

EDUCATION 2.0

by

Leonard Ingram

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I certify that I have read and approved the content and presentation of this paper:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ruth Judy, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Henry Poon, Ph.D., Chair of Global Master's Programs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## Education 2.0

### Introduction

While I realize that much that is presented here will seem a far stretch from Transpersonal Psychology it is presented to help provide both the reader and myself with an understanding of the background and legacy of where we are today. In most of my interactions with professionals, educators, and students, I find there is a general lack of such knowledge. This includes computer technology, psychology, and education. However, I have found that all of these have collided into a booming new era of which I wish to provide a better understanding of what tomorrow may bring. Regrettably, this requires digging into the oft forgotten and overlooked past to foresee the trajectory of things to come. I realize, too, that much of what is presented here may seem disjointed as I present it piece by piece in an attempt to elucidate the components of the big picture I envision based up on the world around me. This includes the growth of modern technology, educational psychology, and my own understanding of all these things. This is also a study of my past and the world I grew up in, equally oblivious to the changing world around me. As such, this is an exploratory study of what has been and what may come to pass. I realize, too, that this is something new and unprecedented in the venues of academia and Transpersonal Psychology so I must ask that you please bear with me as I try to make my standing clear.

It is now the 21st century and we have entered into a new age of technological resources. In the 20th century we went from the invention of the radio to the television. In today's era, we have numerous digital devices from computers to phones that not only allow us to transmit messages instantly around the globe but can broadcast live video person to person as well. Social

communities are forming around the world between people thousands of miles apart who have never truly met face to face. Boundaries of race, color, sex, and religion are being eroded as people connect online.

These advances in technology are having an impact on other parts of our lives too. More people are working and going to school from home. People can access their e-mail, teleconference, and turn in their projects instantly without ever stepping out the front door. People are sharing their ideas and posting them publicly online in blogs, wikis, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, and Facebook. A worldly amount of information is readily searchable within mere seconds, all of which is constantly growing both in participants and development, like neighborhoods constantly growing as more and more people move in.

The means of education is growing, as well, with more and more schools appearing online as more of the currently traditional schools jump on the e-learning bus. With this growth and expansion comes new means of education and group interaction. In such settings both students and teachers are getting more involved in the educational process of learning as the Internet continues to grow and change.

### **A Brief History of the Internet: Past and Present**

The ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer) was the first digital computer created in 1946; it filled a large room, weighed more than 30 tons, and had over 18 thousand vacuum tubes. The ENIAC was designed by the Moore School of Electrical Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania for the U.S. Army. In 1969, ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), the predecessor of today's Internet was created for the Pentagon as a means of sharing data. It was a coordinated effort between the University of California/Los Angeles (UCLA), Stanford Research Institute's (SRI) Augmentation Research

Center, University of California/Santa Barbara (UCSB), and the University of Utah's Computer Science Department (Castells, 2010). This marked the birth of modern computer networking. It also marks the year of my birth.

In 1976, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak created the first desktop Apple Computer ("Steve Jobs," 2007). During this period, I was fortunate enough when I was about 5 years old to visit the students' computer lab at the local university where my father was an undergraduate in chemistry. He would take me with him and allow me to stand on a stool and insert FORTRAN punch cards, his homework, in the giant mainframe. While I did not get any real hands-on experience working with the computers, to me it was like going to Disneyland.

In 1981, IBM released the first personal computer (PC). In 1982, Commodore released the first low-budget home computer—the Commodore 64 (C64). The C64 was my first computer on which I honed my early programming skills. The 1980s saw the rise of Microsoft Disk Operating System (MS-DOS) as it became prevalent in schools and public libraries. It also was the backbone for Microsoft Windows through and including Windows 95 until the release of Windows 98 on June 25, 1998 (A History of Windows, 2011) which, coincidentally enough, was also my birthday and the day I first moved to Seattle, Washington. I eventually found myself outsourced through the company I worked for doing Microsoft hardware technical support and troubleshooting (e.g., mouse, keyboards, joysticks, speakers, and a variety of toys long forgotten). This included whatever personal computer (PC) and non-PC (e.g., Apple Mac) with whatever operating system (including non-Windows operating systems such as Mac or Linux) the customer calling was trying to use. This also was the time of the great "Net boom" of the late 1990s.

Throughout the 1980s, there was also a significant growth in the number of computers and computer courses outside of the higher academic and military circles into the U.S. public school system providing computer access to more and more children. Today the idea of a school without computers is almost unthinkable when most of the U.S. population has some form of computer at home whether in the form of a PC or Mac, game console, or smartphone.

Admittedly, however, I was fortunate that I did not have to wait until the 1980s for my first introduction to computers. By that time, I was already gaining experience with basic programming using the mainframes and dumb terminals of the mid-to-late 1970s that, in time, were mostly replaced by the prototypes of today's PCs.

My father had also bought me my first home computer, the C64, when I was in junior high school. In 1995, I received my first PC which included MS-DOS, Windows 3.1, and an upgrade in the mail for the (then) recently released Windows 95. This also marked my introduction to the modern Internet and web development with hopes and dreams of becoming a multimedia artist. Given my familiarity and general knack with computers, compared to the average consumer, such dreams seemed lost and were soon replaced by more lucrative jobs performing technical support and network administration. This too, in time, was given up as the computer industry continues to grow with more and more of today's children growing up with computers in their households and schools.

From the radios and walkie-talkies of the early 20th century to television and cell phones in the late 20th century to today's internet interaction through desktops, laptops, personal digital assistant (PDA), and smartphones, technology continues to grow and expand as computers and telecommunications continue to merge and provide easier and faster accessibility among users. With this continued growth and obtainability came new means and platforms with which to

communicate and share information—not just voice and video but other media such as interactive documents, databases, and music.

The term *hypertext* was originally coined in 1965 by Ted Nelson while working as a graduate student at Harvard University (“Ted Nelson,” 2011, para. 1). In 1967, Nelson and Andries van Dam (1996) developed the Hypertext Editing System (HES) at Brown University as a database system. On August 6, 1991, Sir Timothy John “Tim” Berners Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, launched the first online website (“BBC History: Tim Berners Lee,” 2011). In 1993, Glenn Jones founded the first online university—Jones International University (JUI) (“Glenn R. Jones,” 2011). In the 20 years since the launch of the first website, the number of domain or hostnames has escalated from Berners Lee’s one website and approximately 16 million internet users to nearly 463 million hostnames (“December 2011 Web,” 2011) with slightly over 2 billion users or 30.2% of the world’s population (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2011).

While gaining recent popularity in the past decade the term *Web 2.0* was coined in by Darcy DiNucci in 1999:

The Web we know now, which loads into a browser window in essentially static screenfuls, is only an embryo of the Web to come. The first glimmerings of Web 2.0 are beginning to appear, and we are just starting to see how that embryo might develop. . . . The Web will be understood not as screenfuls of text and graphics but as a transport mechanism, the ether through which interactivity happens. ( p. 32)

This allows employers and employees in the enterprise environment and students and instructors in the educational environment to build and share data and resources with each other. In order to access an online environment or resource, it is prerequisite that an individual has online access whether through a computer, laptop, or other compatible mobile device.

All of this technological development has resulted in a new online medium of three-dimensional (3D) simulation worlds as found in many massively multiplayer online games



(MMOG) often provide fantasy or science-fiction environments. Open Simulation (OpenSim) is an open source 3D platform that has gained popularity in many universities throughout the world as a means of providing custom e-learning and 3D simulation environments for students dealing with subjects ranging from art to medicine. In you are interested in learning more about OpenSim, you may go to the National Center for Simulation in Rehabilitation Research website (NCSRR; <http://opensim.stanford.edu/>), and schools may register at the Educational Institutions in Opensim website (Opensim Edu Directory, 2011).

### **Education 1.0: Old School**

The Internet obviously has its roots in academia and has come a long way in recent years. Web pages are no longer simple text, links, and basic search engines of the 1990s; they now carry rich media content with static and real-time streaming video, online chat, collaborative Wikis, tweets, blogs, games as well as interactive objects, media, and more. Facebook, for example, now has more members than many small countries with over 500 million active users and over 250 million users accessing it via mobile devices such as pocket PC or cell phones (“Facebook statistics,” 2011).

Today’s educational system, however, has made little advance from the educational methods of the 19th and 20th centuries with the instructor standing in front of the class lecturing while the students sit silently taking notes, occasionally raising a hand if a question occurs, but generally with minimal open discussion of the material. My teachers often grew frustrated with me as I would sit in class staring out the windows, daydreaming.

Testing is still largely based on the rote memorization of materials and instruction requiring little if any actual comprehension, knowledge, or understanding of application in real-life scenarios. Regrettably, for many people (myself included) memory is largely visually

oriented and not readily given to rote textbook recitation. As a result, I did not always fair well on exams. With online presentations, it becomes easier to provide audio, pictorial, and video examples of the course work. Three-dimensional virtual-learning environments (VLE) add the ability to provide 3D representations and simulations which can also be made group interactive. This also gives the instructor the opportunity to work more creatively with the students both in demonstration and interactively as part of the learning process whether one-on-one or in groups. This also gives the student the opportunity to experiment with and demonstrate knowledge of the material allowing for feedback and assistance from both the instructor and peers. Such online collaboration allows for students to incrementally build upon prior developments; it allows for a synergetic combination of small insights contributing to a larger success, frequent interactions between teams, multiple discoveries, and a shared ownership of the resulting product (Sawyer, 2007).

Today's educational system in the United States still seems largely based on a factory-based processing of students ending with a stamp of approval upon the completion of minimal requirements and the passing of standardized tests. Most classes are still held in a standard room with up to 30 students or in larger auditoriums (such as on college campuses) with anywhere from 50 to 150 students or more. The teacher commonly monologues (with the possible aid of slideshows or videos) and the students are expected to raise their hands if necessary but to otherwise remain silent unless called upon. This is not to say that the understanding of the cognitive processes of learning, the varieties of learning styles, and the ways of knowing have not been researched—they have. Four such examples can be seen from the outlines provided by Felder (1996):

- *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)* of “extroverts, introverts, thinkers, and judgers”;
- *Kolb’s Learning Style Model* of Type 1—concrete/reflective, Type 2—abstract/reflective, Type 3—abstract/active, and Type 4—concrete/active;
- *Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI)* of “*Quadrant A* (left brain, cerebral)—logical, analytical, quantitative, factual, critical; *Quadrant B* (left brain, limbic)—sequential, organized, planned, detailed, structured; *Quadrant C* (right brain, limbic)—emotional, interpersonal, sensory, kinesthetic, symbolic; and *Quadrant D* (right brain, cerebral)—visual, holistic, innovative;” and the
- *Felder-Silverman Learning Style Model* including “*sensing learners* (concrete, practical, oriented toward facts and procedures) or *intuitive learners* (conceptual, innovative, oriented toward theories and meanings), *visual learners* (prefer visual representations of presented material—pictures, diagrams, flow charts), *verbal learners* (prefer written and spoken explanations), *inductive learners* (prefer presentations that proceed from the specific to the general), or *deductive learners* (prefer presentations that go from the general to the specific), *active learners* (learn by trying things out, working with others), or *reflective learners* (learn by thinking things through, working alone), *sequential learners* (linear, orderly, learn in small incremental steps), or *global learners* (holistic, systems thinkers, learn in large leaps)” (Felder, 1996, pp. 18-20).

#### **Four Constructs of Learning Theory**

As stated previously, there has been nearly a century of studies in the psychology of learning theory. I realize, too, that the following terms and concepts presented here can be a bit

confusing to those who are unfamiliar with technical terms; however, I have made an effort to simplify the terms and definitions presented. These concepts are crucial in understanding learning theory and the changes now available in education (as presented herein) also offer an excellent platform to apply these terms.

Utilizing *constructionism* theories of learning help provide students the opportunity to learn by giving them the opportunity to actively seek and find answers for themselves. The base assumption is that students learn best by finding, or “fishing” for themselves, the specific knowledge they need in a “morally, psychologically, materially, and intellectually supportive environment” (Papert, 1993, p. 139).

Seymour Papert’s theory of constructionism in education is based on Jean Piaget’s *constructivism* theories of learning by doing, researching, and exploring the possibilities of that which is to be learned rather than merely repeating verbatim what was in the learning materials presented (Piaget, 1973). Thus, learning is acquired through interactive exercises and in the development of knowledge and skills rather than just a test of rote memory.

Jerome Bruner’s constructivist theory emphasizes that building upon a student’s prior knowledge provides greater personal meaning to the material and promotes experience-based rather than rote-based learning (Bruner, 1977). By making it more personally relevant, the material takes on more personal meaning and becomes more memorable.

Lev Vygotsky’s theories of *social constructivism* support the idea that students and instructors who share their ideas in a social environment will build and explore topics as a collective group and this will result in a wider range of ideas than when pursuing such tasks alone (Ozer, 2004). The more involved the endeavor the more evolved the idea, the more embedded the learning experience. The essence of these theories is to learn by constructing, doing, and sharing in the

learning process of acquiring, understanding, and comprehending. I have assembled a list here to help clarify the terms (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Four Constructs of Learning Theory*

Theory	Description	Source
Constructivism	“In short, the basic principle of active methods will have to draw its inspiration from the history of science and may be expressed as follows: to understand is to discover, or reconstruct by rediscovery, and such conditions must be complied with if in the future individuals are to be formed who are capable of production and creativity and not simply repetition.”	(Piaget, 1973, p. 20, para. 2)
Constructionism	Assumes that students will learn best by searching and finding for themselves the specific knowledge needed in a “morally, psychologically, materially, and intellectually supportive” environment.	(Papert, 1993, p. 139, para. 1)
Constructivist	“The best way to create interest in a subject is to render it worth knowing, which means to make the knowledge gained usable in one's thinking beyond the situation in which the learning has occurred . . . knowledge one has acquired without sufficient structure to tie it together is knowledge that is likely to be forgotten.”	(Bruner, 1977, p. 31, para. 1)
Social constructivism	“Constructivist learning environments promote the learner to gather, filter, analyze, and reflect on the information provided and to comment on this knowledge so that it will result in individualized comprehension and private learning. This type of group learning will reduce the dissemination of false data, prejudice, and atrocities among diverse groups and help build a moral, scientific, information society in the new millennium.”	(Ozer, 2004, para. 16)

## Action Research and Beyond

As Reason and Bradbury (2001) noted the term *action research* had been used so many times that it has essentially lost its original meaning. There are now countless models in a wide range of fields implementing some variation of these basic stages and ideas in a variety of settings such as business, scientific research, and education.

Blum (1955) provides a simple definition of the two essential stages of action research as starting with a diagnostic stage where “the problem is being analyzed and hypotheses are being developed” (p. 1) followed by a therapeutic stage where “the hypotheses are tested by a consciously directed change experiment, preferably in a social ‘life’ situation” (p. 1). McNiff (2002) defines action research as

A practical way of looking at your own work to check that it is as you would like it to be. Because action research is done by you, the practitioner, it is often referred to as practitioner-based research; and because it involves you thinking about and reflecting on your work, it can also be called a form of self-reflective practice. (p. 6)

Barton, Stephens, and Haslett (2009) list seven requirements that all methodologies claiming to be action research should follow:

1. The pursuit of social value framed within an open systems/socio-cological/ contextualist worldview.
2. Logical processes that can be easily identified with abductive, deductive, and inductive modes of inference.
3. Team processes that adopt multiple perspectives and pluralist values both as a hedge against fallible behavior and as a platform for ethical practice.
4. Critical evaluation techniques that include single, double, and triple loop learning.
5. An operational basis in dialectic learning as a result, for example, of making critical comparisons between different systemic frames or perspectives.

6. Monitoring processes within action research cycles that inform (minor) corrections that can be made and recorded.
7. The possibility of considering each stage in the recursive terms of action research (Barton et al., 2009, p. 485).

### **Education 2.0: New School**

Along with this advent of a new era of web development also comes new means of providing user interactions and data online for administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Such online learning tools may be found in what is sometimes termed a content, course, or course-management system (CMS) or learning-management system (LMS) as a means of providing distance education (“Course Management Software,” 2011).

The LMS design emphasizes the major tenets of Jean Piaget, Seymour Papert, Jerome Bruner, and Lev Vygotsky’s theories of learning including adaptation through the application of constructionism, constructivists, constructivism, and social constructivism with social interaction and exploratory learning through assimilation and accommodation within the LMS environment (Kanuka & Conrad, 2003; Stevens, Wineburg, & Bell, 2005). This provides an environment where fellow students and instructors collaborate together to work on externalized concepts online. Application of DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control), as part of the learning process, helps people to develop critical thinking skills in both academic and scientific research as well as in life. Such online design elements may include downloadable and interactive course materials such as assignments, calendars, e-mail, flashcards, trainers, quizzes, forums, audio, video, chat, whiteboards, and 3D simulations.



## **Nursing School Case Example**

This educational experience began with the premise that the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX) pass rate had fallen below the 80% mark in the school where this e-learning pilot program was applied and tested. Each nursing school in the state of Texas must maintain an 80% pass rate at the end of the calendar year. Failure to do so begins a process of working with the board to evaluate the curriculum and teaching methods.

At the time Estella Boyes (a registered nurse) had recently taken an instructor's role at a nursing school, the school's pass rate was 66.5%. We discussed various possibilities for implementing a pilot e-learning program which was started in January 2011. After about 7 months of implementing the e-learning tutoring program along with various onsite changes (discussed below), the NCLEX test average was raised to 88.2% (E. Boyes, personal communication, August, 3, 2011).

The instructors, with the approval of the program director, began to reevaluate the way the material was being taught. While the sequence of the courses could not be changed, the methods of teaching these courses could be modified. One of the issues identified early on was that there was a large quantity of material that needed to be covered in a short time. One of the solutions was to include the material in the regularly scheduled tutoring sessions. Another barrier to learning, in this situation, included the time of the tutoring sessions. Since the school attracts adult learners with the responsibilities of family and work, not all of the students could make the tutoring times. It was at this point that online tutoring was introduced as part of the changes implemented to give the students more opportunities for learning. These opportunities also included scheduled lab times to improve clinical skills and added teaching elements to the clinical lab portion to enhance the didactic portion of that week's training.

The first challenge was to be able to get every student enrolled on the website. Not all students had the opportunity to utilize technology prior to this situation. The students had to be taught how to access their school e-mail account, how to log on to the website, and how to navigate the website. This often leads to much frustration on the part of the new students as well as many errors and calls for technical support as students acclimate to a new technological environment.

In addition, the question had been raised asking if a mindfulness-based training program for the student nurses could be created to help them with test anxiety and school-related stress. Factors pertaining to such a program were discussed and many of them were implemented with the students over the summer. A new educational platform of 3D simulations has recently been brought to our attention. With the agreement of Estella Boyes (as supervisor) and Ruth Judy (my ITP mentor), I was able to develop an interactive mindfulness-based course and 3D simulation as part of my practicum ITP. This included introductory documentation about mindfulness as well as directions and a video on yoga and meditation to assist the students in becoming more in tune with their minds and bodies. In addition, a daily journal was used to help the students become more mindful of their thoughts and reactions in daily events.

I must confess that OpenSim, an open-source 3D simulation server, is still new to me and was only brought to my attention by Estella Boyes. She has provided me with much support throughout this project for which I owe her a great deal of gratitude. I must confess, too, that as a child I often dreamt of becoming a virtual-reality programmer as in the movie TRON (Miller, Kushner, Ellenshaw, & Lisberger, 1982) as well as a game programmer. However, I had given up such dreams much as I had given up forsaken dreams of becoming a multimedia artist in favor of being paid to work on computer maintenance and networking. In fact, when I returned to

college in 2005 to pursue a career in psychology, having found the college of my dreams in the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP) and its curriculum of transpersonal psychology. I had believed myself to be retired from computers or, at least, as much as one can be in this computer-driven age.

### **Where is Maslow?**

Computers seem to provide a means of fulfillment for many people's *deficiency needs* (i.e., physiological—food, water, sex; safety—physiological, sociological, or environmental; love—including affection and belongingness, and self-esteem) rather than their *beingness needs* (i.e., self-actualization) as per Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943, 1954/1970).

Technology has provided the means of not only acquiring jobs and money but of online socialization and fraternization. There is a significant interest from many universities and researchers in 3D simulations; however, currently the majority of the 3D worlds online are dedicated either to massive multiplayer gaming or virtual dating (including virtual sex). Three-dimensional simulations provide a means for profiting monetarily whether to the gamers or, more likely, to those hosting or developing these environments.

The use and possible abuse of the Internet has also given rise to the debate of whether *internet addiction* should be included in the Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V; Pies, 2009). I, myself, have often felt something like a drug dealer when I have fixed computer or networking issues for gamers who I know will sit for days on end, plugged in, playing their life away, paying little or no attention to the world around them. I even know one person who claims that computers will bring the end of humanity and spiritual development as more and more people get "plugged into" this new addictive pastime.

While I may not agree entirely with this assessment regarding the end of humanity I do see it as a threat to spiritual growth and to the fulfillment of “beingness” needs. There are many who do use computers as a means of escape from facing real-world problems (i.e., deficiency needs) which might contribute to internet addiction. Health problems can also be seen as another symptom of this behavior. Such sedentary lifestyle of spending too much time sitting at the computer may give rise to a potentially fatal pulmonary embolism due to a blood clot in the leg, referred to as the condition of *eThrombosis* (Kent, 2003). However, it might be said that people have been out of touch with themselves long before the advent of modern technology given the lack of transpersonal awareness whether in terms of general or academic knowledge or in terms of experience. Evidence of this might also be seen in the proliferation of the profession of psychiatry, number of patients, and psychiatric drugs in the past century (Whitaker, 2005).

Personally, I would not have acquired an interest or knowledge of transpersonal psychology if not for first-hand experiences throughout my life experiences (no matter how sporadic or infrequent) of a deeper sense of self beyond my daily ego giving rise to questions that no one I knew could answer for me. In a survey of professionals in the field by Lajoie and Shapiro, the following definition was derived: “Transpersonal Psychology is concerned with the study of humanity’s highest potential and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent experiences” (as cited in Frager & Fadiman, 2005, p. 363).

Some of the benefits of the Internet are that thousands of years of ancient texts, modern research, professionals who are familiar with these things, as well as other people with similar experiences and questions have all come together online. This would have been a boon to me as a child, giving myself and my parents the means and opportunity to find answers to our questions as well as supportive groups online. This has the added benefit that it is much easier for such

groups to maintain an online presence, whether through forums or virtual worlds, than to open and maintain an actual local community center that may not be accessible to all and is often faced with both financial burdens and possible closure. Another advantage of an online resource is that it often allows anonymous access without fear of reprisal or backlash which might result in loss of family, friends, and/or jobs within less-tolerant communities.

Aside from the integration of technology with education, other benefits of online education include the integration of the aforementioned psychological constructs (i.e., constructionism, constructivist, constructivism, and social constructivism). These constructs can be learned in an online environment that not only encourages them but by the very nature of the multiuser setting enforces their application. While much of the psychological research in education and learning is decades old it has been easily ignored as instructors followed step in the widely accepted habits and traditions of old.

The new online learning environment encourages interaction by simple proxy of being an online participant. The instructor becomes more than a mere lecturer to a presumably quiet class of warm bodies. Instead, the instructor can teach in a fully interactive environment as part the learning process with the students. Three-dimensional simulations also provide the opportunity for students to learn and play with learning materials in safe, virtual environments. For example, medical students attending to patients in life-threatening scenarios, that are generally available only in real-life situations, may not always prove best for the patient. In the case of a real-world scenario, a student's mistake might result in a horde of lawsuits against the student, teachers, school, and clinic or hospital.

This still leaves the question of how to provide transpersonal training online. I applaud websites such as Internet Sacred Texts Archive (<http://www.sacred-texts.com>) which provide

thousands of sacred texts from different cultures from around the world many of which I had spent countless years trying to find in bookstores and libraries as well as many tomes of which I had no prior knowledge. As a student (and soon to be graduate) of ITP, I also applaud its endeavors into the realm of global online education. ITP has provided access to students around the world who might not otherwise have means to such academic resources and training. This includes an outstanding curriculum which presents a full-spectrum psychology of the mind. The coursework also encourages growth in mindfulness, self-awareness, and self-actualization in the students, incorporating a series of readings and exercises with a wide range of cultural views and influences. Additionally, there are a growing number of other organizations online that also provide some measure of transpersonal education and learning resources, whether through online texts or tutorials. There is also a new trend in higher education including Positive Psychology, medical schools, and the U.S. military to include mindfulness training as part of the curriculum (Azar, 2011). This trend is the result of many years of research.

One of the more prevalent researchers today is Jon Kabat-Zinn. Kabat-Zinn has provided successful mindfulness-based clinical research in medical and penitentiary environments with much success. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) has also been used in the business environment where many companies have brought in a trainer for their employees' benefit to help with work-related stress (Kabat-Zinn, 1991). There are similar works of mind-body exercises (backed with scientific studies) which have been incorporated into mindfulness programs and exercises for the nursing students; for example: *Body and Earth: An Experiential Guide* (Olsen, 2009) and *Discovering the Body's Wisdom* (Knaster, 1996).

## About Me

I am sure the reader is still wondering where I fit into all of this and what it has to do with my transpersonal development. To understand that it helps to know that I frequently work on the “black box” principle of data in/data out with large amounts of data that often seem disconnected. This generally involves me “consuming” large amounts of data in a relatively short time, digesting and processing it typically on a subconscious level until it is ready and reemerges to the conscious level. In terms of art, this would be like a rapid but complete study of the art of Pablo Picasso, Leonardo da Vinci, and Salvador Dali or the music of Mozart, Jimi Hendrix, and Johnny Cash. These are then allowed to mix, meld, and fuse together subconsciously to form some new manifestation of art or music that one day erupts in a moment of spontaneous creativity. I often compare the process to taking a puzzle box full of unconnected pieces, shaking it up, and then throwing it open to reveal a completed picture. In this case, it is the fusion of modern technology with educational psychology in order to provide a meaningful, functional environment or medium for transpersonal e-learning; granted, the basic tenets should work in any form of education and have been shown to do so.

In spite of ITP’s presence for over 25 years or the hundreds if not thousands of texts derived from teachers throughout the ages, transpersonal psychology and the related practices such as mindfulness are, at best, new to today’s educational curriculum. In short, neither “transpersonal” nor “mindfulness” are common household or academic terms or concepts. This is something that has plagued me my entire life even before I became familiar with such terms myself.

I have frequently found, in my attempts to reach out and communicate with others about such matters, that such communication is frequently laden with culture-bound misinformation,

Hollywood hype derived from blockbuster movies with more interest in box-office sales than in fact. I also find it sad and disappointing that even in schools, where the professors include Maslow's hierarchy of needs as part of their curriculum, little mention is made of the peak of the hierarchy of beingness-needs and self-actualization or even knowledge of transpersonal psychology as the fourth force of psychology with psychoanalysis, behaviorism, and humanism being the first three (Maslow, 1969). I have even read of cognitive psychology as the fourth force with no reference to transpersonal psychology whatsoever—not even a footnote.

This lack of knowledge and awareness is not only limited to those who have no interest but includes many I have met whose primary source of information is limited to what is available to them through local resources. These resources are frequently lacking and heavily engrossed in regional myths, superstition, and other folklore that are very much out of date (hundreds if not thousands of years in most cases). As an example, depending on the region, the subject of some of my talks, writings, and experiences may find me labeled variously as a saint, prophet, mystic, psychic, sorcerer, mage, heretic, or even demon spawn. Personally, I do not see myself as any of these—I am just another human being on this planet trying to discover and become the best me I can be.

I have encountered numerous others who have faced such culture-bound labeling and have accepted such labeling due to their own culture-bound biases in understanding and through lack of relevant information or alternative explanation. I have also seen where alternative explanations were rejected because they did not fit in with the individual's cultural paradigm or worldviews as derived from his or her personal *socialization* and *enculturation*. Socialization is “the process by which we learn and internalize the rules and patterns of the society in which we live” (Matsumoto & Juang, 2004, p. 60) and enculturation is “the process in which youngsters



learn and adopt the ways and manners of their culture” (p. 60). Such labeling and self-identification can stunt both the personal and the transpersonal development of the individual by limiting one’s ideas and definition of self rather than allowing one to explore all the possibilities of what may be. In essence this follows the old adage of you will not know if you do not try, but if you believe you cannot and never try then you will never know.

In OpenSim, and similar online worlds, we find that users creates an avatar as a manifestation and expression of how they wish to be or how they wish to be seen by others. This, in essence, becomes a living metaphor of being analogous to Carl Jung’s concept of *persona* as the mask worn and presented to others (and often erroneously tied to self-identity and Ego as conscious mind as well) and *Self* as the totality of one’s psyche including both the conscious and subconscious. It also provides a safe environment for users to express and explore inner aspects of their self (or Self) that might otherwise remain dormant and hidden from public eyes and even one’s own eyes (Jung, 1969, pp. 3-41).

It is true that many may seek to escape through their avatars and online games from the troubles of the real world as many traditions maintain that we, as human avatars of the gods, have done. However, perhaps it is through this modern myth and metaphor that such truths of self and who we really are may come to light in the modern world.

Yeats, in *A Vision*, speaks of the two masks that life wears. The first is the primary mask that society has put upon you—the technique of life. But in adolescence the individual has a sense of the potentiality within himself that has to throw off that mask and find what Yeats calls “the antithetical mask”—the mask contrary to that of society. And then comes that struggle so characteristic of youth in our society. In the traditional society, you are not allowed to follow the antithetical; the primary is there like a cookie-mold on you. But here comes this struggle. Now, if the family or society opposes that, it becomes rather fierce. But with a gradual yielding and attention, the young person can learn his own possibilities and what they can do for him. This is the proper way. (Campbell, 1988, p. 74)

On a more personal note, let me state that it should be understood that all of the data here pertaining to modern technology, educational psychology, e-learning, and even transpersonal psychology, has become more integrated into a unified whole within my mind only through my continued studies and practices. This integration has, thus, shaped both me and my future as part of my lifelong process of trying to puzzle things out and piece them together. For once I finally feel that my life is coming together and becoming more integrated thanks, in large part, to the people at ITP and the practicum I have stumbled into with the assistance of Estella Boyes.

Another boon for me derived from all this is that I have finally found a place where I can apply all of the skills and education that I have acquired throughout life including art, music, writing, math, science, computers, and psychology (including psychoanalytic, behavioral, humanistic, transpersonal, and even cognitive theories). My dreams of becoming a multimedia artist have been resurrected and given a place to manifest and I wish to provide others the same opportunity. I also see this as an excellent opportunity to provide others the opportunity to explore themselves in an environment that is less prohibitive than real-world society often is.

This new era of technology has not only presented us with a new medium of artistic, academic, and scientific communication, creation, and exploration but a brave new world where we can don masks or bare all to the world as we see fit giving us a new means of self-expression and self-exploration. Admittedly, this brave new world we live in is very much still in its infancy and may require much cultivation and nurturing to become all that it can be; however, it is only through such ambition and endeavors that it may become so. This is part of the future I see before me as both technological guru and shaman. In so doing and by setting an example perhaps others may see what can be done, be inspired by such ideas, and build upon them to create an even grander future than even I can imagine. Perhaps, too, by reaching within and finding their

own inner truths they may be able to bring to light and acquire a new sense and understanding of Self.

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Transpersonal Integration Paper Submitted In partial fulfillment of the requirements For the degree of Master of Transpersonal Studies. Institute of Transpersonal Psychology Palo Alto, California 10/01/2009. Approved by: \_\_Ruth Judy, Ph.D Date. \_\_Henry Poon, Ph.D, Chair, Global Program Date. Table of Contents. Transpersonal psychology, or spiritual psychology, is a sub-field or school of psychology that integrates the spiritual and transcendent aspects of the human experience with the framework of modern psychology. The transpersonal is defined as "experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos". It has also been defined as "development beyond conventional, personal or individual levels". Integral and Transpersonal Psychology Conference scheduled on December 20-21, 2021 in December 2021 in Istanbul is for the researchers, scientists, scholars, engineers, academic, scientific and university practitioners to present research activities that might want to attend events, meetings, seminars, congresses, workshops, summit, and symposiums. All submitted conference papers will be blind peer reviewed by three competent reviewers. The peer-reviewed conference proceedings are indexed in the Open Science Index, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, Zenedo, OpenAIRE, BASE, WorldCAT, Sherpa/RoMEO, and other index databases. Impact Factor Indicators. ICITP 2021 has teamed up with the Special Journal Issue on Integral and Transpersonal Psychology. Integrating two theses of Transpersonal Integration Papers submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Transpersonal Psychology, dual specialization, Creativity and Innovation, and Spiritual Psychology. Sofia University, Palo Alto, California, February 21, 2015. See publication. Dark Night of the Soul: Traveling With Our Shadow by Natika Shewry Transpersonal Integration Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Transpersonal Psychology, Viking Garb. Viking Costume Viking S. Viking Halloween Costume and Ship I made from wrapping paper. The ores are a brown bag and the tubes from the wrapping paper. Shields were cardboard and wrapping paper. My Father's World. Story Of The World.