

THE HOLISTIC EDUCATOR

Editors' Notes

Gary Babiuk and Susan A. Schiller



Dear Friends,

This is the last Newsletter that we will be editing for you. With gratitude for and appreciation of the opportunity to serve our community since 2011, we now turn over the Newsletter Editorship to a new team. We are confident that they will sustain and grow the community spirit that the Newsletter has come to represent for all of us.

Since 2011, we have worked together to bring the Newsletter to all of you and to keep alive a space where everyone can share their voice. When we began, we had about eighty names on our mailing list; today, as we close our term, we have 250. Serving our community has been a rich experience that even prompted us to organize the conference we held in Winnipeg, which many of you attended. During our term, we have made good friends. Our Canadian/American partnership has also been a significant reward to both of us, and we expect it will become the same for the new team, as well.

Let's welcome the new team: Paul Freedman, Laurel Tien, and Renee Owens.

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Hello Holistic Education Newsletter readers!

Paul, Laurel, and I are honored – humbled – to be assuming the role of continuing the legacy of The Holistic Educator that Gary and Susan have served for many years. We will endeavor to use the publication to nurture the holistic education movement as it continues to evolve.

Call for Submissions for the May 2021 issue

We invite you to become of part of the next leg of the journey by submitting an article or news in one of three categories:

1. Scholarly articles: Articles that include theoretical foundations and/or research around holistic education. These will be peer-reviewed.
2. Exemplars of practice: Articles and stories describing innovations in holistic practice, particularly highlighting equity and inclusion. This can include book reviews.
3. News and events: Short notices of upcoming opportunities for our community to learn from one another and to stay in touch. This can include conferences, book releases, and events of interest to our shared community.

Due date for submissions is *April 1, 2021*

How to submit your submissions

We are moving to an Open Journal System to facilitate submission and publishing of the newsletter. Your emails will be added

If you are submitting News and events, or Exemplars of practice please send them to any of the co-editors.

If you are sending Scholarly articles, please send submissions to <https://HER.journals.publicknowledgeproject.org/index.php/HER/index> using the following steps.

1. Click on <https://HER.journals.publicknowledgeproject.org/index.php/HER/index>
2. Create your author profile by clicking on **Register**. You will be asked to create a profile and login/password.
3. A confirmation email will be sent to the email address that you gave. Please click on the link in that email to confirm your registration.
4. You can now log in using the credentials you supplied when you created your account.
5. Click on the links to make a new submission or view your pending submissions. The system will walk you through the various steps.
6. Questions? Email Laurel Tien, Production Editor at laurel.tien@TLCommunity.org

Co-editors

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I am the father of two amazing young adults, my greatest mentors. I have been a K-6 teacher for 28 years. I am the Founding Head of Salmonberry School on Orcas Island, WA. I have served as President of the Graduate Institute for Transformative Learning and am currently a member of the faculty of TIES (The Institute for Educational Studies) and the Transformative Learning Foundation. I have served as a Contributing Editor for *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*. My TEDx Talk is on "Deep Education." I am the Co-Director of the Holistic Education Initiative.

It is an honor to accept the reins for *The Holistic Educator* from Susan and Gary, and to share the leadership of this project with my friends and colleagues, Renee and Laurel. I look forward to serving the needs of the holistic education community.

Dr. Renee Owen / owenr@sou.edu / 828-775-6202



I teach Educational Leadership, Adult Learning, and Holistic Classroom Management courses at Southern Oregon University, in Ashland, OR. I have over 20 years experience as a holistic school leader in unique public and private schools, where we used a holistic, human-centered approach toward closing the opportunity gap and uplifting the human spirit. My doctoral degree is from Columbia University Teacher's College where I studied Organizational Development/Adult Learning, through a program that focused largely on transformative learning. In both my practice and research I continue to view education through the lens of transformative learning, both at the individual level and at the systems level.

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Inspired by the self-directed learning journey of my children--now young adults!-- I embarked on my own parallel path through the SelfDesign Graduate Institute's MA program. I have continued to deepen my understandings of post-traditional education as a PhD Candidate in the Transformative Studies program at California Institute of Integral Studies, where my dissertation is focused on privileging emergence and relational learning as generative collective wisdom. My teaching and research over the past ten years has focused on experiential, holistic, integral and transformational approaches to education.

I am honoured to be able to support holistic education through the Transformative Learning Foundation and as Director of the Transformative Learning Communities concentration in the Individualized MA program at Antioch University. In these roles I get to see the power of holding space for holistic, emergent knowing with individuals and intentional learning communities.

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Feature Article



Leveraging A Holistic Approach to Integrating Curriculum During the era of COVID-19; A Case Study at Green School Bali

By Emily Ferguson

Introduction

Traditional education is being disrupted across the globe today in various ways. The distinct yet overlapping fields of holistic education, education for sustainability, and anti-oppressive pedagogy have worked to disrupt traditional methods that reproduce systems of oppression that are detrimental to the wellbeing of humans and the environment. During the time of writing, the COVID-19 pandemic has further disrupted educational systems. Yet many educators have recognized this latter disruption as an opportunity for positive change. As most school campuses closed and educators were forced to pivot to distance learning, teachers and administrators immediately had to contend with issues of equity, detachment, and isolation. These issues were already existent within educational programs and institutions, yet the COVID crisis both exacerbated and exposed them as issues necessitating urgent attention.

It is the aim of this paper to demonstrate some of the ways in which holistic education can provide guidance for teachers and administrators, both during the current health crisis and also as educators and schools plan for future redesignings and reopenings. By implementing the foundational principles of holistic education, school boards, administrators, and teachers have the potential to restore relationships, regenerate broken systems, and provide opportunities for authentic integrated learning. The current crises—not only the pandemic, but ongoing social injustices, climate change, and others—make it evident that educational systems that are reliant on an old industrial order are incompatible and detrimental to a sustainable future. An approach to curriculum development anchored in holistic educational philosophy furthers the aims of education for sustainability and anti-oppressive pedagogy. In addition, a holistic approach provides the needed flexibility for teachers and administrators to adapt to changing circumstances and capitalize on unplanned opportunities for authentic learning.

Experimental strategies to enhance holistic practices at Green School High School are outlined below. While these strategies were instituted in response to the pandemic, they also present creative considerations for future planning. For example, the implementation of a 'transdisciplinary' approach to curriculum integration provides more agility for educators to adapt and evolve during times of uncertainty. These strategies have also empowered educators at Green School Bali to infuse their curriculum goals with the principles of education for sustainability and anti-oppressive pedagogy.

A Holistic Integrated Curriculum

The holistic curriculum is grounded in the principles of balance, inclusion and connection (Miller, 2019). Informed by these three principles, holistic approaches to education honour the learner as a whole being and intentionally nurture relationships of all kinds. In addition to embracing wholeness and relationships, the holistic curriculum considers various educational orientations to determine a range of methods that are conducive to holistic teaching and learning (Miller 2019). To explore various strategies and their congruence with holistic principles, Miller outlines three educational orientations—transmission, transaction and transformation. He states, “transformational learning acknowledges the wholeness of the child... [and is] also concerned about the links with other forms of learning” (2019, 14). The transformation orientation most strongly aligns with the aims of holistic education as it embraces interconnectedness and calls for meaningful integration within the curriculum.

A holistic integrated curriculum consolidates learning experiences in order to highlight interconnectedness between self and society as well as self and environment (Miller 2019). Similar to Miller’s educational orientations, Drake and Reid (2018) outline three distinct categories on a continuum of curriculum integration as a way to practically conceptualize the integration process. The first model is the multidisciplinary model, where “each discipline and its assessment is distinct, but the disciplinary learning activities revolve around a common theme, issue or project” (2018, 119). The second ‘interdisciplinary model’ weaves discipline-specific outcomes together in such a way that the boundaries are blurred by a central topic or theme. The third category is the ‘transdisciplinary’ model. As Drake and Reid suggest, “an integrated curriculum can find the most comfortable home at the transdisciplinary level” as the disciplines are not central to the planning process but rather informed by central questions (2018, 120). In this way, the transdisciplinary model for integration aligns most closely with Miller’s outline of ‘transformational’ learning by honouring the idea that the student cannot be “reduced to a set of learning competencies or thinking skills but is seen as a whole being” (Miller 2019, 15). Drake and Reid’s continuum provides schools and educators with a framework for assessing degrees of integration within their curriculum.

Strategies to integrate curriculum at all levels—multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary—can also provide opportunities for educators and administrators to position sustainability and anti-oppressive topics and themes at the centre of the curriculum. The transdisciplinary model described above aligns most with the aims of these subdomains as it repositions big ideas or topics/themes and brings them to the forefront of teachers’ planning processes. This repositioning allows educators and schools to integrate sustainability and equity topics across the curriculum, rather than incorporating them as stand-alone subjects, classes, or sets of learning objectives or competencies.

For example, in his seminal text “Place and Pedagogy,” Orr (2013) explores Thoreau’s teachings and learnings in *Walden* to demonstrate how place-based study allows for a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of learning experiences. Thoreau’s personal studies integrate philosophy, economy, education, and more. Although Orr (2013) calls Thoreau’s approach interdisciplinary, perhaps *Walden* can be considered ‘transdisciplinary’ as it connects the self to the world through big ideas that incite transformative changes. As Orr states, “Ultimately, Thoreau’s subject matter was Thoreau: his goal, wholeness; his tool, Walden Pond; and his methodology, simplification” (Orr 2013, 183). To experience and embody the connection between everything ultimately allows one to see oneself as an interconnected being, invested in the health and sustainability of the natural world. Transdisciplinary integrations within the curriculum further this process, enabling educators to position issues of sustainability and the natural world at the ‘heart’ of the learning process.

The same assertions can be made for education for social change as well. Holistic educators and school communities challenge the industrial nature of educational institutions by disrupting the narratives that bind them to inequitable core beliefs and insensitive or oppressive traditions (Miller 2019). Brantmeier (2019) outlines the confluent, yet somewhat distinct aims between holistic learning, education for sustainability, and anti-oppressive education. Underpinning all of these subfields is the imperative to study and nurture deep connections and relationships with the intended purpose of empowering learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to restore balance and regenerate broken systems. An integrated approach to teaching and learning at all levels is foundational to the shared aims of each subfield as it defragments the learning process and restores the inherent connections between disciplines. As Drake and Reid assert, “the twenty-first century context makes an integrated approach even more appropriate, perhaps even urgently needed” (2018, 126).

The following sections of this paper present practical tools and strategies utilized by Green School Bali during the COVID-19 pandemic that were designed to meet the urgently needed call for more holistic, integrated approaches to teaching and learning by shifting the high school program from a ‘multidisciplinary’ to a ‘transdisciplinary’ model.

Identifying My Role (A Personal Narrative)

I have been deeply involved in the curricular design and support strategies to implement holistic integrated methods at Green School Bali. During the planning period for the 2020-2021 academic school year I worked alongside my colleagues to adapt the high school program to accommodate new restrictive regulations and protocols imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. I designed and implemented a new timetable for the high school that would embrace a ‘transdisciplinary’ approach to curriculum integration (Drake and Reid 2018). I also adapted the school’s planning tools and faculty support workshops to accommodate a shift to more of a holistic, transdisciplinary philosophy. To that end, I was deeply embedded in the work and as a result, cannot be considered an objective assessor. Further, I am currently teaching within this new structure so I have experienced these shifts as both an administrator and an educator. While my proximity to the design and implementation of the new program prevents an objective analysis, I have made efforts to include and identify limitations to these initiatives. To supplement my own analysis, I have also collected informal feedback from colleagues in administration and within the faculty (captured below).

Green School Bali Context

Green School Bali’s curriculum is organized around three ‘frames’ of learning. These include the proficiency frame, the thematic frame and the experiential frame. The thematic frame of learning can be considered an example of integrated curriculum across all levels of the school. As stated in one of the school’s guiding curriculum documents, the “thematic frame is an interdisciplinary approach to learning where units are focused on a particular topic or theme” (“High School Curriculum Overview,” 2020). Topics and unit plans within the thematic frame at Green School are informed by issues related to environmental or social sustainability. Green School Bali’s framework for thematic learning provides insights into how an integrated approach using problem-based topics and themes synthesizes the aims of holistic education, education for sustainability and anti-oppressive education.

While Green School’s framework for thematic learning reflects Drake and Reid’s (2018) outline of ‘transdisciplinary’ learning in the primary and middle schools, the approach to thematic learning in the

high school could more accurately be considered ‘multidisciplinary’ according to the continuum. This is because courses of study become increasingly specialized in high school. Every six weeks high school students choose a combination of required and elective courses that each connect to the block’s central theme (such as climate change). Most of the courses remain subject-focused, although interdisciplinary courses are encouraged. In that way, students are able to make connections between subjects (between their science and social studies classes, for example) because all courses relate to the overarching theme of climate change, and teachers are encouraged to collaborate across classes on large-scale projects when possible.

While this model of multidisciplinary integration allows teachers and students to explore connections between classes, these connections and the overarching theme come secondary to content focus of the class. During the COVID-19 health crisis and its disruption of existing educational systems, the team at Green School Bali recognized the opportunity to experiment and shift the high school curriculum to a transdisciplinary level of integration.

COVID-19 Crisis and a ‘Transdisciplinary’ Shift

Upon learning of the new COVID ‘return-to-school’ regulations preventing students from moving from class to class and from mixing with other groups of students and other teachers, it became clear that the ‘multidisciplinary’ nature of the high school program had to be adapted. Students would no longer be able to move between required and elective classes throughout the school day and teachers would no longer be able to limit instructional obligations to specialized subjects.

Under the new COVID restrictions, small groups of students (cohort pods, as they are called at Green School) must stay together all day with the same teacher(s) and may not mingle with the other groups of students and teachers. These restrictions present a number of challenges for Green School’s learning program, especially in the high school where courses of study become increasingly specialized with mixed-age enrolments. However, a small number of administrators and teachers saw these challenges as an opportunity to experiment by using new strategies in planning and implementation that embody holistic principles. The disruption to the existing structure made the idea of leveraging the agility and dynamism of a transdisciplinary integrated curriculum even more appealing. In the span of three planning days, the high school team worked together to pivot to a transdisciplinary model.

Using a collaborative transdisciplinary approach, teachers in the new model focus on one thematic big idea/enduring question. From there, they explore how that particular theme can integrate multiple disciplines organically. This aligns with Drake and Reid’s (2018) model for transdisciplinary learning in that “disciplines, although present if looked for, are seamlessly blended and their particularities are not central to the planning” (Drake and Reid 2018, 119). Inspired by these features of a transdisciplinary integrated curriculum, the following was used as a guide for both teachers and families to understand the intentions of this new approach:

In pods, teachers intentionally leverage Green School’s thematic integrated approach to learning. Learning is holistic, experiential, place based, and adaptive to the needs and skills of teachers and learners. For example, teaching teams may integrate arts, wellbeing, and other subjects into these thematic experiences in developmentally appropriate ways. Integration will look different in different pods, dependent on the thematic focus as well as the unique skills and interests of students and teachers in the mini neighbourhood. (“High School Blended Learning Program” 2020).

To achieve the approach described above, the timetable had to be significantly altered. As highlighted in their study of how various schools leverage transdisciplinary learning using the International Baccalaureate curriculum, Savage and Drake explain that the ways in which “the timetable [is] constructed [is] often directly related to the underlying philosophy of the school” (2016, 9). To this end, the school team at Green School worked to defragment much of the high school timetable, allowing for long periods of time for transdisciplinary integrated learning. In this structure, students engage in the ‘thematic’ frame of learning for approximately two-thirds of the school day (see timetable outlined below).

	Tuesday Pod	Wednesday (Distance)	Thursday Pod	Friday (Distance)	Saturday Pod	
Pagi (8:15-10:15)	Advisory / Wellbeing / Study	See Distance Learning Schedule	Advisory / Wellbeing / Study	See Distance Learning Schedule	Advisory / Wellbeing / Study	
Break						
Siang (10:30-12:30)	Thematic 1		Thematic 1		Thematic 2	
Lunch						
Sore (1:15-3:00)	Thematic 2		Thematic 2		Thematic 1	
3:00-3:15	Advisory Check-in		Advisory Check-in		Advisory Check-in	

(“High School Blended Learning Program” 2020)

Further, the pods are organized to align with a holistic emphasis on community connections, embodied learning and personal wellbeing:

Pods at Green School become mini 'neighbourhoods' of learning, where students and teachers learn together in person and nurture relationships with themselves and their learning, each other, their community, and their environment. These relationships and the wellbeing of our students are the priorities in pod learning.

(“High School Blended Learning Program” 2020)

To support teachers in the planning process for this model, I incorporated Drake and Reid’s (2018) exploratory web into an activity for teachers to brainstorm connections between big ideas and learning objectives. Teachers then collaborated with their pod co-teachers to build a six-week program leveraging their personal passions and skills around one central theme. For example, in one pod, a social studies teacher and music teacher developed a thematic unit integrating art for social change. This unit of study embodies a transdisciplinary approach by seamlessly integrating movement, music, Indonesian language, history, current events, and even some elements of science related to climate change. The co-teachers for this unit were able to leverage their respective passions and skills and co-design a thematic unit of study. While the planning tools and processes reflect a backwards design approach (Wiggins & McTighe 2005), teachers were not required to begin their planning process with discipline-specific curriculum. Rather, they were encouraged to use the thematic topics and questions as a launchpad to integrate relevant discipline-specific learning objectives. For example, to explore the question, ‘Should everyone have access to clean water?’, one of the teaching teams created this map of learning goals captured at the end of the article.

The shifts implemented in the thematic frame of the high school program at Green School align with Drake and Reid’s (2018) ‘transdisciplinary’ approach. The limitations imposed by the new health and safety

protocols serendipitously liberated the teachers and their students from their previous fragmented timetable. This alleviated many of the teachers' anxieties over returning to school as well. Teachers in each pod are not expected to teach *all the subjects* at the high school level. The new transdisciplinary model also allows students to obtain a breadth of discipline-specific credits, allowing them to remain on track towards their diploma pathways. The shifts in structure and pedagogy allow both administrators and educators to remain agile and flexible, empowering them to adapt to changes that will inevitably arise throughout the academic school year.

The shifts to a more defragmented, transdisciplinary program enables teachers to more intentionally align with the school's approach to education for transformative change, both environmentally and socially. All of the thematic topics across the curriculum at Green School relate to environmental or social change. However, it has been difficult to achieve meaningful and lasting connections across classes in the high school as our approach has previously been limited to what Drake and Reid (2018) would consider to be 'multidisciplinary'. With this new shift, I have observed more connection to the central themes than ever before during my eleven years teaching in the high school program.

Limitations and Feedback

Implementing these shifts to a transdisciplinary approach was not easy in such a short time frame. Compounded by the task of implementing new health and safety protocols within their classrooms, some teachers expressed overwhelm regarding the amount of changes required of them at the start of the school year. Some teachers sought ways to integrate previously planned units of study into their thematic courses, resulting in less integration and more fragmentation of the 'thematic time' in each teaching pod. Nevertheless, the majority of high school teachers recognized the benefits of the transdisciplinary model beyond the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. I asked the teachers and administrators for their feedback regarding how the shift reflected an integrated curriculum, the benefits of an integrated curriculum, and the challenges they experienced. One teacher provided the following reflection on the idea of integrated curriculum and the ways in which this shift embodies holistic principles:

To me, integrated learning incorporates blended and thematic learning on a specific topic through different learning modalities. For example, I am currently teaching a 20th Century Indonesian/Balinese History class that is utilizing a novel of historical fiction as a basis for discussion of historical events, but my co-teacher is also teaching Balinese and Indonesian arts and crafts in the course and these approaches and activities blend and complement each other beautifully. The students seem to really respond to this balanced approach, too, since this kind of blended model integrates head/heart/hands and intellectual/artistic skills... This is the future of education!

The same teacher also commented on the collaborative process as well as its connection to topics related to environmental and social sustainability:

Since we are teaching in pods, the pod teachers all naturally are a part of each other's class instruction. For example, two teachers in our pod are currently teaching about water and water rights. From my 20th Century Indonesian course, we were discussing colonialism and neo colonialism, and the topic of how colonists frequently destroyed watersheds and springs (such as in my home state of Hawai'i). This illustrated the importance of people having access to water.

The head of the high school commented on the ways in which Green School's existing pedagogy and the thematic frame prepared teachers to take this leap:

Teachers have the skills and mindsets to do holistic integrated learning [at Green School]. This shift gave them the opportunity to bring it to the next level... content areas are synergizing in a way that students are getting a much greater experience than the individual disciplines can provide.

The head of the high school also commented on how this model has resulted in stronger relationships—between teachers in the collaborative process, between students and teachers in their respective pods, and between the content areas of the curriculum. This aligns with the principles and aims of holistic education as outlined by Miller (2019).

When asked about the challenges experienced, teachers and administrators echoed those outlined by researchers in the field of holistic learning and integrated curriculum (Drake and Reid 2018; Drake and Savage 2016; Miller 2019). The head of the high school commented:

The challenges we have encountered have been mostly logistical. We are still working out how to award credits for these integrated experiences. Other limiting factors are that the students and teachers do not get to mix and learn outside of their pod groupings.

Some teachers expressed discomfort with the collaborative process, as teaching teams were required to negotiate individual teaching plans for the benefit of the learning as a whole.

Another noteworthy comment from the head of high school relates to the limitations this model imposes on students' individualized pathways:

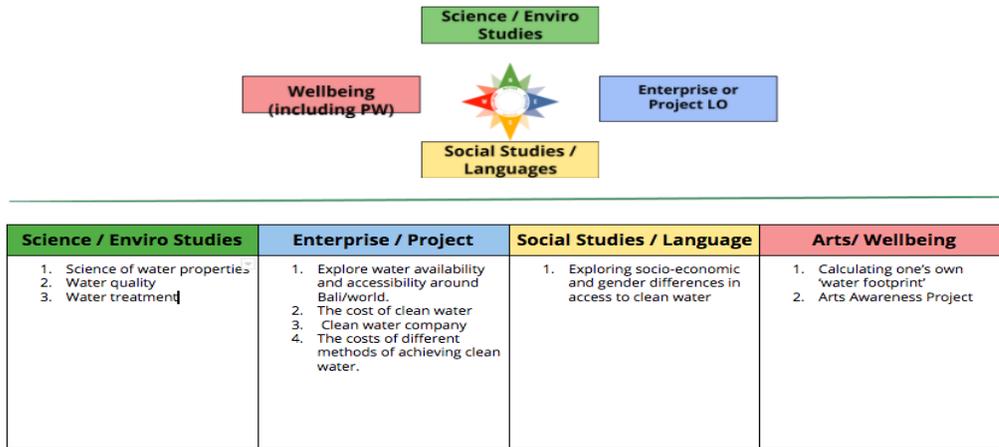
The cohort experiencing the most challenges with this new model is the seniors, the grade 12s. At this stage of the learning process in high school, students are seeking agency over their learning journeys and wanting to specialize rather than be locked into integrated programs.

It follows that educators and administrators implementing a transdisciplinary curriculum at the high school level must balance the needs of the program with student agency and ownership over individual educational pathways.

Conclusion

The lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic have the potential to inform shifts in the ways in which we conceptualize curriculum, as well as the roles of students and educators in the process. The shift to a transdisciplinary model in Green School Bali's high school program can be considered a calculated response to institutionalized restrictions and regulations. However, the shift also provides insights into how school leaders can adapt programs to align with holistic principles and practices. At Green School Bali, these experiences can reveal approaches to maintain transdisciplinary learning after the regulations are lifted. Too often educational programs are limited by the constraints of rigid planning expectations, discipline-specific outcomes, and timetables that maximize teaching resources. This model of transdisciplinary, transformative holistic learning practices demonstrates that education has the potential to be so much more than the sum of its parts. Education must embody deep connections, nurture relationships, and strive for balance and regeneration. While the examples from Green School Bali reflect a shift in this direction, much more is required in all areas and levels of schools. The effort required for

schools and school boards to transform their out-dated and often oppressive curricula will be rewarded with students who are primed to meet future challenges with skills and solutions based on respect for social justice and a deep reverence for the world's interrelated ecological systems



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Emily Ferguson is originally from Toronto, Canada, and now lives and works as the curriculum advisor at Green School in Bali, Indonesia. Passionate about education for sustainability and social justice, Emily has developed a number of large scale programs and projects at Green School that exemplify ways to integrate curriculum through a holistic approach. She is currently continuing her graduate studies part time at OISE at the University of Toronto. Emily's approach to teaching, learning, and curriculum development is focused on ways to empower youth with holistic competencies so that they may contribute to positive change locally and globally.



Book Announcement



Self and Wisdom in Arts-Based Contemplative Inquiry in Education

By Giovanni Rossini

By foregrounding a first-person perspective, this text enacts and explores self-reflection as a mode of inquiry in educational research and highlights the centrality of the individual researcher in the construction of knowledge. Engaging in particular with the work of Thomas Merton through a dialogical approach to his writings, *Self and Wisdom in Arts-Based Contemplative Inquiry in Education* offers rich examples of personal engagement with text and art to illustrate the pervasive influence of the personal in reflective, narrative and aesthetic forms of inquiry. Chapters consider methodological and philosophical implications of self-study and contemplative research in educational contexts and show how dialogic approaches can

enrich empirical forms of inquiry and inform pedagogical practice. In its embrace of a contemplative voice within an academic treatise, the text offers a rich example of arts-based contemplative inquiry.

This unique text will be of interest to postgraduate scholars, researchers and academics working in the fields of educational philosophy, arts-based and qualitative research methodologies and Merton studies.

The book forms part of the series *Routledge International Studies in the Philosophy of Education*.

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9780367817053>

Giovanni Rossini, PhD (University of Toronto/OISE) is a philosopher and independent scholar whose research interests span the fields of holistic and contemplative studies in education and, in particular, the terrain of arts-based contemplative inquiry. Core to his research is the intersection of narrative study and the imaginal and how it is foundational to the constructing of self and the ethos of knowledge as wisdom.





Important Announcement

Dear Prof. Miller,

Thank you for writing "Key Instances of Holistic Curriculum as Alternatives to National Curriculum." We are pleased to inform you that the article has been approved for publication in the Oxford Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies (part of the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education project). Thank you for your fine contribution and congratulations! On behalf of the editors of the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education (<https://oxfordre.com/education>), we look forward to your continued contributions.

Best wishes, Editor-in-Chief

Key Instances of Holistic Curriculum as an Alternative to National Curriculum

By John P. Miller

Summary

Holistic education as a field of inquiry began in the 1980s. Previously this field was referred to as humanistic education, confluent education, affective education, or transpersonal education. The work of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow inspired many educators working in these areas. In 1988 *The Holistic Education Review* under the editorship of Ron Miller was first published along with *The Holistic Curriculum* by John Miller. However, as a field of practice holistic education can first be found in Indigenous education. Historically, Socrates, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Bronson Alcott, and Tolstoy can be viewed as working from a holistic frame.

What is that frame? It is educating the whole person: body, mind, and spirit. At every level, education tends to focus on skills and a narrow view of the intellect. The body receives little attention while the spiritual life of the student is ignored. One image of the student from this approach is as a brain on a stick. In contrast, the holistic curriculum attempts to reach the head, hands, and heart of the student.

The other main principle of holistic education is connectedness. Connectedness is one of the fundamental realities of nature. In contrast, the curriculum at every level, except perhaps for kindergarten, is fragmented as knowledge is broken down into courses, units, lessons, and bits of information. Rarely are there attempts to show how knowledge is interconnected. Holistic education seeks to be in harmony with how things actually are by focusing on connections. Six connections are at the core of the holistic curriculum: connections to the earth, community, subject integration, intuition/logic, body/mind, and soul. There are many models of holistic education in practice. They range from more structured approaches, such as Waldorf education, to schools such as the Sudbury Valley School that give students a great deal of choice. Despite these differences these schools view the child as a whole human being.

Here is the link to the article on Holistic Education in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Education* that has just been published. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1144>



A Short History of “The Holistic Educator” Newsletter

By Jack Miller

This newsletter began as part of the Wholistic Education Network of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). The first editor was John Palladino, a professor, Long Island University, C.W. Post Campus in Curriculum and Instruction. The newsletter was called *Transcendent* and was first published in 1991. In 1996 I became co-editor with John and the newsletter was now titled *The Wholistic Educator*. Two issues a year were published. In the fall of 1997, John turned the editorship of the newsletter over to me and I renamed it *The Holistic Educator*. The articles in that issue included, “Holistic Education in Japan,” “International Conference on Holistic Education”, and “Professor Clive Beck’s Vision of Holistic Education.” It was still connected to ASCD through the Holistic Learning and Spirituality in Education Professional Interest Community Group of that organization. OISE supported the mailing of the newsletter. ASCD began an initiative on Whole Child Education with issues of their journal, *Educational Leadership* devoted to that theme. Gary became involved with the newsletter and contributed a column on the ASCD annual conference in the Spring, 2009 issue. By then the newsletter was being distributed to members by email. With the Spring 2011 issue after 14 years as editor I turned over the editorship to Gary. Susan Schiller later joined Gary as co-editor. They have done a wonderful job with *The Holistic Educator*.





Farewell



Thank you for your contributions and readership.

*We both have enjoyed our time editing, publishing, and sending you
The Holistic Newsletter over these past years.*

We wish you all the best.



*Wishing you and your family a relaxing,
safe, and happy holiday season*

