Book Series

Transforming Education for the Future

Series Editors
Jing Lin, University of Maryland; Rebecca L. Oxford, University of Maryland; Vachel W. Miller, Appalachian State University

Humanity is facing unprecedented challenges. Critical issues, such as world conflicts, global warming, energy crises, and moral decay, if not dealt with, can bring a total breakdown of human civilization. We currently have all the tools to destroy our planet, either slowly by continuing to injure the physical environment or rapidly through nuclear warfare. We can annihilate not only our enemies but the whole human race and other species on Earth.

In the U.S. and many other countries, educational systems are bogged down by structural problems and old philosophies. Education is supposed to prepare citizens who have the ability, awareness, and wisdom to deal with crises and continually learn and grow, but it still operates on an almost purely mechanistic, rationalistic, capitalistic, and highly competitive paradigm.

The U.S. needs a new educational paradigm based on a different, far richer, more insightful understanding of human possibility. This paradigm must be strong enough to transform current educational thinking and practice. It must be creative and expansive enough to transform the world.

What kinds of schools and universities do we need to transform the world? To answer this, we need to address a number of other questions. For instance, what types of skills will people, both young and old, require in order to contribute to the common good? What can education do to motivate people toward cooperation and harmony? What is our deepest, most heartfelt hope for a compassionate human race, and how can education help manifest this hope? Can Enlightenment rationality, individualism, and rigor share a berth with wisdom, universality, and compassion in the education of the future? Can education develop a humanity that is not just intelligent but wise? Can education, which is often viewed as a very conservative cultural institution, become a means for transforming values, not just transmitting them?

Books in this series:

- Contemplative Pedagogies for Transformative Teaching, Learning, and Being
- Apocalyptic Leadership in Education
- Critical Conversations about Religion
- Toward a Spiritual Research Paradigm
- Re-Envisioning Higher Education
- Ethics Education of Business Leaders
- Transformative Eco-Education for Human and Planetary Survival

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In our current systems of education, there is a trend toward compartmentalizing knowledge, standardizing assessments of learning, and focusing primarily on quantifiable and positivist forms of inquiry. Contemplative inquiry, on the other hand, takes us on a transformative pathway toward wisdom, morality, integrity, equanimity, and joy (Zajonc, 2009). These holistic learning practices are needed as a counterbalance to the over-emphasis on positivism that we see today. In addition to learning quantifiable information, we also need to learn to be calmer, wiser, kinder, and happier. This book aims to find and share various pathways leading to these ends.

This book will describe educational endeavors in various settings that use contemplative pedagogies to enable students to achieve deep learning, peace, tranquility, equanimity, and wisdom to gain new understanding about self and life, and to grow holistically.

Embodiment is a central concept in this book. We hope to highlight strategies for exploring internal wisdoms through engaging ourselves beyond simply the rational mind. Contemplative pedagogies such as meditation, yoga, tai chi, dance, arts, poetry, reflective writing and movements, can help students embody what they learn by integrating their body, heart, mind, and spirit.

CONTENTS:


SECTION II: PROGRAMS TRANSFORMING STUDENTS THROUGH CONTEMPLATIVE CURRICULA. Pedagogical Infusion of the Contemplative: Simon Fraser University's Contemplative Inquiry Master's of Education Program in Canada, Laurie Anderson, Muga Miyakawa, Meena Mangat, Charles Scott, and Heesoon Bai. Nourishing the Inner Life of the Educator, Robert London.


Mainstream educational leadership has lost much of its footing as a progressive practice. More managers than wisdom-keepers, educational leaders no longer have authority to critique the toxicities of the present and imagine alternative futures. In public schools and higher education, the neoliberal emphasis on measurable outcomes shrinks the radius of concern for what educational leaders are leading toward. There’s a planet missing in mainstream discourses of sustainability in educational leadership, and this book aims to resituate the work of teaching/leading in the place where we stand.

In a period of overlapping social/environmental crises, this book takes inspiration from Robert Jensen’s call for teachers and intellectual leaders to “go apocalyptic”, i.e., to face head-on the calamities that threaten our shared future on Earth. When leadership is situated within an apocalyptic context, we are called to reflect on educational injustice and unsustainability, while envisioning more hopeful futures. The work of apocalyptic leadership, though, isn’t all about future vision; it’s also about attending to what hurts and what heals in the present moment. Intended for aspiring and practicing educational leaders in both K-12 and higher education settings, as well as scholars in the fields of social justice and sustainability, this book begins mapping and traversing the affective, spiritual, pragmatic, and organizational geography of apocalyptic leadership. Such leadership holds dear the radical belief in our shared capacity to work gracefully with the painful awareness that tremendous challenges are inevitable, and yet, we have every opportunity for inching toward a more habitable future.

Through three descriptive case studies set in a large public university in the United States, Edwards explores the use of Intergroup Dialogue as a pedagogical model for interfaith dialogue. While the goal of this pedagogy is to increase student understanding of privilege, oppression, and social injustice pertaining to religious identity, the cases in this book demonstrate how and why social justice oriented interfaith dialogue can be easily derailed and, if so, may potentially have harmful implications for religious minorities. Accordingly, Edwards offers five necessary conditions for assuring that social justice oriented interfaith dialogue (which Intergroup Dialogue is intended to be) succeeds. By focusing on the unique perspectives of four particular student participants (all of whom have religious identities outside of the three dominant Abrahamic religions) Edwards also highlights the experiences of those from religious identity groups that are the most overlooked and under-represented in the discourse on interfaith dialogue.

acknowledging our integration of soul and spirit with the body and mind. Three additional aspects are useful to a spiritual research paradigm: axiology, methodology, and teleology. An axiology concerns what is valued, good, and ethical. A methodology is the appropriate approach to systematic inquiry. A fifth and less frequently mentioned aspect is teleology, an explanation of the goal or end (telos) to which new knowledge is applied, such as gaining wisdom and truth, touching the divine, increasing inner peace, exploring hidden dimensions, or improving society. This book takes the first step to develop such a research paradigm. We draw from world spiritual traditions as well as scholarship that has arisen from contemplative practices. We also attempt to build a bridge between science and spirituality. Spiritual research is not necessarily opposed to scientific research; in fact, each can shed light on the other.


Re-Envisioning Higher Education: Embodied Pathways to Wisdom and Social Transformation

Jing Lin, University of Maryland; Rebecca L. Oxford, University of Maryland; Edward J. Brantmeier, James Madison University


This book will expand the horizon of higher education, helping students, faculty and administrators to return to their roots and be in touch with their whole being. This book stresses that learning is much more than just accumulating knowledge and skills. Learning includes knowing ourselves—mind, body, and spirit. The learning of compassion, care, and service are as crucial or even more important in higher education in order for universities to address students’ individual needs and the society’s needs. Higher education must contribute to a better world. The book acknowledges that knowing not only comes from outside, but also comes from within. Wisdom is what guides students to be whole, true to themselves while learning. There are many ancient and modern approaches to gaining wisdom and wellness. This book talks about contemplative methods, such as meditation, qigong, yoga, arts, and dance, that help people gain wisdom and balance in their lives and enhance their ability to be reflective and transformative educators and learners.


Ethics Education of Business Leaders
Emotional Intelligence, Virtues, and Contemplative Learning

Tom E. Culham, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada


Events on Wall Street and Main Street reveal that some business leaders make dramatically unethical self-serving decisions that ignore the public interest. How can business schools educate future business leaders to make ethical decisions? Unfortunately, most business schools fail in teaching ethical decision-making. They erroneously assume that such decision-making is primarily conscious and reason-based, reflecting the western cultural orientation toward science and logic.

In this book, Thomas Culham cites neurological findings showing that unconscious processes and emotions play a much more significant role than reason in making ethical decisions. Culham urges business schools to teach a modified form of emotional intelligence, linked with research-supported contemplative practices from the great meditative traditions. This book details the author’s ethics curriculum and explains its successful application at the Sauder School of Business at the University of British Columbia. This fascinating, interdisciplinary, and highly practical curriculum integrates philosophy (virtue ethics), Daoist thinking, psychology, and neuroscience. This curriculum intends to transform the way business schools teach decision making. Such an effort might just transform the way we do business.


Transformative Eco-Education for Human and Planetary Survival

Jing Lin, University of Maryland; Rebecca L. Oxford, University of Maryland


Transformative eco-education is environmental education that is literally needed to transform and save our planet, especially during the global ecological crises of our present century. Such education demands inner transformation of many deeply rooted ideas, such as the following: the Earth exists merely to provide for human comfort; the extinction or reduction of other species does not matter; we are free to consume or destroy natural resources at will but are safe from destruction ourselves; and the Earth will continue to sustain us, even if we do not sustain the Earth. Unless these concepts are changed, we will increase global warming and add to the ruin of much of the Earth.

This book presents powerful ideas for transformative eco-education. At this time of ever-increasing ecological crisis, such education is needed more than ever before. We urge readers to use the ideas and activities in this book with your students, develop them further, and create new conceptions to share with other educators and students.
The chapters in this book provide key principles, of which the following are just a few. First, educators can and should prepare students for natural disasters. Second, stories, case studies, the arts, and hands-on environmental experience, all enriched by reflection and discussion, can offer profound learning about ecology. Third, education at all levels can benefit from a true ecological emphasis. Fourth, teachers must receive preparation in how to employ transformative eco-education. Fifth, Indigenous wisdom can offer important, holistic, spiritual paths to understanding and caring for nature, and other spiritual traditions also provide valid ways of comprehending humans as part of the universal web of existence. Sixth, transformative eco-education can be an antidote to not only environmental breakdown, but also to materialistic overconsumption and moral confusion. Seventh, we can only heal the Earth by also healing ourselves. If we heed these principles, together we can make transformative eco-education a blazing torch to light the path for the current century and beyond.

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