canada separated by 1500 kilometers (900 miles) of highway were connected by a chance meeting in a 2014 residency program in Bellingham, WA, through SelfDesign Graduate Institute. In turn, they focused on holistic approaches for co-creating joy, more commonly known as collaboration, in our virtually-inclined world.

When you're a holistic visionary who leads with creativity, passion, compassion and innovation it can be deflating to work with teams who approach projects with a traditional mindset, "this is how things have always been done." You start feeling stuck and defeated. Surely there is more to collaboration than sitting in meetings where it feels like people talk just to hear themselves speak. Between coping with chronic illness or working with teams who lacked innovation and follow through, the choice can come to end participation with integrity.

Learning to value time and expertise led to the need to run from projects that aren't fueled by passion and elements of fun! Life cannot be all about work, but for many, there's little work-life balance. A victim of failing work-life balance in a demanding career, witnessing others finding joy and living life fully with creativity can ignite a mission of rediscovery. It took the words of a 73 year old education mentor talking about her tribe of 50-somethings keeping her young to realize the need for a tribe, a tribe that collaborates and co-creates and nourishes your ambitions with energy, enthusiasm and authenticity, creates connections to community and spiritual values based on compassion, peace, authenticity and kindness.

A common course of graduate studies in writing and sharing in the writing group rekindled our connection and ignited the desire to co-create. This course allowed us to experience each other's authentic natures and laid a foundation for working together, finding opportunities of collaboration, co-creating joy in our lives.

How are we co-creating joy? Our first endeavour included collaboratively co-creating an academic retreat with another student and asking someone phenomenal to mentor the experience. In addition to joy, the result was connection, community and valued learning. The shared love of writing and research led to an initiative of co-creating journal articles using virtual docs. How incredible that two or more people can collaborate from their own region contributing to a shared idea, shared research, and shared writing? The amazement is astonishing.

As lifelong learners, an engaging project has been to co-create post-secondary courses together with underlying themes of holistic education, social justice and other issues authored by lived experience. Common threads weave into the learning ideas of course creation, academic writing, experiential writing, and beyond. Within this co-creating experience brings the revelation of the **need** for co-creation. We are lighting a fire underneath each other with playfulness, sincerity, and accountability.

Co-creating joy is not the product of our collaboration but the purpose of slowly building a tribe reflective of intention, presence, connection and authenticity. As we begin to share with others about our joint projects, it's as though a spark has been ignited. Curiosity is birthed. Whispers of, "I want to engage in something like that" are heard. Momentum is building. Stories are shared. Chapters begin to unfold. We invite others to join! With each additional person, our learning community enlarges with more voices, more contributions to co-creating joy.

From rural areas of Canada, we have intentionally chosen to engage in collaborative projects using the virtual world, in real time, to co-create a community of inspiration. As we engage others into our growing tribe of shared ideas, shared intentions and shared dreams, we are expanding our projects. We welcome others to co-create joy in their lives or join our endeavours.

How are **you** co-creating joy in our virtually-inclined world?

Ten Ideas for Co-creating Joy for Holistic Educators:

1. Attend live online webinars or conferences on hangout technology.
2. Find an online bookclub.
3. Use social media to follow associations and groups that are of your interest (writing, education, etc).
4. Join a writing or research group or another group in your field.
5. Create a Personal Learning Community. Or join an existing one.
6. Create your own opportunities and ask others to join you.
7. Find a mentor to engage in conversations and ideas.
8. Investigate local bulletin boards or online event sites (Eventbrite) to see what is happening and take a chance on an event, new activity or learning experience.
9. Attend at least one conference, retreat or other social activity each year to expand your network, relax and enjoy yourself.
10. Make the first move to engage someone in connecting!

E.D. Woodford, MA, B.Ed, DHMP, is a former Principal, a Holistic Educator, a Sessional Instructor at UPEI and will be a Sessional Lecturer at URegina in Fall 2017. An artist and writer, her current research focuses on Home Economics realms and Indigenous Research. She is founder of *The Holistic Parents' Book Club* and co-creator of *Wildflower Writing Workshops*.

Deb Martens, MA, BA, is a former Social Worker, Freelance Writer and Editor, and a Holistic Educator. Her current endeavours include serving as President for a not for profit organization, researching PhD programs, and spending time with her family on the prairies of Manitoba. She is co-creator of *Wildflower Writing Workshops* and Indigenous Research. She is founder of *The Holistic Parents' Book Club* and co-creator of *Wildflower Writing Workshops*.





Spiritual Intelligence: The Spirit of Creativity

By Isabella Colalillo Kates

I was invited to speak at the *2016 Forum on Spiritual Intelligence* hosted by the *Holistic Education Foundation* founded and run by Ramon Gallegos Nava, Vicky Damien and Ram Gallegos Damien. The Foundation, based in Guadalajara Mexico, is responsible for successfully expanding the ideas of holistic education through ten years of educational programmes, conferences, forums and publications throughout Mexico and Central America. Current programmes can be found at the foundation's new website: <https://ramongallegos.com/>.

The theme for the forum was *Spiritual Intelligence: The Transpersonal Power of Being*. My talk, *Spiritual Intelligence: The Spirit of Creativity*, delivered live, via SKYPE on July 17, 2016, focussed on my thoughts and research on creativity as spiritual intelligence. Two other English speakers on spiritual Intelligence were Sam Crowell (USA) who spoke on *Meditation and Spiritual Intelligence* and Michael James (UK) whose talk was on *Spiritual Intelligence and the Question, Who Am I?*

My talk was broadcast, with simultaneous translation from English into Spanish, to a large audience of teachers, highlighted by images and selected text. At the end, audience members had the opportunity to ask me questions. Many of the questions were insightful and many dealt with how to use the concepts I discussed in practical ways.

The audience heard how my interest in creativity has brought me along a path of research and exploration and how I embody these ideas in my own life, and work as a teacher and poet. "My personal creativity is a shining lighthouse that illumines my heart and mind. And your personal creativity can do this for you as well. As you learn to use this light you will illumine the spaces around others—your family, friends, students and even strangers. You become a living candle. For creativity is the *light of the soul*—strong, timeless and unbounded. Creativity is a higher intelligence and its nature is light."

I explored some primary ideas that frame the archetype of creativity as the *soul's code*-- a code that animates and forms our spiritual intelligence. "The spirit of creativity is the embodiment of the power of creativity and its relationship to spiritual intelligence."

I spoke of how an educator brings spiritual intelligence into her work with students through modes of creative living and teaching: Holistic teaching is at the forefront of a new wave in education. "The cultivation of creativity and spiritual intelligence are one and the same. They belong to the turquoise meme, which identifies second-tier consciousness or holistic thinking. It will require the active, creative intelligence of a significant number of human beings to fuel the paradigm shift into holistic modes of thinking and raise the vibrational consciousness of all the earth's people for the Great Transition from Materialism to Spirituality to take place."

I asked the listeners to consider this notion: Can you imagine what might happen, if education offered creative ways of teaching and learning across curricula? If teachers cultivating their personal creativity nurtured the creative mind and heart of their students? I then asked the audience to write down their own answers to these questions: *What are the ways in which I am creative? How can I use these creative passions in my teaching?* I asked them to hold on to their list and add things in order to grow their creative profile.

I took the audience through a visualization called "The Ladder". The visualization can be done at different times in one's life and allows us to gauge where we are on the rungs of a ladder that connects our personal life to the life of the Soul. It is a way of knowing how the creative nature of our soul is embodied in our day-to-day life.

Lastly, I underlined the idea that basis of all creative work is partnership: partnership between the self and the Soul and partnership between the self and soul in others: "The more you agree to take ownership of your own creative way of being and doing, the more you inspire and are inspired. By simply being in partnership with your creative Self you automatically broadcast your creative essence to others-- your co-workers, friends, family and students. As you claim your sublime nature, the source of creativity, you open to your spiritual intelligence."

Isabella is a poet, writer/editor, and holistic educator based in Toronto, Canada. She works as professor, writer and psychospiritual therapist.

Isabella is the author of three books of poetry. She leads workshops and classes in personal creativity and creative writing. She has taught Creative Writing and Creativity classes and workshops at the University of Toronto,

Centennial College in Toronto and internationally. Isabella is the poetry editor of a new magazine, *The Braided Way*, which explores spirituality in all walks of life (braidedway.org).

Co-founder of the holistic education conferences *Breaking New Ground* and the *Soul in Education* conference series, she is a contributor and co-editor of two books of essays on holistic education, *Holistic Learning and Spirituality in Education* (SUNY, 2005) and *The Wheels of Soul in Education* (Sense, 2010). Isabella is the author of *Awakening Creativity and Spiritual Intelligence* (LAP, 2009).

Isabella can be contacted at: isak.light@gmail.com or visit her blog: <http://thecreativeself.blogspot.ca>



In Memorial

Our Students, Our Teachers

By Pete Reilly

Many of us work far into our careers before we realize that in order to become master teachers we're required to become master learners. Whatever we want to bring forth in our students has to be brought forth in ourselves first. So it is, that at the center of the holistic teacher's journey is a commitment to life-long learning, self-reflection and self-discovery.

If we're committed and willing, the right teachers will come our way, just when we need them the most and are most ready to learn the lessons they have to offer. And, odd as it may seem, some of the best teachers are often our own students, who offer us some profound lessons, if we're open to receiving them. One of my students, Tim, taught me some of the most important lessons of my career, and my life. They were

lessons that were deeply personal and not found in any book

Tim was a small boy, thin, with shoulder length, tussled brown hair. He was somewhat of a loner and his ninth grade teachers and classmates treated him as an outsider. Tim showed little interest in school. He came from a poor family and his clothes showed wear and a lack of washing.

I had a long relationship with Tim. He was stubborn about not following the rules. If there was homework to do, he ignored it. If there were reading or studying to be done, it was usually left undone. Grades didn't motivate Tim. Punishment didn't deter him. School held no interest. Most of us, including myself, I'm ashamed to say, treated Tim like a lost cause. We stopped thinking of him as a 14 year old kid with a tough family life; but looked on him as an obstacle to be dealt with, an object to subjected to the rules, punished, to be taught lessons; lessons that he, in defiance, chose not to learn.

At the time I couldn't understand how Tim looked at the world. It was harder for him to be defiant and stubborn than to "go with the flow". Most kids his age had learned how to play the "school game". But not Tim.

I saw to it that whatever work he shirked he eventually ended up completing. I was rigorous about it and I never let it slip. In fact, I'd make him do his work for me after school sitting alone, silently, bent over a blank sheet of paper in my classroom.

I remember asking him half-heartedly any number of times, "Tim, wouldn't it be easier if you did this work the first time? You'd get full credit for it and not have to stay after school. You always end up doing it anyhow."

I knew my logic wouldn't break through his stubbornness, and, sure enough, it didn't. Tim would simply give me a half smile and shrug his shoulders.

The first, and maybe the most important lesson Tim taught me was the *lesson of the limits of power*.

The school day was over. Tim hadn't read the chapter of Huckleberry Finn that I had assigned the previous night for homework. I seated him in my classroom, gave him a stern lecture, and ordered him to read the chapter he hadn't read for homework. Whenever I lectured him it made me feel good. I was in control. I felt I had him. He couldn't hide from me. He couldn't defy me.

I walked out to the hallway and struck up a conversation with one of my colleagues. I deliberately stayed out in the hall to make Tim feel isolated in his punishment. When I returned to the classroom to check up on him, there was Tim, sitting back in his chair, legs outstretched...with...with... the book held publicly and defiantly, upside down. Upside down!

He was defying me! Defying all of us! It was too much. He'd gone over the line. I went ballistic and began to rush toward him in a rage. I was pushing desks and chairs out of my way as I went like a madman. I had no idea what I was going to do when I got to him, but something inside me had snapped. He had pushed me too far this time. I felt as if he'd slapped me in the face.

When I was a step away from him he looked up at me. He showed no fear. In fact, Tim's face had an impish grin on it. It was a grin that Huckleberry Finn himself might have flashed at Miss Watson after being caught breaking some silly rule. His grin struck me in a way that disarmed me. It was both innocent *and* impish. It was a boy's grin; a real live, feeling, confused, 14 year old boy.

I stopped in my tracks and for a moment saw the humor in this scene of a red faced, sputtering teacher and this puckish 14 year old holding his book upside down. For some strange reason, I smiled back. The moment I smiled the two of us saw each other, not in our roles of angry teacher and problem student, but as human beings. I could see in his eyes that Tim was just as startled by this strange connection, as I was. We were looking at each other as if for the first time.

I broke the silent connection between us shaking my head and said, "Tim, what am I going to do with you?"

We both kept smiling. "Go on, Tim. Go home."

Tim, popped up from his seat, and started towards the door. As he reached the threshold, he turned back for a brief moment. Our eyes met. "Mr. Reilly..."

I didn't let him finish, "You're free, Tim. Go on, get out of here!" I motioned as if pushing him away with my arm in feigned exasperation.

He turned and left.

After that day Tim and I had a different relationship. I stopped looking at him as an obstacle. I stopped being so hard on him. My heart opened. Tim took a special place among my students. I could tease him in a good-natured way and he always returned the favor. Every now and then he did his homework. He even produced a poem or two before the end of the year; but there were still many afternoons spent in my classroom after school making up assignments, only now I sat next to him and looked for openings to speak with him. Tim never shared much about his life outside of school. He wasn't much of a conversationalist

I wish I could say that Tim turned his life around and that everything turned out well for him. I'm a sucker for happy endings. When the school year ended he went on to other teachers and eventually was ground up by the system. Each year things got tougher for him. Because of his reputation, he rarely got a clean start with a new teacher. He had fewer and fewer friends. He was worn down; I could see it in his face. But he defiantly refused to quit school. Whenever I passed him in the hall or got a chance to say hello to him I did.

Tim's father was a drunk. One night before he graduated, his father took after him in a fit of anger. Tim decided he wouldn't submit to another vicious beating. He locked himself in the bathroom of the family trailer, and in a last act of defiance, took his own life.

I didn't understand what Tim was teaching me until much later in my career. The seeds that he planted germinated years after we parted ways. Tim was defiant because he felt powerless. He manifested his power by teaching me, armed only with his copy of Huckleberry Finn (held upside down), that no one could force him to learn or do anything he didn't want to do. He taught me that no matter how hard I tried, or how much I cared, there were limits to my power.

I can also see that he did his best to teach me about compassion and how important having a big heart is for an educator. He was demonstrating to me that the kids who need us the most can make it awfully hard to love them. I wasn't ready for this lesson at the time; but it was a seed that would blossom beautifully later in my life.

Looking back, I realize that Tim had been reaching out to me and to others, in his own way, his entire life. I didn't recognize it until decades later. Tim was a beautiful boy and he helped me discover many things about myself. He mirrored back to me my own insecurity, my difficult childhood, how I used my role as teacher to be controlling, and how I'd closed my heart to protect myself from being hurt.

Like Tim, our students offer us many powerful personal and professional lessons if only we're open to receiving them. Our classrooms are full of these wonderful teachers. As holistic educators we owe it to ourselves to seek out their lessons. Do we have the courage to look at ourselves as our students see us?

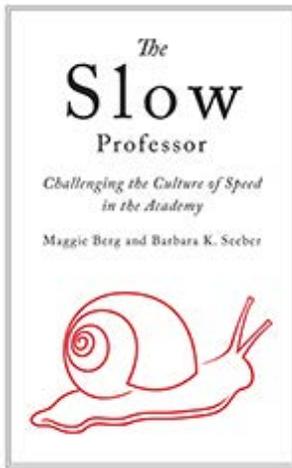
My student, Tim, was such a delicate soul. I was blessed to have him as a teacher. I wish I could tell him that.

I miss him.
Pete Reilly

Pete Reilly is a holistic educator, writer and speaker. You can find more information about him at his website <http://www.petereilly.org>



Book Review: by Susan A. Schiller



Berg, Maggie and Barbara K. Seeber. *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*. Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 2016. Print. 107 pages.

If you are frustrated with the corporatization of the university and need encouragement to do something about it, then read *The Slow Professor*. Berg and Seeber present a fairly comprehensive overview of Canadian and American higher education as a neoliberal and corporatist institution that promotes competition, production, and profit. In addition they urge our resistance to it and argue for activism. Practical advice, formed out of various research findings others have completed, appears reasonable and feasible. They link their initiatives to the "Slow movement" because in that they see already generated a philosophy that sustains and improves life quality through its focus on care and attention as well as the intention to live in the present. In their words, "Slow Professors act with purpose, taking the time for deliberation, reflection, and

dialogue, cultivating emotional and intellectual resilience (11). They further believe that the Slow movement, if enacted in the academy, will "repoliticize" the academy (11).

To persuade readers to this point of view and to activism, Berg and Seeber effectively organize chapters to feature topics essential to the academy: Time Management and Timelessness; Pedagogy and Pleasure; Research and Understanding; Collegiality and Community; and a conclusion that brings it all together under Collaboration and Thinking Together. This book presents concise anecdote, published research findings, and practical guidance that convinces us to act against the neoliberal corporatist directions our universities are taking. I found it to be rather compelling, especially when it echoed conditions at my own institution. At times I patted myself on the back for the little I already do to resist this insidious culture, but I also found myself imagining what more I could do to counteract it. As these authors point out, the corporate university seems extremely pervasive and powerful, almost too powerful to change.

Yet, change it we must, or else live with ugly consequences. The "or else" is a scary scenario that looms in the future, a future that is here, now, for many of us. Workloads are increasing, employment stability is eroding, mandated assessments and outcomes weaken or eliminate professional choice in pedagogy, and a drive for greater productivity across all levels of higher education weakens the joy and pleasure in intellectual activity for students and faculty. In fact, the words joy and pleasure take on derogatory meaning in the academy and are used to dismiss holistic endeavors as meaningless, worthless, or frivolous. Fear is introduced. This is the biggest enemy since it is internalized and spread among us. Hats go off, then, to Berg and Seeber, for writing honestly and with courage when they urge us to resist these ugly conditions.

Like me, those of you who contribute to and read the *Holistic Educator* resist the corporate university and have done so for some time now. I could do more. We all could, and Berg and Seeber suggest key ideas to consider:

1. If you want an event to be joyless, make it mandatory.
2. If we don't vent, we will begin to whine.
3. Risk candour.
4. Ask what we miss.
5. Don't give up hope.

If these ideas interest you, read their book. It motivates us into being louder spokespeople for holistic education as well as for a healthier lifestyle that includes balance in our private AND professional spaces. When the values of our institutions move in the wrong direction, it is up to us to reset the compass. Berg and Seeber make an attempt to do just that.

Dr. Susan A. Schiller is a Professor of English at Central Michigan University where she teaches American Literature, Composition Studies, and serves as Director of the M.A. in Humanities Program. *Sustaining the Writing Spirit: Holistic Tools for School and Home*, 2nd Edition, is her latest book. This evolved from international contact with educators in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. She also presents and publishes on studies in Willa Cather.





***Second International Conference
in
Ashland, Oregon (USA)***

September 14-17, 2017

***Hosted by the School of Education at
Southern Oregon University.***

Exploring Wholeness: Connecting Voices and Visions

You are warmly invited to attend and participate in this inclusive gathering of educators from many realms of holistic practice. The conference will honor diverse perspectives that contribute to our exploration of wholeness, bridging traditions from the past with possibilities for the future.

How do conceptions of wholeness expand our vision of what is possible in education?

The conference addresses a critical need for educators to support one another in promoting humane and inclusive forms of teaching and learning. We hope to draw on the work and leadership of inspiring educators and to feature a variety of schools, programs, and teachers from many places.

The program structure will encourage dialogue, collaboration, and a shared sense of inquiry through interactive session formats, roundtables, *fishbowl* plenaries, workshops, and school visits.

Watch for conference updates at the HTLC website:

<http://www.sou.edu/holistic/>

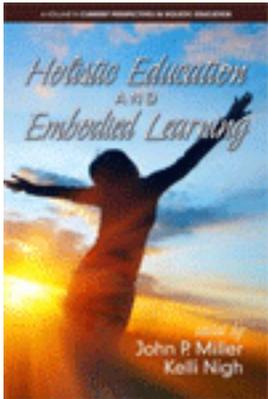
You may send an email requesting to be included on our contact list to:
Dr. William Greene (greenew@sou.edu) or Dr. Younghee Kim (kimy@sou.edu)

Announcements



1. Recently Published Books

A. Holistic Education and Embodied Learning



Edited by: John P. Miller, *University of Toronto* and Kelli Nigh, *The Living Institute*

A volume in the series: [Current Perspectives in Holistic Education](#).

Published 2017

Learning often begins with an experience in the body. Our body can tighten or feel expansive depending on different learning contexts. This experience of learning in the body is crucial to holistic education. This book explores embodied learning from several perspectives.

This first section explores how psychology can inform us about embodied learning; for example, the work of Carl Jung and Wilhelm Reich devoted much of their thinking to how energy manifests itself in the body. Meditation and movement are also examined as ways of embodied learning; for example, Dalcroze, a form of movement education, is presented within the context of whole person education. The book also presents schools where embodied learning is nurtured. Waldorf education is discussed as well as a public school in Toronto where the body is central to holistic education. The book also presents visions of embodied learning. John Miller presents a holistic vision of teacher education and Tobin Hart, who has written extensively in this field, writes about the embodied mind.

Embodied learning is an emerging area of inquiry in holistic education and this book presents a variety of perspectives and practices that should be helpful to both scholars and practitioners.

CONTENTS

Foreword. Preface. Acknowledgments. **SECTION I: PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES.** A Full and Flexible Life: Carl Jung and Wilhelm Reich, *Kelli Nigh*. Transformational Growth Into Wholeness: A Holistic, Experiential, Process Method, *Jim McNamara and Caroline Mardon*. Healing Archetypes: Reclaiming Teacher Wellbeing by Embodying the Wild Feminine, *Joanna Krop*. **SECTION II: SCHOOLS.** The Art of Education: Waldorf Education in Practice, *Warren Lee Cohen and Brian Daniel Bresnihan*. Compassionate Teaching, *Young-Yie Kim*. Equinox: Portrait of a Holistic School, *John P. Miller*. A Vision for a Holistic Secondary School, *Misha Abarbanel*. **SECTION III: MEDITATION, CONTEMPLATION, AND MOVEMENT.** Loving Kindness Meditation: Awakening Teacher Eros in Modern Educational Settings, *Keith Brown*. Contemplation in Action: An Engaging Pedagogy for Our Times, *Jennifer Motha*. Dalcroze Pedagogy: Reflections on Rhythm and Felt Learning, *Sharon E. Dutton*. **SECTION IV: VISIONS.** A Journeyman Professor's Walk Through Metaphor and Philosophy in Search of Holistic Approaches to Teacher Education Curriculum, *Rupert Clive Collister*. Growing Spiritual Wings: Cultivating Creativity and Spiritual Intelligence in Holistic Education, *Isabella Colalillo Kates*. Embodying the Mind, *Tobin Hart*. A Holistic Vision of Teacher Education, *John P. Miller*. About the Contributors. Index.

2. Conferences of Interest:

A. AERO Conference, August 3rd – 6th, 2017, Long Island University CW Post Campus



Renowned educator and author [John Gatto](#) has agreed to keynote the AERO conference in August. Gatto, who has been recovering from a serious stroke several years ago, has started writing again. He has a new children's book that will be released soon, "Snider the CIA Spider," and has been working on a revision of the "Underground History of American Education." Gatto has spoken all over the world. He once rented Carnegie Hall to introduce people to educational alternatives. He made headlines during his acceptance speech as New York State Teacher of the Year by calling the education system "psychopathic!" He said to us, "I will write something really good for you!"

Other Keynoters for the AERO conference include [Dennis Littky](#), founder of the MET Schools, unschool expert [Dayna Martin](#), [Jonathan Kozol](#) author of "Savage Inequalities" and [Joanna Faber](#) will do a presentation on her new book, "How to talk so Little Kids Will Listen."

You can still register at the Conference Website: <http://www.educationrevolution.org/conference/>

B. ACMHE Conference, October 27-29, Scotts Valley, CA



the association for
Contemplative Mind
in Higher Education

The 9th Annual ACMHE Conference October 27 – 29, 2017 at the [1440 Multiversity](#), Scotts Valley, CA

Learn more at the conference website - <http://www.acmheconference.org>

C. 2017 AEPL Conference, June 22-25, [YMCA of the Rockies](#), Estes Park, CO

Theme- "Writing as a Way of Being Human"

Inspired by keynote speaker Robert Yagelski's *Writing as a Way of Being*, the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning (AEPL)'s summer 2017 conference will bring together teachers, writers, and scholars from a variety of institutions, K-PhD, to investigate and enact what Yagelski calls the "potentially transformative inquiry into self and world that writing can be."

Find Registration info at <http://www.iup.edu/english/centers/aepl/conferences/>

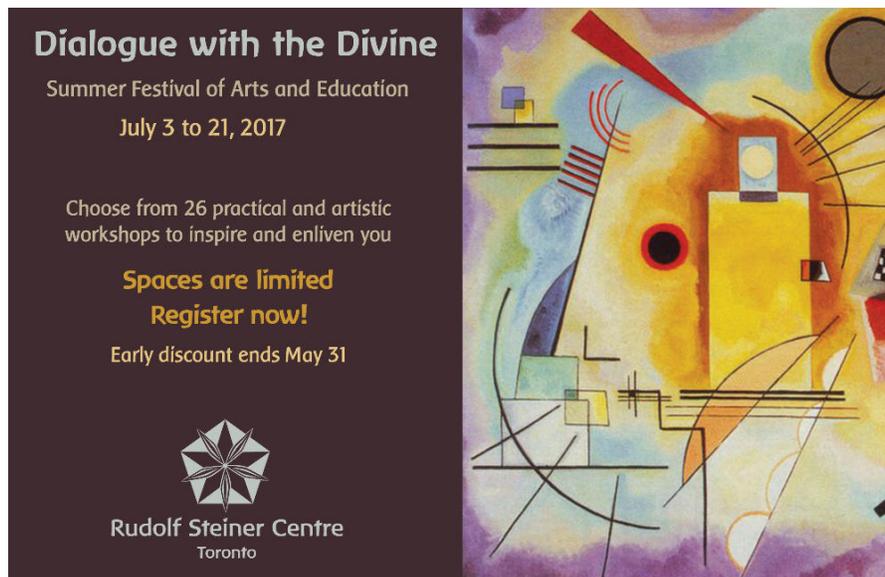
3. Program Announcements

A. Summer Festival of the Arts and Education, “*Dialogue with the Divine*” hosted by the Rudolf Steiner Center, Toronto, July 3 to 21, 2017

To download a PDF version of the brochure outlining the full program go to http://www.rsct.ca/site/rudolf_steiner_centre_2012/assets/pdf/suumerfestbrochure2017eletronic.pdf

And to visit their home page go to <http://www.rsct.ca>

To contact Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto 9100 Bathurst St., Thornhill, ON, L4J 8C7, Canada 905-764-7570 fax 905-889-3336 info@rsct.ca www.rsct.ca



3. Interesting Online Resources and Websites

A. On-line Asynchronous Course Offering

Dear Holistic Educators, Join author and educator Pete Reilly, as he guides you on the Hero's Journey, the path of the Master Teacher. This is an action oriented online program focused on helping you develop as a Master Teacher and re-connecting you to your larger purpose and passion. The course is approved for 15 hours of CTLE credit.

Learn more about this dynamic new course at <http://www.petereilly.org/online-course>

Register securely on [MyLearning Plan](#)

More information at www.rockteach.org

B. PEACE CHANT - Here is an item that might be of interest to teachers/classes/schools/groups/clubs / etc.

Submitted to us by a long time holistic educator Paul Royes

I am facilitating the creation of a UNIVERSAL PEACE CHANT (currently rolling this out across Canada and USA) with as many groups/organizations/participants as I may find willing to tone the word: PEACE.

GOALS:

- 1) Sustain community through PEACE CHANTING;
- 2) Raise the awareness of PEACE & LOVE in our world;
- 3) Create a contemplative vehicle (MP3 PEACE CHANT LOOP) for use in individual and group practice;
- 4) Create one UNIVERSAL PEACE CHANT from many individual voices.

PEACE CHANT INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have a small group sit in a circle, and tone the English word : “PEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEECE” or tone the French word: “PAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAIX” for 7 seconds in the key of C (the note is C, this may be middle C on the piano, or one octave up or down)
2. **Record it three times.** (I am using a ZOOM recorder for my sessions, <https://www.zoom.co.jp/products/handy-recorder/h2n-handy-recorder>)
3. Email proyes@georgebrown.ca AND/OR proyes@goodmedia.com the three WAV, AIF and/or MP3 files.
4. The aggregate UNIVERSAL PEACE CHANT will be posted to the web site beginning Spring 2017. The web site will document and catalogue the buildup of this UNIVERSAL PEACE CHANT. I will send you the link to the web site when it is up and running.

Thank you again for your continuing support...

Be well, happy and peaceful

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C. AERO Website:

The Alternative Education Resource Organization (AERO) was founded in 1989 by Jerry Mintz. AERO's goal is to advance student-driven, learner-centered approaches to education. AERO is the primary hub of communications and support for educational alternatives around the world. Our network includes Montessori, Waldorf (Steiner), Public Choice and At-Risk, Democratic, Homeschool, Open, Charter, Free, Sudbury, Holistic, Virtual, Magnet, Early Childhood, Reggio Emilia, Indigo, Krishnamurti, Quaker, Libertarian, Independent, Progressive, Community, Cooperative, and Unschooling.

To connect to the AERO website go to < <http://www.educationrevolution.org/store/about/>>

4. Call for Submissions

The Holistic Educator is the newsletter for the Holistic Learning and Spirituality in Education Community of Educators. It is published bi-annually in an electronic format and addresses issues of interest to our community members. We welcome scholarly contributions, book reviews, and professional announcements from our members on any aspect of holistic education. If you would like to submit an essay or article of about 3000 words or less to be considered for publication in the newsletter, or any announcements such as call for papers or promotional material for programs, please send an electronic copy to Gary Babiuk, gary.babiuk@umanitoba.ca OR to Susan A. Schiller, Schil1sa@cmich.edu. For scholarly work, please follow MLA or APA style and include a works cited page. Be sure to give your institutional affiliation and all contact information.

5. Influential Reads

We are still accepting submissions. This column in the Newsletter offers a review of books that have significantly influenced the contributor's thinking over a period of time. We hope to make this a permanent feature of the Newsletter and invite you to send up to five titles of books that have impacted your life. Please provide an annotation of two or three sentences that will inform our readership of the book's contents. You are not limited to books about education. We simply ask that your choices have been important in shaping your life. Please send your reading list to Susan A. Schiller at Schil1sa@cmich.edu.

6. Growing our Community

We currently have approximately 150 members who receive the newsletter. We would like to double this number or even triple it if possible. This goal may be easily achieved if each of you recruits one or two people who share our interests. Please send us email addresses of friends or colleagues who have agreed to receive our newsletter. We will add them to our mailing list. Let's grow our community!

7. Correction: The editors would like to make a correction to an article found in the Fall Newsletter. We erroneously titled David Marshak's article on page 14, A Book review but it was an excerpt from his book. We hope this error did not cause any misunderstandings.

Special Note

The editors would like to thank Trudy Bais, Technology Administrator in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, for her assistance in formatting the Holistic Educator Newsletter. Thanks Trudy, this bouquet is for you.

