

THE HOLISTIC EDUCATOR

Editors' Notes

Gary Babiuk and Susan A. Schiller



Welcome to the fall edition of the Holistic Educator. The above photo is a reminder that as the newsletter is issued many of us have just enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday season and are transitioning from fall to winter.

This issue is a mixed collection of unique and interesting articles. We begin with providing the "Preface" of the newly published *International Handbook of Holistic Education*, which provides an excellent overview of holistic education and features chapters by a host of influential writers and educators in the field of holistic education. The next article is by Anne Adams and outlines a systemic, integral model for education, followed by an article by Giovanni Rossini who takes us on a reflective and contemplative journey into narrative writing. The last two articles include Krystyna Henke's review of a not so well known early 20th century Dutch reform pedagogue Kees Boeke, and to round out this issue we have some musings about how to integrate some "Ecotherapy" into our teaching and lives.

As usual, we end with our Announcement section, which includes some book reviews, interesting conferences, online resources and our submission guidelines. We are always glad to receive your articles, so please don't hesitate to send us your latest writings.

Also, it is with regret that we have decided not to proceed with organizing the second Holistic Conference in Winnipeg. Due to retirements, as well as life and career changes, we feel we cannot embark on this endeavor.

Finally, we send out our warmest wishes to you as you prepare for the coming solstice and holiday season. We hope you get a chance to celebrate and spend time with family and friends and maybe get some time to relax and hibernate under a warm blanket with a hot beverage and a good book.

May you be healthy, safe and content.

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Editors Note: With the kind permission of the publishers *Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group* we have included the following copy of the Preface of the recently published *International Handbook of Holistic Education*. More details on Table of Contents, editors and contributors can be found at the end of the preface.

Preface

Educating the Whole Person

John P. Miller

In *The Coming Interspiritual Age*, Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord (2012) argue that during the latter part of the twentieth century there was the unfolding of the Holistic Age. In their view, during this period an emerging holism developed that includes “a skilled understanding and synergy between our interior and exterior, subject and objective ways of knowing and working” (p. 163). Johnson and Ord refer to a number of developments, including various conferences, publications, and institutions that reflect this emerging holistic perspective. They cite books such as the integral work of Ken Wilber (2007), Paul Hawken’s (2007) *Blessed Unrest*, which describes global grass roots change, and Beck and Cowan’s (1996) *Spiral Dynamics*. Organizations and associations include The Charter for Compassion, California Institute for Integral Studies, Naropa University, Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, and The Garrison Institute.

Holistic education can be seen, then, as part of this unfolding of the Holistic Age. Holistic education as a term arose in the 1980s and in 1988 saw the publication of *The Holistic Education Review* and my book, *The Holistic Curriculum*. Since then seminal works in the field have included Ron Miller’s *What Are Schools For?*, Rachael Kessler’s *The Soul of Education*, Parker Palmer’s *The Courage to Teach*, and Nel Noddings’ books on care (1992) and happiness (2003). In recent years, there have been several important developments in the field of holistic education. For example, important conferences have taken place around the world. Under the leadership of Professor Yoshiharu Nagakawa, The Asia Pacific Holistic Education Network has held annual meetings in Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Malaysia where holistic educators have come together to present their work. In North America, conferences have been held at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, the University of Manitoba, and Southern Oregon University. Southern Oregon University has also established a Center for Holistic Education. There is also the Holistic Special Interest Group (SIG) at the American Educational Research Association (AERA), where research is presented on an annual basis. In response to growing interest in the field, Information Age Publishing has initiated a book series entitled *Current Perspectives in Holistic Education*. The American Institutes for Research has engaged in major research in whole child education that is described in the chapter by Spier and her associates at AIR.

This Handbook can also be seen in the context of the growth of Holistic Education as a field of inquiry and practice. The Handbook provides an up-to-date picture of the field, as it exists around the globe, its theories, practices, and research. The original proposal for the Handbook identified the following objectives:

- Describe the current state of the field of holistic education
- Examine the theoretical and historical foundations of holistic education
- Describe examples of holistic education with regard to schools, programs and pedagogies

- Present current research methods used in holistic education
- Outline new and emerging research in the field
- Examine potential areas for future program development and research

I believe we have met these objectives. Perhaps the greatest challenge has been in the area of empirical research, since this is an area that has not been developed as fully as the other areas. Recently, books such as *Toward a Spiritual Research Paradigm*, edited by Jing Lin, Rebecca Oxford, and Tom Culham (2016) have started to address the need for innovative research methods that could be used by holistic educators.

The overall purpose of this Handbook is to create a comprehensive resource for both researchers and practitioners, which we envision will be utilized as a foundational text. Notably, this Handbook is the first comprehensive overview of holistic education's history, conceptions, practices, and research. The Handbook will function as a valuable reference for practitioners and researchers, as well as for novices who are just learning about the field.

The Handbook has five sections. I am so grateful for the work of my co-editors, Kelli Nigh, Marni J. Binder, Bruce Novak, and Sam Crowell who have edited the different sections of the Handbook. Since each editor has written an introduction to his or her section, here I will just outline the overall structure of the Handbook. The first section, entitled Foundations of Holistic Education and edited by Bruce Novak, explores the history and theoretical foundations of holistic education. Marni Binder edits the second section of the Handbook that focuses on examples of teaching, learning, and curriculum in holistic education. I edit the third section that includes specific examples and programs in holistic education. The fourth section is edited by Kelli Nigh and explores research in holistic education. The last section is edited by Sam Crowell and is entitled Final Reflections: it focuses on future trends and possible areas for future program development and research.

The rest of this introduction will identify a few of the central themes of the book and cite certain chapters that are representative of these themes.

The Whole Child

Holistic education is about the education of the whole child—body, mind and spirit. The whole child is central to Montessori education and Waldorf education. Tim Seldin and his associates have contributed a chapter where they situate Montessori education within the context of holism. There are two chapters on Waldorf education; Warren Cohen and Brian Bresnihan describe life in a Waldorf school, while Aziza Mayo has written about research on Waldorf education in the Netherlands. There are also examples of educating the whole child in Bhutan, Thailand, and East Africa. Professor Prapapat Niyom in Thailand has written about how the incorporation of Buddhist principles in several schools nurtures the whole child, while Sarfaro Niyozov and Antum Panjwani write about how Islamic education reaches the whole child in Madrasa schools in East Africa.

There are also examples of whole person education in higher education. Jamie Magnusson at the University of Toronto describes her graduate course that engages the whole person, while Cruz Prado at LaSalle University in Costa Rica writes about the holistic doctorate program there.

Nature

Another important theme in this book and in holistic education is the connection to nature. Holistic education seeks to be in harmony with nature and, thus, focuses on interdependence and connectedness to guide teaching and learning (Miller, 2007). This theme is central to Indigenous education and we are fortunate to have contributions from Four Arrows and Greg Cajete, leading indigenous scholars. One of the interesting developments in Korea and Japan is the planting of small forests on school grounds. Professor

Kim describes how a large number of schools in Korea have planted these forests and how they encourage integrated learning. The forest can also be a place where children can meditate. Jane Bone, in her chapter, writes about how, in the Danish preschools, children walk into the forest on their own to “be at home in the pine trees”.

Holistic Teaching and Learning

The Handbook explores many innovative approaches to teaching and learning that connect to the whole person. Fred Korthagen has developed a powerful model of learning that builds on one’s core values. His approach has been adopted by faculty at Southern Oregon University. William Greene and Younghee Kim, Professors there, introduce the concept of *va*, which is the space or between-ness that connects and allows energy to flow in the classroom.

Several authors in the Handbook explore how various spiritual concepts like *va* are central to holistic teaching and learning. For example, Vivian Darroch-Lozowski introduces the concept of the *threshold body*, which allows the person to experience the world with a “wider and deeper inner wisdom”. Ping Ho Wong explores how stillness and silence are critical to traditional Chinese spiritual practices which can lead to a state of *wuwei* or selfless, effortless action.

In conclusion, we are fortunate to have a contribution from Thomas Moore, whose writing about the soul helps us see how soul transcends religion and is crucial to our humanity. He offers his vision of the place of soul in holistic education:

My final word on holism in education, therefore, is to suggest that educators might consider their deep work as taking care of the health of the students’ souls, even as they focus on learning and knowledge. This Platonic or soul-based learning has roots in both the student’ very being and in the culture. Certainly one of the goals in education is to improve the character of the culture at large by creating deeply educated persons.

. . . if you are not concerned for your students’ souls, you can easily do them harm. More than that you need to know what it takes to heal a wounded soul, because most if not all of your students come to you with such wounds. You come to them with your own wounds.

Holistic education doesn’t merely dispense knowledge; it does so in a way that both the teacher and the student’s soul is engaged and benefits.

The contributors to this Handbook offer inspiring visions of holistic education. More than that, they have also described a variety of practices to enable teachers and schools to make holistic education a living reality. Holistic education is deep education that touches the whole human being. Through this education, it also offers the hope that the planet and all those who inhabit this wondrous globe can grow and thrive.

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Readers can find more information about the handbook, the table of contents, the editors and contributors at the following url:

https://www.amazon.ca/International-Handbook-Holistic-Education-Miller/dp/1138082651/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1538675455&sr=1-2&keywords=John+P+Miller&dpID=51hS5ZI9RNL&preST=_SY264_BO1,204,203,200_QL40_&dpSrc=srch-reader_1138082651





Where the Mind is without Fear

By Anne Adams

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
 Where knowledge is free
 Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
 By narrow domestic walls
 Where words come out from the depth of truth
 Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
 Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
 Where the mind is led forward by thee
 Into ever-widening thought and action
 Into that heaven of freedom...

Rabindranath Tagore

Systemic Integral Education Model

This model is presented to complete Tagore’s profound ode to true education above. What follows is a presentation of a systemic, integral model for education, which includes parents, educators, children of all ages, families, community members, etc. The intention of the model is to transform the way we think about education; how it is defined and brought to life.

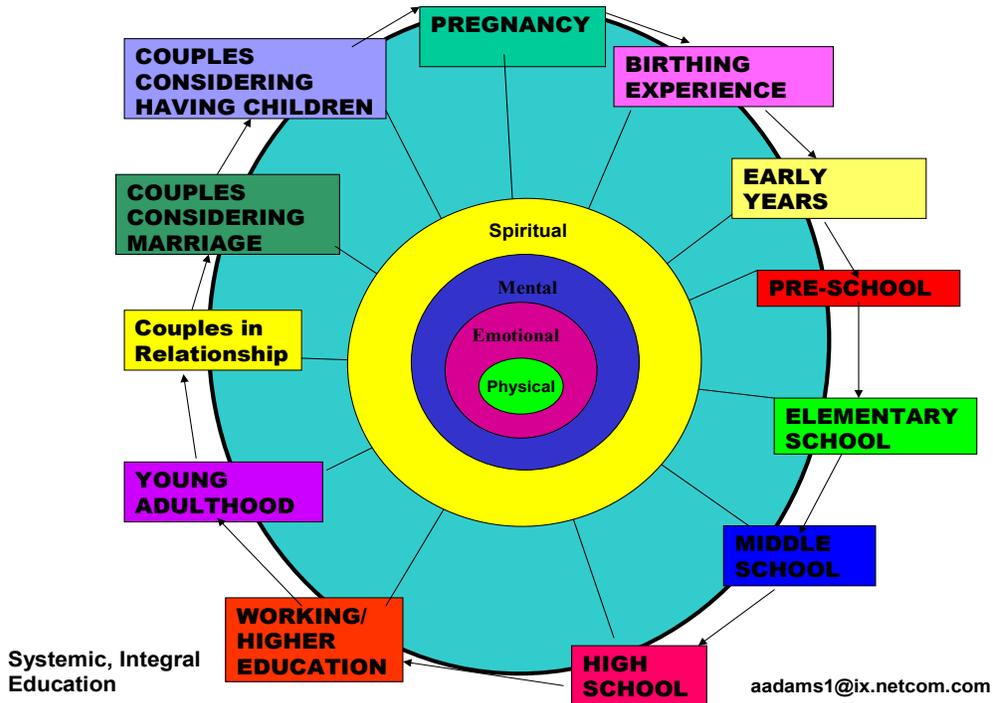


Figure 1

The above diagram represents a model for education that is *systemic*, i.e., spans from a child's conception to his/her graduation from school, and is *integral*, i.e., develops and integrates the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual intelligences throughout the stages of growth and development. The time span beyond high school is included because these phases of work/higher education and young adulthood play such a crucial role in the quality of connection between couples considering long-term association, possible marriage and family planning and child raising.

This systemic, integral education is found in a campus-like environment that provides facilities for each of the stages. Education is viewed as a life long learning journey. The facilities needed to provide for couples, school students, babies, pregnant mothers and their partners, toddlers, elders, etc, are co-located. The schools and other programs are close to one another to provide intergenerational relationships and support. The campus is a learning community and epitomizes a living system that is dynamic and co created by its members. People of all ages, i.e., young people, couples, children, students, parents, elders, teachers, community members, etc., come to the campus for education; classes, workshops, access to experts, resources, e.g., books, tapes, experiential practices. They are assisted in learning more about what education, learning experiences, practices and knowledge are essential in developing and integrating their mental, spiritual, emotional and physical intelligences. Whatever they are addressing in their current stage of growth is supported by an integral educational approach.

Philosophical Framework

The philosophy of integral education is taught and employed throughout the campus. People are engaged in an inquiry about how to think from and with an integral worldview. From the research study of nine integral education programs (Adams, 2006), the participants imparted valuable knowledge concerning the learning experiences found most supportive of the development of their mental, physical, spiritual and emotional intelligences. The following is a synthesis of their contributions and provides a framework for the design of a systemic, integral educational experience:

- The schools, parents, families, teachers, friends and community support individuals in educating themselves as integrated human beings, i.e., the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual intelligences are developed and integrated.
- People are able to experience themselves in relation to a larger world and feel connected to themselves, others and nature. They learn and participate in practices that put them in touch with themselves, i.e., self-reflection, journaling, silent time, meditation, yoga, exercises etc. They experience their physical body as connected to the physical world and nature. They are 'present' in their body, feel centered and aware of their energy and the energy of others around them. They are engaged in discovering habits that support their health and well-being, i.e. good nutrition.
- People feel safe, loved and related to others, and have a sense of belonging. They feel respected, honored, known and self expressed as individuals. They think and learn for themselves. They love to learn, are curious and follow their passions in life. Individuals are trusted, given choices about their life and responsibility for their learning. Learning is experiential, embodied and relevant to their lives. People serve and mentor others. There is congruency in their lives.
- People have an understanding of and honor the world's religions. They have learned the difference between spirituality and religion and engage in dialogues that support their spiritual insights and experiences, as well as their religions beliefs.

Throughout each stage of development, these principles are available for each person to relate to in a personal way—with which to make his or her own meaning. They are not rules or dogma. They are guidelines for exploring what it takes to invent a learning community with an integral worldview.

Relationship: The Foundation for an Integral Worldview

Throughout school, age appropriate courses are offered to learn about creating healthy relationships, both with oneself and others, i.e., groups and community. These courses correlate with other classes that address group dynamics, human development, responsible parenting, identity creation, as well as academic subject matter. The practices for good communication and dialogue are begun at an early age and are interwoven throughout the curriculum in appropriate contexts. Time is set aside regularly for young people to learn about silence, reflection, contemplation and self observation. The relationship they have with themselves is primary to all others.

Young adults considering committed relationships and/or marriage have courses, resources and practices available to them to support them in approaching a long-term partnership from an integral worldview. They can learn many important distinctions of intimacy, sexual experience and expression, compassion, listening, speaking, dialogue, having difficult conversation, handling disagreements, etc, that allow them to experience their ability to *create* relationship with others, of the same and opposite sex.

The systemic, integral education process engages couples in an essential inquiry regarding having a family; how to think about having a family from a view that incorporates the emotional, spiritual, mental and physical intelligences. The inclusion of these aspects supports the quality of choices made because the person involved in the choosing is also active in an integral lifestyle inquiry. Pregnancy and birthing inside the integral point of view regard the phenomenon as a whole, i.e., a complex, dynamic process. Expert advice in prenatal and perinatal experiences and care is available to families in this integral model of education. Many experts have voiced how important this time is to a perspective mother, father, baby and family members. The integral philosophy is extremely important during this time because everything that is happening is happening inside of a complex, living system; all participants require understanding, support, attention, love, etc., and coordination. There is a level of consciousness that is available throughout this time that can integrate the emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual intelligences and utilize their integration to create a powerful environment in which to receive the gift of life. This experience of wholeness provides a unique ‘energy’ that opens people up to their ability to create new life in a manner consistent with the unique experience it is, and to share that wholeness and creativity with others around them.

Integral Education

In an integral milieu, children are known to have a quality of wisdom. They are related to with respect, honor and listened to; their voices are heard and supported in developing. From the beginning of life, human beings are recognized as having passions, curiosity and love of learning, and can be trusted to discover what their unique path of education will be. Education is viewed as education for life for parents, teachers, students and includes all the intelligences; emotional, mental, physical, spiritual. The curriculum is designed so each area is fully explored and interwoven with the others. There is no hierarchy of intelligence in the integral approach.

Throughout the curriculum, there is recognition of the significant contributing influencers to a student’s growth and development, i.e., the school’s philosophical and pedagogical approaches, parents, families, teachers and friends. These influences are an integral part of the program and are incorporated in the student’s educational program.

Physical Intelligence

Physical intelligence is seen as *fundamental* to a systemic, integral education experience. There is an acknowledgement of the integral relationship between biology (earth), chemistry (foods, substances) and physics (energy) at the core of this approach to education. There is groundedness, centeredness, consciousness and connection with the natural elements. Some of the characteristics of the development of the physical intelligence incorporate: 1) time spent in nature exploring the connections humans have with nature, plants and animals, 2) attention paid to healthy eating habits and learning the impact different foods have on the functioning of the body and 3) centeredness, body and energy awareness and 'presence.' In addition to a well coordinated physical education program, this systemic, integral model of education offers experiences in learning awareness through the body which provide an incremental and experiential relationship with one's body throughout the first 18 years of life. Movement, drama, art and music are interwoven in the curriculum affording 'embodied' learning and supporting students with the connection between the physical body and the mental, emotional and spiritual areas.

Emotional Intelligence

The emotional domain plays a *relational* role in the integral educational programs. Connections are seen throughout. People are in community; they are in communication, with themselves and each other; they are caring and cared for; they are learning the skills to remain in community and communication, i.e., conflict resolution, dialogue, and mediation. Focus is placed on the experiences of: safety, belonging, relationship, love, being known, self-expression, responsibility, serving and mentoring others to support the development of emotional intelligence for everyone related to the programs, i.e. students, teachers, parents, related personnel. Teachers and parents are educated to be compassionate of students in their emotional development and are engaged in their own emotional self-discovery. The schools have age appropriate opportunities to learn about relationship and community building, health and human development, responsible parenting, dialogue, self-expression through play, drama, music and academic courses as well. Programs are designed to give students opportunities for travel, exploration, service and mentoring to mature an integral worldview. The curriculum coordinates with the development of the students.

Examples of these could be community service projects, individual explorations in areas of interest that require student generated initiative and resourcefulness, camping trips or dramatic/ musical production that include everyone in the school and offer transformative learning experiences in self-expression, interdisciplinary connections and intergenerational relationships.

Mental Intelligence

The *natural* role of the mental domain is respected in the integral curriculum. Mental intelligence is known to expand in an environment in which students are encouraged to love learning, be curious and follow their passion. When the learner is respected, trusted and honored as an individual and educated to think and learn for him/herself, given choices and responsibility for what is studied, the *natural* quality of learning is activated. Students exposed to curriculum that is experiential and relevant can embody the content and the context. The growth of mental acumen is equated with trusting the human being in his/her natural quest of learning.

There is a recognition that the purpose of education is to provide an environment in which the inherent attributes of the individual can naturally grow and take root. Human consciousness is recognized as an essential theme in the growth of mental intelligence. Learning content honors and reflects the learner's inner development. The development of the mental domain utilizes an eclectic approach by bringing together material appropriate for multiple ways of knowing.

Spiritual Intelligence

The spiritual domain plays a *contextual* role in an integral education. It gives a sense of congruency to life. Students are educated in ways that their sense of 'spirit' can show up in their lives, i.e., seeing themselves in relation to a larger world, feeling connected to themselves, others and nature. The holistic approach provides practices to support individuals getting more related to themselves through internal experiences such as contemplation, self-reflection, journaling, silent time, meditation, yoga, exercises, etc. The integral curriculum includes understanding and honoring the world's religions, learning the distinction between spirituality and religion and having clarifying conversations that bring people together and promote interfaith inclusion as opposed to exclusion and derisiveness.

Because the distinction between spirituality and religion is clearly made and accepted in an integral educational setting, everyone is engaged in an examination of his/her life and uncovering the meaning being made through the educational process. The value of silence and reflection is seen not as 'religious,' toward a belief, but toward an essential discovery—the relationship each person has with her/his own human spirit and that spirit or life force that surrounds us. Key to developing an integral point of view is seeing the connection of science and spirituality—to experience the awe in both expressions of 'spirit.'

Integral Intelligence

Extensive interdisciplinary modules that focus the student's awareness on the interconnectivity of and reverence for all life are interwoven throughout the integral educational curriculum. World peace, cooperation, coordination and understanding are major goals of an integral worldview. Integral education programs focus attention on hosting events and activities that educate people to transform the way different religious, cultural, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups relate with one another.

Integral practices that develop and integrate the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual intelligences as ways of knowing and being in the world are found in the philosophical fiber of the course work, pedagogical observances and actions taken in the schools. There is a weaving together of the individual with him or herself, the individual and the collective, the inner and outer, the silent and expressive, the abstract and practical and the spiritual with the religious.

Integral Practices

There are many integral practices to include in an integral curriculum. Two examples of practices found to be supportive of integrating the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual intelligences are yoga (Gates & Kennison, 2000; Kramer, 1980) and Network Spinal Analysis (NSA) (Epstein, 1994) which would be valuable as part of an integral curriculum.

Conclusion

It is not the aim of this document to provide a comprehensive curriculum for an integral education. What is being proposed is the combining of many different approaches to match the requirements of a perspective integral educational community. These are examples that have proved successful in researched schools. One of the important criteria for being an integral education approach is that it is inclusive of the circumstances, audience and context for which it is being created. It is co created by its community. Students, parents, teachers, and friends co create an educational program that allows the uniqueness of each student to grow and express.

Each approach to holism in education has many unique qualities to contribute to a systemic, integral model of education. In closing, let us acknowledge Sri Atmananda and his son, Sri K. Padmanabha Menon, for reinterpreting his work for education, Krishnamurti, Yogananda and J. Donald Walters for his thorough interpretation of Yogananda's gifts to education, Maria Montessori, George Fox, Sri Aurobindo and The

Mother, Jagdish and Bharti Gandhi who brought the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi and the world's religions to their schools and Rudolf Steiner, for the depth of their commitment to education, children and the world community. And to the people who have deeply known the integral experience and have reinterpreted it in a way that we all can benefit by it. Thank you.

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You can also refer to her website at <http://integrality.co/>





Reflections upon Narrative Writing and the Contemplative Life

By Giovanni Rossini

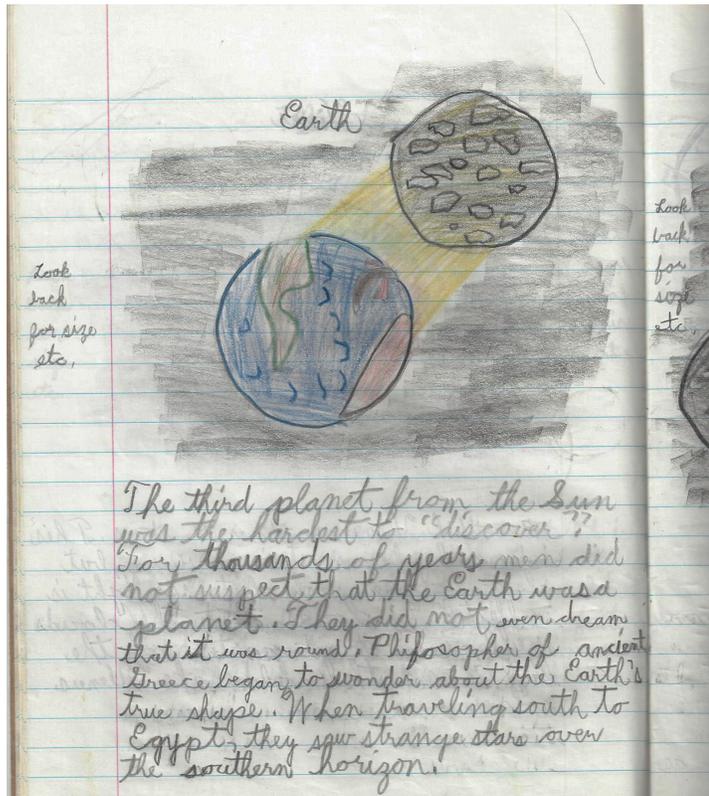
My second best book confirmed me in this desire. This was a collection of stories called the Greek Heroes. It was more than I could do to read the Victorian version of these Greek myths for myself, but Father read them aloud, and I learned of Theseus and the Minotaur, of the Medusa, of Perseus and Andromeda. Jason sailed to a far land, after the Golden Fleece. Theseus returned victorious, but forgot to change the black sails, and the King of Athens threw himself down from the rock, believing that his son was dead. In those days I learned the name Hesperides, and it was from these things that I unconsciously built up the vague fragments of a religion and of a philosophy, which remained hidden and implicit in my acts, and which, in due time, were to assert themselves in a deep and all-embracing attachment to my own judgement and my own will and a constant turning away from subjection, towards the freedom of my own ever-changing horizons. (Merton, 1998, p.12)

Late in the process of writing my doctoral dissertation, I had a revelatory moment. I was perusing my Grade 3 and 4 workbooks, which I had kept along with all my other school notes from elementary and secondary school through to university and which now filled many file boxes at home. As I explored these workbooks I became fascinated by the images of the planets I had drawn as a nine year old. Amongst the drawings in my workbooks these ones stood out as they were colorful and clearly drawn with enthusiasm. As I looked upon the drawings of the young John, a reflection began to emerge. Later in life I would study philosophy and history of science becoming fascinated by the stories of the old astronomers – Ptolemy, Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Galileo and Kepler. Many years later my transit into these subjects now cycling back to my childhood when I returned to my workbooks. A curious nexus of the young John and old John begins to emerge; one wherein the childhood drawings of the planets by the young John come into meaning within the context of a thesis. I now begin to view them as a prescient presence in my young life; and ones constituting, following Thomas Merton’s retelling of his own childhood, the “vague fragments” which would later inform my adult life.

The nexus of the young and old John within the context of a doctoral dissertation in holistic education was accompanied by a beautiful revelation that my thesis journey found its earliest expression in my childhood. A child’s enchantment with the creation carrying forth onto the adult’s fascination with the story of astronomical discovery. The transit from childhood to adulthood revealing how within the child we see the promise of the adult and within the adult the light of the child. The child whose light flickered within the precious workbooks which he had cared for onto adulthood.

Of the presence of the child its emergence within my inquiry in turn evoking themes of the spiritual child within holistic studies in education. Notably, Hart’s notion of children as “natural contemplatives” (Hart, 2004, p. 43); Del Prete’s idea of the “child’s voice” (Del Prete, 1990, p. 85) or Gardner’s notion of “child

mind” (Gardner, 2016, p. 3) which along with Del Prete’s view emerges from their study of the theme of child spirituality in Merton’s writings. Together such notions kindred with Montessori’s idea of the child as “spiritual embryo” (Montessori, 1970, p. 18) yet an embryo which is also attuned to the big picture – an alignment echoed in Montessori’s notion of cosmic education (Miller, 2010, p. 48) and in the young John’s fascination with the planets.



Merton's "Vague Fragments"
Building the Big Picture, 1966
My Grade Four Work Book

As I travelled my thesis journey my revelation also crystallizing observations about the methodological character of research in holistic studies in education; notably the intimacy of our stories with reflection upon self and the role of narrative writing within such intimacy. While my workbooks were witness to the cosmic child, they also became the basis for a dissertation which was configured in part by a narrative first person presence in addition to the third person voice common in academic inquiry. Reflecting upon the workbooks foregrounded the relation of contemplation with narrative within the inquiry onto the self; and the act of narrative writing in extracting meaning from such relation. From meditations upon a child’s workbooks there emerged reflections upon the transit of my life; and in my thesis I write about what I had learned from my workbooks:

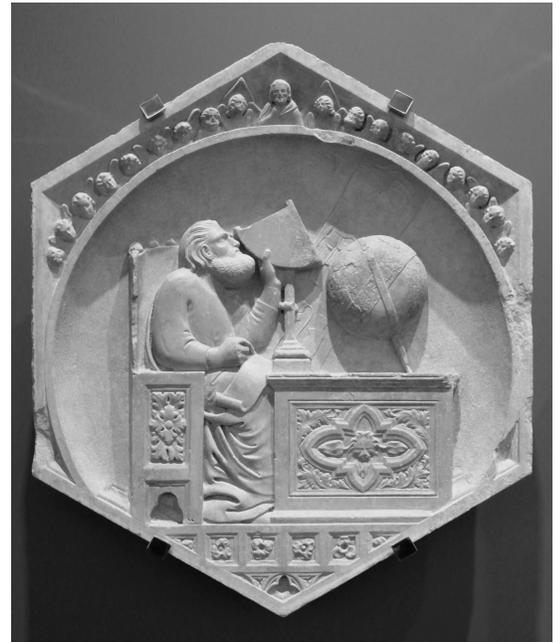
I look at the planets that I had drawn in my Grade Four workbook and reflect upon the words I use to describe them. In the margins I had written “Look back for size etc” and ponder the metaphorical prescience of those words. Years later within the context of doing a doctoral dissertation I “Look back” onto my narrative in order to arc forward onto inquiry. (Rossini, 2018, p.202)

My workbooks remained unseen for decades, yet within them were present the “vague fragments” – primordial witnesses to awareness which waited to be uncovered. Within them lay nuggets whose potential as channels towards self reflection stood apart from how I had been schooled in the university. As a young university student I had also studied philosophy specializing in metaphysics, yet my studies sought to know the world within a reductionist paradigm in which contemplative approaches to knowing through the engagement with the arts or narrative writing had no place. Within such paradigm there was no room for the embrace of the complexity and mystery of creation; or for reflection upon the self that was ethical and not analytical. Years later I reflect upon those earlier times and ponder *though I had knowledge of the world, I lacked wisdom*; and am reminded of Sri Ramana Maharshi who wrote

What is the use of knowing about everything else when you do not yet know who you are? Men avoid this enquiry into the true self, but what else is there so worthy to be undertaken? (Maharshi, n.d.)

For contemplative writers like Sri Ramana and Merton to be with the self is the ultimate epistemic and ethical goal. Though we may know, Sri Ramana reminds us that the core of such knowing is incomplete if we do not reflect upon the character of our authentic self. For Merton, the true self is the “scintilla animae” – the spark whose character is “a self beyond all ego...that transcends all division” and the purpose of education (Merton, 1979, p. 9). For the young John the scintillae expressed within a workbook whose light, captured within a child’s reflections upon the planets and stars, flickered unseen until it shone within the light of narrative retelling.

Our lives are witnessed by our stories and narrative writing is a powerful tool to begin to unpack such witnessing; and in so doing casting light onto the character of the scintillae that configures our true selves. Narrative writing nurtures contemplation channeling us onto the character of the self while simmering the mind upon the existential questions of life from whose reflections upon we find meaning.



The Astronomer

Susan Schiller observes how writing, if it is to be a place of creative vitality, “needs to be [an] activity based and connected to something in the writer’s world that allows the writing to be both *desirable* and *worthwhile* to that person” (Schiller, 2014, p.x). In my journey that activity was narrative writing and its connection to my world configured by a child’s workbook and experiences of schooling in particular; and other encounters with art and art making in general. With such encounters narrative writing becomes a witnessing of story; and one which nurtures contemplation towards the scintilla of the authentic self which resides within us.

While my thesis journey was marked by the revelation of how its transit found its earliest expression in childhood; its journey was also marked by a second revelation of the intimacy of narrative writing with the contemplative life. By embracing narrative I began to travel the contemplative journey onto the self; a journey of the young John with the old John which would not have been were it not for the child who pondered the planets and cared for his workbooks.

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Appendix A: List of Illustrations

Merton's "Vague Fragments" Building the Big Picture, 1966. Photograph of page from G. Rossini's Grade Four work book. c. 1966. Photograph by G. Rossini. Reprinted from "Summonses to awareness:" *A meditation upon wisdom and artful inquiry* (p. 207), by Giovanni Antonio Rossini (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.

The Astronomer. Pisano, Andrea & Assistant. (1341-48). *Gionitus, The beginning of astronomy*. The Opera del Duomo Museum. Florence, Italy. Photograph by G. Rossini.

Giovanni Rossini is an independent researcher whose interests traverse the terrains of contemplative studies in education, philosophy, aesthetics and the history of science. His latest project travelled onto the territory of wisdom and pondered how its promise is one which flowers from within our selves through the unity of the personal and artful. Crossing this terrain was the subject of Giovanni's doctorate from OISE/University of Toronto which he completed in 2018.





On Exhibit: Kees Boeke's Holistic Education Vision of Head, Hart, and Hands

By Krystyna Henke

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit the National Education Museum in the Netherlands, a country where the right to freedom of education has long been enshrined in its constitution, leading to a society with a variety of government-funded schools consisting of vastly differing educational philosophies. A small example of the seemingly fertile ground in the Netherlands for educational experimentation can be found in the egalitarian and progressive school founded by the early 20th century Dutch reform pedagogue Kees Boeke in 1926, called *de Werkplaats Kindergemeenschap* or the Children's Community Workshop. In the 1930s, Boeke's school became a haven for a number of Jewish refugees from Poland (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018). After World War II, it was also attended by a number of children from the Dutch royal family, namely those of Queen Juliana, who valued the creative and artistic freedom practiced at the school (Rietveld-van Wingerden, 2008). Although later, according to research by Hooghiemstra (2013), Queen Juliana indicated that she had some misgivings and she switched her three eldest daughters, Beatrix, Irene, and Margriet, to a different learning environment.

While perusing the exhibits at the Museum, which is housed in a spacious, three-story historic building in Dordrecht, the oldest city in the Netherlands ('t Jong, 2018), I was intrigued to come upon classroom furniture that had been made by children for their own use in Boeke's school. A nicely finished, handmade wooden chair was perched atop a glass display case. It is part of the Museum's vast collection of more than 390,000 artifacts that tells a story of the country's historical trajectory of education. Books, documents, photographs, teaching materials, school furniture and writing paraphernalia illustrate the various twists and turns of schooling since around the 17th century (Van Buren, 2018). In this particular section of the permanent exhibit, although placed within a larger context of an international movement of education reform and progressive approaches by Montessori, Parkhurst's Dalton, Peter Peterson's Jenaplan, and Rudolf Steiner's Free School movement, the focus was on Western European education reformers, such as the Belgian Ovide Decroly, the Frenchman Célestin Freinet, and Kees Boeke (Los, 2012; Nationaal Onderwijsmuseum, 2015). Noteworthy is that there was great interest in the Netherlands for many of the schools developed by previously mentioned educational practitioners and thinkers. The Museum's director, Tijs van Ruiten, underlined that it was the constitutional guarantee of freedom of education that made the Netherlands an attractive country for education reformers to try out their ideas, emphasizing that the Montessori method, among others, was successfully introduced there by the Italian physician and pedagogue Maria Montessori for that reason (Marreveld, 2016).

While Boeke's immediate impact is limited to just one school, as opposed to the well-known educational systems set up by a number of his contemporaries in Europe and in the United States, his vision for education and the school he started are worthwhile reminders of the importance of critically challenging schooling that may not necessarily serve children's best interests (Chomsky, 2003). Boeke was an outspoken pacifist and felt strongly that society should have equitable relations with all of its members. He disavowed the hierarchical power structures in traditional schools (Burgers, 2017). What struck me was that Boeke had been able to convince Queen Juliana of the Netherlands of these values. A photo of a young Princess Beatrix, long before she took over from her mother and became Queen of the Netherlands herself, shows her happily looking at the camera and carrying a carpet beater and a carpet in her hands, as she along with the other pupils were responsible for housework to keep the school tidy (Los, 2012). This was

part of the training for an egalitarian community that Boeke sought to build through his school. In response to his Quaker ideals, he hoped to achieve social justice and peace as a microcosm of the vision he held for the larger society. He saw his school as an extension of the family in which children would participate as equal members, take responsibility, and be involved in the decision making process. According to Burke and Könings (2016),

De Werkplaats was founded through a rejection of dominant modes of educational theory and practice, which regarded the pupil as the passive receiver of knowledge, always dependent on the authoritative teacher. Its alternative vision was one where knowledge was created together in a process of communal living, where discipline was brought about through an atmosphere of self-direction and social responsibility, and where cooperation was the guiding principle of educational relationships. (pp. 722-723)

An absence of exams and a mixing of daily household tasks with academic and cultural explorations, initiated by the children themselves, are some of the characteristics that mark this school, which is still in existence today. Its holistic vision is captured by the school's articulated focus on helping to build a world full of possibilities with "head, hart, and hands" (*De Werkplaats Kindergemeenschap*, n.d.). In the classroom, Boeke, who rejected the use of textbooks, had the children create their own learning materials, which were published in the school paper (Rietveld-van Wingerden, 2008). Teachers were available for assistance, if necessary. In Boeke's school, he did not want learning to happen solely on an intellectual level. Listening to music and caring for animals, along with cooking and engaging in sports were all valued activities that the children were encouraged to pursue. Boeke's vision was to allow children to develop freely by letting them explore and having them build on their creative impulses (Rietveld-van Wingerden, 2008). He felt that if children learned to integrate the intellectual with the emotional and the practical, then as adults they would be able to achieve a peaceful, democratic society. In Boeke's (1957) own words:

No difference of nationality, of race, creed, or conviction, age or sex may weaken our effort as human beings to live and work for the good of all.

It is therefore an urgent need that we all, children and grown ups alike, be educated in this spirit and towards this goal. Learning to live together in mutual respect and with the definite aim to further the happiness of all, without privilege for any, is a clear duty for mankind, and it is imperative that education shall be brought onto this plane. (p. 51)

Boeke's belief was that holistic, non-coercive and non-hierarchical education, led by the children themselves and thus fostering independence, could lead to harmony and social justice for all.

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Krystyna Henke is a PhD student in Educational Studies at Brock University in Ontario, Canada. Her doctoral research focuses on music education in refugee camps. Born in Europe and partially homeschooled, she attended elementary and secondary Montessori schools in the Netherlands. Krystyna holds an undergraduate liberal arts degree from Sarah Lawrence College, New York, as well as graduate degrees from institutions in Toronto, Canada: a Master of Arts in ethnomusicology and musicology from York University and a Master of Journalism from Ryerson University. In 2017, drawing on poetry's evocative link to imagery and emotion, she presented a session on Teaching and Learning Like a Poet at the 2nd International Holistic Teaching and Learning Conference in Ashland, Oregon.





Ecotherapy in education and life

By E.D. Woodford

Recently, I was cleaning up the documents on my computer and I came across some assignments from a psychology course that I had taken a decade ago. In particular, the psychology course examined our environment and what role that may play on our wellbeing. Rereading the assignments and some of the articles made me think about how my own life as an educator has changed with nature as an integral part of each day. One assignment stood out to me, the psychology of your environment. In this journaling assignment we were asked:

When you are feeling tired, bored, angry, or experiencing some other unpleasant emotion this week, spend some time with Mother Nature. Take a walk. Ride a bike. Scale a rock. You decide. Respond to the following questions in a 5-10 minute write.

1. What did you do?
2. What did you think about while you were communicating with Mother Nature?
3. How did you feel during and after eco-therapy?

Last year, I participated in Classrooms to Communities workshop in the West Kootenays of British Columbia sponsored by the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network. This workshop brought together 100 community and classroom educators to learn, network and collaborate on strategies and ideas for bringing learners out of the classroom and into the community and nature. Through a series of activities threaded throughout the day, we engaged in learning from others and ourselves and left with at least a seed planted for a direction to take in accomplishing the goal of incorporating more nature into education. A common conversation amongst attendees was that while we need more nature with our learners, we may also need more nature in our personal lives.

What is ecotherapy? A *Therapy Today* article states “ecotherapy is about the healing and psychological benefits of being in nature and natural settings” (Jordan, 2009). Having experienced many benefits of nature in my own life led me to look at educational trends. Current trends in education refer to nature schools, nature education, outdoor play based education, and even forest schools. Regardless of the geographical location of the learning space, it’s outdoors and it involves educators who guide learners to inquire, wonder, ask questions, and investigate their outdoor learning space. Learners are building a relationship with the land and positively affecting not only their learning, but their “human perception, emotions, behaviour and cognition” (Jordan, 2009). Ecotherapy is not only beneficial for the learner, but for the educator and this was quite noticeable during my course and taking advantage of the assignments and interpretations through psychological theory.

In reflection, learning about ecotherapy as a psychological tool kick started my re-engagement with nature over a decade ago and has shaped my current path. As an educator and as a homeschool parent, our way of

life has changed. Presently, living in a cabin in the woods we are able to connect with nature, harvest from our garden, preserve food for winter and relish in outdoor activities on a whim.

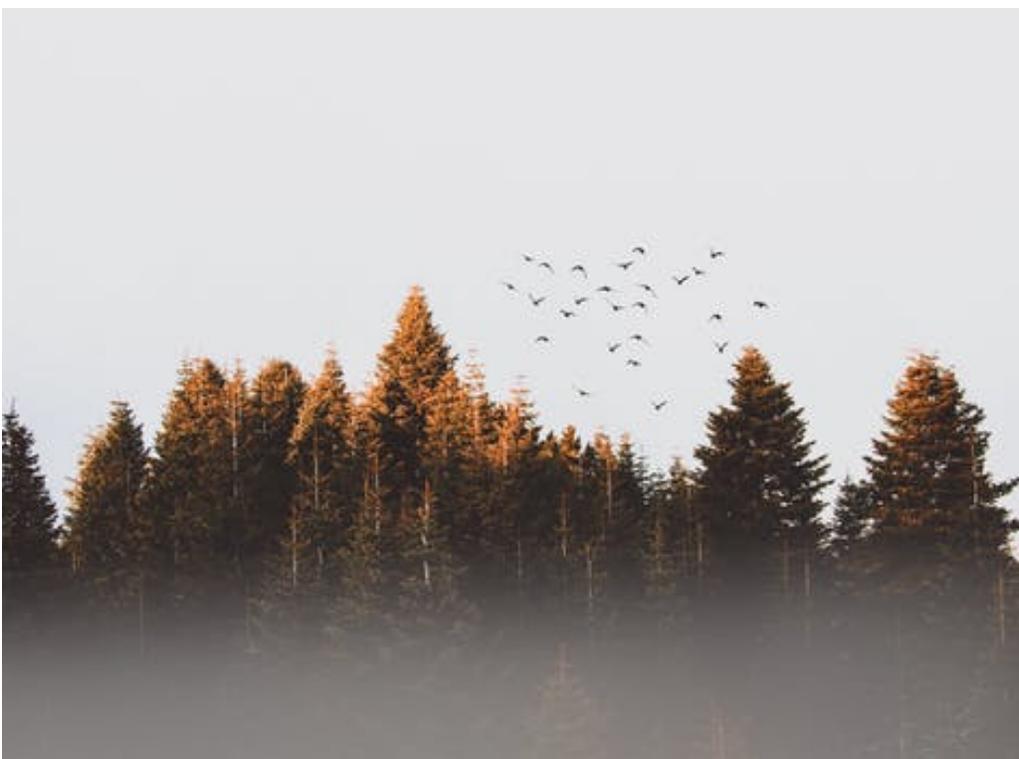
How is nature present in your life? Whether you are in a workshop or other professional development activity, there are numerous ways to incorporate nature. Simply through movement breaks during the day, or actually incorporating the learning space to be out in nature. An intriguing closing activity might be to ask educators to describe one goal from their learning. However, digging deeper illuminates a better idea. Why not describe one activity or accomplishment that you can celebrate that engages nature in education and life. The result when you ask 100 educators is one hundred accomplishments to celebrate and learn from with depth, innovation and inspiration!

On a final note, I invite readers to participate in an activity for the next issue of *The Holistic Educator*. Choose one or both!

1. Spend time in Mother Nature and respond with a 5-10 minute write answering the following questions: What did you do? What did you think about while you were communicating with Mother Nature? How did you feel during and after eco-therapy? Email your write for publishing (anonymous if you choose). erin.woodford@uleth.ca
2. Celebrate something you have accomplished recently as an educator in a nature. Email me your celebration for a compilation. erin.woodford@uleth.ca

Reference

Jordan, M. (2009, April). Back to nature. *Therapy Today*. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52d4fafbe4b093a3faf4bffd/t/52f2020ae4b080c60b257461/1391591946696/Therapy+today+article+on+ecotherapy.pdf>



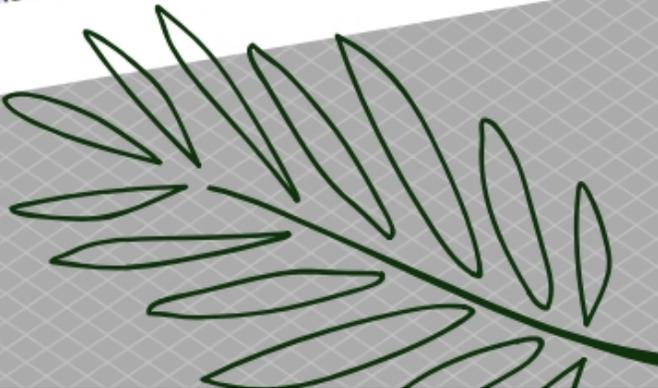


I went for a nature walk to a lake near my work on my lunch hour. I was feeling stressed out because of difficult technology that just wasn't functioning the way it is supposed to and then the computer power source blew out, again. It was one of those days so a lunch time distraction was a welcome change.

Walking around the lake gave me time to plan my work for the rest of the week without the structure of having only 10 minutes to quickly get organized for the next day and look through books, etc. I think having the freedom to think about things in this environment allowed me to be more creative with work activities and planning. It also encouraged me to incorporate a few future 100m field trips into my week. Next time, I will persuade a co-worker to come along.

The time also gave me a chance to use my senses. The grass was definitely greener outside of my workplace! The smells of spring were abundant; something I don't smell working indoors. It was a chance to hear the birds and other creatures and to feel the wind. The colors of spring were apparent and I even collected a few rocks for my son's painting activities. Getting outside spontaneously was great for the senses. The only sense I did not use was taste.

After the walk, I felt energized. Strangely enough, I think the outdoors cured my usual lunch time hunger because I definitely had decreased appetite. This is another reason to make a lunch time walk a regular routine! I think if I had of went walking outside of working hours, I wouldn't have thought of work and I would have had more time to feel nature and put more meaning into it. The afternoon at work went by quickly. I didn't have the usual mid-afternoon fatigue that I often feel. I think that nature aside, the idea of getting out at lunch time as given me new liveliness that I didn't feel throughout the winter. That alone is reason to get out again!



10 NATURE CELEBRATIONS

- **Senses Scavenger Hunt** - Using one sense, have learners come up with one search question to share with another learner and search. "Search for something red."
- **Creek Study** - Take learners to the local creek to learn about animals, habitat, and other elements.
- **Thinking Trees** - Learners choose a tree for the entire year. Each week they spend time with their tree for observation, mental wellness, and conversation.
- **Spuds in Tubs** - Plant potatoes in the classroom after spring break and harvest them in June.
- **Community Walks** - Take weekly walks in the community and observe spaces. Discuss needs and wants of the community. Contribute ideas to community planning.
- **Plant a Row** - Use gardening to not only grow food, but connect to academic learning outcomes.
- **Sacred Hunt** - Spend a night on the land learning about the sacred hunt, interconnectedness of all living things. Make a bow.
- **Fly fishing** - Students learn to tie flies, cast fly rods, and learn how to fish.
- **Tree Planting** - Participate in a tree planting experience to restore riparian zone.
- **Invasive Species Project** - Participate in an invasive species removal event.

E.D. Woodford graduated with a Baccalauréat en Éducation from the Faculté Saint-Jean campus of the University of Alberta and a Masters of Arts from the SelfDesign Graduate Institute. A homeschool mom, researcher, writer and explorer of her Métis heritage, she currently spends time between BC, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Pacific Northwest writing poetry and contemplating what her PhD question may be. A former Principal, currently faculty in Indigenous Studies with the College of the Rockies and the University of Lethbridge, she is passionate about making learning meaningful and relevant.

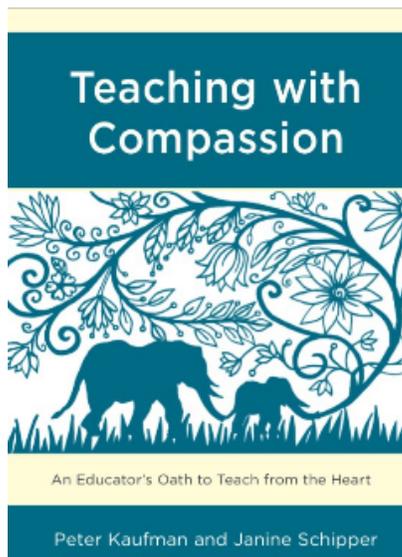




Announcements



1. Recently Published Books



Teaching with Compassion offers practical tools and strategies designed to help educators foster a culture of care and compassion in their teaching. The book is written in simple, accessible language and is intended for experienced and novice educators at all levels and in all types of educational settings. Organized around an eight-point “Teaching with Compassion Oath,” the book draws on real life examples and exercises to demonstrate the power and potential of teaching from the heart. *Teaching with Compassion* is sure to stimulate inquiry, provide ongoing motivation, and promote reflective dialogue among educators.

Given the current political climate of animosity and intolerance, as well as the array of social problems that students confront on a daily basis, compassionate action is needed more than ever. Educators cannot fully shield students from the harsh realities they face; however, they can provide a supportive and affirming atmosphere. *Teaching with Compassion* is meant to help teachers cultivate such an educational environment.

TEACHING WITH COMPASSION: AN EDUCATOR'S OATH TO TEACH FROM THE HEART has just been published by Rowman and Littlefield. You can purchase it directly through [Rowman and Littlefield](#) (use coupon code *RLEGEN18* to get a 20% discount from the publisher).

2. Conferences of Interest:

A.



The [6th annual Contemplative Practices for Higher Education Conference](#) will be held on **Friday and Saturday, March 8-9, 2019** hosted by James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia at the Hotel Madison. Keynote speakers on Friday will include Michael Yellow Bird and Judith Simmer-Brown and a half-day contemplative workshop will be led on Saturday by Joanne Braxton ([more details](#)).

The conference is now accepting proposals that represent the best contemporary uses of contemplative practices in the following areas of higher education: teaching, research, service, leadership, and support. We hope to share insights from a diverse range of scholars, practitioners, educators, administrators, coaches, consultants, thought-leaders, students, and other professionals.

Submissions will be explored during the conference's Friday, March 8, 2019 sessions (panels, presentations, round-table discussions, workshops, and papers). **The deadline for submissions is November 12, 2018.**

Learn more about submission requirements, here: <http://www.jmu.edu/cpc/submissions.shtml>

This conference is the annual meeting for C-HEARTS, the Contemplative Higher Education Alliance for Research, Teaching, and Service: Mid-Atlantic Region. Submissions and conference attendance are encouraged for interested parties from across the country and around the world. A greatly reduced student registration rate is offered to help encourage graduate and undergraduate students to attend the conference as presenters, co-presenters, and attendees.

Shared on behalf of the CPHE Conference Planning Committee. <http://www.jmu.edu/cpc/index.shtml>

B.



STLHE 2019 SAPES

Winnipeg, Manitoba

The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning at the University of Manitoba is delighted to host the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) 2019 Annual Conference at the RBC Convention Centre in the heart of downtown Winnipeg from June 11 – 14, 2019.

We invite you to participate in the 2019 STLHE Annual Conference. This year's conference theme is **Guiding the Journey: Learner – Teacher – Learner.**

The online submission system is available now for proposal uploads. All submissions must be received by **11:59 p.m. (Central time) on Thursday January 10, 2019.**

For questions about the Call for Proposals please email: program@stlhe2019sapes.ca

For more information about the conference go to their website at <https://stlhe2019sapes.ca/>

3. Interesting Online Resources and Websites

A. We would like to introduce you to a monthly blog on **Wellness**. It was created by an Education for Sustainable Well-being Summer Institute student at the University of Manitoba, as her final assignment after this two week eight hour intensive institution. Her name is Meghan Rauch and she is a teacher at a city high school. The name of the blog is:

The Teacher's Apocalypse Thrival Blog

“The focus of the blog is on teacher and really any adult working within our schools and their wellbeing as a means to promote a whole-school positive and well environment. If you decide to stick around for the journey, I will be posting one blog post at the start of each month that will touch on an element of wellbeing. A few topics include: flourishing, mindset, simplicity, various Scandinavian philosophies and much more.

I will also include links to sites, videos and additional resources that you can explore should you wish to go deeper into each month’s topic. So if your personal and profession wellbeing is a priority for this school year, I encourage you to check in each month and join the conversation!” To get to the blog go to:

<http://madamerauch.weebly.com/the-teachers-apocalypse-thrival-blog>

And if you want to be added to Meghan’s reminder email list, you can send her an email at meghan.rauch@7oaks.org

B. Contemplative Community Building Toolkit

We hope that the toolkit will support the continued development of living and learning environments that support inquiry into meaning, purpose, and action.

The toolkit is organized into six sections, reflecting common phases and challenges:

1. Intention (Laying the Groundwork)
2. Invitation (Creating a Welcoming Community)
3. Sustainability (Building a Sustainable Community)
4. Meetings and Events
5. Conflict Transformation
6. Connecting the Dots (Being Part of a Larger Movement)

Find copy at <http://www.contemplativemind.org/communitytoolkit>

You can also go to The Center for Contemplative Mind In Society to join and get their newsletter at <http://www.contemplativemind.org/>

C. Meeting with Remarkable Educators PodCast

About the most remarkable educators changing paradigms of learning-|-

A podcast showcasing the work, insights, & inspiration of educators dedicated to the whole child. New episodes will be released biweekly, on alternating Tuesdays.

We, the producers and participants, sincerely believe that these interviews contain critical elements for social justice. We trust that everyone who cares for and about children, education, and the actualization of social well-being will grow in valuable and often unexpected ways through listening to Meetings with Remarkable Educators.

Here are episodes of the holistic educators that have already been interviewed.

1. Jack Miller
2. Demetri Yound
3. Marni Binder
4. Paul Freedman
5. Philip Snow Gang
6. Tobin Hart
7. Four Arrows
8. Yoshi Nakagawa
9. Sam Crowell
10. Josette Luvmour
11. Ron Miller
12. David Marshack

Find them at <https://www.remarkable-educators.com/podcast>

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 200 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!

Special Note

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



