

---

# HOLISTIC EDUCATION

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NEWSLETTER

Winter 2007

American Educational Research Association

---

## Highlights of This Issue

Message from the President.....	2
Finding One's Voice Through Singing.....	3
Holistic Education at this Year's AERA Conference.....	4

---

## THE PURPOSE OF THE WE SIG:

**To facilitate and support Wholistic Education toward the well-being of individuals and society through practice, theory, and research focusing on the integration of intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions of experience.**

---

## WE SIG Executive Committee

Rodney Clarcken	President
John Freeman	Vice President
Nettie Campbell	Past President
Franzi Ng	Treasurer
David Marshak	Program Chair
Michelle Tichy	Program Co-Chair
Dan Rea	Secretary

**From the President  
Rodney Clarken**

We are experiencing an era of unprecedented change. The dramatic changes and challenges in individual and collective life during that last several decades resulting from the exponential growth of knowledge, communication, technology, information and discoveries is advancing at an ever accelerating pace. Old solutions to our new problems and realities are found wanting, even counter productive. All areas of human endeavor are being brought under question. Previous wisdom and practice becomes current misconceptions and anachronisms.

The worldview that development and education should be chiefly measured in materialistic and economic terms is beginning to be challenged. More holistic educational systems and approaches offer a much needed antidote to this excessively materialistic approach and its narrow conceptions of what learning is and how it should be measured.

Once freed from the limitations that our various traditions and ideologies have imposed upon us, we can begin to realize more of our potential for growth and development. We can begin to build the necessary relationships upon which a healthy community and world are based. We can begin to re write our futures. We can find the hope and inspiration for which our minds, hearts and wills yearn. We can become empowered to build that future, one day and one classroom at a time. Learning can take on a meaning and power that can transform our own minds, hearts and wills and those with whom we come into contact. In this way we can build a healthier world, by doing our part to make education better.

Our service as holistic educators can change the world, but only if we take the responsibility to do so. Our working together through AERA's Holistic Education Special Interest Group to increase our opportunities and capacities for knowing, loving and serving in schools is one solution.

I look forward to seeing you at the Holistic Education meeting and session in Chicago in April.

## Locating One's Voice Through Singing

By Kat Kleinerman

Now that I'm thick into my research for my doctoral dissertation, I thought I'd step back from it for a moment and share what I'm doing. Anyone who has any experience with singing might find it of interest. After 2 -1/2 years of taking classes, doing poster board assignments and writing papers for my myriad classes, I finally get to dig into my research question and explore my topic. Though my doctorate will be in Educational Leadership, I've focused several of my papers and projects on arts-in-education issues and my dissertation is no exception. My topic is an unusual one, which was one of my goals. I wanted to pick a topic that no one had yet looked at, and that combined my interests in singing, women in leadership, and education. After some floundering, I developed a question that jazzes me every time I think about it (which is often, considering I'm researching, analyzing and writing on a daily basis). The question at the heart of my research is "How might participation in singing foster leadership qualities in women?" My curiosity about the subject has its roots in my readings about leadership as well as in my experience as a singer and teacher of singing.

Without question, women in every age have fought for the right to be heard, to participate in the leadership of their societies, to have voice both metaphorically and literally. Indeed the issue of women's voices being undervalued or dismissed in many cultures and sectors makes provocative reading. The word "voice" and the concept of having voice are often used as metaphors for leadership. Voice is also used in reference to personal leadership development and development of one's identity.

Frequently, though, female voices are ignored or subverted, particularly as they age. Yet, for women to claim their equitable rights as leaders and meaning makers in this society, they must know themselves and make themselves heard. Several researchers have noted that the development of a sense of voice, mind and self are closely knit. Voice is linked to self, to one's identity.

The journey of locating one's voice through singing can be one of self-discovery and development of self-efficacy, empowering one to find new aspects of oneself that enlarge and transform one's identity. In my work as a singer and voice teacher, I have seen participation in singing make a difference in the self-confidence, sense of identity and presence of my female students; qualities that are the basis of leadership capabilities.

The purpose of my research will be for me to go beyond my personal discoveries to find out if my experiences are shared by others. Through the narrative inquiry method of life stories, shared by the participants in my research, I hope to identify and bring to light experiences of women who realized the power that issued from their voices when they freed them through singing.

When women find their voices, they find their identities. They discover their power. They express what they have to give. They begin to lead. I believe that singing is one powerful way through which women can gain their voices, make themselves heard and realize their vanguard potential. The possibilities inherent in this are manifold, for women and for society as a whole.

# **HOLISTIC EDUCATION SIG PROGRAM AT THE 2007 AERA ANNUAL MEETING**

The Holistic Education SIG will have a diverse and considerable program at the 2007 AERA Annual Meeting, thanks to the large number of excellent paper submissions that we received. We'll have 36 presenters in all as well as 8 discussants and 4 session chairs. Here is our program:

## **Monday, April 9**

### ***Holistic Education Paper Discussions (II) 4:05-4:45 PM; Hyatt, Grand Ballroom***

#### **Social-Emotional Learning in Secondary English Education: Implications for Preparing Preservice Teachers**

\*David L. Carlson (Hunter College)

*This paper considers how social-emotional learning (SEL) could impact the preparation of pre-service secondary English teachers. It demonstrates how SEL could be used in English methods courses by examining the three most commonly used English methods textbooks.*

#### **Teachers' Descriptions of the Negative Butterfly Effect: Holistic Implications for Understanding Classroom Dynamics**

\*Dan W. Rea (Georgia Southern University)

*The "butterfly effect" may be defined as a small change in the interactions of a complex system—such as a classroom with an interacting teacher and students—that rapidly evolves into a major change in the system; The butterfly effect may be characterized as negative or positive depending on whether the consequences of the effect are detrimental or beneficial for the functioning of the system. The proposed study is an exploratory multicase study that seeks to understand the complex classroom dynamics of the negative "butterfly effect" as reported by teachers. By better understanding teachers descriptions of the negative butterfly effect and contrasting them with descriptions of the positive butterfly effect, educators may learn how to holistically view classroom interactions and become sensitized to both the negative and positive potentialities of the butterfly effect.*

**The Artful Doctoral Journey: Riding the Crests, Troughs, and Choosing Tack**

\*Gail Thornton (University of Toronto), \*Vicki Kelly (University of Toronto)

*The purpose of this presentation is to examine the academic journeys of two holistic educators who each embrace the arts as ways of knowing through professional development. It is an exploration into the intellectual and spiritual dilemmas, evolving understandings and knowledges gained from these two educators and researchers on their individual doctoral thesis journeys. This presentation is based on two 2006 doctoral theses (T, 2006; K, 2006) that explore the holistic, contemplative and spiritual development of adult educators. These narrative inquiries have been written through the lenses of the visual arts, drama, music, movement and experiential education.*

**The Seven Liberal Arts in the 12th Century: A Preinstitutionalized Model of Holistic Education**

\*Elizabeth Seward (Independent Scholar)

*Education is a search for wholeness and understanding, which reappears throughout history in various forms. The goal of the medieval educational model of the Seven Liberal Arts was to realize and actualize the underlying unity of all knowledge by approaching Truth through seven different pathways, which all scholars mastered. Only through specialization and the complementarity of differing viewpoints could underlying commonality be realized. Pre-institutionalized education in the twelfth century was thus radically different from the prevailing model today, in which 'methodological fences' force scholars into ever-increasing specialization. The medieval approach to education as the path to understanding divine intelligence requires community and diversity; it is profoundly religious in the sense of re-ligio; and ecological in the Gaian sense.*

**What a Holistic Approach to Consciousness Reveals About Educational Quality**

\*Irina Yurievna Blekhman (Reynolds School District)

*This paper proposes a theoretical model of educational quality that is based on the notion of consciousness. Consciousness is approached holistically. Holistic approach to consciousness is chosen as a way to explicitly deal with subjectivity and the phenomenal side of consciousness, a possibility that is usually not afforded by functionalist and physicalist approaches to consciousness. This approach reveals such basic features of consciousness as intentionality, subjectivity, componentiality, and continuity. These basic features of consciousness are the basis of analyzing relationships between individuals and institutions. Principles of educational quality are formulated based on the notions that basic features of consciousness can be maintained in balance through the emphasis on the relational aspect of learning and on guidance instead of purposive action.*

**Tuesday, April 10*****Exploring New Insights in Holistic Education 4:05-5:35 PM;  
Intercontinental, Burnham, 8<sup>th</sup> floor*****Reimagining Social Justice in Education Through Learning for/From the Imagination**

\*Dalene M. Swanson (University of British Columbia)

*The purpose of this paper is to provide a conceptual argument for reconsidering some of the current thinking and research on the principles of learning in terms of their recontextualization in teacher education and educational practice in the classroom. The argument follows some of the work of Kieran Egan (2002, 2005) in Imaginative Education, and contests some of the underlying advocacies of pedagogic constructivism as not fully providing opportunities to address issues of social justice in the classroom, despite the rhetoric of its openness and inclusive power. The paper offers an alternative, more holistic approach to conceptualizing learning as a process of coming to know through the imagination as a starting point for all students, rather than through what the student 'already knows', which opens up a legitimizing space where students' 'knowing' might be differentially judged by teachers and administrators in accordance with the existing hegemonies of dominant ways of knowing and entrenched structural inequalities in society. Rather than providing liberation from the oppression of social difference discourses in education supported by cognitive categories, pedagogic constructivist ways of engaging in educational discourse and practice often serves to 'pedagogize' them.*

**Toward a Holistic Framework for Moral Education**

\*Rodney H. Clarcken (Northern Michigan University)

*A holistic framework for moral development based on the tripartite theory that considers cognitive, affective and conative domains and capacities is presented along with some guiding principles. The psychomotor domain is also considered in its role as a vehicle for manifesting moral behavior that can be also be used as part of a model for more holistic development.*

**Toward Better Balance in the Ecology of Consciousness**

\*Heesoon Bai (Simon Fraser University), \*Avraham A. Cohen (University of British Columbia)

*Defining holistic education as the cultivation of human beings who are moving towards wholeness, multi-dimensionality, and integration, we argue that the prevailing conception and practice of education privileges the rational dimension, neglects others, and hence is imbalanced. Psychologically the imbalance manifests in the predominance of the intentional, objectified consciousness of rationality that creates an instrumentalist mind-set and is responsible for prevalent exploitative attitudes and behavior. We contrast the instrumental mind-set with the intrinsic mind-set that perceives the world as sacred, which we argue is associated with attentional, non-dual consciousness that is central to holistic education today, and we offer ways to infuse the curriculum and pedagogic practice with the practice of attentional consciousness.*

**Holistic Education and Complexity Thinking**

\*Ton Jörg (University of Utrecht)

*In this paper I link complexity thinking with Holistic Education (HE). It is a challenge to show how HE may benefit of thinking in complexity. For me thinking in complexity is a way of humanizing our scientific thinking. It asks for a reform of our thinking. The rethinking of common concepts like interaction and complexity itself as a dynamic process has important effects on the concepts of learning and education. A link should be made between complexity theory, learning theory, and evolution theory. It may lead to a reinvention of learning and education. The learner's learning and development can be described as a complex process of coming into being with others. This process of learning is based on diversity and variety operating in interaction, like in evolution. The reinvention of learning and education, with its new language of learning, will simultaneously be the building stone for a new Complex Pedagogy, with its own concepts and generative metaphors, its generative principles and mechanisms for enabling the description and explanation of coming into being of learners as whole human beings*

**Chair:** Raji Swaminathan (University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee)

**Discussant:** Anna Pennell Oerther (Guilford College)

**Discussant:** Faith Wambura Ngunjiri (Indiana University - Purdue University - Fort Wayne)

## **Wednesday, April 11**

### ***Holistic Education Paper Discussions (I) 8:15-8:55 AM; Hyatt, Grand Ballroom***

#### **Creating a Holistic Learning Experience for Second-Language Learning**

\*Jun Feng Seet (Nanyang Technological University), \*Poh Hoon Teng (National Institution of Education)

*In Singapore, schools encourage holistic learning which would nurture in students competencies such as self-learning, self-development and social development. However, a pedagogical framework has yet to be developed to incorporate holistic learning in second-language learning—in this case, the Chinese language. Students' learning of Chinese language is primarily focused on the acquisition of code-breaking skills such as reading and writing. In long term, this may hinder students' development of competencies in their Chinese language. This paper will describe an ongoing study on using Philosophy for Children framework to cultivate a holistic learning experience for two primary school classes in their Chinese language lessons.*

#### **Creative Artists: Rabindranath Tagore's Perspective on Children**

\*Abdul Latif (Sacred Heart University)

*Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the 1913 Nobel laureate for literature from Calcutta, India, wrote biographies, autobiographies, short stories, dance dramas, novels, poems, songs, and essays. I analyze Tagore's concept of children in the light of his children's literature. In Tagore's poems, children can feel the pain and suffering of lower animals. They become adventurous, inventors, and social critics. They show the psychic power to "read" the adult's inner motives. Tagore opened his own school, in 1901, to foster emotional, social, cognitive, and artistic growth of students. In Tagore school, the emphasis of curricula was on literature, painting, music, dance, and drama. In 1921, the school became a university which still bears his legacy.*

#### **From Urban to Holistic Education: A Field-Based Attempt at Understanding**

\*Neil J. Liss (Willamette University)

*This paper presents the results of a partnership involving ten public school teachers and doctoral candidates and two professors of education to study and support each other's commitments to Holistic approaches to education. Working with various methodologies in gathering their data (including narrative inquiry; participant observations; survey methods; philosophical analysis; quantitative comparisons), this "professional learning community" interpreted their emerging findings intersubjectively through reflection and dialogue. The results indicate a need for personal transformation in dialectical process with pedagogical construction.*

### **Meditation: Paired-Comparison Scaling**

\*Barbara A. Larsen (University of Minnesota)

*The paired comparison scaling technique has been applied to 40 adult meditators. The data from expert and novice meditators will be analyzed with hierarchical linear modeling. It is expected that expert meditators will have higher consciousness and greater transcendence. The paired comparison method is discussed as well as implications for meditation in the public school setting.*

### **Organic Inquiry in the Classroom: Working With a Holistic Classroom Observation Protocol**

\*Laurie Schroeder (University of LaVerne), \*Lourdes Arguelles (Claremont Graduate University)

*Standardized high-stakes testing and accountability measures have resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum, teaching to the test, and a resulting “relatively shallow thinking” (Kohn, 2000, p.18) that has replaced “... creativity,... conceptual thinking, curiosity,... judgment,... nuance,... and ethical reflection” (Ayers, in Kohn, 2000, pp. 82-83). With the focus on quantitative results in the form of standardized test scores, meaningful alternative forms of classroom assessments are sorely needed. The \*\*\*\*\* Classroom Observation Protocol is an alternative assessment, contributing to “holistically complete and multidimensional” educational research (Schroeder, 2006, p.22). The goal of the protocol is to “facilitate the joint construction of meaning between the researcher(s), the participants, and the reader”, as well as “focus deep inquiry on the classroom, and better understand the complex interrelationships among all elements involved” (Schroeder, 2006, p.24).*

### ***Learning and Teaching in Holistic Education 2:15-3:45 PM; Intercontinental, Burnham, 8<sup>th</sup> floor***

#### **Drama as Integrative Inquiry: Exploring the Juncture of Role Play, Embodiment, and Reflection**

\*Dorothy - Lichtblau (OISE/University of Toronto)

*This paper explores how drama is a holistic, interpretive form of inquiry that leads to critical questions about the human condition, increased self-understanding, and greater integration of mind and body. From the standpoint that drama is profound research, I write about studying narrative through dramatic play to demonstrate how this methodology permits shifts in understanding by demanding the engagement of the whole being. I also discuss how dramatic play addresses issues on both personal and political levels. My overarching aim is to reveal how dialectical, embodied, creative methodologies, specifically ones related to performance, are powerful and valuable vehicles for facilitating personal and social development.*

**Experiencing “Awareness” in Higher Education Through the Shared Experience of Film**

\*Kathryne Roden (University of Oklahoma)

*This paper explores how the process of awareness can be created through the use of film in the classroom of university graduate students. It reports on a study of students' responses to the use of films as part of their classroom experience. Students' experiences of awareness are examined according to the three phases of awareness: Suspension of habitual thoughts and judgments, conversion or redirection of cognitive activity from external to internal thought, and letting-go of mental chatter toward an attitude of listening and receptivity. The data suggests that when film is effectively integrated with the course curriculum students become engaged in the cycle of awareness.*

**New Levels of Student Participatory Learning: A WikiText for the Introductory Course in Education**

\*Dwight W. Allen (Old Dominion University), \*Patrick O'Shea (Old Dominion University), \*Daniel E. Curry-Corcoran (Newport News Public Schools), \*Peter Bradley Baker (Old Dominion University)

*The presumption of teacher as exclusive knowledge expert is no longer accurate. New roles for both teachers and students need to be defined. The WikiText approach is one important possible new element in instruction. This paper will explore the success of one approach to giving students the opportunity to write their own textbook for the introductory course in education. Our initial student population will be approximately 250 students taking the introductory education course at Old Dominion University in the Fall of 2006, in both on-line and face to face formats. Will students be sufficiently motivated by the promise of electronic publication of their efforts to produce brief, credible articles for inclusion in an on-line WikiTextbook.*

**Chair:** Lee W. Digiovanni (Georgia College and State University)

**Discussant:** M. Jayne Fleener (Louisiana State University)

**Discussant:** Shijing Xu (OISE/University of Toronto)

***HOLISTIC EDUCATION SIG Business Meeting 6:15-7:45 PM;  
Marriott, Great America, 6<sup>th</sup> floor***

## **Thursday, April 12**

### ***Learning from Steiner, and Parallels in the Work of Froebel and Jung 10:35 AM-12:05 PM; Intercontinental, Sullivan, 8<sup>th</sup> floor***

#### **A Search for Wholeness: Parallels in the Work of Froebel and Jung**

\*Jerry Aldridge (University of Alabama - Birmingham), Kelly A. Russell (University of Alabama - Birmingham)

*Froebel is recognized as the father of kindergarten (Wolfe, 2002), but is it possible that Froebel had a significant influence on the field of analytical psychology? The ideas of Jung, who pioneered the field of analytical psychology, bear striking similarities to Froebel's ideas on education. While both Froebel and Jung were German-Swiss and both sons of protestant ministers, it is unlikely that these coincidences could explain the similarities in their work. Froebel died in 1852, and Jung was born in 1875. Still, it is possible that Jung attended a Froebelian kindergarten. This session considers three major similarities in their work. These include the theme of unity, the search for wholeness, and the transformational nature of symbols.*

#### **Learning From Steiner? The Relevance of Waldorf Education to Public Education (**

\*Ida Oberman (Springboard Schools), Richard E. Siegesmund (University of Georgia), Robert L. Anderson (WestEd)

*No abstract available.*

**Chair:** Douglas G. Blomberg (Institute For Christian Studies)

**Discussant:** Pamela C. Jewett (University of South Carolina)

**Discussant:** Michelle L. Tichy (St. Norbert College)

**Friday, April 13*****The Lives of Teachers, and Spirituality and the Whole Person  
12:25-1:55 PM; Intercontinental, Burnham, 8<sup>th</sup> floor*****Affirming and Sustaining Joy in the Life Work of National Teachers of the Year**

\*Delores D. Liston (Georgia Southern University), \*Camille Lowe Shirah (St. Simons Elementary School)

*Teachers enter the field of teaching with high ideals, but are confronted with challenging expectations. Many teachers experience burnout and succumb to professional disenchantment (Palmer, 1998). Others, however, find ways to sustain their commitments to education. We postulate that one key dimension perpetuating the sustenance of these commitments comes through joy. Delores Liston defines joy as the unifying experience of recognizing the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual interconnections of ourselves as human beings (Liston, 2001). This proposed presentation presents our search for joy through an exploration into the lives of three National Teachers of the Year. Stories are offered with the intent of helping teachers continue to travel through “humanly impossible days” (Ayers, 2004, p. 119) with dignity and self-worth.*

**Impact of High-Stakes Testing on the Emotional Well-Being of Teachers: A Visual Narrative**

\*Laurie Schroeder (University of LaVerne), \*Lourdes Arguelles (Claremont Graduate University), \*Alane K. Daugherty (California State Polytechnic University)

*The development of higher academic and accountability standards as required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act has raised the bar for educators and schools in the United States (Schroeder, 2006, p.64). The fear of exams and test situations is intensifying and becoming increasingly widespread in schools across the nation. Utilizing a holistic drawing assessment instrument, this study creates a visual narrative of teachers’ experience of high-stakes testing by eliciting and assessing images drawn by K-12 teachers and graduate students attending two university teacher education programs. The narrative contributes to a deeper understanding of how teachers are emotionally impacted by high-stakes testing, both in the classroom and in their lives outside of school.*

**A Theoretical Framework for Clarifying Teaching With a Spiritual Perspective and a Holistic Philosophy**

\*Robert H. London (California State University - San Bernardino)

*The goal of this research was to develop a theoretical framework for teaching in a secular setting in a way consistent with a spiritual perspective and a holistic philosophy. The specific objectives of the study were to (1) identify basic assumptions and principles consistent with a spiritual perspective and a holistic philosophy in the process of teaching in a secular setting; (2) clarify the consistency of the assumptions with a variety of spiritual traditions, the implications of the new sciences and some current psychological theories; and (3) clarify the assumptions with comments from experts in the field. The study builds on previous collaborative work and involves collaboration with appropriate experts, including international leaders in the field.*

**To Educate the Whole Person: A Case Study of the ARISE Foundation**

\*Michelle L. Tichy (St. Norbert College)

*When one looks at struggling schools, increases in school violence, and the increase in apathy among many students one is often inspired to question why this is occurring and what can be done about it. One small foundation in Florida has stepped up to societies call with a strong perspective on how to create real change in the lives of disenfranchised students. This study is a first step in unlocking the secrets to the success of the ARISE foundation and their ongoing dedication to creating real change through educating whole people for life. This study utilizes a variety of methods to illustrate the details of the ARISE life-skills program and their twenty years of success stories with students.*

**Chair:** Elena Lay Esparza (Texas State University)

**Discussant:** Sharon G. Solloway (Bloomsburg University)

**Discussant:** Bruce J. Novak (Northern Illinois University)