

Education for harmony; insights from Indian thinkers and practitioners

Seminar for RJMCEI IIMA

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Education, 12 (+2) long years at school

That we want to put everyone through.
Why do we even care? What is the purpose?

A child “doesn’t know anything” and a school will educate him,
To make money, prepare him for the future;
To make an economic contribution, create a good citizens.

But is education just that; an instrument for future success?
Do we even know what the future would be like?
Did we know about the financial crisis, Brexit or covid?
In an ever-changing world change seems to be the only constant

And what about the inherent value of education?
The intrinsic value of the process of learning;
The value of developing multifaceted perspectives;
The intrinsic value in appreciating beauty around us;
The value in understanding one’s ownself.

Perhaps an education that frees one,
Opens the head heart and hands;
To appreciate rather than just accept diversity;
To find beauty in understanding “others” rather than just tolerate “others”;
To develop values of unity kindness empathy gratitude and compassion;
Might make the 12 long years value-able.

Policy maker- Po
Teacher- T
Parent- Pa
Student- S



Limitations of modern education systems

Modern education systems and their practices were borne in the light of the industrial revolution and have been criticized by several Indian thinkers (Gandhi, 1968; Krishnamurti, 2000; Tagore, 1929) for their

- top-down implementation of colonial/developmental agenda (Freire, 2005);
- instrumental and reductive vision for education; narrow emphasis on functional literacy and numeracy;
- failure to stimulate the critical engagement and the cultivating empathy;
- It is only one of the means whereby men and women can be educated.
- absence of an emancipatory nature; emancipation from one's own conditioning and oppressive societal structures; and
- limited contextual relevance of what was taught

Furthermore, education has at times been considered a means to not just replicate but also propagate social inequity (Bowles & Gintis, 2011).



Education as a means of inner renewal and social change

These seemingly two separate goals, one focusing on the spiritual self and the other on society at large, were considered to be related to each through ideas of individual responsibility to maintaining social order (Thapan, 2001).

- “It is **through education that we acquire the passion and perspective to fight caste prejudices, class privileges and group antagonisms...** Education has to give us a second birth, to help us to realise what we have already in us. The meaning of education is to emancipate the individual”. ~ Radhakrishnan (1959)
- “Whilst Sir M. Vishweshwarayya has emphasized one grave defect of our present education which places exclusive emphasis on literary merit, I would add a graver defect in that students are made to think that whilst they are pursuing their literary studies, **they may not do acts of service at the sacrifice of their studies, be it ever so small or temporary. They will lose nothing and gain much if they would suspend their education, literary or industrial, to do relief work,** such as is being done by some of them in Gujarat. The end of all education should surely be service”. ~ Gandhi and Kumarappa (1953)



Education of the heart and its equivalents

- “*Educating the mind without **educating the heart** is no education at all*”~ Aristotle
- “*When educating the minds of our youth we must not forget to **educate their hearts***”~ His Holiness Dalai Lama
- “*By education I mean an all-round drawing of the best in child and man in body, mind and **soul/heart***”~ Mahatma Gandhi
- “*The highest education is that which doesn’t merely give us information but makes our life in **harmony** with all existence*”~ Rabindranath Tagore
- “*Education to be complete must have five principal aspects corresponding to the five principal activities of the human being: the physical, the vital, the mental, the **psychic** and the **spiritual**.*” ~Sri Aurobindo



Impact of Indian thinkers

Thinker	Impact
Aurobindo Ghose and Mirra Alfassa	Informs national curricular framework. Chain of schools across India.
Mahatma Gandhi	Informs national curricular framework. Experimented at a few initial schools. Set up Gujarat Vidyapeeth (university). <i>Nai Taleem</i> movement. <i>Buniyadi shalas</i> .
Jiddu Krishnamurti	Informs national curricular framework. Set up and inspired a chain of schools (including a school in UK and another in US). Inspired activity-based learning movement.
Rabindranath Tagore	Informs national curricular framework. Set up Shantiniketan, Sriniketan and Vishwabharati (university).
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“Develop[ing] good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution”~ NEP (2020).



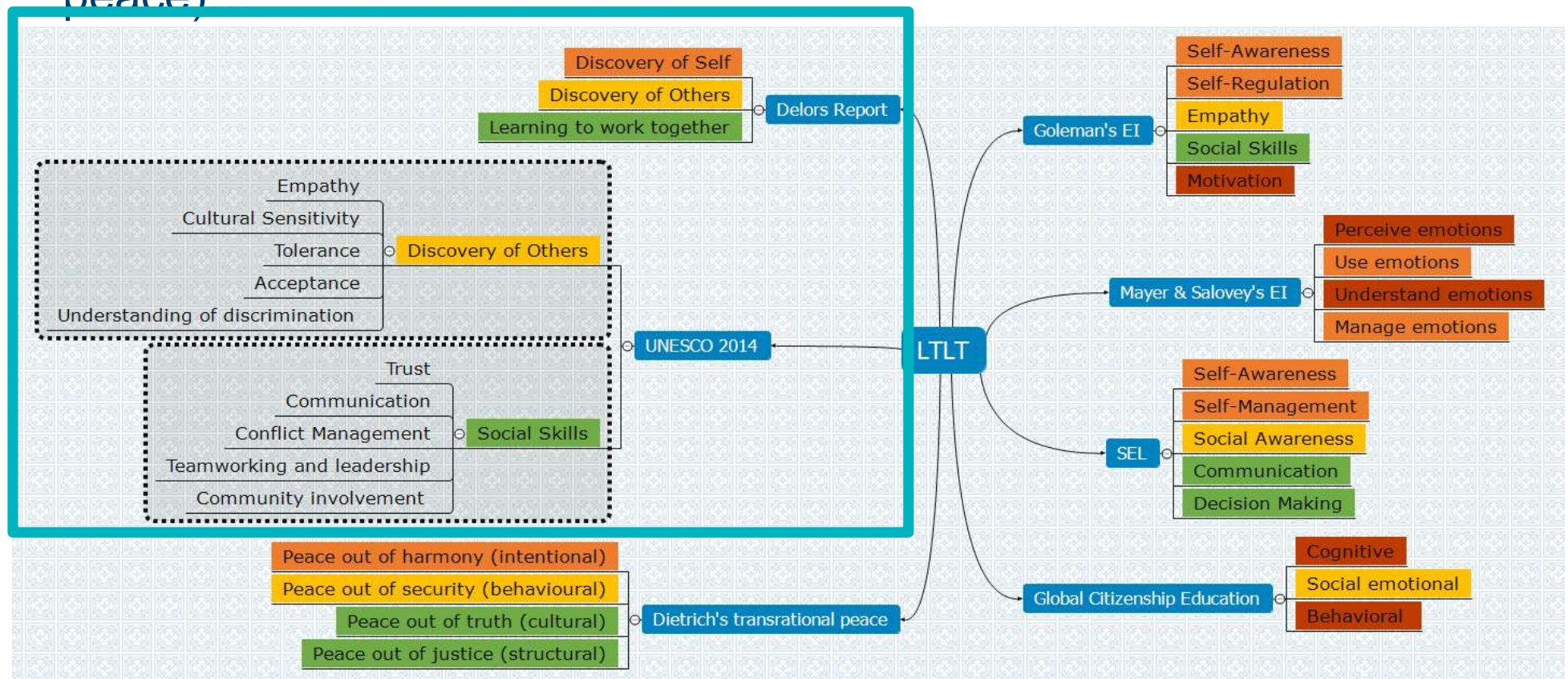
UN's pillars of education (Delors, 1996)

1. Learning to know
2. Learning to do
3. Learning to be (Faure, 1972)
4. Learning to live together (LTLT)



Other Learning To Live Together (LTLT) equivalents

- Umbrella term used to describe citizenship education, SEL, EI, positive peace, transrational peace, aesthetic ethics of peace (eastern views of peace)

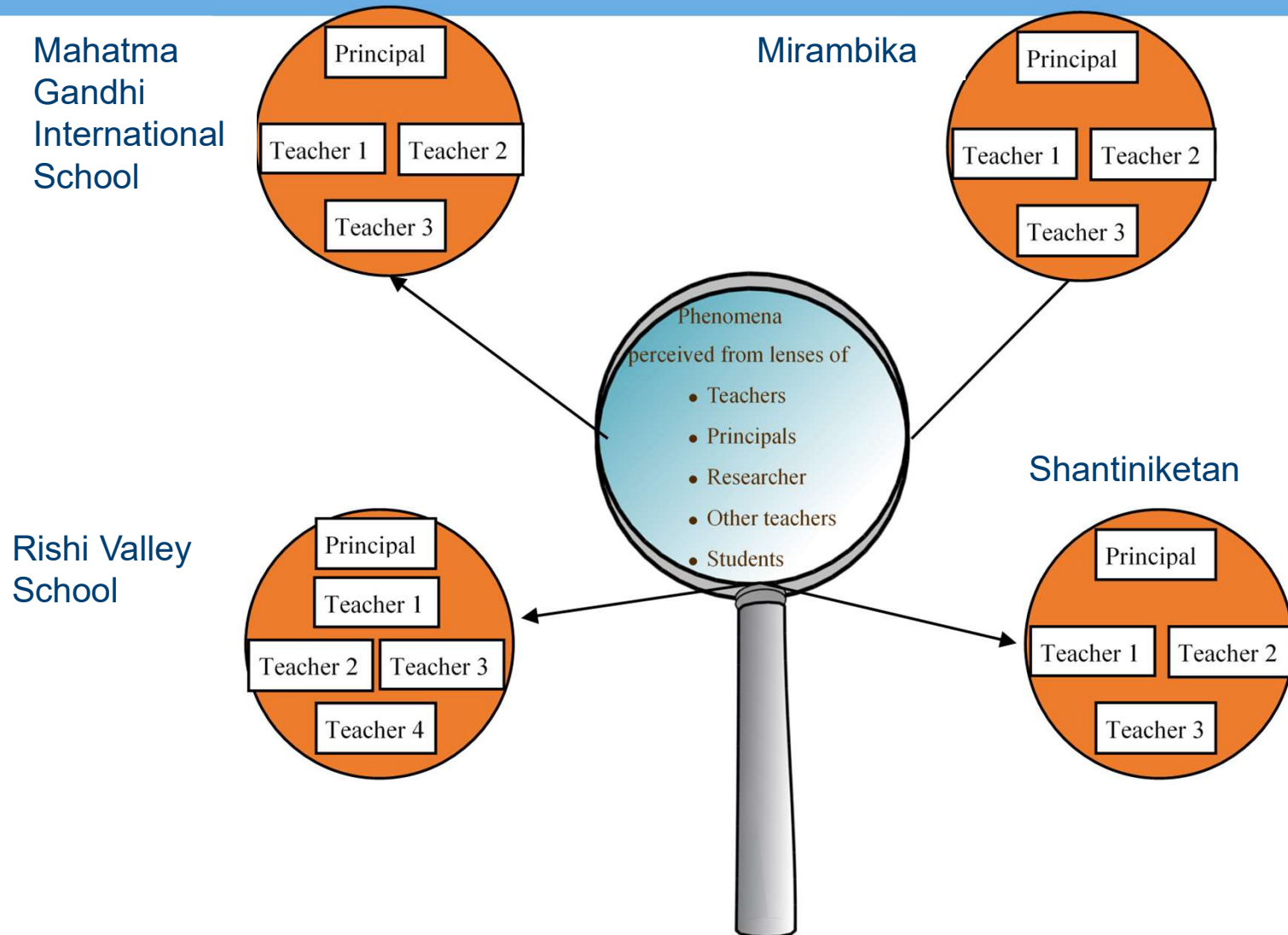


Research Aims

- How do teachers understand Learning To Live Together (LTLT)?
- What teaching practices do teachers use for teaching LTLT?
- Why do they teach for LTLT / what influences them to do so?

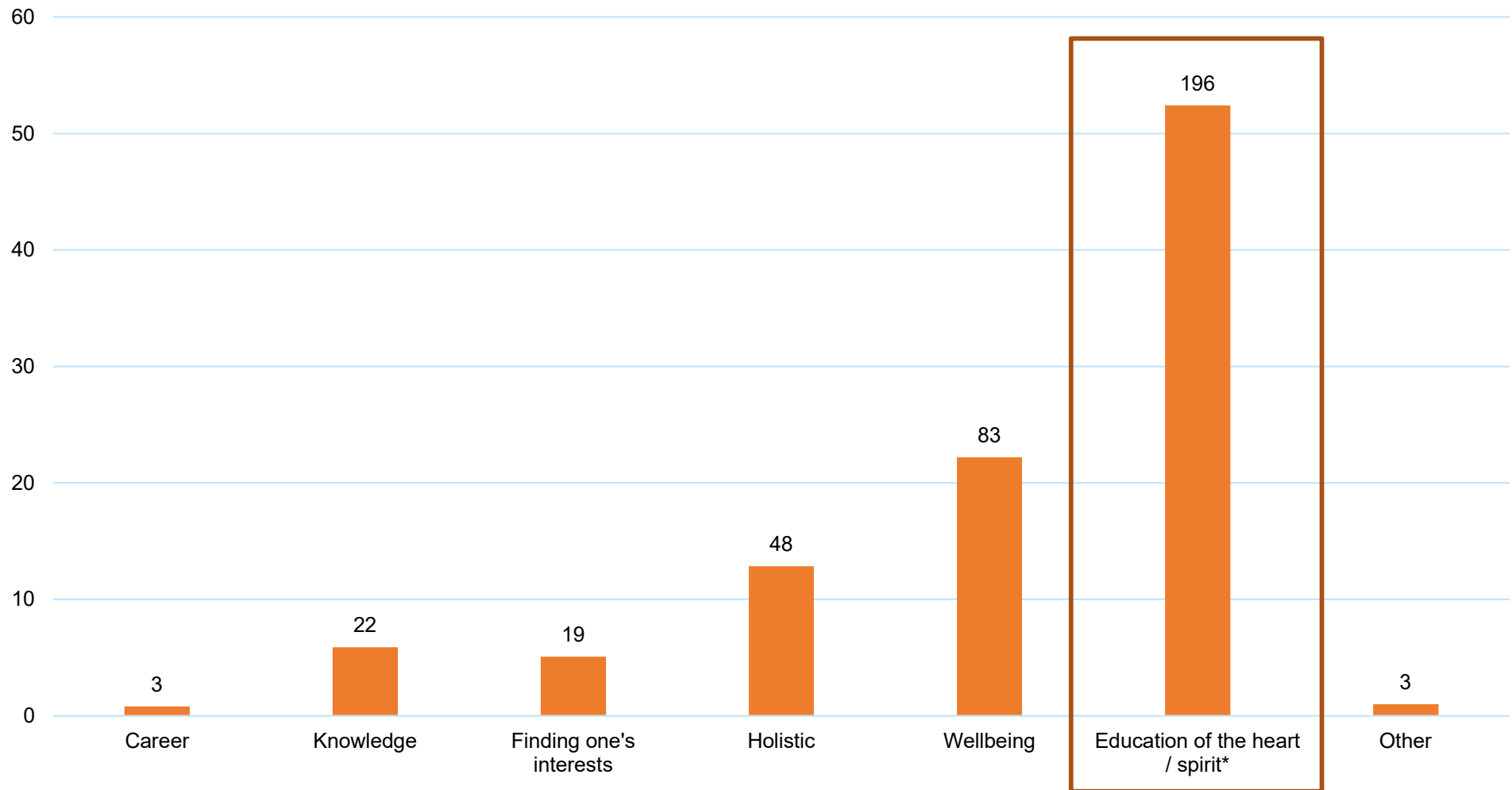


Multiple embedded case-study design



Purpose of education

Purpose of Education



The importance of a framework for “indescribable conceptualizations”

There was a strong notion that ideas of education of the heart cannot be put in words and “it cannot be said, it has to be felt”.

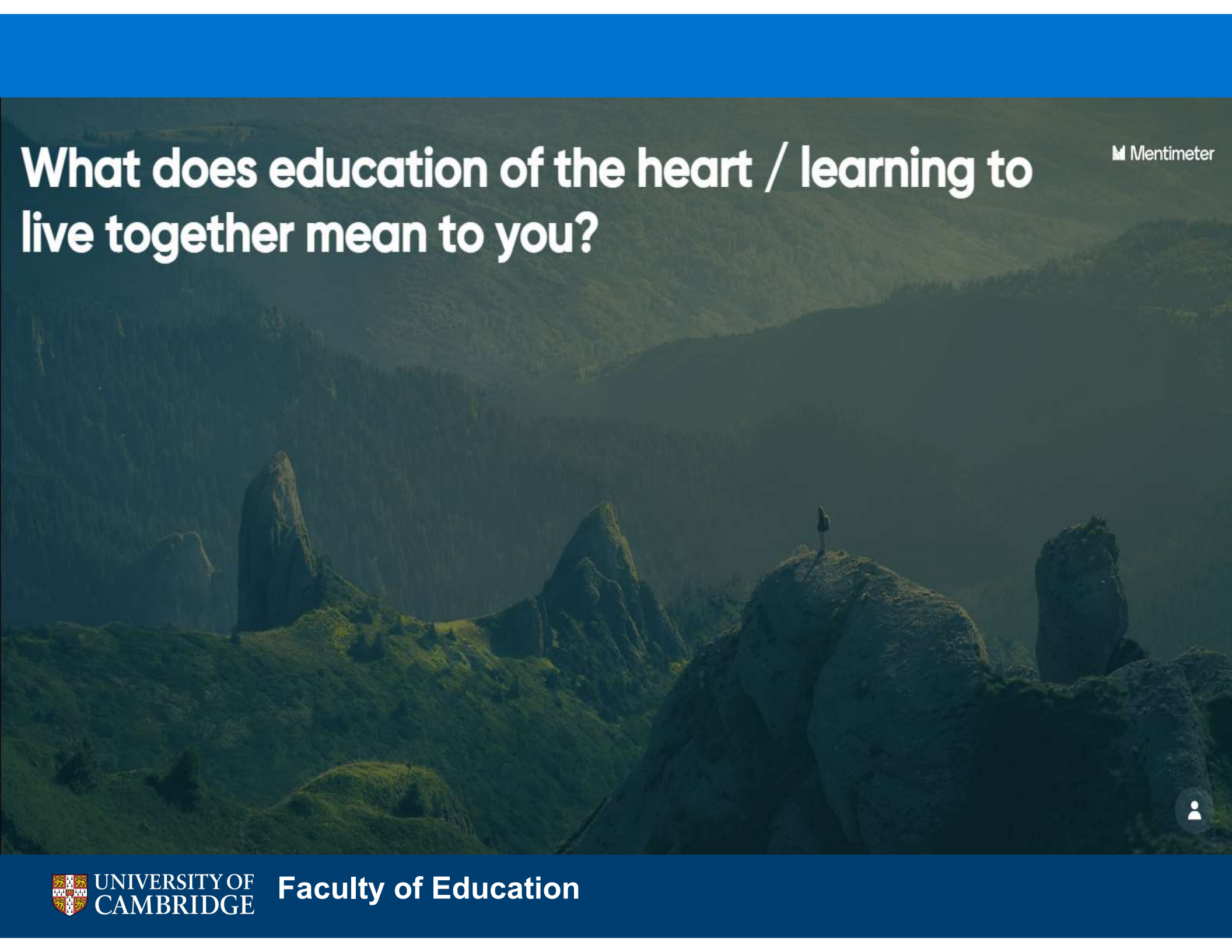
1. the moment it is articulated it ceases to be what it is (e.g. silence)
2. there is no need for a definition, because one actually knows what it means (e.g. family, love)
3. there is a need to practise these rather than talk about them

Furthermore, it was designed **to avoid ‘piecemeal efforts’** and to bring about education of the heart as a form of lived experience. It **prevented any ‘fragmented’ or prescriptive efforts** of developing a specific subject, expectations of linear learning trajectory, and pursuits of quantitative measurement.

However, teachers also suggested that some degree of description can help **further explore**, ensure that **significant aspects aren’t skipped** and can allow **translation to practice**. Else it remains a broad umbrella term and difficult to implement.

Similarly, The Mother (1977, p. 135) notes “**all formulation is only an approximation that should be progressive and grow in precision as the experience itself becomes more and more precise and coordinated**”.



A person is standing on a rocky mountain peak, looking out over a vast, misty forest valley. The scene is atmospheric and serene, with the person's silhouette standing out against the landscape.

What does education of the heart / learning to live together mean to you?

Mentimeter

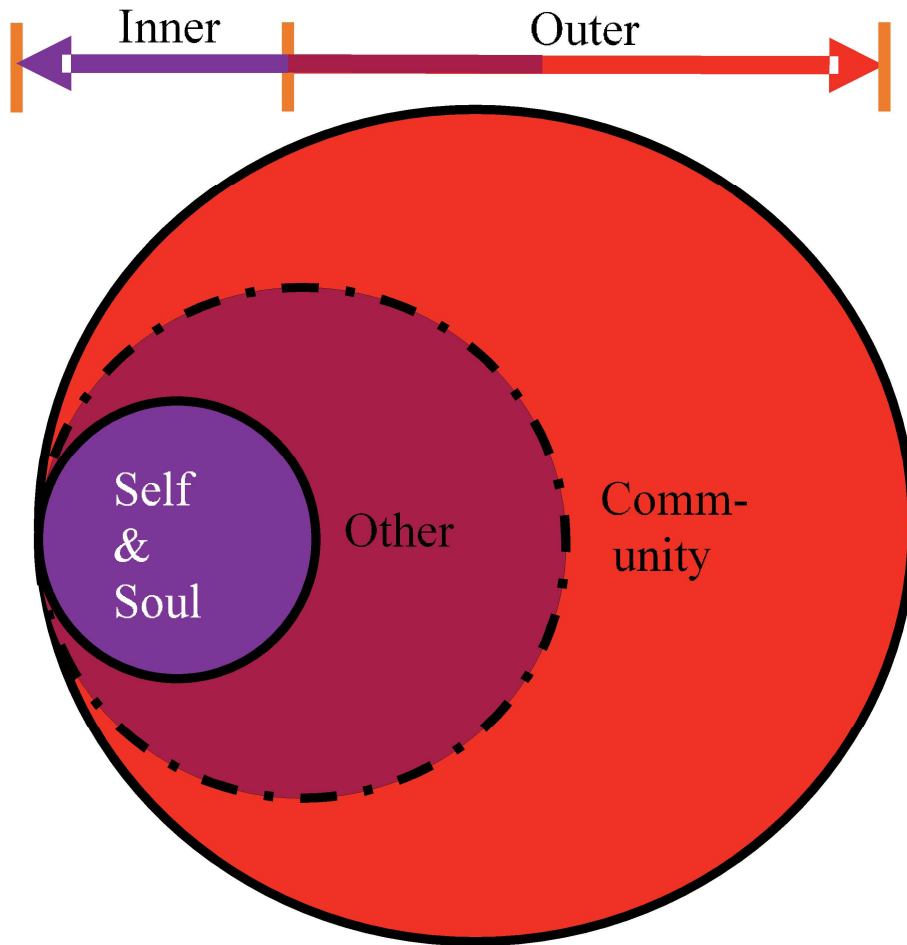


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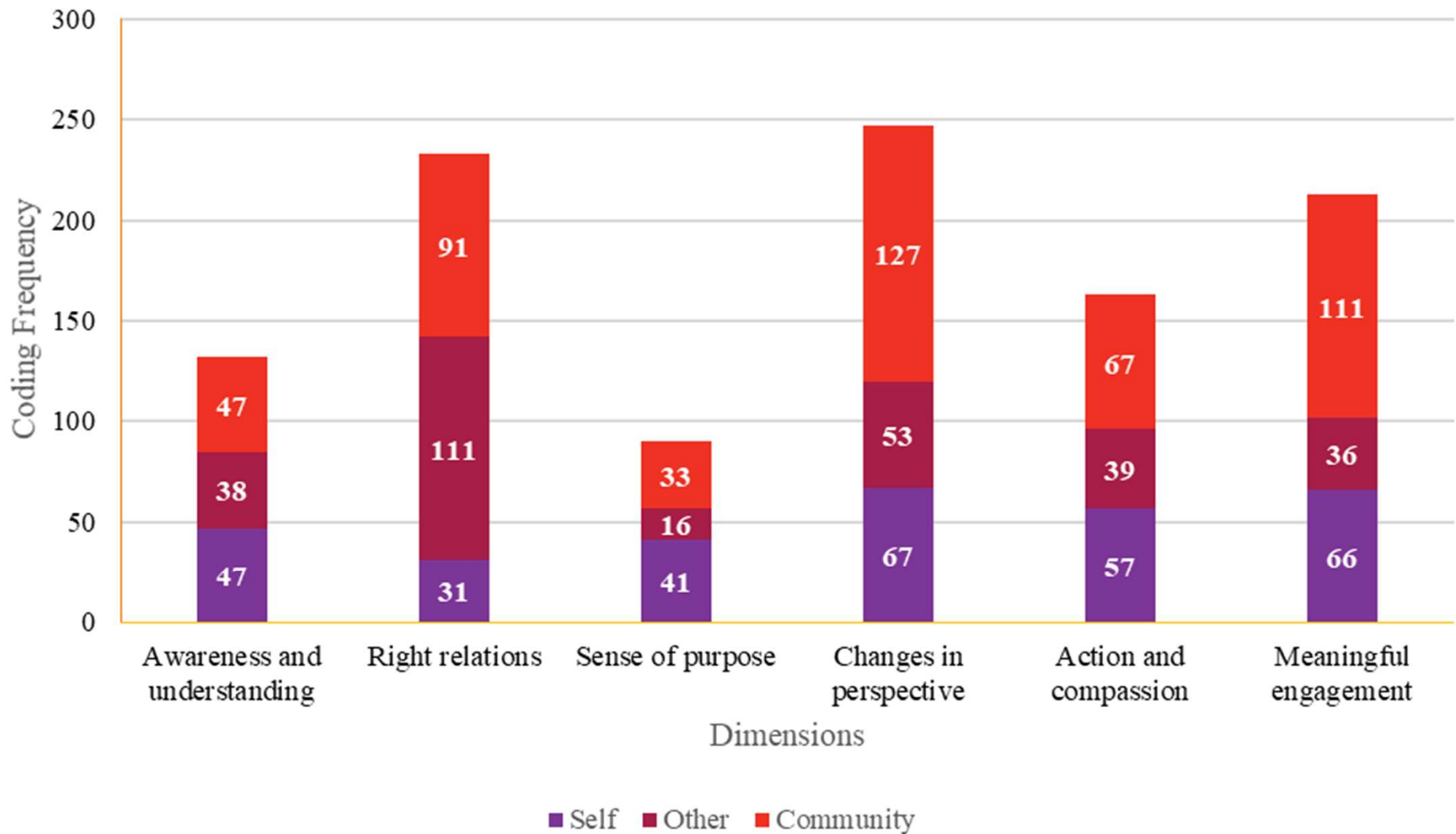
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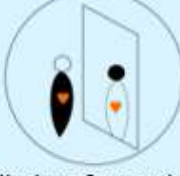
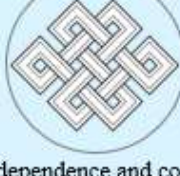





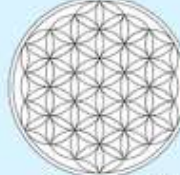


Domains and Dimensions



Coding Frequency



DIMENSIONS	DOMAINS		
	Self	Other	Community
	 Self-awareness	 Sensitivity and empathetic understanding	 Interconnectedness
	 Non-judgemental acceptance	 Mutual love and respect	 Equity
	 Swadharma (inner purpose)	 Empathy	 Kinship
	 Anityata (impermanence)	 Illusion of separation	 Interdependence and common humanity
	 Self-governance	 Compassion	 Community responsibility
	 Equanimity, balance and inner peace	 Metta (unconditional love) and oneness	 Universal oneness & Karuna (extended compassion)

Interconnected conceptual framework

		D I M E N S I O N S					
		Awareness and understanding	Acceptance and emotions of care (right relations)	Motivation (sense of purpose)	Change in perspectives (the bigger picture)	Action and Compassion	Meaningful engagement (wisdom)
D O M A I N S	Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self awareness • Strengths & weaknesses • Awareness of conditioning and belief systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance • Nonjudgement • Patience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of purpose • Understanding long-term impact • Quest for happiness/ inner self • Self responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who am I? • Identity • Balance between inner and outer worlds • Impermanence of emotions (<i>anitya</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-regulation and self-governance • Self-compassion • Self-transformation • Dissolving ego 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inner peace, satisfaction & harmony • Equanimity (<i>upekha</i>) & balance (<i>samata</i>) • Transcending boundaries of segmented perspectives (mind, body & heart separation)
	Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitivity • Empathetic understanding • Awareness of prejudices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance • Nonjudgement • Care • Not imposing • Not pressured by others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Similarity between people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I (me) to other • Appreciating individual diversity • Similarity between people • Gratitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassion • Helping others • Respond (non-reaction) • Changing oneself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful relations • Engaging as equals • Unconditional love (loving kindness; <i>metta</i>) • Transcending boundaries of the self and other (oneness) • Open hearted
	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other individuals in the community • Inter-connectedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuality within communities • Teamworking & communication • Care • Not imposing • Not pressured by others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of purpose for the collective • Kinship; one family • Process/journey is what matters and not the results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mine to ours (attachment) • Ideological plurality & beauty in diversity • Common humanity • Interdependence & bigger picture • Role of conflict • Uniformity v. diversity-based oneness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seva</i> (social work) and uplifting others • Peacebuilding • Community responsibility taking • Changing oneself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community living • Extended compassion (wishing everyone is free of suffering; <i>karuna</i>) • Empathetic joy (<i>mudita</i>; finding joy in others joy or sharing one's joy to other) • Universal oneness / brotherhood



Classroom practices framework



1) Basic teaching practices (Freire, 1970) and active pedagogies (Gill, 1999) are foundational pedagogies and emphasize the importance of the teacher as a facilitator and the student as an active participant. Problem-based learning (PBL) (Barrows, 1985) and participatory pedagogies (Gill, 1999) are pedagogies that emphasize the importance of the student as an active participant and the teacher as a facilitator. Pedagogies of social justice (Shor, 1992) are pedagogies that emphasize the importance of the student as an active participant and the teacher as a facilitator.

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A lived experience-based pedagogy

LTLTH took place through

- **experiential learning** (Deweyian, 1938, experiential education, Reardon and Cabezudo's, 2002, pedagogy of democratic engagement)
- **a continuum of shared lived experiences** (Freirian, 1970, emphasis on lived experiences and reflection as a form of praxis that underpins emancipation); and
- **an ethos of harmonious living** (Charney, 2002 and Noddings, 2002, 2003 emphasized caring ethos).

LTLTH was perceived as a way of living and being rather than a momentary experience (Aristotle's Eudemian Ethics explores virtues and virtuous living as a way of life).



Transferability

- Theoretical transferability
- Schools and teachers trying to adopt an ethos of LTLTH can find a comprehensive shift time-intensive, overwhelming and sudden (Jones & Bouffard, 2012).
- Lane et al. (2010, 2012) call for a multi-stepped and multi-tiered approach.
- Simple kernels of practices that could be replicated elsewhere.



Kernels of best practices

- Student (interest) driven learning processes;
- Student autonomy and self-regulation;
- Dialogic discussions;
- Collaborative team-based exploration;
- Project-based learning;
- Embodied learning
- Opportunities for social action;
- Meditation, prayer, reflection and introspection;
- Systemically spaces and time were made for (school-wide) shared activities (meals, prayer, sports, projects);
- Democratic peer-based behaviour regulation (rule-making, council sessions to resolve conflicts); and
- Use of behavioural reports over assessments as a means of deeply understanding a child and building emphasis on LTLTH outcomes.



Next research steps

- Current- Exploring school-wide systems underpinning students' LTLTH
- Current- Building a community of practitioners to explore potential practices
- May 2022 – 2024- Exploring teachers' perceptions and practices of SEL curricula in government schools (process evaluation of happiness curricula)
- 2023 – 2025- Exploring systemic influences underpinning implementation of large scale SEL interventions
- 2025 onwards- Exploring the state of SEL in south Asia

Requesting support

- Means and ways of sharing the findings with teachers, school leaders and parents in India!



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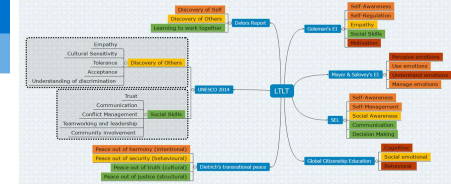
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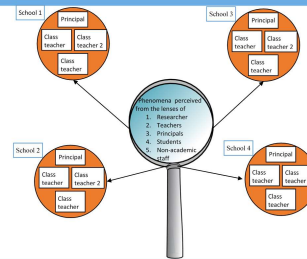
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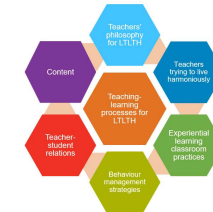
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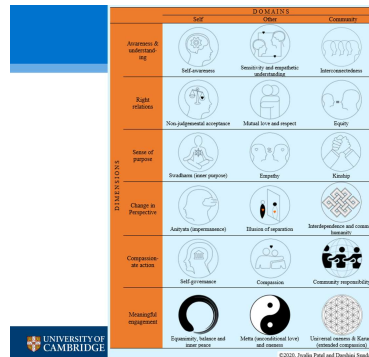
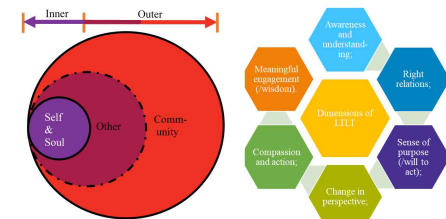


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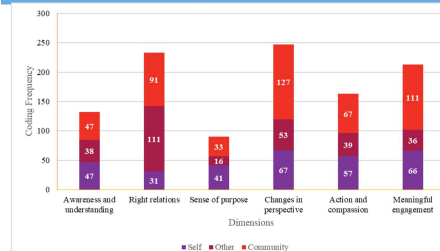
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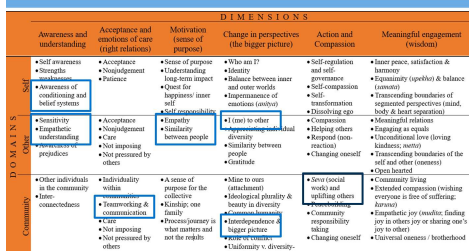
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Thank you for your attention!

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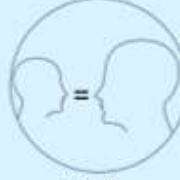




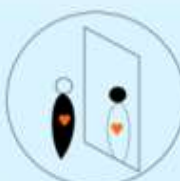






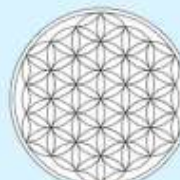
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