



The End or a New Beginning: A Parallel Look at the COVID19 Pandemic and Wholetheme Education

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PANDEMIC WORLD OF COVID19

Academic year 2019-2020 is gone

2020-2021 is about here; and hopefully, COVID19 is on its way out. What is next on the highly unusual crystal bowl of still early 21 Century? Among these, COVID19 deserves special attention because it is still fresh on the minds and represents pandemic spread, success, dedication, and sacrifice. 2020-2021 deserves attention because it is the bridge to the future. 2019-2020 represents the outdated past to which we must not return. In retrospect, the relative significance of this closing years of the first two decades of the 21 Century was anticipated in 1994 to be a function of the last two decades of 20 Century (see Figure 1). In this figure, the top panel demands wholetheme development of understanding, a notion similar to pandemic spread, thoughtful success, dedication, and sacrifice like COVID19 and possibly 2020-2021. By contrast, the opposite is portrayed in the bottom panel

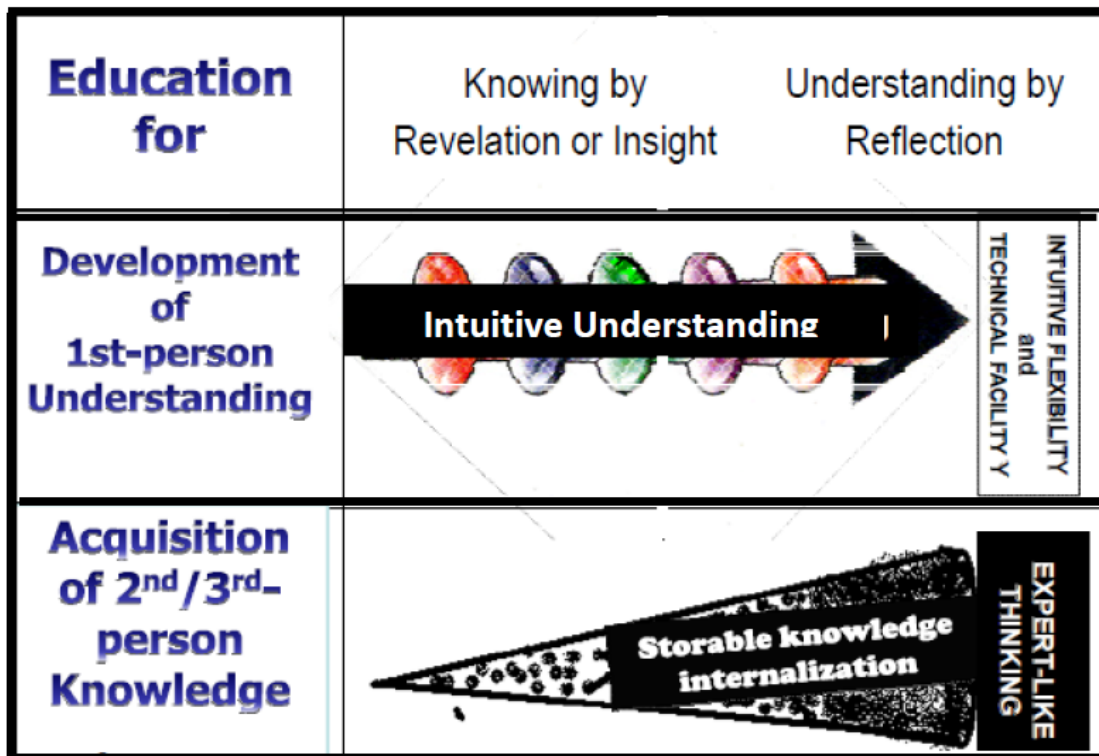
Wholetheme Education

Post-COVID19 education may take one of the two routes shown in the two panels in Figure 1. Either, following the past, the default expectation for the coming academic year (2020-2021, lower panel) is to reopen schools with this default mandating the used wheels of education to roll forward as usual. Everyone then knows, more or less, what to do! Alternatively, Figure 1 recommends for the coming academic year a major shift in education from piecemeal 2nd/3rd-person knowledge acquisition (lower panel) to education for wholetheme development of 1st-person understanding. It is (a) the understanding of that shift that is going to make the difference; and here is where (b) there is room for the 1st-person understanding of every individual, in principle, around the globe—from the Situation Room at CNN to my daughter's elementary school in San Diego—and where (c) the fresh experience of COVID19 comes handy. Therefore, the shift from today's piecemeal to tomorrow's wholetheme education shows the road never taken before. If it is taken, it promises to make all the difference.

The closest existing case example for this wholetheme movement, one that has ever been tried in history is, by analogy, the COVID19 pandemic. The difference is that the former will be a matter of life and living endeavor and the latter has so far been a matter of life and death. In principle, A life-

and-living shift at least as large, well-orchestrated, and all-encompassing as the world experienced during the COVID19 pandemic

Figure 1. Wholetheme spirals of biofunctional understanding (top) and piecemeal input-



transformation-output knowledge internalization (bottom).

Wholetheme knowing by revelation (biofunctional understanding) and understanding by reflection (conceptual understanding) only apply to the top panel (Iran-Nejad & Irannejad, 2017). Learners seek their own revelations and reflect on them. The bottom panel represents piecemeal input-transformation-out knowledge internalization by seeking taxonomies and improvising with them. A. Iran-Nejad (1994). The global coherence context in educational practice: A comparison of piecemeal and whole-theme approaches to learning and teaching. *Research in the Schools*, 1, 63-76.t

Figure 1 bottom panel shows today’s business-as-usual in education. The principle feature of this is second Person education in the classroom using third-person materials (textbooks). It depicts youth learning from the knowledgeable others. As a model for scientific research, this learning depicts an input- transformation-output sequence that is very slow and highly laborious. Output translates into the so-called capacity-limited, read torturous, effort aimed at storing this Second Person knowledge, and expecting to return the content back to the teacher via examinations. The core idea in the bottom panel is knowledge-internalization. The principle difference between bottom and top panels is that the top panel portrays learning by understanding. The top panel is opposite of knowledge-internalization without understanding. The ultimate in the bottom panel is expert-like thinking. The ultimate in the top panel is intuitive flexibility and technical facility, which happen during Wholetheme Biofunctional Understanding Spirals (shown by figure’s color wheels). The highlights of the ongoing process are: knowing by revelation (also known as insight) or

understanding by reflection. An insight is perceived, reflected upon, and then it turns into understanding. In the top panel, knowing by revelation occurs as a function of resisting the usual. When the usual is resisted, insights and understanding form. Once the knowing of revelations are reflected upon, the spiral leads to understanding by reflection. The spirals go on developmentally as one moves throughout life and living. A major difference between bottom and top panel is that the bottom soon sets boredom and is found as uninteresting, yet the top panel sets understanding and experiencing revelation therefore engaging learner interest when one find's their desired area of interest. In the top panel, the role of the teacher changes from knowledge providers to guiders as necessary in a unique way that becomes biofunctionally affective. Guiding first person learners to help them to resist the usual.

CONCLUSION

What are we learning about other areas of life and living from the ongoing COVID19 pandemic? One of the most obvious and impactful realms of endeavor has been famously called social distancing. In education, social distancing has always been unnaturally confined to 2nd/3rd-person knowledge acquisition; and its role has seldom been considered for the development of 1st-person understanding. Second and Third person education can now easily be seen as outdated and can be replaced with the insight-provoking, understanding-inducing First person education. In the past, everyone participating in education has headed towards the classrooms where the teacher is in control, while the learner typically participates passively. This kind of infrastructure has never done justice to education, student motivation, and to technological advancement. It is outdated and needs to be replaced.

References

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