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Transpersonal Education

Nancy Rowe[1] and William Braud

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> *Education at its best—these profound human transactions called knowing, teaching, and learning—is not just about information, and they're not just about getting jobs. They are about healing. They are about wholeness. They are about empowerment, liberation, transcendence. They are about reclaiming the vitality of life.*
>
> (Palmer, 1997, p. 10)

As implied in Socrates' maxim that "the unexamined life is not worth living" (Plato, *Dialogues, Apology,* para. 38a), it is crucial that a person know themselves wholly and well in order to understand their true nature and in order to grow and develop. Careful examinations of outer and inner reality and of the world at large—as well as exploring such questions as who or what am I? Why am I here? What might I do next? What is the nature of life and consciousness and death? Is this physical world the only reality?—can help foster personal development and transformation while helping to fulfill some of the most crucial individual and collective needs.

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Education that focuses on understanding self and transpersonal processes can facilitate learning that cultivates awareness, consciousness, and growth in both inner and outer realities as students explore academic subject matter. Transpersonal education includes practices and systems that have the potential to transform larger communities and the planet.

This chapter explores the concept of transpersonal education, the role of the educator, and process and practices that support transpersonal education at the school, classroom, and facilitator levels. The authors discuss process, obstacles, and challenges of transpersonal education and make suggestions for the future.

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The Nature of Transpersonal Education

Etymologically, transpersonal education literally means *drawing out from beyond the mask.* Regarding education in its most general form, Plato suggested that "the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already" and that true education could occur only when "the whole soul . . . turned from the world of becoming into that of being, and learn[ed] by degrees to endure the sight of being, and of the brightest and best of being, or in other words, of the good" (*The Republic,* VII, para. 518). Putting together these two observations, one might describe transpersonal education most succinctly as *the drawing out of the soul—the essential core of one's nature—from behind the ordinarily obscuring mask of ego.* The aim, in the remainder of this chapter, is to describe some of the ways in which this drawing out might be effectively accomplished.

Braud (2006) in his article on transpersonal holistic education described "the transpersonal" as

> ways in which individuals, societies, and disciplines might increase their ambit and become more inclusive and expansive in areas of sense of identity (including ways of being and ways of functioning beyond the typical egocentric mode), development and transformation, conditions of consciousness, ways of knowing, values, and service. The transpersonal also involves recognizing and honoring the spiritual aspects of our being, actions, and ways of thinking. (p. 135)

To understand the nature of transpersonal education, it is important to distinguish it from three other closely related but sufficiently different terms and concepts: *transpersonal psychology, transformative education,* and *spirituality/spiritual education.*

Transpersonal Psychology

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Transpersonal psychology can be taken to mean an academic field that carefully explores transpersonal topics and integrates, embodies, and applies transpersonal processes. It might be characterized as a discipline that studies, researches, theorizes about, and applies information and findings relevant to, transpersonal material. Some transpersonal scholars have made a compelling case that transpersonal psychology be categorized as a science, one that relies on appropriate research methods, both conventional and transpersonal methods such as intuitive inquiry and hermeneutics (e.g., Daniels, 2005; Friedman, 2002). Such thinkers also distinguish transpersonal psychology from *transpersonal studies,* which is more general, including psychological as well as other approaches to its subject matter, and uses input from such areas as anthropology, sociology, philosophy, the other humanities, poetry, spiritual and folk traditions, and the arts (Boucouvalas, 1999; Daniels, 2005; Friedman, 2002). Friedman and Pappas (2006) recently suggested that if any transpersonal theory is to be considered valid in an ultimate and not merely relative sense, it must employ techniques that would be consistent with both conventional scientific approaches and, more broadly, approaches that are congruent with insights from other knowledge traditions and cultures (p. 48).

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Through an extensive and careful content analysis of 160 previously proffered definitions of transpersonal psychology, Hartelius, Caplan, and Rardin (2007) found that these definitions tended to address three major themes: (a) transpersonal psychology offers something *beyond established ego psychology* (concerned with states, stages, paths, aspirations, capacities, perceptions, and realities beyond ego); (b) its practice is *integrative and holistic* (emphasizing embodiment, and social, ecological, and contextual factors); and (c) its aim and goal are the *transformation* of individuals and of society.

Anderson and Braud (2011) more recently offered another succinct characterization of transpersonal psychology: "Transpersonal psychology is the study and cultivation of the highest and most transformative human values and potentials—individual, communal, and global—that reflect the mystery and interconnectedness of life, including our human journey within the cosmos (p. 9)." Anderson and Braud's definition is a good example of Friedman and Pappas's (2006) cartography of a transpersonal psychology that blends transcendence, "highest and most transformative human values and potential," with immanence, a concept that suggests that transcendence is not necessarily expansive but can also "descend into the personal self through nature, the body, or the feminine" (Daniels, 2005; Friedman & Pappas, 2006) and be experienced through "awe, faith, mystery, or participative knowing" (p. 47). Immanence is reflected in the definition's reference to reflecting the mystery and interconnectedness of life (p. 48).

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Transformative Education

Transformative education focuses on transformation within individuals, organizations, communities, society, and the planet (Markos & McWhinney, 2003; O'Sullivan, Morrell, & O'Connor, 2002). It fosters enhanced awareness of consciousness of being in the world and serves to create lasting change in a person's or community's frame of reference. Although transformation is an important aspect of transpersonal education, transformative education can be found in venues that may or may not be transpersonal in nature. Programs that may be transformative include (a) new career training, (b) humanitarian service, (c) spiritual renewal, (d) transformative learning, and (e) organizational implementation. By providing opportunities for people to examine and unlearn assumptions, ways of thinking, and ways of being that no longer serve them, learners can take on new purposes and perspectives (Markos & McWhinney, 2003), whether it be within cognitive processes or in the way that people are in the world (O'Sullivan et al., 2002).

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Transformative learning, the area of transformative education most akin to transpersonal education, has many lenses. Mezirow (2003) first introduced the term transformative learning into educational discourse. He described it as "learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change" (p. 58). Since that time, transformative educators have broadened the term to invite thinking around soul work (Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006), oppression (Schugurensky, 2002; Shahjahan, 2004), ecological consciousness (O'Sullivan & Taylor, 2004; Selby, 2002), feminist issues

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(Miles, 2002), creative expression, and spirituality (Duerr, Zajonc, & Dana, 2003; O'Sullivan et al., 2002; Tisdell & Toliver 2003; Yorks & Kasl, 2006).

More recent definitions of transformative learning include the following:

> Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feeling, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structure of class, race, and gender; our body-awareness; our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of the possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (O'Sullivan, 2002, p. 11)

In an article highlighting a course in a transpersonal psychology program, Netzer and Rowe (2010) expanded on O'Sullivan's definition to include transpersonal experience:

> Whole-person, transformative learning [is] the process of experiencing meaningful and purposeful shifts in the ways learners perceive and process newly acquired knowledge and their own inner-knowing, by developing and integrating new awareness on personal and transpersonal levels, which is mindful, intuitive, embodied, and creatively informed. (p. 126)

Spirituality and Spiritual Education

> *What is spirit? The word is derived from a Latin word meaning "breathe" or "wind"—like respiration or inspiration . . . an invisible force—a life-giving essence that moves us deeply, or as a source that moves everything from within.*
>
> David Bohm (1993)

Spirituality. In order to understand what is meant by spiritual education, it is important to describe the concept of spirituality and to distinguish it from religion that denotes rituals, traditions, beliefs, and doctrine that are organized around rules and ceremony (Daniels, 2005). This discussion will focus only on the concept of spirituality.

Spirituality is associated with a great variety of meanings and viewed through a number of lenses. Transpersonal psychologist Frances Vaughan (2002) described the diversity of spiritual experience:

> Spirituality may also be described in terms of ultimate belonging or connection to the transcendental ground of being. Some people define spirituality in terms of relationship to God, to fellow humans, or to the earth. Others define it in terms of devotion and commitment to a particular faith or form of practice. To understand how spirituality can contribute to the good life, defined in humanistic terms as living authentically the full possibilities of being human . . . it seems necessary to differentiate healthy spirituality from beliefs and practices that may be detrimental to well-being. (p. 17)

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Jennifer Lindholm and Helen Astin (2006) reflected on the spiritual process:

> At its core, spirituality involves the internal process of seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness; transcending one's locus of centricity; developing a greater sense of connectedness to self and others through relationships and community; deriving meaning, purpose, and direction in life; being open to exploring a relationship with a higher power that transcends human existence and human knowing; and valuing the sacred. (p. 65)

Alluded to in the above definitions but perhaps not sufficiently emphasized are the relational, communal, interconnected, embodied, earth-based, and nature-related aspects that are important in feminine and indigenous forms of spirituality and in spirituality as lived in other cultures. Jorge Ferrer (2002) began to consider this in defining *embodied spirituality*: "Embodied spirituality . . . views all human dimensions—body, vital, heart, mind, and consciousness—as equal partners in bringing self, community, and world into a fuller alignment with the Mystery out of which everything arises" (Ferrer, 2008, p. 2).

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Spirituality in schools, particularly secular education, has been called many names, including soul, soul/spirit, heart, heart-mind, "feelinged heart-body" (Miller, 2005).

Spiritual education. Spiritual education can be experienced in many forms. On one level, educators who claim spiritual education provide direct instruction on the content, processes and practices related to spirituality. This is often associated with a particular tradition or teacher such as Sri Aurobindo, Sai Baba, the Bahai religion, or Christianity. In these cases, spirituality is primarily concerned with beliefs, spiritual developments, and values of that particular teacher or faith.

Spirituality can also be incorporated into secular education (Glazer, 1999; Kessler, 2000; Miller, Karsten, Denton, Orr, & Kates, 2005; Tisdale & Toliver, 2003). Kessler (2005) described how to bring spirituality into the classroom without threatening religious beliefs. Her essay provides insight into ways that teachers can facilitate adolescent spiritual development in the following domains: (a) search for meaning and purpose, (b) longing for silence and solitude, (c) urge for transcendence, (d) hunger for joy and delight, (e) creative urge, (f) call for initiation, and (g) deep connection. She also explained that "Since we 'teach who are,' teachers who invite heart and soul into the classroom also find it essential to nurture their own spiritual development" (p. 102). Although transpersonal psychology is not technically "spiritual education," a large part of the transpersonal curriculum involves the cultivation of spiritual practice and the exploration of various spiritual traditions inform psychology.

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Transpersonal Education

Transpersonal, transformative, and spiritual forms of education are interrelated. Each assumes that the seeker is on a journey of transformation (Baker, 2012; Braud, 2006; Dirkx et al., 2006; Markos & McWhinney, 2003) in which the ultimate goal is to bring personal authenticity, wholeness, a sense of relationship, and greater consciousness to self, community, and planet (Braud, 2006; Clark, 1974). Each discipline embraces

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uniqueness and meaningful content and incorporates multiple ways of knowing. Each path arrives at these goals through different doorways and lenses of understanding.

Indeed, transpersonal education can be considered a form of transformative education that includes components of spiritual education (Baker, 2012; Braud, 2006; Clark, 1974; Duerr et al., 2003; Miller, 2002, 2005; Rowe, 2011). What distinguishes transpersonal education from these other forms is its integration of *processes* and *practices* grounded in transpersonal theory and the world's wisdom psychologies and the inclusion of transpersonal ways of knowing (Braud, 2006; Clark, 1974; Duerr et al., 2003; Hart, Nelson, & Puhakka, 2000; Rowe, 2011; Sarath, 2003/2010a). It blends the epistemologies of the heart and intellect (Anderson & Braud, 2011; Braud, 2006; Clark, 1974; Duerr et al., 2003; Hart et al., 2000; Rowe, 2011; Sarath, 2010b).

In other words, transpersonal education includes essential *transpersonal content* and *qualities* that involve the *process and practice* through which these qualities might be discovered or re-discovered, identified, cultivated, integrated, and applied (Braud, 2006). The next section presents these processes and explores qualities associated with the transpersonal educator, which can be incorporated within any content area.

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Transpersonal Processes and Ways of Knowing

Transpersonal education is a holistic, expansive, growthful, transformative process that involves a both/and rather than an either/or attitude; it is experiential and reflective, inclusive and integrated. It emphasizes not only conventional forms of intellectual functioning, critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis but also the many forms of intelligence (emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and the multiple forms of intelligences), oral dialog, pluralistic ways of knowing, and the informative and educational value of personal experience, the wisdom of the body, the great spiritual and wisdom traditions (which are really world psychologies), "real philosophy, poetry, myth, story, the arts, contemplative inquiry, and all forms of creative expression. It advocates a form of experiential learning that is fully and deeply lived, immediate, embodied, particular, and concrete as well as community service and concrete. Its aim is to allow an individual to find his or her unique, authentic nature, potentials, and voice, and to express and apply this knowledge and wisdom to the greatest possible extent, for the benefit of self and others (Anderson & Braud, 2011; Braud, 2006; Gardner, 1999; Hart et al., 2000; Netzer & Rowe, 2010; O'Sullivan et al., 2002; Root-Bernstein & Root-Bernstein, 1999; Sarath, 2010b).

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Cultivation of embodied spiritual or transpersonal values, qualities, and practices are key to transpersonal education (Baker, 2012; Braud, 2006; Clark, 1974; Frager, 1974; Netzer & Rowe, 2010; Sarath, 2010b). These qualities and values might include appreciation of differences, appreciation of others and of the Universe at large, attention, authenticity, compassion, creativity, deeper levels of meaning, discernment, empathy, expansiveness, gratitude, insight, inspiration, intention, interconnectedness, intuition, mindfulness, self-observation, spirituality, spontaneity, and wisdom (Baker, 2012; Braud, 2006; Brussat & Brussat, 1996; Clark, 1974; Hart et al., 2000).

Transpersonal practices not only facilitate awareness of self in relationship to a larger whole but often awaken learners to a sense of wonder and awe and can connect them to the cosmos (Miller, 2002, 2005). In transpersonal education, learners are

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encouraged to explore spiritual practices from diverse wisdom approaches, to inspire direct knowing and insight specific to their education and lives (Braud, 2006; Clark, 1974; Netzer & Rowe, 2010; Sarath, 2010b).

Ed Sarath (2010b), Music Professor at University of Michigan and founder of Students, Teachers, and Administrators for Transpersonal Education (STATE), an organization designed to bring transpersonal education into a variety of content areas, explained that

> Transpersonal education is rooted in processes that transcend the boundaries that separate the various spiritual pathways, and in so doing accesses common ground that invites a cross-traditional exploration, inquiry and analysis. By creating a bridge between diverse spiritual practices, and between spiritual/transpersonal experience and conventional forms of knowledge, we can begin to understand how these areas both unite and differ. An entirely new educational landscape emerges that promotes unprecedented kinds of transformation and development, and helps dissolve the boundaries between spiritual pathways and other fields of knowledge that are so problematic in our world. (section FAQ, para. 4)

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Ultimately, transpersonal education incorporates self-discovery, self-cultivation, and transformation; its goal is to contribute to society and our planet:

> Virtually all of the challenges confronting modern society point to the need for foundational changes in how individuals think and act, which means a change in consciousness. It is not enough to define education solely in terms of practical mastery in one or more fields; internal mastery is also needed, where individuals transcend the sense of separateness that prevails in our times, and they experience more expansive and integrated modes of awareness. Our educational systems have both the capacity and the responsibility to provide this kind of development, providing they first undergo change in this direction within themselves. (Sarath, 2010b, section FAQ, para. 5)

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Shared journey of discovery. Transpersonal educators are keenly aware of their own processes of awareness and inner change as they guide their students, protégés, and mentees (the seekers) on a journey of self-discovery, toward self-actualization and psychospiritual transformation (Partho, 2007). Whether through brief or long-term encounters, in one-on-one or group settings, educators and students share self-transformative paths, as the teacher emulates his or her lifelong experience and skillful guidance yet remains open to learning from the unique encounter with each student and the group dynamics at large. The circle of learners, teacher and students alike, interact and respond to one another in ways that facilitate connection to self, others, and Earth community, toward the integration of course content in ways relevant to each person's journey.

This reciprocity, which stems from the recognition of the sacred qualities and synchronicities in human encounters, values each person's unique nature, inner wisdom, and potential contribution. A soulful learning exchange amplifies individuals' authentic voices and movement toward change, to the greatest possible extent, toward the benefit of self and others. At the same time, all seekers are encouraged to challenge their own frames of reference and integrate their revised lenses into new awareness

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(Anderson & Braud, 2011; Mezirow, 2003; Netzer & Rowe, 2010). As students serve each other through sympathetic resonance (Anderson, 2011), they are each asked to hold the tension between diverse perspectives and their own uniqueness and to live with contradiction and paradox (Duerr et al., 2003; Moore, 2005). They are given exercises that tap into their imaginal realm and empathic connection (Anderson & Braud, 2011; Netzer & Rowe, 2010), to hone their capacity to remain open to the innate nature of the transpersonal as both an experience of transcendence and immanence, where knowing emerges in unanticipated manners and wisdom is generated from weaving connections between the concrete and the ineffable.

The Process and Practice of Transpersonal Education

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Aspects of transpersonal education can be found in many approaches. This section explores two cross-cultural approaches to education (one Eastern and one indigenous) as well as organizations and classrooms that fit well into the criteria of transpersonal education.

Cross-cultural Worldviews

Aurobindonian integral education, which includes characteristics of general forms of integral education (Esbojorn-Hargens, Reams, & Gunnlaughson, 2010), and traditional Pueblo education (Cajete, 1994, 2004) are two examples of education approaches that emulate transpersonal perspectives and qualities. These two approaches are grounded in specific spiritual and cultural perspectives. Integral education is based on the East Indian Yogic psychology that uses a map of transformation that primarily reflects transcendence, whereas Pueblo Education is grounded in indigenous cosmology and is a good example of an education system that reflects values of transmission and immanence.

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Aurobindonian Integral Education.

> *Essentially there is but one single true reason for living: it is to know oneself. We are here to learn—to learn what we are, why we are here, and what we have to do. And if we don't know that, our life is altogether empty—for ourselves and for others.*
>
> The Mother (in Huppes, 2001, p. 205)

Integral education is an excellent example of transpersonal education; it is based on the spiritual teachings of Sri Aurobindo and Mirra Alfassa ("the Mother"; Center for Integral Education, n.d.; Partho, 2007) and grounded in Yogic psychology and practices that have a keen awareness of continuous spiritual transformation in a transcendent process (Cornelissen, Misra, & Varma, 2011). Two assumptions permeate this system: (a) Humans are evolutionary beings; they are in the process of evolving toward greater wholeness and eventually divinity, and (b) spiritual evolution is transformed into a creative force for the betterment of society as a whole (Partho, 2007).

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Integral education is a whole person process that focuses on the development of the mind, body, emotions, soul, and spirit (Center for Integral Education, n.d.). Its major aim is psycho-spiritual transformation and the realization of one's true Self through self-mastery and movement toward a deepening and widening balance and harmony within self and community (Partho, 2007). Self-knowledge and world-knowledge are valued and considered essential for successful living (Center for Integral Education, n.d.). This approach assumes that students and teachers alike are lifelong learners who are willing to be part of an evolutionary spiritual journey and grow toward greater and greater consciousness in thought and action (Cornelissen et al., 2011; Center for Integral Education, n.d.; Partho, 2007). Learning includes reflection, contemplation and a continuous search for truth.

Integral teachers are expected to be guides, facilitators, and nurturers of the student's overall growth and development. The process is highly individualized according to the needs and abilities of the student; emphasizes processes of self-observation, self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-perfection; and has the dual purpose of providing both mundane and spiritual knowledge. The educational process can also be one of healing of mind, heart, and soul. For this reason, educators are expected to be on their own ongoing quest so that they might better understand the learner, the process of learning, and the ways of providing learning experiences and inspiration to help students embark on their inner journey (Center for Integral Education, n.d.; Cornelissen et al., 2011). "Thus, a teacher has to be a true *karma yogi* who engages in enjoined actions in the pursuit of knowledge, and is committed to the development of her self and her students" (Cornelissen et al., 2011, p. 104).

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Integral educators help students to cultivate self-knowledge and have a clear understanding of their own true nature (Baveja, 2011; Partho, 2007) so that they can arrive at a more authentic and unique expression of self in the world. Authors of the website for the Center for Integral Education (n.d.) have suggested, "If everyone truly has a spark of the Divine as the center of his [or her] being, a comprehensive education must do more than ignore it or passively acknowledge it. Integral Education takes that spark, the soul, as the guiding principle for the education of each child" (n.p.).

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As a reflection of this Aurobindian vision and integral education, the Center for Integral Education in San Diego County created the following mission statement for their preschool and elementary schools:

> The mission of the *Center for Integral Education* is to create beautiful and engaging educational environments where children can become aware of themselves and grow into conscious, creative and responsible individuals, participants in society, and contributors to the community of the future.
>
> Everything at the Center helps the students to: (a) Discover their unique and special aim in life; (b) Experience the joy of learning for its own sake; (c) Embody integrity, harmony, and beauty in every aspect of their lives. (Center for Integral Education, n.d., Mission, paras. 1-3)

Pueblo education. Gregory Cajete (2004), who introduced himself as an indigenous educator and Tewa Indian from the Santa Clara Pueblo, has described a number of principles and relationships that guide indigenous education in a chapter based on his

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keynote address at the Fourth International Conference on Transformative Education. These principles also guide transformative, transpersonal, and holistic education.

Cajete (2004) invited the reader to reflect upon the indigenous worldview as seen from the Pueblo people of New Mexico. He claimed that central to Pueblo education are the values of "interdependence, interconnection, and relationship with their history, their land, and with each other" (p. 103). Cajete began by describing the mountains and deserts of his homeland and refers to the guiding myth, a myth that gives his community a sense of perspective and also evokes responsibilities that are to be passed down from generation to generation, about living respectfully and sustainably on their land. The myth is a sacred story that can only to be told in its entirely in private ceremonies.

In general, the story speaks of humans as evolving beings within a landscape, people on a journey who are in the process of unfolding and becoming fully alive and human. This central teaching is shared, storied, sung, danced, and represented in various ways within indigenous communities. The myth illustrates an evolutionary process of relating to the world and shows that "how we view the world very much determines how we will treat it" (Cajete, 2004, p. 104). Pueblo spirituality and education is embedded in the ecological perspective that all things are interrelated and interconnected. Pueblo teachings "are coded within their stories, their designs and traditions of art and dance, within their languages, communities, and expressions of science and technology" (p. 105). Stories and storytelling are foundations of indigenous education and through archetypal images like Kokopelli, the archetype of creative spirit, help the seekers better understand how to create themselves.

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Cajete (2004) described this education system as filled with story and meaning. He explained that stories teach about relationships with one another and with Earth, how to deal with issues related to social ecology, the importance for honoring plants and animals, and the interconnectedness of all life. Meaning is reflected in all things. He illustrated that an ear of corn is not merely sustenance; it is a symbol of life. Each kernel is individual as are humans, yet each is part of a collective or community, reflected in the corncob. Within a community there is a diversity of kernels and yet all are united expressing unity in diversity.

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Cajete (2004) also reminded the audience that the Tewa language is very different from English. If Western concepts of education were translated into the Tewa language, there would be references to "pathways," "remembering to remember," "coming to know," or "breathing in" (p. 107).

Finally, Cajete spoke about the first light of the summer solstice and how it pierces through a window cut in the east side of the kiva. The first light on the longest day creates a column of light on the wall opposite the window and illuminates a strategically placed niche. This pattern is repeated throughout Chaco canyon during the solstice. For Cajete, it is an affirmation of indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world. He described it as a *sympathetic resonance* between self, Earth, Sun, and the whole Cosmos. It is a celebration of life set in place by the ancient ones.

Commentary. In the examples of Aurobindonian integral education and Pueblo education one can see parallels with transpersonal education. Both reflect an interest in educating the whole person and instilling values through specific practices. Both speak

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to the importance of a journey toward wholeness and how the individual is part of a larger community. Transpersonal psychology, Integral education, and Pueblo education are interested in spiritual growth and resonance with what is considered to be greater than self. All three are grounded in the deep philosophical belief that people are evolving in order to contribute to a better world.

Transpersonal Schools and Institutes

Research in transformative and spiritual education (Duerr et al., 2003) shows that although individual instructors incorporate spiritual and transformative aspects in their classrooms, few programs or schools are actually considered transformative. Of this group, even fewer transformative education programs consider themselves to be transpersonal. Indeed, transpersonal education at the school level is uncommon. Programs that are transpersonal do so with intention, with attention to transpersonal content and practice and related values, and this is seen in their mission/vision statements. Such statements ground the school or institute in their purposes.

This section highlights two institutions grounded in transpersonal education: Sofia University (formerly the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology), and the Center for Courage and Renewal. Following are descriptions of three courses that utilize transpersonal methods, and a strategy used by Rhea White that cultivates transpersonal ways of knowing as a self-educational process.

Sofia University. Commitment to transpersonal education is often built into founding principles of an institution and shows up in the mission/vision statement. These statements serve as a way to assess whether or not the institute has deviated from its original intention and to inform learning. Sofia University is an example of a school founded with the intention of embodying principles and practices of transpersonal education.

Sofia University, is a private, independent, non-profit graduate school in transpersonal psychology. It offers master's level and doctoral programs in transpersonal psychology, clinical psychology, and related topics in residential, hybrid, and online formats. Robert Frager and James Fadiman founded Sofia University under the name of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP)[2] in 1975 to prepare students to study human nature from an approach that encompasses the whole person and incorporates the tenets of transpersonal psychology. They wanted to provide students with a solid intellectual foundation as well as an opportunity for deep personal growth and a lived experience of the subject matter. It was built on a founding principle that all aspects of human experience, including the spiritual dimension, are part of our human experience (Sophia University, n.d.). This original principle continues to be expressed, as can be seen within the 2012 mission statement:

> Through disciplined scholarly inquiry into the frontiers of psychology and spirituality, ITP [Sofia University] seeks to foster the development of individuals, organizations, and societies toward their fuller potential for wisdom, health and wholeness . . . . We value the qualities of mindfulness, discernment, compassion, and appreciation of differences, and

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> we embrace whole-person education that supports personal and community transformation. We value diversity and seek to impart knowledge and skills that empower people to live together in peace within multicultural communities, the inherent unity of our world and seek to foster a sense of the interconnectedness of all beings. We encourage and promote service to local, national and international communities. We value all of life and educate students in a way that treats all beings with respect and encourages living in harmony with all of nature. We value consciousness and its evolution and engage in rigorous research that includes multiple ways of knowing. (n.p.)

Tenets of transpersonal psychology, including personal growth, spirituality, being of service to the world, expanding consciousness, and working toward wholeness, originally intended as the school was being formed, are still reflected upon as the school morphs and evolves today. Not only is this mission statement reflective of the original intention, but the author, former president Thomas Potterfield, used a transpersonal and inclusionary discernment process to arrive at the words. All faculty and administrator voices were included and synthesized in the school's mission.

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From 1995 to 2000, a six-faceted, longitudinal study assessed the transpersonal nature of the program by examining the experiences and changes of students who attended ITP (Braud, 2006; ITP is now Sofia University). The project's design included complementary quantitative and qualitative research methods and honored both nomothetic and idiographic aims. Quantitative results indicated significant changes in measures of the following qualities: decrements in egocentric grasping and striving, increments in acceptance, greater self-transcendence, increased spiritual perspective, "thinner" and more permeable boundaries, increased present-centeredness, and increased inner-directedness. Substantial positive changes also were reported in areas of values, meaning, spirituality, attitudes, beliefs, intellect, body, emotions, spirit, creative expression, community, openness, and connectedness. In the project's qualitative components, the students reported increased awareness and changes in personal growth, mindfulness, body-related areas, academic/scholarly areas, appreciation of interconnectedness, appreciation of differences, compassion, discernment, transformation, openness, surrender/acceptance, and professional areas; some reported experiencing regression, cognitive dissonance, and disillusionment (Braud & Schmitt, 2000).

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Transformative, transpersonal education. Another mixed-methods study (Baker, 2012) explored the lived experience of transformation of students in the online master's program. Baker discovered that 92% of participants believed that they experienced transformation, which was defined as "a profound and persistent shift toward greater wholeness and authenticity" (p. iii). A thematic content analysis revealed that the movement of transformation showed up in three forms: (a) from socially constructed identity toward realization of the essential self; (b) from fragmentation toward greater integration and wholeness of body, mind, and spirit; and (c) toward greater connection to self, others, and the natural world and was often accompanied by increased awareness, gratitude, appreciation, and greater presence. The alchemical process of transformation was described as a vessel that offered a combination of "tools" and "conditions." "Conditions included experiences of *safety and love* which were created

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by the curriculum and feeling of being held by their cohort of faculty, which sustained for a sufficient period of time" (p. iii). Students who experienced being seen, heard, and accepted for whom they were contributed to their ability to trust and consequently make significant shifts in their lives. Other educational components that participants suggested facilitated transformation included: experiential, creative, and embodied learning; spiritual practice; a focus on "being" along with "doing"; personal motivation and discipline; readiness; encouragement to be authentic and to bring gifts forward; acceptance; organic learning; earth-centered activities; core spiritual values made intentional by school; and learning diverse perspectives.

Center for Courage and Renewal. The Center for Courage and Renewal, a small non-profit organization, is another institute that embodies principles and practices of transpersonal education. It was started by Parker Palmer over a decade ago to foster both personal and professional renewal. The Center seeks to support participants as they create "positive change in their workplaces, professions, and communities, as well as in the lives of the people they serve" (Center for Courage and Renewal, 2006-2012).

This Center offers spiritual retreats and professional training. Facilitators utilize stories, contemplative solitude, deep listening, and poetry to open hearts so that participants may return to their workplaces with restored passion, commitment, and integrity. It uses the Clearness Committee (Palmer, 2006-2012), a strategy grounded in Quaker spirituality, as a means for decision-making and problem solving. This discernment process draws on inner and communal resources.

Programs and trainings offered through the Center for Courage and Renewal are transpersonal forms of education for a variety of reasons. The center's mission and philosophy draw on spiritual principles and values; they invite participants onto a journey of transformation where they eventually bring their understanding to their homeland community. Facilitators utilize transpersonal ways of opening to understanding, such as deep listening, contemplation, discernment, and dialog between the inner world and the outer world of action. Finally, their primary goal is to transform individuals, communities, and society, and this clearly has been accomplished: The Center has reached tens of thousands of people throughout the country.

Classrooms that Support Transpersonal Ways of Knowing

Transpersonal Education can also be found within individual classrooms. This section describes one class based on a curriculum model that is transpersonal and transformative and two examples where the teacher has integrated transpersonal ways of knowing into classes within traditional academic settings.

Inquiry into creative and innovative processes. Although courses on creativity can be taught in a variety of ways, the following transpersonal approach has been highly successful. In this class, creativity theory is taught using a learning structure that emulates intuitive inquiry (Anderson, 2011), in order to bring depth, transpersonal practice, and the potential for transformation.

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"Inquiry into Creativity and Innovation" (Netzer & Rowe, 2010), a six-week online research course about creativity, creative process, creativity as spirituality, and a self-selected topic, was set into the five cycles of intuitive inquiry (Anderson, 2011). Intuitive inquiry invites the researcher into an exploration that balances scholarly research with transpersonal ways of knowing, including intuition, sympathetic resonance, imaginal learning, and creative exploration.

Students begin this course by participating in a contemplative activity that taps into their creativity and helps them notice topics potent within their psyche. From this place, they select a research topic that is moving them. In the second week, students delineate their preliminary lenses or preconceptions and become metacognitively aware (knowing about knowing) of how they have arrived at assumptions and understandings about this topic. Simultaneously, they read articles, books, and other sources of information related to creativity theory and their chosen topic. They create a set of questions and then interview a professional who can inform them about their topic. They continue using transpersonal and creative explorations to deepen their understanding about their research and allow their intuition to play a part in leading them down paths they might not otherwise consider. This dance between scholarship and intuitive exploration continues until the final week when papers are completed.

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In the fourth week, students return to their preliminary lenses, discerning whether or not their understandings continue to hold true, and make a new list of lenses of awareness that weaves their combined insights from reading, interview, and experiential learning. They develop a creative synthesis project that integrates their learning and creatively expresses their new awareness. Students then write their papers.

This transpersonal approach to inquiry invites students into a journey of exploration and potential personal transformation as they move into their research, questioning their understanding and using the transpersonal values of discernment, radical honesty, and authenticity to transform their awareness and to note how this has happened. They explore their topics using transpersonal ways of knowing, such as imagination, dreams, contemplation, and connection with the earth, checking into their felt sense and intuitive awareness at each stage of the inquiry. The course structure invites a journey of transformation.

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Integrating Transpersonal Ways of Knowing Into Conventional Classrooms

Educators in schools that teach transpersonal psychology have easily blended transpersonal material into various fields of study (Davis, 1998; Ferrer, 2002). This has helped advance transpersonal education. Other educators have found ways to incorporate transpersonal ways of knowing into conventional curricula. These initiatives make students aware of complimentary ways of studying a discipline. The following section profiles two such educators.

Integrated learning: teacher education. Sam Crowell, at California State University, San Bernardino, is a teacher educator in an integrative education program (Duerr et al., 2003). He has stated that he believes "we teach who we are" (p. 193) and that this

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assumption awakens students to a genuine exploration of self that leads to authentic teaching. He has described various ways that he has incorporated spiritual practice, self-exploration, and other transpersonal practices into his curriculum. He explained that he made room for a variety of spiritual practices and for reflection on spiritual topics, such as the sacredness of the experience and the need for quiet and stillness. He described co-teaching with a visual artist who was also a Zen monk. During that time his students learned to think through various art modalities, created a labyrinth as a way to show ancient participation in collective and individual consciousness, and explored the embodied notion of journeying to one's own center and "living within the question" (p. 193). He required his students to be authentic, reflect honestly, use introspection, and participate in contemplative activities.

Art history. Bowdoin College Associate Professor of Art History Susan Wegner incorporated contemplative practices into her art history seminars in direct relation to topics being studied even though she occasionally felt challenged in teaching a practice without demanding that there be a spiritual context for it (Duerr et al., 2003).

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Specifically, Wegner incorporated the practices of *Lectio Divina* (divine reading), *Oratio* (prayer), walking the labyrinth, and contemplation practices from the *Cloud of Unknowing* as students read Medieval manuscripts and took in the art of the time (Duerr et al., 2003). In some of these practices she encouraged students to refrain from thinking and speaking and to be silent, open, and accepting of whatever comes. Students experienced what it means to sit in silence in a quiet place while saying a single word like "love" or "God." Wegner has expressed belief that experiencing contemplative practices is essential to the study of the devotional art of the Medieval period. As a result of these practices, students and the instructor experienced a closer connection to one another and a new way of learning.

Transpersonal Self-education

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In addition to being helped and nurtured by a mentor, it is possible to self-educate oneself about the transpersonal. This can be done through readings, reflection, and engaging in regular spiritual practices, such as contemplation, meditation, and prayer. Another approach is to work with one's own *exceptional human experiences* (EHEs). EHEs are anomalous experiences, such as mystical/unitive, psychic, encounter, unusual death-related, and "exceptional normal" experiences, that, if worked with sufficiently, can foster transformative changes in the experiencer.

Of great relevance to transpersonal education is a model, proposed by Rhea White (1997), of how working with one's EHEs can have profound life impacts and can result in important transformative changes; she has called this the *EHE process*. This is essentially a *transpersonal self-education process*. The process begins by refusing to ignore, dismiss, or explain away one of these unusual experiences that cannot be explained in terms of conventionally recognized physical, biological, psychological, or sociological processes. Rather, one can attend more to the EHE and wish to learn its possible meaning. As people continue to work more deeply and extensively with their unusual experiences, they begin to uncover other similar experiences, their meaning and significance deepens, and the experiencers begins to discover and to actualize

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and express more of their true human potentials. Their self-schema, lifeview, and worldview begin to transform.

Experiencers begins to shift their prior self-narrative to a new one; they begin to disidentify with their earlier, limited, isolated, separate ego-self ("little self") and to re-identify with what White called a more inclusive "All-Self" (of a similar concept, William James (1902/1985 wrote, "[One] becomes conscious that this higher part is conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of [one], and which [one] can keep in working touch with" (p. 508). One begins to live a new "project of transcendence," and develops a new way of being in the world. This new way includes a shift in one's self narrative from a *life-depotentiating* one in which unusual experiences are devalued, explained away, or viewed in a continuing anomalous or pathological context, to a *life-potentiating* one wherein exceptional experiences are affirmed and used in stories in which they have a more meaningful place. The new life-potentiating narrative is associated with a more productive, happier, healthier, zestier, and exciting life.

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White (1997) suggested that one of the best ways to realize the benefits of EHEs is to prepare an extensive and ongoing journal of one's own EHEs in what she called the *EHE autobiography*. In an EHE autobiography, one attempts to tell the story of one's life, not in terms of the usual outer events of a typical autobiography, but in terms of one's inner life—the EHEs that one has had. In working on the EHE autobiography, one focuses increased attention on one's EHEs, allowing these to be better remembered and more fully integrated with each other and with the entirety of one's life. Working with EHEs in this systematic manner provides a catalyst for forms of growth and development that otherwise might not be possible. As in any transpersonal practice, it is important that one be psychologically ready to open to and integrate this new psychic material.

Future Directions

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This chapter has attempted to bring together descriptions and examples of approaches to transpersonal education that might inspire greater dialogue and theory-building and perhaps address some of Cunningham's (2006) concerns about the need for research and support for scholarship in this field. The authors have attempted to clarify what is meant by transpersonal education without trying to bind it too tightly, yet at the same time differentiate it from other forms of education. The many ways that transpersonal education has been expressed and adapted have been highlighted. Transpersonal education is a lens into education, one that brings expansiveness, interconnection, exceptional human experiences, and psychospiritual transformation to the forefront, yet demanding that it adhere too tightly to definitional boundaries would limit its nature that tends to be dynamic, flexible, adaptive, spacious, visionary, and expansive. Moving toward the future, educators, scholars, and researchers need to continue the dialogue and improve upon ways that bring transpersonal education to all students from kindergarten to adulthood without holding it too tightly.

Already, some educators have offered concrete suggestions on ways to improve education that are closely aligned with the values and aims of transpersonal education

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and transformative education as discussed above. For example, writer, lecturer, editor, and educator David Lorimer (1990) has suggested 11 approaches that might be added to those currently existing in educational systems in order to help foster greater emotional, psychological, and spiritual growth and development in students. Some of these include placing human beings in a system context of interconnectedness, interdependence, and responsibility at the biological, ecological, social, psychological, and spiritual levels; cultivating reverence for all life; presenting comparative world-views to foster mutual tolerance and understanding; emphasizing the masculine and feminine qualities within each person; learning ways of acquiring inner peace as a result of silence and meditation; cultivating a sense of beauty that stimulates imagination and sympathies; and emphasizing the need to study in depth the nature of love in its widest sense and to work out how kindness, trust, and co-operation can best be fostered in the attempt to create a maximum of synergy within the world system (pp. 282-283).

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Within transpersonal psychology, there have been many perspectives of the nature of transpersonal education. For example, in addressing transpersonal issues at the millennium, transpersonal philosopher and teacher of engaged spirituality Donald Rothberg (1999) has suggested seven possible future directions that transpersonal education might take, including focusing more on the link between study and action, between theory and praxis; guiding education by practice and the conscious sense that all experience in a given setting is relevant and related to learning and transformation; articulating various modes of disciplined spiritual inquiry, integrating these with other types of inquiry, and aiming at spiritual insight and wisdom as seriously as established modes of inquiry reach for empirical knowledge; emphasizing the connections between different levels of development and different disciplines; bringing together experiential, practical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of education; and recognizing that "ultimately the intention of transpersonal education is no less than spiritual transformation, the cultivation of wisdom and love, the opening of heart and mind, the deep communion with life" (p. 56).

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The following statement serves as a conclusion that is well aligned with the nature and aims of transpersonal education:

> Education is meant to open many doors, leading to many rooms. Imagination thrives when sensual experience joins with reason, when Illusions link to Reality, when intuition couples with intellect, when the passions of the heart unite with those of the mind, when knowledge gained in one discipline opens doors to all the rest. The point of education must be to create whole people who, through their wholeness, can focus the accumulated wisdom of human experience into illuminated patches of splendor. (Root-Bernstein & Root-Bernstein, 1999, pp. 325-326)

Notes

1. I dedicate this chapter to my friend and colleague, William Braud, who crossed over weeks after we wrote this chapter. William's contribution to the field of transpersonal psychology was legendary. Even greater was his depth of spirituality. He showed us how teaching,

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writing, and the sharing of scholarship can be a spiritual practice. He will be greatly missed by so many of his colleagues and students. (Nancy Rowe)

2. The name ITP (Institute of Transpersonal Psychology) will be used in research that was accomplished prior to the name change.

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