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Meeting the JCHE Team: A Reconstructed Interview

Heesoon Bai

Simon Fraser University, hbai@sfu.ca

Charles Scott

Simon Fraser University, charles_scott@sfu.ca

Cary L. Campbell

Simon Fraser University, clc25@sfu.ca

Jwalin Patel


Together In Development & Education Foundation, India, jnp32@cantab.ac.uk

Yifan Sun

davina_sun@hotmail.com

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Authors

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Heesoon Bai ^a, Charles Scott ^a, Cary Campbell ^a, Jwalin Patel ^b, Yifan Sun ^c, Jing Lin ^d, Hyeyoung Bang ^e, Sachi Edwards ^f, Deepa Srikkantaiah ^d, Yishin Khoo ^g, Denise McHugh ^d

^a Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

^b Together In Development & Education Foundation, India

^c Faculty of Education, Rudolf Steiner University, Norway

^d College of Education, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, United States

^e College of Education and Human Development, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH, United States

^f The Graduate School of International Peace Studies, SOKA University, Japan

^g Faculty of Education, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

Keywords

Contemplative pedagogies; Holistic education; Decolonial education; Environmental education; Peace education; Collective writing; Editorial dialogue; Team-writing

This “reconstructed interview-conversation” involves the entire editorial team of the Journal of Contemplative and Holistic Education (JCHE). Together, the team dialogues around the shared visions, aspirations, motivations, and aims we have in creating this new journal platform. With this sharing, the team sends out a welcoming invitation to colleagues from around the world to get to know our new journal and to join our work to support and promote contemplative and holistic education. We at JCHE are committed to the ideal of education as transformative integration of mind-body-heart-spirit, which we ultimately understand as a decolonizing project. Through this interview, various research and life themes have emerged: the centrality of education for wisdom, the life-sustaining importance of contemplative practice, the role of contemplative and holistic education as decolonial project; how JCHE exemplifies and aims at cultivating the wide diversity that exists in intellectual work; the place of contemplative and holistic education within peace education and environmental education; the important contributions that Indigenous knowledge practices make to education, science, medicine, and health care, and to the broader task of cultivating ecological and human flourishing; as well as concerns about contemplative/holistic practices being co-opted by neoliberal and instrumental forces in education.

Corresponding authors. JCHE Team.

E-mail addresses: hbai@sfu.ca; charles.scott@sfu.ca; clc25@sfu.ca; jnp32@cantab.ac.uk; davina_sun@hotmail.com; jinglin@umd.edu; hbang@bgsu.edu; sachiteresa@gmail.com; dsrikant@umd.edu; yskhoo@uwindsor.ca; dmcugh@umd.edu;

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One spring morning, we met at Livia Café . . .

Heesoon Bai, Cary Campbell, and Charles Scott meet at Livia Café in East Vancouver (late March 2023) to discuss how they will work in editorially reconstructing a (virtual) dialogue from their JCHE Editor Colleagues' responses to a set of "interview questions," asking each member to reflect on what they value and hope for from this new journal platform.

HEESOOON: Colleagues, I am reminded, yet again, the sagacious notion that Parker Palmer put out to the world: "We teach who we are" (Palmer, 2007, p. 1). The same psycho-logic applies here: our new journal, *JCHE*, will reflect who we the editorial team members (the three Editors-in-Chief, the six Associate Editors, and one Assistant Editor) are, in terms of our worldviews, values, visions, aspirations, motivations, and aims in creating our new journal.

CARY: Certainly. And might I add that we want to reflect on both *who we are* and who we are/may *be becoming*.

HEESOOON: Absolutely. For the world to know what our journal is about, the most comprehensive way to go about pursuing that understanding would be to hear directly from our Editor Colleagues on what they have to say about their worldviews, values, and so on, as we listed above.

CHARLES: Definitely. And, as an additional and important benefit, it would be helpful for us as work partners to know about each other more deeply. As well, by virtue of sharing ourselves with our readers, we would also be inviting those who submit to the journal to feel welcome with respect to revealing themselves in their fullness. We hope the journal can represent a space of unfolding and becoming.

HEESOOON: The other day, I was watching the Dragon Boat Racers rowing together in their Dragon Boats, and I was utterly amazed to see how synchronized they were with each other. They were attuned to each other's breaths, rhythms of paddle strokes, and so on. This makes total sense to me. I like to think that our new journal is our dragon boat, and we the editors are (while not racing against any other journal) paddling together contemplatively and holistically to steer our boat in the rough sea of the current world, academia included.

CARY: I very much like this Dragon Boat analogy, especially, in terms of understanding the importance of our knowing something about each other's aspirations and visions for this journal, as expressed at the intersection of the personal and the professional/scholarly.

CHARLES: And not only is this knowing important to ourselves doing the journal work but also to our readers and potential journal contributors. To amplify what you both have already indicated, providing these interview responses allows readers and those who might like to submit get a better sense of the ontological, epistemological, and axiological orientations of the journal. These interviews have the potential of helping develop a cohesive, inclusive community: one that champions both unity and diversity.

CARY: This is a perfect point at which we invite our editor colleagues in for dialogue! One of the questions we asked our colleagues is: ***What is "near and dear" to you in the broad domains of contemplative and holistic education -- in your own life, teaching practice, research, and inquiry?*** Let's hear what some of our Editor Colleagues say!

Meeting Our Team

HEESOOON: *JCHE* Editor Colleagues! I know we come from a very diverse cultural,

intellectual, and academic backgrounds, not to mention personal and familial backgrounds. Yet, here we are, united by our deep intellectual interest and personal passion in, and commitment to, contemplative and holistic education. **Please tell us about yourself!** Shall we start with you, Yifan?

Yifan Sun: Thank you for this opportunity to share my story and voice my views. As a member of the editorial team, I am deeply committed to exploring and promoting educational practices that honor the whole person and the interconnectedness of all beings. In my own life, teaching practices, research, and inquiry, I am drawn to the transformative potential of contemplative and holistic approaches to education. These approaches are crucial for cultivating compassionate, creative, and wise citizens capable of addressing the complex challenges facing humanity and the planet.

Contemplative practices are especially important to me because I value the ecology of knowledges and the plurality of heterogeneous practices. Many ways of thinking around the world are distinctive from Western philosophies and paradigms and are imbued with an anti-positivistic stance. As a Chinese researcher, I am embedded in other areas of thought and practices outside the Western canon. Holistic education is also essential to me because I believe that education should foster the development of the whole person, including their emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. Education is not just about educating the “head,” but also the “heart” and “hands.” A holistic way of thinking and educating prohibits us from defining human possibilities narrowly.

I consider myself not only as a researcher but also as a practitioner in contemplative and holistic education. I seek to cultivate contemplative practices such as mindfulness, compassion, and gratitude in my personal life, and integrate these practices into my teaching and research. I have been practicing Vipassana meditation since 2014 and have been facilitating workshops on mindfulness and nature-connection, applying holistic education principles embedded in Chinese philosophy.

Jing, how about you?

Jing Lin: Like you, Yifan, I have connected my contemplative practice with my teaching, research, and inquiry. Meditation allows me to sense the life force that creates and connects everything, experiencing that we are all one, and that we should embrace each other as family. Hence, I created courses on peace education and ecological education as I am acutely aware that these are very much missing in education. I feel strongly that education must go beyond the mind and touch on the heart and spirit of the learners, allowing us to embody love and compassion.

To me, contemplative and holistic education provide us pathways to connect with our inner being, gaining knowledge and wisdom about self, life, nature, and the whole universe. In my life, meditation plays a big role. It centers me every day with the life force that sustains everything, my life energy, *qi*. It gives me introspection and aligns my body, mind, heart, and spirit.

I would like to invite Sachi to share with us on what’s near and dear to her about contemplative and holistic education.

Sachi Edwards: I share similar views with Yifan and Jing in the way they articulate their understandings of contemplative and holistic education. I think what’s especially important is the integration and practice aspect. This is why I am a huge supporter of artistic forms of

inquiry and pedagogy such as dance, poetry, storytelling, and self-reflective journaling. For me there isn't a clear distinction between how I use these practices in my personal life, teaching, and research because I try to blend them as much as possible. My research is personal, and in my teaching, I'm often trying to create opportunities for students to use practices like these to similarly connect personal and academic interests. Integrating the personal and the academic creates meaningful experiences for students.

Hyeyoung, what is your sense of meaningful education, teaching, and learning?

Hyeyoung Bang: As an elementary school teacher for 15 years in South Korea, I enjoyed doing something more meaningful with my students. I was interested in their well-being, helping them find a meaningful place in the world beyond just academic achievement. As a professor who teaches educational psychology in my teacher education classes, I always emphasize supporting students to be holistic human beings who enrich the lives of others. So, my foundation comes from more holistic education perspectives.

Growing up in Korea, being exposed so much to Buddhism and Confucianism (and a little bit of Daoism) and the educational motto—*Hong-Ik-In-Gan* (benefiting others) from the early founder of Korea, wisdom is the word that I am constantly reflecting on. I try to cultivate a wise mind and actions. Thus, wisdom became my inquiry for life and became my research topic. Although my research agenda is understanding the function of wisdom in human development from a (Western) psychological perspective, I try to incorporate Eastern wisdom traditions in my teaching, research, and service.

This semester, I am teaching a course called Education for Wisdom and Peace. I developed the course, and this is the first time the university has offered it. In this course, I incorporate the broader domains of contemplative Inquiry and holistic education. My framework is that world peace starts from the cultivation of inner wisdom and peace, and it expands to the cultivation of wisdom and peace in communities, societies, nations, and the world/earth. I designed the course around various activities such as inner peacebuilding, a community action project, building a peace education program, lesson plans, and peace education research. Through these activities, students are contemplating wisdom and cultivating their inner strength through keeping the right mind, developing empathy and compassion, and reflecting on social justice for peacebuilding.

I would like to turn to Jwalin. How did you get into holistic and contemplative education?

Jwalin Patel: Thank you, Hyeyoung! Like you, I was exposed to holistic modalities of education through my own cultural roots. I have frequently questioned the purpose of modern education, its narrow emphasis on academic learning, and its fragmentary, reductionist, and instrumental approach to education (Patel, 2021, 2023; Patel & Ehrenzeller, in press). In contrast, many southern, Indigenous, and holistic education scholars have called for holistic education for its intrinsic value and its emphasis on broader vision of education.

There are several approaches to holistic education: some that call for the education of various “aspects/parts of a person,” while others that call for education of a “person as a whole” (not just education for an assimilation of parts). Holistic educators strongly emphasize the latter with underpinning beliefs of the whole greater than the sum of its parts. However, I would like to extend it to include an emphasis on education of the “whole person within a larger whole”; this allows for an inherent recognition of the larger world (human community, nature, and the world) in which one is situated (Patel, 2023).

I believe that we need to embody a holistic epistemology and approach to all aspects of education, including its philosophy and purpose, learning and teaching practices, and educational research. In my own life, this has meant a continued exploration of the philosophy and purpose of education, through contemplation, discussions, visits, and embodied experiences. This in turn has helped inform some of the interventions that the charity I work with runs, including whole school transformation initiatives, bottom-up teacher capacity building, and life skills interventions. In my teaching learning practice this has led me to focus on co-creation of curricula with my students and promotion of embodied, experiential, project based, social action based and self / peer directed learning. And for my research this has meant an explicit focus on Southern epistemology, participatory research methodologies and methods, reflexive research, and autobiographical research (Patel & Kester, 2023).

Most importantly, I have come to believe that holistic education is a lifelong process about the transformation of one's ways of living and being. This has resulted in a continued and ongoing journey of self-transformation.

I am curious if you, Deepa, share similar interests in holistic education stemming from your own cultural roots?

Deepa Srikantaiah: Thank you, Jwalin! Yes, my parents emigrated from India in the 1960s, and I identify myself as a South Asian American, an Indian American, a second-generation Indian, and a first-generation American. Growing up in the United States and attending public schools, like many other first and second-generation immigrants, I faced challenges with my identity. However, I find inspiration in the Sri Lankan Tamil novelist S. Sivanandan, who speaks to the impact of colonization. He suggests that colonization created a two-way road. When the British left India, they left behind two of the poorest countries in the world—India and Pakistan. Those seeking better opportunities for education and economic advancement had to look to other countries such as England, the United States, and Canada.

To me the knowledge of mathematics, science, art, and history empowers voices. I research and study Indigenous Knowledges, South Asian and African Diasporas, and Mathematics and Science Education.

In my view, knowledge of subjects such as mathematics, science, art, and history can be empowering. As part of my research, I focus on Indigenous Knowledges in mathematics and science, especially those that have withstood colonization, capitalism, ecological changes, and other challenges. These knowledges serve as reminders from Mother Nature, guiding us towards a more sustainable and holistic way of living.

I now turn to you, Yishin. What brought you into contemplative and holistic ways of education?

Yishin Khoo: I believe that the collapse of our industrial consumer societies due to climate change is now unavoidable. The root causes of the collapse lie in humans' minds: that is, our habitual ways of thinking which are characterized by greed, ignorance, and a delusion of separateness. Our greed for profit, the inability to see the interdependence of all lives, and the denial of the limits of the Earth and our complicity in harm, have led to our current unsustainable, human-centred, extractivist, socio-political economy that is driving our own demise. A higher level of human consciousness (or a more expanded way of perceiving reality) is needed to help address the crises of our time.

In my work, I examine how Buddhist mindfulness practices may help individuals broaden

their perception of reality and build their personal and collective capacity to create a more just and regenerative society in times of crisis. A key aspect of this work is to provide opportunities for individuals to experience — affectively — the interconnectedness of themselves with nature, such that caring for the earth is also caring for themselves. Another aspect of the work is to train ourselves to “be” with personal and planetary suffering and not go into flight, fight, and freeze mode in the face of suffering. Developing healing spaces and curricula where individuals can understand the roots of suffering and heal their relationships with themselves, with each other, and with Mother Earth through earth-based mindfulness practices (e.g., regenerating soil, saving seeds, growing food forests, building harmonious communities, etc.) is where I am increasingly spending my energy these days. Knowing that Buddhist mindfulness practices are not the sole authority on addressing current socio-ecological challenges, I am also seeking collaboration with other educators and scholars in diverse scientific and Indigenous traditions.

Denise, please join us now!

Denise McHugh: Hearing from everyone has been wonderful. For myself, I am especially interested in exploring contemplative practices across various faiths and in the domain of interfaith. Also, I like to explore how contemplative traditions are carried out across various physical settings. Nature holds the power to deepen and ignite our senses. But there also is the power of built spaces, such as chapels, synagogues, and mosques, in forging personal connections to faith and faith communities. As the manager of a university multifaith chapel and gardens, I have the privilege of seeing the role that contemplative spaces can have on students and staff in a campus community. For some (although not all), the campus chapel and gardens can be a calming haven within a hectic campus world. Working with fourteen chaplains of various faiths that comprise the University's affiliate chaplain staff, I have come to see ever more strongly how spiritual beliefs and values hold the ability to connect across religious communities and people of faith.

Challenges, Difficulties & Persistent Themes

HEESON: Listening to all your “near and dear” personal narratives about how you came into holistic and contemplative education is extremely inspiring!

One of the themes that strongly jumped out of your introductions is the importance you all place on the integrating of the personal and the academic in your life as researchers and teachers. Our journal's aims and missions truly support this theme. We also observe the ways in which your own positionalities, life stories, and values speak to the imperative for holistic education to seek perspectives and practices beyond dominant Euro-centric frameworks, which involves/requires embracing decolonial, world Indigenous and North American Indigenous, and Global South epistemologies.

We are aware that in starting an academic venture, such as establishing a new journal, there is a strong sense of responding to the prevailing zeitgeist.

We would like to hear from our Editor Colleagues what they see as the major challenges and difficulties facing our world, today and tomorrow, and the implications for our work in contemplative and holistic education.

Deepa: I'd like to highlight two big challenges facing our journal, that intersect with my work:

- *The Scientisation of Indigenous Knowledge:* Scientisation is a word commonly used in the field of

political science to describe the identification, validation, and integration of Indigenous knowledge into existing conventional knowledge (Agrawal, 2002). Indigenous knowledge is used for the purposes of the consumer and neoliberal agendas, which causes Indigenous knowledge to become decontextualized. The decontextualization of Indigenous knowledge means it is taken out of its local context, disconnecting it from processes and factors used in its environment, and is often stripped down to generalizable knowledge or applications. For example, Indigenous knowledge can be reduced to a molecular compound without retaining rituals or forms of tacit knowledge and this works against the purpose of these knowledge systems (Agrawal, 2002; Briggs and Sharp, 2004; Wangoola, 2000).

- *Scientific Validation:* The Western scientific method has in the past produced many miracle drugs, like the polio vaccination, which has helped eliminate polio in many parts of the world. Hence, the Western scientific method is generally relied upon or used as the benchmark to validate other forms of knowledge and their approaches to treatment (Briggs and Sharp, 2004). However, the Western scientific method is limiting. The Western scientific method suggests that a biomedical model can be studied in isolation from other systems in its environment, and that there is only one reality or “universal truth” (Ogawa, 1995; Snively and Corsiglia, 2001).

Sachi: To add to what you are saying, Deepa, integrating Indigenous knowledge systems in the face of the increasing (neo-liberal) marketization of education is an obvious challenge. Another challenge I've been thinking a lot about lately is how contemplative practices are being appropriated by people who: (a) do not know or acknowledge the roots of the practices they co-opt; and (b) use these practices to promote a hyper-individualist mentality that ultimately serves white supremacy. For example, rhetoric suggests that contemplative practices (meditation, breathwork, energy work, etc.) can solve all sorts of ailments ranging from physical/mental illness to poverty, and therefore, people who do suffer from these ailments only have themselves to blame. I worry a lot about how to advocate for contemplative practices without guiding people towards the wellness-to-QAnon pipeline or making it seem that I am in any way sympathetic toward that ideology.

An opportunity I think we have is that many academic conferences and journals are becoming more open to submissions/presentations that do not necessarily align with mainstream ideas around what scholarship is/should be. So, in that way, academia (individual academics and organized networks of academics) does seem to be trending towards more openness to contemplative and holistic practices, even if institutions and systems often are not. Those of us who ground ourselves in long-standing traditions of contemplative practice can hopefully be embraced by this new openness.

I always try to be very upfront about the reality and danger of the trend of alt-right appropriation of contemplative practices. In that way, I am not only "nice" and "hopeful" about such practices, I'm also frank and unapologetic in expressing my concerns about how these practices are being used by those with intentions that directly oppose my social justice values. In other words, not everything you hear about contemplative practices is unquestionably good; these practices (or, more specifically, the way people use them) also need to be approached with clear eyes and need to be able to be critiqued sometimes. I hope that through trying to be transparent in this way, I can make my advocacy for traditionally grounded and collectively minded contemplative practice more effective.

CARY: Thanks, Deepa and Sachi. Hopefully, you don't mind if I jump in here to add to this

rich dialogue on the challenges facing holistic and contemplative educational initiatives in our age. As you say, Sachi, I agree it is important to remain vigilant and critical in the face of these reductive obfuscations of contemplative practices, often in the name of consumeristic and essentially neoliberal ideologies. To add to this: I like to think of the problems facing contemplative pedagogies in existential terms: that is, as expressed in the ongoing challenge of being in, with, and even *for the world*—especially in the face of such prevalent difficulties, suffering, and despair. For instance, my experiences as a young (millennial-aged) person have often been disillusioning: to wake to a world that feels decidedly not my own — a world created for others, with a different set of opportunities and values that I can't seem to fully make use of — a world that seems to be the final spinning out of cycles and processes that were created long before I was born. These cycles will ensure our collective eco-destruction and societal disintegration, we've been told our whole lives, but still, they are, paradoxically, all that is afforded to us. A mass dis-imagination machine (as Henry Giroux might call it) is at work and this is evidenced by how news media tells us every day to imagine the end of the world, not the end of our current technocratic and globalist trajectory.

I feel there is an urgent need for intergenerational dialogue—for encounters, for meeting, somewhere along different intersecting lifeways—something, somewhat uniquely, that our editorial team affords, and something being enacted, right before our eyes, in this collective-interview piece. Intergenerational conversations such as exchanging a heartfelt conversation about a local stream or waterway or discussing the climate crisis with an elder, a small child, or my gen Z undergrad students (Campbell, 2023). As I touch on with Tim Lilburn in this SI, I'm interested in how we can practice *pedagogies of hope* in the face of these massive challenges like colonization and the prospect/promise of Indigenous-settler reconciliation (Campbell, 2022), climate-change ecological loss and degradation, or the social-ecological effects of mass digitization and our post-digital ways of living (Lacković, 2020; Jandrić & Knox, 2022). These days, in my writing, research, and teaching, I'm most interested in how educators can offer existential and contemplative practices and opportunities for their students to articulate and explore how they might want to *live well* in an era of the Anthropocene (Bai et al., 2020; Campbell, 2023). I believe that it is only by taking seriously ourselves and our students' existential feelings, including grief, that we can hope to realize meaningful pedagogy in face of the massive challenges we are encountering in our present time.

Jing, you have a sense of prevailing hopefulness, I feel, to your work and disposition. Care to expand on this?

Jing: Indeed, as you speak, our world is mired in unprecedented struggles and imbalances, with wars and conflicts, climate change, moral breakdown, and unparallel social inequity threatening the very existence of the human species and all those non-human species on Earth. Meanwhile, I also see that there is a strong balancing force of peace and love that is sustaining our resilience and the viability of our world. This force comes from the capacity for love which is wired into our genes to survive and sustain the world. So, while a lot of challenges are present daily, be they economic, social, political, moral, spiritual, a lot of opportunities also exist for doing the work of love, which would help to tip the scale for a hopeful future (Lin et al., 2023). As a species, we have reached a point where, if we don't evolve and elevate our spiritual consciousness, and bolster our ability to love and connect, we will not have hope. I think many people are coming to this realization. Many are now more open to contemplative practices to find wisdom. Contemplative and holistic education, with its potential for cultivating compassion and cosmic wisdom (Culham & Lin, 2020; Lin, 2019), has a critical role to help us

meet these challenges and provide hope.

Hyeyoung: I will jump in, Colleagues. Here, we might try to explain how holistic education differs from dominant educational conceptions. Holistic education is not a new concept, of course, but it has been neglected in the education field due to so much focus on standardized test scores, education policies based on big data, and assessments that emphasize the cognitive function of human development instead of supporting individuals' reflective and affective dimension of wisdom (Bang, 2015; Band & Montgomery, 2013; Bang, 2015). As an Educational Psychologist, I take responsibility for this kind of phenomenon in education. In many countries, including the United States, one of the chief goals of education is national economic advancement. Students are dehumanized in a process wherein "responsible citizenship" translates into "productive employment in the Nation's modern economy" (U.S. Code, 1994, 5812). Thus, we seem most concerned with producing material zombies who are not happy. In schools, many children and teens are shot, bullied, commit suicide, and are victimized from emotional, sexual, and physical abuse as well as substance abuse. The earth's climate has changed due to reckless over-development and over-consumerism; thus, we suffer from more pandemics and natural disasters. In the face of this, the goal of education for me should be supporting students to be holistic humans who are resilient, wise, loving, happy, and kind to all beings.

Jwalin: I will jump in, too. Today's world is faced with a plethora of global crises (e.g., issues of equity, plus ecological, economic, political, and justice issues). Many of these are replicated and propagated by/through modern mass education. I believe holistic education is ever more so important and pertinent in today's day and age. One of the biggest opportunities, at the current time, is the growing recognition of the limitations of the modern education system and the need for more holistic approaches. There has been a long-standing history of educational thinkers calling for holistic education, with this recognition leading to chains of schools. However, I think we are now starting to see a new wave of interest and small-scale experiments stemming within the alternative and holistic education space. The confluence of the old and many new ideas can help drive and shape the next century of holistic education.

While there is growing understanding of the need for more holistic education, I wonder if these ideas can be scaled across current mass education systems. It is promising to see international development and aid agendas trying to bring in more holistic education endeavours through interventions, the targeting of sports education, social emotional learning, and mindfulness; yet many of these interventions still adopt instrumental approaches with such education, eventually contributing to solely academic outcomes and an interest in future economic contributions. One of the major challenges that the field faces is where alternative and holistic education experiments remain as experiments. However, there is much more deliberation required on whether such experiments should be scaled, what is the feasibility of scaling these experiments in holistic education (or if they are inherently non-scalable), and what aspects of such experiments should be scaled. I would argue against replicating content, being more open to replicating processes, and better still, taking inspiration from the epistemologies based in developing one's own vision and practices for holistic education.

Yifan: I see both opportunities and challenges for contemplative and holistic education in our current historical moment and going forward into the future. On the one hand, there is a growing recognition of the limitations of traditional educational systems and a desire for more holistic and transformative approaches. In addition, recent research has demonstrated the benefits of contemplative practices for mental and emotional well-being, as well as for

developing cognitive and socio-emotional skills. On the other hand, there are significant challenges facing the implementation and institutionalization of contemplative and holistic education. These include resistance from traditional educational institutions, limited resources and funding, and the need for more research on the efficacy of such approaches.

Another challenge I see for the work is that holistic education is often viewed as an ‘alternative’ approach to education. Many so-called “holistic” or “alternative” educators may consider themselves to be practicing “mainstream” education; they do so, however, under social conditions in which they have found themselves sidelined in favour of a more popular or state-endorsed educational model. What at first may appear to be a pedantic insistence on semantics illustrates an underlying ideological battle for what is fit to be considered “normal.” As is argued by Santos (2016), “The idea of alternatives presupposes the idea of normalcy” and “the designation of something as an alternative carries a latent connotation of subalternity” (p. 189). The risk for a non-critical analysis is that, without recognizing this implicit power dynamic, the term “alternative” becomes unconsciously rendered as “strange” or “abnormal” in opposition to the normality of the state educational model.

Yishin: Exactly! I agree with you, Yifan. The fact that we are in multiple crises creates a need for the work mentioned above. I have heard university professors and schoolteachers say that they are burned out. If we are constantly in burnout mode, we won’t have the clarity, inner resources, and health to handle crisis situations.

This year, I managed to invite two social-justice-oriented teacher candidates to join me in exploring how mindfulness can be engaged in their lives as teachers to be. This is a humble start. My hope is to work with more educators to see how mindfulness can enhance climate justice and sustainability educational efforts. I also hope to work with local educators to bring mindfulness to newcomers and immigrants in our community. Earth-based mindfulness practices have helped me heal intergenerational trauma and find a sense of belonging in Canada. Feeling at home on Turtle Island subsequently deepened my commitment to work for truth and reconciliation. I aspire to share the benefit of mindfulness with other immigrants and newcomers.

There are various challenges I foresee in this work, namely:

- A lack of understanding and buy-in from educators and community members.
- A lack of funding.
- A lack of educators I can partner with to do this work in my local area.
- A need to create effective programs and curricula.
- A need to cultivate my own understanding and practice of Buddhist mindfulness practices and their implications in our current times of crisis.
- A need for practical inquiries.

Also, I feel that even though the idea of mindfulness has entered the world of education, the way it is being promoted and shared does not tap into its fullest potential as a method to cultivate awareness, wisdom, and compassion. There are many reasons for this. First, I don’t think our traditional classroom is the best place to learn and apply mindfulness to our complex life. Secondly, if we want to see more clearly into our blind spots and broaden our perception of reality through mindfulness practices, the guidance of an experienced teacher is often needed, and one cannot find this kind of teacher in the educational system (at least I have not encountered such a teacher in my life). Thirdly, to sustain and deepen our practice of

mindfulness, a community of support, plus a community of mindfulness practitioners demonstrating mindful living, are desirable. Fourthly, time is needed to cultivate mindfulness and there is often not enough time in formal educational settings for people to rest and strengthen their mindfulness practices. All this requires different ways in which mindfulness can be taught, learned, and studied beyond the walls of universities and classrooms, foregrounding a sense of community. The challenges I located earlier emerged out of my attempt to find a different way of sharing and exploring mindfulness with others in our current historical moment, beyond the university and usual academic settings.

Denise: Yishin, you have clearly laid out for me the complexity of manifold issues facing us holistic and contemplative educators. And I particularly resonate with your observation that there is not enough time in our institutional lives of study and work for “people to rest and strengthen their mindfulness practices.” To round off this exchange once more: Patterns of loneliness and depression run rampant among our university students. While there may be a hunger for slowing down, for finding one's center, for locating one's core values, for connecting to something beyond oneself, some students need a roadmap to discover the way inside.

Regular contemplative practices can offer students a way to create and support their inner lives. Strengthened within, they are more likely to gain the insight and understanding to connect with a broader community in healthy and positive ways. Our universities need this—and so does our world!

Hopes for Our Journal

HEESOON: It's been just so wonderful and inspiring to meet each of you and learn a little about who you are as well as get a sense of how you each understand the challenges and barriers to contemplative and holistic educational initiatives. And, importantly, we also have a sense of how you find hope in the face of these challenges.

Some of you have already mentioned how you find hope in the face of these challenges; however, now, I want us to focus now specifically on discussing the hopes and dreams you are pouring into our new journal.

Perhaps we should start with you, Hyeyoung.

Hyeyoung: We (members of the *Contemplative Inquiry and Holistic Education* Special Interest Group in the Comparative and International Education Society) have been contemplating the needs of this kind of journal for a long time. There are journals focusing on holistic education, peace education, and environmental sustainability that share similar topics.

Through our new journal, we try to break the traditional (mainly, Western) view on rigorousness in academic journals as interpreted through a very narrow range of submission criteria. In addition to the more traditional academic research articles, we also welcome essays based on a broader framework from empirical, philosophical, theoretical, pedagogical, and spiritual perspectives and works in and with both traditional academic research article and non-traditional formats, such as arts-based and multimedia essays, video/audio submissions with art exhibitions, community voices, interviews with practitioners and spiritual teachers, and reviews of educational practices and events. In terms of topics, we look for submissions that focus on contemplative practices and education that cultivates holistic well-being and wisdom, peace education, social and ecological justice, art education, service learning, and classroom activities as well as lesson plans that work with these topics.

Through the journal's mission, scope and aims, I believe that we can 1). inform the (academic) world about what excellent work scholars, practitioners, educators, policy makers, and philosophers do to pursue fundamental inquiries within the humanities; 2). revisit the function of education for educational, social, and ecological change; and 3). encourage future scholars and educators to cultivate contemplative and holistic consciousnesses as their contribution to upholding humanity.

Jing, I know that you have been keeping, for all of us, the hopes and dreams of creating a journal like this for a long time.

Jing: This journal comes at a pivotal time in human history, and I see the journal playing a pioneering role in helping and supporting educators and our society to meet and respond to challenges rooted in the capitalist ethos, instrumental reason-based education, e.g., a paradigm focusing on selfish interests and ego-based education that creates a sense of separation. The journal will provide a platform for educators and practitioners to explore new theories of knowing and being, share ideas about creative, contemplative pedagogies, address problems not being addressed effectively in current systems (such as mental stress due to separation of our body, mind, heart and spirit), revive wisdom traditions, find our True Self (Lin & Yishin, 2022), reanimate the universe (Bai, 2009), and help birth new generations of earth citizens who are loving and respectful towards each other and towards Mother Nature.

How about you, Jwalin? What hopes and dreams do you have for our journal?

Jwalin: For me, the journal can create a space for two notable contributions.

First, bringing together the very diverse voices from across the globe and allowing for pushing forward our shared knowledge and understanding, tackling questions that continue to limit the field, and creating an appreciation of the varied practices and approaches that help achieve a similar shared vision.

Second, to highlight and give forefront to practitioner insights, voices, and practices from the various holistic and alternative education learning spaces. While many of these are quite small-scale, they hold valuable knowledge (through experiments and experiences), and the journal can hopefully serve as a space for sharing these and for continual learning.

Let's just go around, Colleagues. Please just jump in!

Sachi: I hope that we can facilitate conversations about these issues in direct, but compassionate, ways. I hope that we can showcase what it looks like to engage in contemplative and holistic education in ways that appropriately honor various histories and traditions. I hope that we can help people who are just beginning to explore contemplative practices to learn about them with depth and nuance.

Deepa: Bringing world indigenous knowledges and North American Indigenous Knowledges associated with mathematics and science to journals like *JCHE* can provide many opportunities. For example, in alternative healthcare, the study of Ayurveda can help to understand the connections of illnesses in our body to the environment. In education, understanding Guru-Shishya relationships can help to define education and what it means to be a teacher.

The main challenge I see is implementation in a world dominated by neoliberal and capitalistic markets. Indigenous Knowledges are relational, community based, and deeply connected to the environment, all of which does not conform to economic and policy

decisions primarily made today.

Yishin: I see *JCHE* as a place where educators like me can share reflections as well as the fruits and challenges of their work and seek input from educators working in formal, nonformal, and informal settings. It is also a place where the teacher candidates I work with can share their inquiries and stories with the wider world.

JCHE allows me to meet and collaborate with like-minded educators from different countries, schools, and communities to inquire into shared educational puzzles from different perspectives and share our research results with a wider audience. It makes this work less lonely.

I also foresee *JCHE* sharing interesting events and funding opportunities that support the work of contemplative and holistic educators in different parts of the world.

Yifan: By providing a platform for scholars and practitioners to share their work, our journal aims to contribute to the transformation of current educational systems and paradigms. Through the publication of cutting-edge research and innovative practices, the journal seeks to inspire and inform the field of education in ways that support the cultivation of a humanity that is not just intelligent but also wise.

Moreover, our journal acknowledges the interconnected nature of the challenges we face in education and beyond and seeks to provide a space for dialogue and collaboration across diverse fields and perspectives. The journal recognizes the need for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to address the complex and interrelated challenges facing humanity. The journal also aims to cultivate a community of scholars and practitioners who are committed to contemplative and holistic approaches to education. By providing opportunities for engagement and dialogue, the journal seeks to foster a supportive and collaborative network of educators and scholars who are dedicated to the transformation of education and the promotion of human flourishing.

Denise: Our new journal offers a way for individuals to share their academic research as well as hands-on work and experiences in contemplative and holistic education. A deeper understanding of both research and practice holds the promise to shift mindsets within our fast-paced society, one person at a time.

Last words, with gratitude . . .

HEESON, CARY, CHARLES: Our sincere thanks to each of you, for this passionate and heartfelt exchange. This chance to encounter one another and to dream up different hopes and futurities for *JCHE* is necessary work.

Dialogue never ends but keeps reverberating through different hearts and minds. Nonetheless, we shall pause here before parting, and we will simply reiterate some of the major themes of contemplative and holistic education that have emerged through this collective dialogue.

- Using contemplative education practices *to resist and transgress technocratic, neoliberal, and instrumentalist forces in education* that consistently reduce educational policy to the level of individual competition and narrow-minded ideas of “productivity.”
- Bringing *renewed emphasis to Indigenous and Indigenous worldviews and educational practices* that have been silenced or muzzled by colonial society.

- Developing holistic educational conceptions and practices that could help students and teachers respond meaningfully to the challenges posed by the Anthropocene and the climate crisis.

As we stand at the precipice of a deeply uncertain time, might we remember that here lives nothing but possibility?

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