

# SunWALK

## A Bahá'í-inspired model of education<sup>1</sup>

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*Having created the world and all that liveth and moveth therein, He, through the direct operation of His unconstrained and sovereign Will, chose to confer upon man the unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him – a capacity that must needs be regarded as the generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation.... Upon the inmost reality of each and every created thing He hath shed the light of one of His names, and made it a recipient of the glory of one of His attributes. Upon the reality of man, however, He hath focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self. (GWB 65)*

The SunWALK Bahá'í-inspired model of education sees the key challenge for education as establishing *the spiritual-moral* and *the creative-subjective* as co-equal modes with the mode that currently dominates; *the reasoning-objective*. SunWALK presents a view of education that centres on the human spirit. The human spirit is seen as the three intrapersonal dimensions of Caring, Creativity and Criticality. The fourth 'C', Community' includes the interpersonal-social and the cultural. Inspired by principles evident in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá teaching and learning are presented as the development of consciousness and abilities in these four 'Cs'. Development is seen as being brought about via processes of dialogue, service and the creation and deconstruction of 'texts'- texts chosen as higher-order expressions from within the arts, humanities and sciences. In SunWALK we study texts, including the text of self, in a 'nest' of contexts – of family, classroom, community and the ultimate ground of being, that Whole that we call the presence of God.

### Diagram 1

The diagram on the following page presents a summary of the meanings of the main elements of the SunWALK model of education logo.<sup>3</sup> The diagram and the summary have been placed here so that the reader may refer back as s/he reads each section.



**Summary of the meanings of the elements in the SunWALK 'logo-diagram-mandala'**

The SunWALK model brings aspects of 'Western' and 'Eastern' world-views into harmony. The 'Sun' = our source of spiritual inspiration & values. WALK = Willing & wise Action through Loving & Knowing – the most general goal for education. The logo combines the following sub-models:

- a) An 'interior' model of the human spirit - in relation to 'the world'.
- b) A model for re-positioning education within being & becoming human – in the world with others.
- c) A general model of the curriculum - for primary, secondary and higher education.
- d) A framework for the analysis and evaluation of teaching episodes or projects.
- e) A model of education that makes spiritual education and moral education intrinsic.

**THE MODEL IN ONE SENTENCE:** - *the SunWALK model of spiritualizing pedagogy sees human education as the storied development of meaning, which is constructed, and de-constructed, physically mentally and spiritually, through Wise & Willing Action, via Loving and Knowing – developed in Community, through the 'Dialectical Spiritualization'<sup>1</sup> of Caring, Creativity & Criticality processes, all undertaken in the light of the 'Sun' of chosen higher- order values and beliefs, using best available, appropriate content.*

**The outer ring of the SunWALK logo** combines two dimensions: 1 'Community' i.e. the social, interpersonal dimension of interaction with other individuals or groups. 2 'Cultural sources' including such dimensions as traditions, the political & the legal.

## Summary of the meanings, cont.

The three major divisions of the arts, sciences and humanities are here thought of as the stored, yet dynamic, accumulation of knowledge and beliefs and procedures – everything from galleries to written laws of physics that the individual can draw upon or be influenced by. This is the ‘stuff out there’ rather than the interiority of consciousness.

**In SunWALK everything within the inner circle** = a representation of ‘interiority’, i.e. human consciousness - the human spirit. The human spirit is presented intrapersonally as 3 ‘voices’ - 3 modes of being & of engaging with reality & of knowing – that emanate from the singleness of ‘heart-mind’ as (metaphorically) the ‘primary colours’ of Creativity (the yellow of inspiration), Criticality (the blue of reason) & Caring (the red warmth of love)

**Creativity** is the ‘I’ voice of *subjective engagement* via an artistic medium - it is particularly related to the core virtue ‘*beauty*’ and to ‘the Arts’. **Criticality** is the ‘IT’ voice of *objective engagement* which enables progress in the Sciences (& Math., Philosophy and ‘critical’ studies). It is concerned with *objective knowing* - related particularly to the core virtue ‘*truth*’. **Caring** is the ‘WE’ voice which enables *moral engagement* – for progress in the moral domain and in service of others. It is concerned with *social knowing* – related particularly to the core virtue ‘*goodness*’ and to ‘the Humanities’.

The physical dimension is seen as the instrument for the flow of spirit in all of its forms – e.g. via dance drama & PE.

Each individual develops her/his I, WE and IT voices, the 3Cs, via socialization, starting in the family, the local community and then later in formal education. A sense of justice is seen as paramount intrapersonally as well as interpersonally i.e. it enables us to engage with that which is beautiful, good or true with *balance, clarity & due weight*.

The essential process in all 4Cs is multi-level dialogue. In the case of the individual dialogue is seen as meditation, reflection and inner-talk. In the case of groups it is dialectical process via consultation.

The ‘Celtic’ knot that surrounds the central shield indicates that the 3Cs are simply aspects of the one human spirit – the flow of ‘heart-mind’.

The white shield at the centre represents the meditative state in which there is no ‘focused’ engagement via one of the 3Cs – and in which there is relatively little of the ‘white noise’ interference that we experience in the unquiet mind. This can enable us to ‘go beyond ourselves’, i.e. transcend our normal knowing – any of the 3Cs (I, WE or IT modes) can be a pathway to the transcendent and to subsequent improved insight into reality.

The black dot at the centre is the ‘well-spring’ of consciousness. For artists (and great scientists) it is the Muse. For religionists it is the voice of God within (albeit distorted by the dust of self). For non-religionists it is the inner source of spirit as energy & inspiration – the little bits of realization and insight that come to us for which we don’t make an effort.

Educating the human spirit is seen as nurturing the life-force which culminates in the developed human who, through higher-order consciousness, realizes abilities from within Caring, Creative or Critical engagements. Teaching is seen as nurturing and cultivating what is normally present, almost from birth, & certainly by the time we go to school – namely the flow of spirit expressed in nascent forms of Caring, Creativity, and Criticality – in Community with others. Holistic Learning takes place when the learner uses Creativity, Criticality and Caring – in Community – inspired by higher-order values – in dynamic combinations such as Creativity providing texts for criticality - which then via dialogue produce the spirit for more creativity.

In SunWALK spirituality is not a dimension; it is the model as a whole. In SunWALK moral education is not a dimension – they are one and the same. The SunWALK logo can also be seen as a mandala, or even as a plan drawing for a fountain or a ‘temple of light’! SunWALK is a major shift to a process view of the world, of being human and of educating our young people. It rejects a worldview that is limited to the mechanistic, the ‘human-as-computer, the fragmentary and the materialistic; seeking instead modelling that is based on flow/process, holism and the spiritual.

## Introduction

This paper gives a brief account of some of the main features of 'the SunWALK model' and its rootedness in the Bahá'í Faith's writings. SunWALK is a new model of education designed to reflect the paradigm shift inherent in the coming of the Bahá'í Revelation.

The model is radical in that it paradigmatically shifts the main focus of education toward a range of 'new' dimensions. For example:

from the material to the spiritual,

from a concern with fragments to a concern with the Whole and its parts

from knowledge as trading in 'stuff out there' to knowledge as being and becoming via multi-level dialogue

from the competitive acquisition of 'having' to self-realization – through being and acting in service

from teaching as 'instructing' and 'training' to education as nurturing and growth inducement

from repetition and reproduction to the raising of consciousness and the solving of problems

from merely technical learning to technical learning within the context of being and becoming human – in the world with others

However such shifts are secondary to the most simple but challenging shift, which is the shift to education as *the nurturing of the flow of the human spirit* – as a river flows, as life-energy or 'chi' flows (the reader might like to look immediately at the '*nub*' of the *model section* below; see Part 1, p. 180). This of course echoes the idea that we are spiritual beings having an embodied experience.

SunWALK was developed in my doctoral thesis. It was chiefly forged out of the daily teaching of English with, mainly, 12 to 13 year olds in a Roman Catholic middle school plus a variety of Bahá'í youth groups and their friends. The thesis was entitled *Spiritualizing Pedagogy: education as the art of working with the human spirit*. Until a publisher is found the thesis can be found at <http://www.holisticeducation.org.uk>

Our mainstream education is notoriously conservative and is, so I will argue, unnecessarily complicated. SunWALK is a radical way to simplify educational modelling without losing the best of contemporary thinking, and, indeed, the best of the wisdom of the past. This broad concept of wisdom also means that we can respect,

and draw upon, the total treasure-house of our planet's many and varied cultures. Celebrating diversity, *and* the oneness that is at the centre of reality, can provide the guiding principles – for education as well as for the unification of the family of humankind. The alternative seems to be that we more agonizingly get forged into greater unity through such catastrophic events as the recent Tsunami disaster. Such events and the worldwide compassionate response to them belie the postmodernist claim that there is no grand narrative. In the SunWALK model of education the eternal grand narrative is the 'story of stories' – of being and becoming human in the world with others. Story is one of the major means for making of the parts a whole. It is the chief means by which we make sense of our life experiences.

With regard to 'story' the thesis developed what has been called a new form of methodology, named 'applied autoethnography'. Autoethnography is an established, but still emergent, form of qualitative research. Described by Ellis and Bochner (2000) it is:

an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth autoethnographer's gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focussing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations – see Deck, (1990); Neuman, (1996); Reed-Danahay, (1997). As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition. Usually written in first-person voice, autoethnographic texts appear in a variety of forms – short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing and social science prose. In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thought and language. (emphasis added)

To the underlined elements, and the italicised passage, in the above quotation I would like to make connection with principles evident in Bahá'í writings.

Firstly the Universal House of Justice, when guidance was sought in 1992, suggested a dialectical process of going back and forth – in

this case between Bahá'í writings and positive aspects of contemporary educational theory and practice. They said;

[We] might make a contribution to the evolutionary process of devising an educational system which “would be in full harmony with the spirit of the Bahá'í Teachings”.

Knowledge of educational theory, for example, could assist (us) in identifying some of the relevant “basic principles” and “teaching ideals” that are set out in the Bahá'í Writings. Such principles could in turn, serve as a basis for highlighting positive aspects of contemporary educational theory and practice which could contribute to the implementation of Bahá'í “teaching ideals”. (Research Dept. Memorandum 21st May 1992)

Some degree of innateness or embeddedness in human reality means that knowledge or virtues are not just ‘stuff out’ there to be crammed into the learner; rather we should:

*Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.* (GWB 260)

We, as well as the Manifestation of God, are made in the image of God (though in our case it is potentially and imperfectly). We on our life-journey are in the business of supporting each other in the process of manifesting whatever admixture of gifts constitutes each individual's uniqueness.

We can see emphasis on *interiority*, *autonomy* and *subjectivity* as well as on the voice of ‘*God within*’, along with the importance of *self-understanding* and *the conditions for true knowing* in the following four Bahá'í quotations (emphases added):

1. *O SON OF SPIRIT!*

*The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.* (HW Arabic #2)

2. *Turn thy sight unto thyself*, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, *mighty, powerful and self-subsisting.* (HW Arabic # 13)

3. One must ... read the book of his own self, rather than some treatise on rhetoric. *Wherefore He hath said, "Read thy Book: There needeth none but thyself to make out an account against thee this day."* (SVFV 51-52)

4. *Turn your faces to the Sun of Reality. That Sun has always risen in the East.* Find the answer to your questions in your heart. *Be as little children.* (PUP 213)

The notion then of autoethnography applied to specific objectives, such as developing a new model, aims specifically at utilizing the creativity that lies within individual life experience. It is a method particularly relevant to the creative and moral spheres just as scientific methodology is appropriate for the investigation of objective reality via science. The present writer takes the view that included in the purpose of the Bahá'í revelation is *the subjective manifestation of potential*. Conversely there is a dis-empowering of the individual when there is the belief that knowledge is simply 'stuff out there' and that it is to be handed down from on high by those few that know. This work's against development<sup>4</sup>. We are protected because not only is it forbidden for individuals to impose their own 'reading' of the Writings on others but also because Abdu'l-Bahá also set out clearly (PUP 197) the conditions for growth and development. The three conditions of *freedom of conscience, liberty of thought* and *right of speech* I suggest are not presented by Abdu'l-Bahá as luxurious and self-indulgent 'rights' in an extreme liberal society. They are nothing less than key dynamics for the whole system to work, if we are to have development and growth. The same principle is, I suggest, applied by Abdu'l-Bahá to establish the dialogic basis for education. He says;

*Most ideas must be taught them through speech, not by book learning. One child must question the other concerning these things, and the other child must give the answer. In this way, they will make great progress. For example, mathematical problems must also be taught in the form of questions and answers. One of the children asks a question and the other must give the answer. Later on, the children will of their own accord speak with each other concerning these same subjects.... Oral questions must be asked and the answers must be given orally. They must discuss<sup>5</sup> with each other in this manner.* (BE 301; emphasis added)

These dialogical and dialectical principles go even deeper. Taherzadeh opens the first volume of his Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh with the statement that

All created things, whether tangible or intangible, come into being as a result of the intercourse between two elements which assume the functions of male and female. This pattern is followed throughout the whole of creation...

Dialogue engages and nourishes subjective potential in the way that rain, soil and sun nurture the potential of the seed. Because we have a whole complex of psycho-spiritual cross-checks given by Abdu'l-Bahá and Bahá'u'lláh we need not fear the subjective. Abdu'l-Bahá gives us the model of *the senses, reason, intuition, tradition* (see SAQ 297; PUP 21-22 and 253-255; PUP 356). Bahá'u'lláh gives us proofs (His own Self, His Revelation, His words – see GWB 105) and a process (consultation). Combined, this set of dynamics is more than enough to check any distortions or excesses of subjectivity.<sup>6</sup>

Such methodology as autoethnography clearly owes something to the postmodern viewpoint<sup>7</sup>. What may be novel is its *applied* use – applied in this case to developing a paradigmatic model of education out of deep reflection on experience – in ‘dialogue’ with a wide range of public theory.

In the thesis some twenty-five major problems were identified, to which the model seeks to provide answers. Here I present a few of the main challenges, and my suggested solutions, indicating examples of Bahá'í writings that ‘speak’ to the particular issues. The paper is in two parts. Part I presents some general, foundational, concerns and Part II asks, and briefly answers, five core questions in relation to Bahá'í-inspired holistic education.

## **Part I – SunWALK as a model for holistic education – some general, foundational, concerns**

*Will and vital energy are similar. Where the will goes, the vital energy follows.* (Hong Yuan in Cleary 1991, 29)

*When true knowledge flows, then knowledge and action advance side by side.* (Hong Yuan in Cleary 1991, 31)

*One cannot obtain the full force of the sunlight when it is cast on a flat mirror, but once the sun shineth upon a concave mirror, or on a lens that is convex, all its heat will be concentrated on a single point, and that one point will burn the hottest. Thus is it necessary to focus one's thinking on a single point so that it will become an effective force.* (SWAB 10-11)

### **What's in a name – the nub of the model?**

SunWALK as a name, and mnemonic, has two elements. Sun stands for whatever source of values the individual, or group, draws upon with which to illumine her/his 'walking' of the path of life. This light and inspiration is also seen as the source of the will to act – morally (or creatively or critically). WALK stands for the generalized goal of development in *Willing Wise Action through Loving and Knowing*. Will, Action, Love and Knowledge also correspond to the 'Four Valleys' as described by Julio Savi in his essay<sup>8</sup> entitled "Will, Knowledge and love as explained in Bahá'u'lláh's Four Valleys". This is the 'what' of the model.

The 'how' of the model is seen as the *balanced, challenging and nurturing* of the dimensions of the human spirit. The human spirit is seen as dynamic – always being expression in one of three voices: the 'I' voice of Creativity, the 'WE' voice of Caring and the 'IT' voice of Criticality (see Wilber 1998: 74). These three are interpersonally the arts, humanities and sciences but *the focus in SunWALK is as corresponding voices, from within the individual's spirit* – through which we engage with reality.

Evil, or at least harm, comes from the absence of positives or from imbalance between the 3Cs – and their illumination by higher-order values or 'virtues'.

To the three *intrapersonal* Cs in the model we must add the fourth C which is termed 'Community'. Community consists of a) the *interpersonal* and social dimension of all of our relationships – our being in the world with others – and b) the cultural from which we take all of the various stimuli, via socialization, through which to develop the three voices. *Naturally* we develop the 'I' voice from what broadly we call the arts, the 'WE' voice from the Humanities and the 'IT' voice from science and philosophy. This starts in the (reasonably healthy) family, local community and earliest schooling. Our individualized version of the three voices, and our command, more or less, of reading the cultural milieu are shaped by the beliefs and values of the culture in which we find ourselves – as well as our personal beliefs and values.

Education, and civilization as a whole, needs the best possible balance between the personal and the group. Failure to enable the release of individual potential is harmful as is excess licence or group domination.

### **The need to stay connected to the perennial values of truth, beauty, goodness, justice and, transcending all, love**

My educational studies in addition to their Bahá'í inspiration have had 'perennial philosophy', as the wider community co-equivalent

source of inspiration for 'holistic education'. Holistic education as a form of education is to be distinguished from other 'labels' such as 'integrated education' or the broader 'alternative education' because it puts the 'Whole' as greater than us, greater than any bits that we can fit together, greater than the sum of the parts. That is to say there is a mystical dimension intrinsic to the term 'holistic education' even though holistic education is not 'faith-specific'. It is, most often centred on the eternal truths of 'perennial philosophy'. Such eternal truths are of course referred to by Bahá'u'lláh as transcending specific religions – *the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future* (PB 118-9). The mystical connection is necessary to holistic education and refers, as do the Guardian's words, *the core of religious faith is that mystic feeling which unites man with God*, (LG 544) to how we relate to Mystery or the Whole. Such being and relatedness is also described as the Whole, or, in Paul Tillich's terms, *the ground of all being, or Being-Itself*.<sup>9</sup>

The mystical connection to the Whole might enable us to maintain an open and prayerful stance toward our theory-making and our practice development and might consequently help us maintain a touch of humility in how we view educational challenges and our tentative solutions. Such a position is far from the 'lust for certainty' which is how the writer Karen Armstrong describes fundamentalism. Fundamentalism of course closes down the possibilities of true growth. Love on the other hand nurtures diversity as well as unity. Concerning love Abdu'l-Bahá says:

*Love is the cause of God's revelation unto man, the vital bond inherent, in accordance with the divine creation, in the realities of things ...*

*Love revealeth with unfailing and limitless power the mysteries latent in the universe. (SWAB 27-28)*

The challenges of developing a new model of education are many. The range of concerns from which questions might be posed, is nothing less than vast. Here as in many challenges we have to set aside the important in favour of the most important but what *is the most important concern when setting out to develop a new model of education?* Over a number of years the most important question was sought – on which to construct a model of education. The question which was settled on was, *'what is it to be human, positively and fully?'* This I suggest is the question to which all other educational questions need to relate. To this was added the question, *'what are the characteristics of education as indicated in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá?'*

This paper then focuses on a view of what it is to be human – in order to provide a clear and simple way to reflect on educational practice and theory.

### **Toward a definition of holistic education – as used in SunWALK**

What is Holistic Education? This is my working definition:

- Holistic Education is learning and teaching based on balancing all positive aspects of being, & becoming fully human – via the realization of interconnectedness & wholeness.
- Holistic Education seeks to provide for balanced engagement, expression and relatedness of the whole person: the physical, mental, affective, & spiritual – intrapersonally & interpersonally.
- Holistic Education seeks to balance content & process. It seeks to maintain balance between the intrapersonal dimensions of the human spirit – here termed the Caring, the Creative and the Critical. It also seeks to maintain a dynamic balance between personal and interpersonal-group concerns. The interpersonal, along with the cultural, political and legal dimensions of society are collectively referred to as 'Community'.

Holistic Education using the SunWALK approach is seen as an answer to some of the key problems/challenges in education – its fragmentariness, obviously, but also the need for moral education to be integral throughout a model as opposed to being a bolt-on' extra.

### **What kind of a mess is education in?**

Children find themselves alienated by parents and other adults whether they live in conditions of wealth or poverty. This alienation has its roots in a selfishness that is born of materialism that is at the core of the godlessness seizing the hearts of people everywhere. (Ridvan 2000 letter, Universal House of Justice)

Inadequate parenting, or exploitation of children, are not the only forces that negatively impact on children and their teachers. Political interference & manipulation, de-professionalization, prevalence of materialistic philosophies, a mechanistic world view, sheer poverty, poor teacher education etc. are just some of the issues that shape, or distort, education. So are all the world's general ills, terrorism being the most recently publicized. We could list many such problems.

For me the chief negative characteristic of mainstream education is its fragmentariness, its lack of wholeness. Children *are* usually whole (to start with) but the system progressively atrophies connections and connectedness. Should Bahá'is see education as (necessarily) holistic?

A range of statements concerning connectedness are to be found in Bahá'í writings. Examples are:

*... all parts of the creational world are of one whole.* (BWF 364)

*God contains all.... The whole is greater than its parts ...* (PT 23-7)

*All that exists is God....* (ABL 22)

*Every created thing in the whole universe is but a door leading into His knowledge.* (GWB 190)

*We cannot segregate the human heart from the environment outside us and say that once one of these is reformed everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world. His inner life moulds the environment & is itself also deeply affected by it The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions.* (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi 1933)

Together these suggest both a view of reality and a way of proceeding. If all is God then all is sacred, all is connected, all potentially leads from and to Him. We need to proceed ever-conscious of two things; a) our connectedness and the need for the learner's realization of, and in, connectedness and b) the infinitely Unknowable that lies behind the little we know and can know. In our humanness lies potentially all of the names and attributes of God. In humanity

*are potentially revealed all the attributes and names of God to a degree that no other created being hath excelled or surpassed. All these names and attributes are applicable to him. Even as He hath said: 'Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery.'* (GWB 177)

Yet beyond even the fullest expression of those names and attributes lies mystery – both immanent and transcendent. Mystery is the ever-present reality (and conditioner) as we look within ourselves and also as we look at all that is 'other' and 'beyond'. A sense of Mystery and of the Whole should be ever present as we nurture thought, feeling and action in education. The writings of A. J Heschel (1965), in addition to the Bahá'í writings, are a great inspiration in exploring awe, wonder and the ineffable as well as what it is to be fully human.

The chief negative consequence of fragmentariness is here seen as alienation. Alienation breeds anti-social behaviour and possibly ill-

health, and dis-ease. At the heart of alienation is meaninglessness. The solution to the negative effects of fragmentariness is meaning-fullness. The creation of meaning-fullness is both a personal and a community responsibility. In SunWALK rich meaning-making comes from the choice of *higher-order texts experienced within higher-order contexts*.

The chief positive consequence of wholeness, through connectedness, is seen as *a sense of belonging* and *a sense of place* and *a sense of identity* and, consequently, *a sense of purpose*. Thereby our name is named, as in

*O son of man! I loved thy creation, hence I created thee.  
Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name thy name and  
fill thy soul with the spirit of life.* (HW Arabic # 4)

which is seen as a process, not as a single completed act. The four 'senses' above are wholly relevant to the crisis that children and youth are experiencing in the Western world – and perhaps the world generally. The *Hardwired to Connect*<sup>10</sup> report enables us to see both a graphic portrait of the ills of our children and youth and also a way to help bring healing. The notion of the panel of thirty odd scientists who contributed to the report is to create 'authoritative communities'. These in effect embody the 'four senses' I have mentioned above as a curative way. They also of course embody support in answering the age-old existential questions of philosophy.

### **The teacher's viewpoint and simplifying the teacher's job**

The SunWALK model, and its application to holistic education, is presented from a teacher's-eye-view of the teaching process. Its perspective focuses on her/his consciousness, decision-making, discourse-management, balancing of inner and outer concerns, environment management etc. as s/he conducts the actual process of nurturing others learning.

To illustrate the need for simplification I point to the UK National Curriculum which originally required primary school teachers to teach more than 200 'Attainment Targets' for each and every child. One of the consequences of the curse of 'managerialization' in education is the replacement of horticultural metaphors with war metaphors. Abdu'l-Bahá seems pre-eminently to use natural, horticultural, metaphors in relation to education.

In SunWALK, on the other hand, I suggest that (in the West, at least) teachers need only ever teach the development of abilities within the dimensions of the 4Cs, three being intrapersonal, the other the interpersonal:

The Intrapersonal:

- Caring – abilities in other-focusedness – moral acts in service of others
- Creativity – abilities in construing reality via subjective expression
- Criticality – abilities in ‘reading’ reality via objective description

The Interpersonal:

- in Community – abilities in being and functioning with other individuals and groups – i.e. includes teamwork and citizenship
- all the rest is forms of information and processing

The emphasis is on more than information or skills. Contexts are as vital as texts. The supreme text is being and becoming human – in the world with others – in the light of higher order values drawn from our ‘Sun.’<sup>11</sup> Information on its own is inert. It becomes knowledge, or even wisdom, when it is placed in a context, particularly in a values context (assuming raised consciousness in the person). Lower-order contexts tend to debase human activity. Here I am arguing for placing information, and all that we do in education in higher-order contexts. Lower-order contexts tend to provide for the greed of the individual, or group. Higher-order contexts tend to be concerned with the good of the whole. We need to stay consciousness of the contexts, whilst teaching ‘texts’<sup>12</sup>. In SunWALK the teaching of the technical is always seen as within the context of being and becoming more fully human. The ultimate context is of course Mystery – or the presence of God. A sense of those contexts, Wilber calls them a *nest of holons* (1998b: 61), can provide richness and depth of significance and meaning.

The focuses of unbridled materialism robs children of the chance to grow into their wholeness. Materialism narrows the meaning that is made and the sense we have of what it is to be human. The antidote to materialism is the spiritual, particularly in the sense of richness and depth of meaning made.

Perhaps this is what the UK Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sachs had in mind when he said (BBC 1 12.9.04) that the future is built on memories. He spoke about how today’s children will become the guardians of memory, so that what we invest in them today will determine the legacy for tomorrow. Memory is what maintains our knowing of who we are – but we need the collective memories of humankind as well our personal memories. Together as contexts and texts, dynamically interactive, they can provoke our development.

Rabbi Sachs said that children are the big time losers in our consumer-society because *what we give them is material affluence and spiritual poverty*. “Children grow to fill the space we give them,”

the Chief Rabbi said. The space I suggest is determined by nests of contexts or holons with which we create the worldview within which we do our teaching. We need to keep hold of eternal values to resist the onslaught of exploitative materialism, and the dark side of the postmodernist world-view. So massively de-stabilizing is that onslaught that it would not be excessive to describe it as a spiritual tsunami. The only antidote or cure to de-humanization is re-humanization – which is why humanization is placed at the centre of the SunWALK model.

It is a bitter-sweet irony that we can only study holistic education fragmentedly. But we can live with a sense of the Whole – providing that we recognize that we have no ability to comprehend the Whole. Bahá'u'lláh says: *I know not how to sing Thy praise, how to describe Thy glory, how to call upon Thy Name.* (PM 122) Abdu'l-Bahá says: *truth in its essence cannot be put into words.* (ABL 22) Above all that we know we have to acknowledge the infinity of what we don't know.

In applying my thesis and model here I needed to summarize (some aspects of) 12 years' work. What did I get when I reduced more than 2000 books and papers, and many years of classroom 'experience and reflection and study' to a one sentence version of the model – consisting of approx 50 words?

### The 50 word 'one-sentence' version of SunWALK?

Concepts are delicious snacks with which we try to alleviate our amazement. (A. J. Heschel, *Man Is Not Alone* 7)

The one sentence version of *The SunWALK model of spiritualizing pedagogy* (learning & teaching) sees **human education** as the

storied development of meaning, constructed, and de-constructed, physically, mentally & spiritually, through Wise & Willing Action, via Loving and Knowing – developed in Community through Dialectical Spiritualization processes (in all 4Cs) – all undertaken in the light of the 'Sun' of (chosen) higher-order values and beliefs, using the best available, appropriate, content.

These are the key elements, sifted from a total list of more than four hundred concepts, and placed in a single, albeit, complex, sentence.

Presented as a *list of elements* the same one sentence version of The SunWALK model of spiritualizing pedagogy looks like this:

1. the storied development of
2. meaning
3. constructed, and
4. de-constructed

5. physically,
6. mentally and
7. spiritually,
8. through Wise &
9. Willing
10. Action via
11. Loving and
12. Knowing developed in
13. Community through
14. Dialectical Spiritualization processes all undertaken in the light of
15. the 'Sun' of (chosen) higher-order values and beliefs

Each of these is a study in its own right, and will constitute chapters or sections in a forthcoming book version, of the model, but there is no space here to do that, however in Part II I present a little more about five of the SunWALK model's major themes.

## **Part II – Five Core questions and issues from SunWALK in relation to Bahá'í-inspired education**

The five themes, as questions, are:

1. What is *the central idea* around which to build education?
2. Given that being and becoming human is the central idea *how should we structure education?*
3. How is knowing and knowledge viewed?
4. What is the key *process?*
5. How should we develop *the curriculum and its contexts?*

### **1. Unity, the central idea around which to build education?**

I suggest that the best answer to the question, '*What is the central idea around which to build education?*' is the idea of '*Being and becoming human, in the world with others, in the light of higher order values/virtues*'. The question, '*In what can we unite?*' also springs to mind'. I suggest that the answer to both is that we can unite in deeper and deeper understanding of what it is to be human – positively and fully – as guided by the best contemporary thought, as well as ancient wisdom<sup>13</sup>. Focus on being and becoming human is not the same as a Humanist viewpoint. The viewpoint here comes from the idea that we are made (potentially) in the image of God and also that we (ideally) grow in the presence of God, a presence that is maintained through prayer, meditation and engagement in service.

As a representative image of this human-centred modelling perhaps we can take the beauty of the human face. Beyond the beauty of the human face, in what then can we unite and in what can we cooperate? My answer is – in the *universality* of being human. We are human, here in the world, and our needs centre on the same realities. A student on a course on which I was teaching said, in answer to the question, ‘Where do human rights come from?’, ‘*Human rights arise from human needs*’. As is well known the psychologist Abraham Maslow described these needs and realities as being at eight levels.

Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs:

1. Physiological: hunger, thirst, bodily comforts, etc.;
2. Safety/security: out of danger;
3. Belonginess and Love: affiliate with others, be accepted; and
4. Esteem: to achieve, be competent, gain approval and recognition.
5. Cognitive: to know, to understand, and explore;
6. Aesthetic: symmetry, order, and beauty;
7. Self-actualization: to find self-fulfillment and realize one’s potential; &
8. Self-transcendence: to connect to something beyond the ego or to help others find self-fulfillment and realize their potential.

Human needs, and the rights and responsibilities attached to them, indicate the shared experience we have, and are as such grounded in such essential fellow-feelings as empathy and compassion. But this taxonomy of needs doesn’t tell us what *medium* it is with which the teacher works, in the way that the sculptor works with stone, or the painter with paint and canvas, or the dancer with body and space.

**With what medium does the teacher-as-artist work, as the sculptor works with stone or the dancer with her body?**

My answer is the human spirit – her own and her pupils. How might we construe that spirit? My answer is as the flow of ‘spirit-as-the-life-force’ (chi?)

One analogy for the ‘flow of spirit-as-the-life-force’ is water flowing. Another analogy lies in the flow of energy as dancer dances. Another metaphor for ‘the flow of spirit-as-the-life-force’ is that of white light. These metaphors are the opposite of the mechanistic ‘human-as-computers’ or the older ‘humans-as-machines’ metaphors.

Since, following Abdu’l-Bahá, I see teachers as ‘developers of consciousness’<sup>14</sup> I here am focusing on the idea of the life-force, in a normal person, culminating in (raised) consciousness. I also use the

term *interiority* to refer to consciousness. By interiority I mean 'affective awareness' and 'moral awareness' as well as 'cognitive awareness' – hence my preference for 'heart-mind' as a term for interiority. Thoughts lead to feelings and vice versa. In the West, post-Enlightenment, the heart and feelings have been presented as an opposite to the 'real thing' i.e. to reason. As with the elimination of the secondary status of women, peace for the human family needs a re-balancing of heart and head and a re-legitimization of other ways of knowing!

Metaphorically undifferentiated consciousness I suggest can be viewed as white light. When the light is differentiated I suggest we be concerned not with a full spectrum but with just the 'primary colours'. The primary colours of the human, the life-force in its spiritual form (i.e. all that is not-biological) can be seen as the red of the warmth of caring, the blue of cold reason, and the yellow of expressing creativity. (See logo diagram on p. 174 above, or for colour version please go to [www.holisticeducation.org.uk](http://www.holisticeducation.org.uk))

Seen as the three 'primary colours', Caring, Creativity and Criticality are not primarily ways of cognition, certainly not simply ways of *thinking about*. They are socially derived ways, and possibly even 'hard-wired' ways of being and of engaging with and acting in the world. Of course the brain is involved in all three modes – but not in the sense of reasoning. The 3Cs as presented here (see diagram 2, page 195) are *modes of being and doing*. It is true that caring draws upon both the creative, for example via imagination in empathy, and criticality, for example via estimating the seriousness of an act, but *being moved by some-thing and then moving* is a different mode to *thinking about* issues<sup>15</sup>.

In the West it seems to me that 'other ways of being' are mistaken for simply different kinds of cognition or 'thinking about'. Perhaps this is relevant to, for example, the feminist objection to the Kohlbergian developmental model of moral development (see Gilligan 1998). The evolution of moral maturity is not experienced by women as a step of improvement in reasoning. In general men, who hold the majority of the positions of power, are challenged by the idea that their way of being may not be the only valid way (much like some powerful nations whose ethnocentricity makes it difficult to understand that there are other worldviews.) Acknowledging other ways of knowing is vital for the paradigm shift, especially for a redress toward justice and peace – both require the establishment of the equality of women on the world's stage. The 3Cs are spiritual in the sense of the ongoing manifestation of the human spirit, but they are not of themselves the Spiritual<sup>16</sup>. The Spiritual in the divine sense is seen as the voice of God that speaks via the Revelations of the

Manifestations (but also to all, relatively, developed human consciousness) via God immanent: *Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting* (HW Arabic #13).

In the SunWALK model a quiet contemplative state of consciousness is metaphorically, the 'white light' state – the state when our spirit is dis-engaged from any one of the 3Cs. But from the contemplative we can 'fire up' into engagement that is Caring or Creative or Critical – we move from quietitude to focused engagement.

In the quietness of the contemplative the ever-present God can speak to us. Sometimes what we hear is impurified through egotistical 'interference', sometimes not. But from an educational point of view since this is part of how we function as humans, being made in the image of God, and this needs to be factored into any educational model that considers itself Spiritual or Bahá'í.

Our psycho-spiritual life consists of events, most of which are interactions that come through Caring, Creative, Critical and Communal engagement. To ground these let me say this – Criticality is the mode we (writer and reader) are in now. Caring would be the mode of engagement if out of compassion we jumped up to care for someone who had fallen down. Creativity would be your mode of engagement if you took an idea and danced it as a dance, or developed a series of filmic images, or represented it in paint, or as a sculpture. My sense is that we are only ever in one mode, but the other two are in the 'background' – each is 'supported' by the others. We can 'hover' between two modes – but I suspect this means switching back and forth rapidly between two modes. Whatever brain science eventually reveals will be interesting but not vital – the balance behind the three modes and the 4Cs is what education needs. They enable the eliciting, developing and refining of 'raw' spirit into appropriate and relevant abilities. They are what are needed to ensure that education is whole, and education that is whole can be instrumental toward the healing of our ailing world.

In SunWALK the teacher's job is to develop *abilities* from within the framework and dynamics of *Caring, Creativity, Criticality in Community – in the light of the 'Sun' of virtues/higher-order values*. The rest is information, and 'information processing' *utilized* for the development of abilities in the 4Cs. Examples of such abilities are the ability to analyse, differentiate, classify etc in the case of Criticality. In the case of Creativity the abilities relate to the use of the various arts media to express viewpoints subjectively. In the case of Caring abilities include the capacity to empathise and act with compassion so as to help others. The model also relates to several of the Ancient

Greeks' cardinal virtues; truth (Criticality), beauty (Creativity) and goodness (Caring). Justice is the over-riding virtue in the social realm but is equally the virtue in interiority that enables us to see reality via each of the 3Cs. It enables us to develop both autonomy and authenticity. Justice is seen as the chief 'conditioning' influence in all of the four Cs.

Each mode or voice needs an exemplary way or process to enable its development in learners. For Criticality my exemplary process is Professor Matthew Lipman's philosophical inquiry programme called *Philosophy for Children*. For Caring it is Bahá'í teachings and, from a wider community perspective, perennial philosophy. For Creativity it is – 'artistic' expression in any of its forms.

The 3Cs relate to three domains; the moral, the artistic and the scientific. Epistemologically the 3Cs provide three forms of knowing – internalized via socialization – from their various forms of social and cultural embodiment – such embodiment being every-thing from family members, to the media and galleries and museums.

As teachers it is our use of task setting and questioning that provides the opportunities for challenging and nurturing abilities in all of the 4Cs. The questions & tasks we give to children help socialize development within the distinct modes of Caring, Creativity & Criticality and in working in Community. With very young children the task setting and questioning might be as simple as:

- "Please offer the grapes to everyone." (Caring – Goodness)
- "Draw me a picture,' or 'Dance me a dance." (Creativity – Beauty)
- "Is the green doll larger or smaller?" (Criticality – Truth)

Enlightened, responsible, parents of course get these processes started from the child's earliest years and create a good foundation for the teacher to build on.

## **2. Given that being and becoming human is the central idea how should we structure education?**

In SunWALK the 4Cs, become the overall structure for developing theory and practice. What does this mean? Theoretical developments are looked at in terms of their value for supporting further work via the 4Cs framework. We all have frameworks, we all construe<sup>17</sup>, but they are not always explicit or shared, not always articulated so that we know them.

In practice series of lessons need to be looked at in terms of enabling balanced development between the four Cs. The need to

intensify one area might become apparent following reflection on the work pupils have achieved over the preceding weeks. Most important is the 'juxtaposing of work' especially the use of work from the criticality mode being used as a creative challenge, followed by the opposite i.e. creative work being used as the text for the next piece of philosophical inquiry. In my experience this 'dialectic' can become the most powerful form of pedagogy, and take the teacher and class into high-order 'crossover' experiences between the critical and the creative-meditative.

### 3. How is knowing and knowledge viewed?

Epistemologically two major shifts are seen as needed in education. The first is a shift from the mechanistic, atomistic view of *knowledge as 'stuff out there'* to *knowing as a state of being and a process of engaging with the world*. Education is still largely in a 'transmissive', 'Newtonian', mechanistic mode. The shift is more than a greater emphasis on experientiality or 'learning through the mastery of doing' – but it includes these re-emphases. It is even more an emphasis on being, and being in relationship with others, as opposed to individualistic, regurgitation of information that is largely meaningless to the learner, except for its instrumental value. The learner has to find meaning in forms of collective experience as well as in the personal. As Parker Palmer (1998) says in his book *Courage to Teach*;

It is not enough to get the big story inside the student but we also have to get the student inside the big story.

To escape from the dominance of 'transmission' a number of things have to be changed, most notably reliance on teaching that which can be tested in narrow, regurgitative ways. The answer here lies in a combination of self, teacher and peer evaluation that is cross-moderated right up to national level. Standards currently result in homogenization, which is the opposite of what is needed. We need standards but standards that are achieved via the principle of 'harmony in diversity', as opposed to standards that create homogenization.

The second shift is away from the 'god' of rationality into recognition of a range of ways of knowing. These can be seen as including women's ways of knowing, indigenous people's ways of knowing etc., but here I am proposing that education needs to legitimize four ways of knowing that correspond to the 4Cs in the model and these are not gender specific or culture specific;

Creativity: The subjective knowing that comes via the imagistic and other arts media

Caring: The knowing that comes from focusing on others needs

**Criticality:** The objective knowing that comes from observing, measuring, repeatability etc

**Community:** The interpersonal knowing that comes from being and working with others

The first three forms of knowing correspond with the voices of 'I', 'WE' and 'IT' as described by Ken Wilber in several of his books (1998a, 1998b, 2000).

In suggesting, as I do, greater emphasis on the other Cs I am not making an argument to diminish the rational. Far from it, since reasoning is taught abysmally in many schools. The exemplary process for criticality in SunWALK, philosophical inquiry, (Lipman's *Philosophy for Children*<sup>18</sup>), shows us how to raise standards in reasoning, and reasonableness.

#### 4. Q. What is the key process?

The key process for SunWALK is dialogue. It is dialogue that causes development that is worth having. Dialogue presupposes at least an element of innate knowing in human reality. Professor of Mathematics education Gene Maier emphasizes the vital difference between education and training;

“Educate” stems from *educere*, to lead out, a Latin word that lives in Modern English as “*educer*”. “Train” is from the French *traîner*, to drag behind one, as in “bridal train.” Thus, we have two disparate metaphors for teaching: leading out or dragging behind.<sup>19</sup>

The chief purpose of dialogue, and philosophical inquiry, as in Lipman's *Philosophy for Children*, is to *educer*, to lead out – as in Bahá'u'lláh's “*Man is a mine...*” (GWB 260) I extend the notion of dialogue into four forms to correspond with the four Cs and the four ways of knowing.

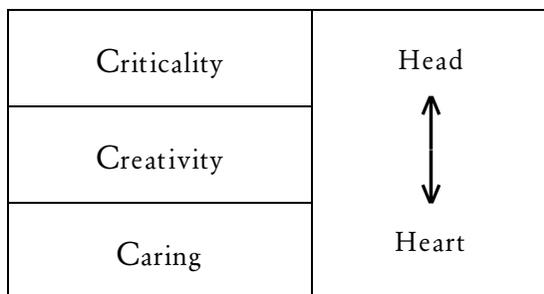
#### Intrapersonal dialogue

1. Caring = d. with and in the heart & with & in relationships – d. in other-centredness
2. Creativity = d. with and in and through the materials of the chosen medium; focused on expression of the subjective world-view (in the meditative) voice; to generate insight subjectively
3. Criticality = d. with and in texts (math., philosophical, critical) focused on expression of the objective voice – to generate insight objectively

## Interpersonal dialogue

4. Community = d. in and with people (or artefacts) that are part of the cultural, legal, social & political milieu – this form of d. includes the purpose of maintaining & developing the social/cultural milieu

The Western separation of affect and cognition can be a curse. Heart and mind, (heart-mind) are involved, more or less, in all three modes of engagement. Moral development, for example, as understood in SunWALK draws upon all forms of engagement and both affect and cognition. Cognition is sometimes defined as *the psychological result of perception and learning and reasoning*. But knowing and being in relationship do not require constant 'perception-and-learning-and reasoning'. A mother and baby for example can 'talk' to each other via touch whilst cognitive involvement can be elsewhere. Diagram 2 indicates a straightforward way to model the three Cs in relation to affect and cognition – criticality being more cognitively charged, and less affectively charged etc. However I still hold to the idea that ultimately interiority is best seen at 'bedrock level' as heart-mind, the flow of the life-force experienced as interiority or consciousness.



**Diagram 2 - The Three Cs**

The nature of the process and methodology is vital to all aspects, and users, of the SunWALK model. The researcher and the teacher, and the teacher-as-researcher, need, as the Americans say, to 'walk the talk'. This relates to two general points. Firstly civilized living is seen as a function of *how well a society brings together the private, subjective sphere, with the public sphere, i.e. the concerns of the group as a whole*. (What passes for democracy in the West may or may not do better than other forms of government, at least on such issues as care of children, or of the vulnerable – but its associated freedoms are vital to the manifestation of potential). The second general point concerns the conditions for maximizing the development of potential. Chief amongst the necessary conditions is the freedom of expression and the use of dialogue. However dialogue

here is seen as more than the exchange of speech. I include creative expression and meditation and consultation in my broadly-based definition of 'multi-level dialogue', as described earlier, since all of these provide the *stimulus* for a person, and the groups to which s/he belongs to manifest potential.

### **The revelation of abilities through the stimulus of dialogic challenge**

Highly relevant to the concern of subjectivity and of maximizing the development of peoples' potential are the writings of Charles Taylor, especially his book *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991, p. 61) where he says;

The notion that each one of us has an original way of being human entails that each of us has to discover what it is to be ourselves. But the discovery can't be made by consulting pre-existing models, by hypothesis. So it can be made only by articulating it afresh. We discover what we 'have it in us to be' by becoming that mode of life, by giving expression in our speech and action to what is original in us. The notion that *revelation comes through expression* is what I want to capture ... (emphasis added)

The chief means for eliciting potentials is seen then as dialogue, dialogue in the broadest sense, as described in the multi-level sub-model of dialogue. Taylor's *revelation through expression* is to my mind more than a definition of 'acceptable authentic individuality' compared to 'unacceptable individualism'. It is the identification of an essential principle for learning and development. That principle lies, as I described above, in having the creative and the rational yoked in dynamic relationship. It also provides an inter-faith (or pan-religious) way to understand the intuitive voice, the spiritual and the transcendent form of experience. One pathway to try to build common ground between the religious and the non-religious views of the spiritual is via art especially if we are willing to entertain the closeness of the subjectivity of art and the subjectivity of religious experience.

### **5. How should we develop the curriculum and its contexts?**

One of the key notions in SunWALK is that we enable the moral and spiritual to be present throughout the whole process of education. One essential way of doing this is to place all technical learning, from basic reading through to advanced engineering, in the context of being and becoming positively and fully human in the world with others. Maslow's<sup>20</sup> hierarchy of human needs if 'inverted' gives us the transcendent as the outermost context with which to embrace all 'lesser' focuses.

- 8) Self-transcendence: to connect to something beyond the ego or to help others find self-fulfillment and realize their potential.
- 7) Self-actualization: to find self-fulfillment and realize one's potential; &
- 6) Aesthetic: symmetry, order, and beauty;
- 5) Cognitive: to know, to understand, and explore;
- 4) Esteem: to achieve, be competent, gain approval and recognition.
- 3) Belonginess and Love: affiliate with others, be accepted; and
- 2) Safety/security: out of danger;
- 1) Physiological: hunger, thirst, bodily comforts, etc. (William Huitt, <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/regsys/maslow.html>)

When inverted Maslow's hierarchy can be seen as a hierarchy of contexts, rather like Ken Wilber's nests of holons. In SunWALK the spiritual is seen as the source of the will to act morally. The spiritual for me includes two simple ideas a) all that is not biological is spiritual and b) spirituality is living for others<sup>21</sup>. Personally I don't care what a person's belief system is so long as s/he is committed to truth, beauty, goodness and justice. Consider the absurdity, and horror, of humans being the only 'animals' that will kill each other because they hold to different ideas. "I know that Christ is king, and I'm prepared to kill you as a consequence." "I know that Muḥammad is the Seal of the Prophets, and I'm prepared to kill you as a consequence." "I know that all religion is the opium of the people and I'm prepared to kill you as a consequence." No lower 'animal' behaves like this. Whatever our worldview that which can be cherished, that which can unite us is acknowledging virtues – and in SunWALK I have chosen as cardinal the virtues of truth, beauty, goodness and justice.

Consequently development in education is seen as the ability to frame the curriculum within higher and higher developmental stages. In using Maslow's hierarchy 'inverted' the suggestion is that we try framing the more material or biological within the higher order context of transcendence. The transcendent (potentially) is here taken at its simplest to mean being able to live primarily in the light of higher order values, or 'virtues', and to be able to stay focused on the needs of others. 'Others' here is seen as ranging from ones own partner or family through to the human family as a whole. However the transcendent can mean more, most importantly it is experiences in which there is loss of ego boundaries, i.e. the subject and object become one. It is possible that in this 'the deeply spiritual experience' and the 'creative experience', or the 'aesthetic experience', are all the same – the unifying factor being the movement from subject-object

to an experience of oneness, expressed subsequently as a gain in 'deep feeling' or 'deep insight'. To include these, the deepest levels of human experience, requires sensitive, inspired teaching of considerable ability. SunWALK provides the framework for this kind of development and international cooperation of the holistic kind can help us create not just a vision, but working models and proven practice.

### **Curricula models – is there a fourth level?**

John P Miller (1996:5-8) suggests three forms/levels of educational orientation, the Transmissive, the Transactional and the Trans-formational – but is there a fourth? It seems to me that there is a case to be made for a fourth namely; the Transcendental. The transcendent I tentatively suggest might lie in *such a deep engagement, via any one of the four Cs, that there follows an experience of oneness between subject and object, (preferably) followed by new insight and new understanding*. Unitive experience is what Wilber calls boundarylessness, or a (temporary) loss of the ego boundaries<sup>22</sup>. Unitive experience of itself is not, of course, a guarantee of virtue. It is the contexts chosen that enable, or deny, virtues.

We can't teach transcendence but we can teach to maximize the possibilities of transcendent experience (but that will have to be the subject for another paper).

The approach used in SunWALK makes the model a vital new way to develop initial teacher education, as well as in-service teacher development. I will write about SunWALK's application to initial and in-service teacher education elsewhere but suffice it say that the model applied to teacher education will involve the same dimensions that are introduced here. This is to say that I believe that the way to organize teacher education, as well as the teaching of children, is via the 4Cs, multi-level dialogue etc.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has provided a brief description of aspects of the Bahá'í-inspired SunWALK model of holistic education'. It is concerned particularly with holism in respect of *interiority* and in respect of *balances* between the four modes of engagement with reality, which in the light of higher-order values, make us human, and which form a basis for true civilization.

Professionally as teachers we could structure our work on the three voices found in (Western) civilization the 'WE' voice (Caring), the 'I' voice (Creativity) and the 'IT' voice (Criticality) – in Community – with the rest of the process being refinement via use of various kinds

of information and processing of that information. SunWALK by placing all technical learning in a context of being and becoming human – in the light of higher-order values<sup>23</sup> is a way of proceeding that has the capacity to contribute to the establishment of justice and peace.

East and West have an abundance of riches to bring to the task of developing Bahá'í-inspired holistic education. With the 3 modes corresponding to 3 'voices' and corresponding to more diverse ways of knowing we have a way to take education into the future – providing they are linked to the cardinal values of goodness, beauty and truth, along with justice as the measure and conditioner of all. That way is a holistic maintaining of glorious diversity – harmonized by our recognition that we are all in the process of being and becoming more fully human, as with others, we spend our brief span in this world.

### **Future developments and partnership cooperation with other centres and further uses of the SunWALK model**

We are currently working at developing courses at various levels including an MA. We are interested to find 'partner' centres who would like to work with us at developing the model further – or at applying the model in schools or in teacher education. If you are interested please contact us at: [rogerprentice@bigfoot.com](mailto:rogerprentice@bigfoot.com)

About the SunWALK model Professor Martin Cortazzi wrote:

A further function of the SunWALK model might be to use the model to integrate theorizing of education and principles application to learning and teaching- in Bahá'í institutes and schools. Another function could be to facilitate ways for Bahá'í professionals to develop their working practices in all levels of education in more holistically oriented ways – in state or private school or colleges. Since the 'Sun' part of the model is so designed that the values from any religion, philosophy or community tradition can be placed in the centre and worked through, integrating practices around the 4Cs, the model has the further function that it might be used to establish common ground between different faiths or worldviews applied to education. This is an exciting challenge towards a holistic vision of spiritual traditions in education.

If you would like to discuss these ideas or receive a book list of key texts please contact me at [rogerprentice@bigfoot.com](mailto:rogerprentice@bigfoot.com) Much information about Holistic Education is available at [www.holisticeducation.org.uk](http://www.holisticeducation.org.uk)

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a development of presentations prepared for the Irfan Colloquium October 2004 at the Louhelen Bahá'í school and the forum held at the Bosch Bahá'í school by the CGIE – the Centre for Global Integrated Education, October 2004. In this version however I have tried to include some elements of a Bahá'í theological basis for educational philosophy.

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<sup>3</sup> The SunWALK logo and model of education © Roger Prentice 1995.

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<sup>4</sup> Of course I don't mean the Bahá'í Revelation or its proper institutions. Here I have in mind corrupt organizations in which people mis-represent knowledge in order to maintain power or achieve improper ends.

<sup>5</sup> The reader of course must decide whether 'discuss' means the openness of dialogue or the closedness of cloze procedures.

<sup>6</sup> 'Mistakes' are vital to learning – as someone said the fastest way to progress is 'ready, fire, aim'. (My apology for the nature of the metaphor)

<sup>7</sup> We mustn't because of contemporary chaos think that the postmodern is all bad. An excellent sorting out of the benefits as well as the demerits of postmodernism is to be found in Wilber (1998 ch. 9)

<sup>8</sup> Savi says:

To summarize the first three Valleys: in the first Valley, the self, with its aspiration to realize its hidden potentialities and to become similar to the Self of God, requires the capacity of willing, intended as willingness to turn towards the True Beloved, willing-ness to choose a course of action, to determine which thoughts, feelings, words, deeds to manifest in this earthly life so that the self may be transformed into a divine, angelic identity. In the second Valley, reason, in its yearning to acquire knowledge of outer and inner reality, requires the guidance of a divine universal mind that will "teach it the science of the love of God" (SVFV 52). The acceptance of this guidance is the secret to acquiring a real and sound knowledge. ([http://bahai-library.com/?file=savi\\_will\\_knowledge](http://bahai-library.com/?file=savi_will_knowledge))

<sup>9</sup> The whole of the Harper and Row 1965 book *Ultimate Concern – Tillich in Dialogue* by D. Mackenzie Brown is online at <http://www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=538> (accessed 29 Jan 2005)

<sup>10</sup> Much information including a summary is to be found at <http://americanvalues.org/html/hardwired.html> (accessed 29 Jan 2005)

<sup>11</sup> The 'Sun' for Bahá'ís obviously is the Bahá'í Revelation. However the model is designed to enable us to work spiritually with others without distorting relationships through feeling the need to convert; that is it is designed to respect other forms of worldview within the 'Sun'.

<sup>12</sup> 'Texts' includes experience of dance, video, theatre etc. – and especially the text of self.

<sup>13</sup> The current interest in 'restorative justice' for victims, and between them and perpetrators of crime, is essentially a process of re-humanization of the perpetrators. Of course it is also for some of the victims a releasing from the negatives that can destroy.

<sup>14</sup> I have in mind the passage:

*There are certain pillars which have been established as the unshakable supports of the Faith of God. The mightiest of these is learning and the use of the mind, the expansion of consciousness, and insight into the realities of the universe and the hidden mysteries of Almighty God. To promote knowledge is thus an inescapable duty imposed on every one of the friends of God. (SWAB 126-7)*

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<sup>15</sup> I continually repeat this point because many people seem to find it difficult to understand the difference between cognition and being in the creative mode (essentially the same as the mystical) or the caring mode. My impression is that something of the order of 90% of male academics, for example, just don't 'get it' – they literally cannot get out of their heads. Some women academics and politicians seem to have essentially adopted a male-like persona in order to succeed. (Possibly their only option.)

<sup>16</sup> I have chosen to capitalize Spiritual to indicate divine influence. I have in mind those passages where 'Abdu'l-Bahá speaks of the 'breaths and promptings' of the Holy Spirit – e.g. PUP 7, 23, 41, 142; PT 179. In Paris Talks the notion of higher self is not capitalized – however in a sense the higher self it is that receives the 'breaths' and 'promptings'.

<sup>17</sup> The psychologist Kelly developed a whole psychology on the idea of our construing – see <http://www.brint.com/PCT.htm> for a summary of his work (accessed 29 Jan 2005)

<sup>18</sup> There are many books by Lipman and about Philosophy for Children. A good classroom based introduction is Bob Fisher's 1998 book *Teaching Thinking – Philosophical Enquiry in the Classroom*. Lipman's opus magnum is *Thinking in Education*.

<sup>19</sup> Mair's website on maths learning contains much more than mathematics, see <http://www.mlc.pdx.edu/ARC060998.html> (29 Jan 2005)

<sup>20</sup> For an introduction to Maslow's ideas in an educational context see Dr William Huitt's website at <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/regsys/maslow.html> (accessed 29 Jan 2005)

<sup>21</sup> These come from the much loved professor of Religious Education John Hull; many papers are online at <http://johnmhull.biz> (29 Jan 2005)

<sup>22</sup> This is a major theme in one of Wilber's early books *No Boundary* (1985)

<sup>23</sup> The teacher, the school, the community needs to decide on those virtues that are to form the 'human context' for a school's teaching – I have argued for truth, beauty, goodness and justice to be cardinal but compassion and empathy as well imagination and other key qualities must be developed. The authority of the school needs to be derived from periodic consultations between representatives of all stakeholders.