



# The Emergence and Characteristics of Integral Education

## An Introduction

*Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, Jonathan Reams,  
and Olen Gunnlaugson*

It is mid-morning in a college classroom with a view of the surrounding hills reflecting soft light into the otherwise stark room. The professor is aiming to help his students find their way through the various theories they have been exposed to over the last four weeks of this course. One young woman raises her hand and asks in earnest seriousness, “But which is the best theory?” He is stopped short in that moment. He realizes that he has projected a variety of assumptions about what these graduate students know and how they know it. Her question invites him to reflect on what is needed in order to help her learn, rather than simply teach what he knows. He proceeds to convey the benefits of relating to the strengths and limits of various theories rather than simply adopting any one of them. Even then he recognizes that there is so much implicit in what and how he is teaching. In particular, he is faintly aware of the range of worldviews that exist within the students in this classroom and feels the challenge of trying to create an educational space that is sensitive to and challenging of these various modes of understanding reality and our relationship to it. How does he simultaneously acknowledge her desire to have a single theory be the “best” one and to point out there are more complex ways of relating to the range of theories, frameworks, and approaches available to us.

Reflecting on that moment, he comes to realize how much he has been inspired by a notion of education that aims to integrate a wide variety of educational influences and perspectives. He also realizes that he is still early in the process of realizing the potential that such an integrative, or integral approach to education



1 holds. Like many educators, he finds himself on a journey into a territory where  
2 the contours and landmarks are changing as the world around us changes. The  
3 maps he has for this journey are themselves in transition, as well as shaping the  
4 territory in the process. His desire to manifest an integral pedagogy has set him  
5 on a course that involves map-making in a landscape in flux, and finding good  
6 companions for the journey is important.

7 The book before you is the outgrowth of a three-year long conversation, and  
8 of gathering colleagues to share their ideas, reflections, and stories about integral  
9 education. As this landscape is still in its formative phases, our intent has been to  
10 introduce the emerging principles of integral education and the range of frame-  
11 works used to embody these principles. We also want to lay some groundwork for  
12 expanding the conversation in ways that convey our and the authors' particular  
13 views and relationship to integral education and integral studies.<sup>1</sup> After some  
14 deliberation, we chose to focus on exploring integral education within formal and  
15 informal contexts of higher education and adult education, in part because of our  
16 own professional settings but also from the shared recognition of the importance of  
17 bringing together the conversations and research of our colleagues. In addition to  
18 this focus we feel that this volume serves educators in other educational contexts  
19 such as outdoor education, the development of professional trainings, assessment  
20 of educational effectiveness in high schools, and overseas field courses.

21 Designations such as *alternative*, *holistic*, and *transformative* have been  
22 applied with increasing frequency to educational theories and practices in recent  
23 years. Thus there are a number of substantive approaches to education that find  
24 expression in contemporary schools, including those informed by the metaphysical  
25 perspectives of philosopher-sages like Rudolph Steiner (1965, 1967, 1983, 1997),  
26 Alfred North Whitehead (1929), Jiddu Krishnamurti (1912, 1953, 1974, 1975),  
27 and Sri Aurobindo.<sup>2</sup> There are also a growing number of schools along the entire  
28 spectrum of education (from elementary school programs to doctorate degrees) that  
29 provide various expressions of alternative education in action. These approaches are  
30 often referred to as *holistic* and are associated with the educational approaches of  
31 individuals like John Dewey (1975) and Maria Montessori (1916, 1965, 1973).  
32 Lastly, there are the *transformative learning* approaches connected to the research  
33 of Jack Mezirow (1978, 1990, 1991). Often, these approaches are contrasted with  
34 the more *mainstream*, *conventional*, or *traditional* forms of education, which tend  
35 to focus on the acquisition of knowledge, development of cognitive skills, and  
36 individual achievement. This division in educational approaches has many sources  
37 and a long history (Crain, 2000; Forbes, 2003; Miller, 1997).

38 To our thinking, these efforts indicate pathways and initiatives that are  
39 working toward actualizing valuable and timely ideals of education. While there  
40 is an acknowledged overlap between such approaches and what we present in this  
41 book, we feel that there are also important distinctions and points of departure  
42 that merit identification and further exploration.

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Academic discourse on *integral* education has thus far been largely absent from mainstream educational literature, as well as from leading conferences and publications in holistic, transformative, and other modes of progressive education. In the last few years this has started to change through various seminars, conferences, and academic publications all focused on integral education (see below). These represent the diversity of thought and exploration fueling what we perceive as an emerging field. We are convinced that integral approaches to education will contribute to the field of education at large. We see a growing need for frameworks that can unpack and articulate better distinctions around a comprehensive range of pedagogical issues. These frameworks need to be able to hold a variety of tensions in a dynamic balance, as well as be inclusive of diverse ways of engaging in educational endeavors. There are a number of creative tensions that lie at the foundation of an integral approach to education such as adhering to traditions while also emancipating ourselves from their constraints; the study of established forms of discourse and thinking outside the proverbial box; specializing in disciplinary distinctions and building bridges across domains of study; and cultivating contemplative dispositions while rolling our sleeves up as we jump into action.<sup>3</sup>

Holding these tensions in mind, the goal of this volume is to offer an overview of the current landscape of integral education, pedagogy, and curriculum from a variety of perspectives coming from leading researchers and practitioners working in integral education. Our aim is to make this research more accessible to both academics and educators and we anticipate that the initial readership of this book will include academics, educators, consultants, students, and others with an existing interest in integral education. Our intention is for this book to act as a resource to serve broader communities of university educators who may not be aware of what an integral approach to education encompasses, yet are actively searching for innovative and comprehensive solutions to the educational challenges they face. We also look forward to the prospects of this book being adopted for curricula relating to innovative approaches to education. Finally, our hope is this volume will contribute to the further development of integral education as a field of study (as well as to other emerging integral approaches in and across other fields of theory-practice).

### The Emergence of Integral Education

A number of self identified integral projects and initiatives have played an important role in preparing the soil for integral education to appear in different settings. A number of chapters present some of these projects, from nineteenth century initiatives to the ongoing 40-year history of the California Institute of Integral Studies. More recently, a variety of endeavors have surfaced that have taken an explicitly integral approach to education.





1 At the end of 2005 and in the beginning of 2006, *ReVision* published a two-  
 2 part issue on integral education, from a primarily Aurobindoian perspective, entitled  
 3 “Revisioning Higher Education.”<sup>4</sup> In the fall of 2006 John F. Kennedy University  
 4 began offering an accredited online graduate level certificate and a Master of Arts  
 5 degree in Integral Theory, with an explicit commitment to principles of integral  
 6 education.<sup>5</sup> In June of 2007 the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* (JITP) pub-  
 7 lished a special issue devoted to integral education from a Wilberian perspective with  
 8 applications and case studies aimed at character education, high schools, colleges,  
 9 and graduate universities.<sup>6</sup> Since August of 2007 there has been an annual five-day  
 10 seminar on integral education held on beautiful Whidbey Island in Washington  
 11 State.<sup>7</sup> In August 2008 John F. Kennedy University hosted the inaugural biennial  
 12 Integral Theory Conference, which showcased numerous presentations on integral  
 13 education as well as panels with some key figures in the field.<sup>8</sup> Over the last few  
 14 years a number of articles on integral education have been published in various  
 15 academic journals. (In addition, there is currently a non-academic anthology on  
 16 integral education in development focusing on a K-12 audience).

17 All of these initiatives together have contributed to a dynamic conversation  
 18 and engaged exploration about the nature and potential of integral education.  
 19 Our individual involvement with these efforts has fostered a desire to contribute  
 20 further to the development of the field by putting together this anthology. We  
 21 feel this volume is timely because there has been a growing interest in an integral  
 22 approach to education as evidenced by these and other initiatives. Yet the field is  
 23 still nascent, working to clarify its own boundaries and struggling to gain broader  
 24 acceptance and legitimacy. These challenges are further complicated by the diversity  
 25 of labels under which this approach has arisen around the world. Thus, our hope  
 26 is that this collection of voices will help expand the ongoing conversation and offer  
 27 inspiration to fuel new directions and research within this emerging field.

28 In particular, we aim to accomplish this objective through chapters that  
 29 provide an overview of the historical context, examples of distinct approaches, and  
 30 case studies as well as reflections on future directions for integral education. It is  
 31 important to us to provide a volume that conveys a reflective process of emergence  
 32 for the whole field so that integral education can grow to become more diverse  
 33 without losing touch with an interest in establishing grounds for a greater basis of  
 34 unity and shared vision. Thus, part of our inquiry has explored the characteristics  
 35 that distinguish an integral approach from neighboring approaches with similar  
 36 mandates (e.g., holistic approaches) as well as more conventional and mainstream  
 37 approaches to education.

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#### 40 Characteristics of Integral Education

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42 Integral education is an emerging field that draws broadly from an array of main-  
 43 stream, alternative, and transdisciplinary sources of knowledge. As a result we





are reluctant to posit a singular or overarching definition of integral education. 1  
 Rather, we are interested in encouraging multiple, even contradictory approaches, 2  
 to integral education. Such diversity is, we feel, essential to the deeper process of 3  
 clarification and articulation of what lies at the heart of integral education. It also 4  
 provides room for things to be permeable and messy. This diversity is not only 5  
 reflected in the breadth of chapters presented, but also emerges from the range of 6  
 views and experiences we as editors bring to the process. Our dialogue as editors, 7  
 and those with our authors, has helped to identify key characteristics common to 8  
 many self-identified as well as parallel integral approaches to integral education. 9  
 Thus, we have identified a number of foci, commitments, or elements that enact 10  
 integral education. These include the following: 11

- *Exploring multiple perspectives:* Our view of integral education is that 13  
 it avoids splitting complex issues into simple binaries; paradox, con- 14  
 tradiction, polarity, multiplicity, and dialectics are invited, cultivated, 15  
 and embraced. Reality is multidimensional and as a result we need 16  
 to include the insights and truths from myriad perspectives as they 17  
 all have something to offer a more complete understanding of any 18  
 topic or phenomena. This integrative process often does not lend 19  
 itself to (re)presenting a clean well-organized single reality. 20
- *Including first-, second-, and third-person methodologies of learning and 21  
 teaching:* We recognize the simultaneity of subjective, intersubjective, 22  
 and objective aspects of reality and the need to make contact with 23  
 these aspects with domain appropriate injunctions and criteria. Thus, 24  
 combining learning modes like artistic expression, participatory inquiry, 25  
 and empirical analysis is commonplace in integral education. 26
- *Weaving together the domains of self, culture, and nature:* Our experi- 27  
 ence has led us to valuing how these respective areas fit together and 28  
 can be integrated. These three domains serve as an integral checks 29  
 and balances system that minimizes excess in any particular area. 30
- *Combining critical thinking with experiential feeling:* Every action has 31  
 an explicit or more often implicit logic behind it. These logics are 32  
 affective as well as cognitive, requiring a commitment to intellectual 33  
 rigor and the grounding of such rigor in direct knowing and embodied 34  
 experience. Thus, an ongoing effort is made to ground conceptual 35  
 distinctions within our lived experience and shared resonance with 36  
 others. 37
- *Including the insights from constructive-developmental psychology:* We 38  
 see a central role for developmental approaches that recognizes that 39  
 individuals—students and teachers—are at different stages of growth 40  
 in their personal and educational journeys. The more we can inform 41  
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- 1 our classrooms by these insights the more contexts we can provide  
2 to engage with this vital transformative potential.
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  - 4 • *Engaging regular personal practices of transformation:* We can each  
5 engage in various practices to participate in our own “interior”  
6 growth allowing us to embody more perspectives through various  
7 practices of “body, mind, and spirit.” There are all kinds of informal  
8 and formal techniques for exercising our embodiment, awareness,  
9 and presence—the more we develop each of these the more open  
10 we are to learning.
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  - 12 • *Including multiple ways of knowing:* We recognize that not only do  
13 we all develop, but also we develop along multiple pathways of being  
14 (e.g., cognitive, emotional, moral, kinesthetic, transpersonal). Each  
15 of these pathways provides us with a distinctive way of knowing  
16 and learning that is irreducible and therefore needs to be honored  
17 on its own terms and included as fully as possible. This includes a  
18 multidimensional view of humans that honors body, heart, mind,  
19 soul, and spirit.
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  - 21 • *Recognizing various types of learners and teachers:* The comprehensive  
22 nature of an integral approach also embraces the complexity that  
23 various typologies add to the picture. Issues of learning styles, per-  
24 sonality types, pedagogical styles and more lead us to be aware of  
25 the need to appeal to multiple modes of learning and expression.
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  - 27 • *Encouraging “shadow work” within learners and teachers:* We also have  
28 learned the importance of students and teachers becoming more self-  
29 reflective and increasingly aware of their trigger points—what makes  
30 us reactive, dismissive, or shut down to ideas and other people. By  
31 learning to look at what we do not want to see in ourselves (and  
32 others) we become more compassionate and open to learning. This  
33 is an ongoing process of owning our projections, minimizing ide-  
34 alization, avoiding the tendency to split things into good and bad,  
35 catching ourselves when we are rationalizing away our responsibility  
36 and so forth.
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  - 38 • *Honoring other approaches to education:* We feel that one of the  
39 attributes of integral education is that it is committed to being  
40 knowledgeable about the strengths and limits of conventional, alter-  
41 native, holistic, and transformative approaches to education. Each of  
42 these approaches has valuable contributions to make toward a more  
43 integral approach.
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1 These ten characteristics represent some of the central features of our present  
 2 understanding of integral education. They are neither mutually exclusive nor  
 3 exhaustive. Different approaches to education in general and integral education in  
 4 particular interface with this list in a variety of ways: some adhere to all of them,  
 5 some emphasize various characteristics more than others, and some only illustrate  
 6 a few of these. Nevertheless, these characteristics offer a provisional overview of  
 7 the distinct elements that characterize educational approaches as *integral*. In call-  
 8 ing attention to these characteristics, our interest is also to further distinguish  
 9 integral education from neighboring approaches such as holistic education. While  
 10 holistic approaches may share a number of the characteristics above, there are  
 11 important differences, which this book hopes to further clarify. In inviting authors  
 12 to contribute to this book, we encouraged them to reflect on and introduce new  
 13 distinctions relevant to integral education that they feel optimally serves their  
 14 objectives and experience.

### 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44

The opening section of this volume provides a background on the development  
 of the early initiatives in integral education, tracing historical roots and emergent  
 branches. Next we focus on the theoretical foundations and distinct approaches  
 of integral education, including; *integral pedagogy* (perspectives on the process of  
 learning/education); *integral curriculum* (perspectives on the implications for teacher  
 education and course design); and modes of *integral learning and inquiry* (explora-  
 tions of the role of transformation and development). We then proceed to showcase  
 applications of integral education, addressing case studies within post-secondary  
 settings including online education. Finally, we include chapters that address the  
 hopes and concerns for establishing integral education as a field, specific educational  
 implications, and methods of assessment for integral approaches and research, fol-  
 lowed by exploratory perspectives on the future of integral education.

#### Section I: Historical Contexts

Integral education is informed by a rich variety of historical sources. The most  
 common historical association is with India's philosopher-sage Sri Aurobindo  
 (1872–1950). While this is an important association, our aim in this section is  
 to situate integral education within a broader historical context. In acknowledging  
 the myriad historical currents feeding into integral education, we feel that a richer  
 conversation can emerge that will help carry integral education into our present  
 moment and beyond.

Gary Hampson opens this section with *Western Islamic and Native American  
 Genealogies of Integral Education*. In this chapter he unpacks a range of meanings





1 of the term integral and applies a scholarship of integration to reveal the deeper  
2 historical roots underlying integral education. After a brief exploration of Amer-  
3 indian notions of integral education, he traces a lineage of educational thought  
4 and practice beginning with Plato's Academy, through the Islamic Aristotelian and  
5 Medieval renaissances, and into the Italian and German Neoplatonic renaissances.  
6 He concludes by describing how this lineage relates to current higher educational  
7 practices as presented in the rest of this volume.

8 Next Hampson joins Markus Molz in the combined contribution *Elements of*  
9 *the Underacknowledged History of Integral Education*. In this chapter they begin by  
10 picking up the thread at the stage where explicit use of the term integral education  
11 came about. They have uncovered a series of educational ventures from the mid-  
12 nineteenth to early twentieth centuries that took the ideas and ideals of integral  
13 thought and created educational systems, practices, and schools that were innovative  
14 and in many cases left a lasting impact on a wider strand of educational practice.

15 We conclude this section with an chapter by Jim Ryan, *The Complete Yoga:*  
16 *Lineage of Integral Education*. Ryan presents the educational vision of Haridas  
17 Chaudhuri and its roots in Sri Aurobindo's *integral yoga*. He outlines the three  
18 features of Chaudhuri's approach and how these are illustrative of the ideals of the  
19 California Institute of Integral Studies. In doing this Ryan provides us with an  
20 important window into one of the most influential historical streams of integral  
21 education.

## 22 23 Section II: Distinct Approaches

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25 There are a number of different integral approaches to education available today,  
26 such as those inspired by; Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics and integral psychology  
27 (e.g., The California Institute of Integral Studies), Ken Wilber's Integral model  
28 (e.g., the Department of Integral Theory at John F. Kennedy University), Rudolf  
29 Steiner's esoteric philosophy (e.g., the Waldorf education system), and William  
30 Torbert's developmental action inquiry (e.g., the Department of Organizational  
31 Transformation at Boston College). Each of these competing and complementary  
32 approaches is an important part of the emerging conversation of what traditions  
33 have constituted and are presently informing integral education.

34 In this section we showcase several of the well-known approaches (mentioned  
35 above) as well as some emerging ones. We begin with Sean Esbjörn-Hargens' *Inte-*  
36 *gral Theory in Service of Enacting Integral Education: Illustrations from an Online*  
37 *Graduate Program*. In this chapter, he presents both a general overview of integral  
38 education based on the five elements of the AQAL model and a specific case  
39 study of a graduate level program based on and in Integral Theory. In seeking to  
40 articulate both general principles and concrete details of integral education, he has  
41 sought to give voice to an Integral approach that is robust enough to withstand

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the rigor of graduate and postgraduate level research while also being adaptable to the demands of different fields of study across the education spectrum.

In *Integral Transformative Education: A Participatory Proposal* Jorge Ferrer, Marina Romero, and Ramon Albareda provide an introduction to their participatory model of integral transformative education. This approach draws from all human dimensions: body, vital, heart, mind, and spirit within a process of inquiry and integration. They outline two additional approaches to integral education in order to draw a contrast with their own proposal, which is symbolized by the “integral creative cycle” of the four seasons. They conclude by outlining five basic features of integral education and then go forward to explore the challenges and prospects of such a participatory approach.

Next, Erica Steckler and William R. Torbert provide an overview of an approach to integral education based on action research in *A “Developmental Action Inquiry” Approach to Teaching First-, Second-, and Third-Person Action Research Methods*. Steckler and Torbert present us with a wonderful examination of the application of decades of research into a developmental action inquiry approach to education. Through describing three detailed incidents in Torbert’s Action Research Methods PhD course, they illustrate how first-, second-, and third-person action and inquiry can interweave to generate single-, double-, and triple-loop feedback that can cultivate real-time awarenesses in both researchers and leaders.

In *Teaching Integratively: Five Dimensions of Transformation*, Roben Torosyan looks deeply into the question of what it means to teach integratively. He examines Lauer’s five dimensions of living and learning and draws out novel comparisons with other leading developmental models to help learners consider multiple perspectives and apply learning concretely to personal, professional and civic life alike through various applied examples.

Concluding this section, Matthew Bronson and Ashok Gangadean team up in *Encountering the (W)hole: Integral Education as Deep Dialogue and Cultural Medicine*. Here they model “deep dialogue” through a notation system that Gangadean has developed and uses to explore integral themes of educational inquiry. Their approach combines global philosophy and linguistic investigation in service of meta-cognition. In the process, they surface a number of considerations and cautions around any integral endeavor.

### Section III: Case Studies

Having presented five distinct approaches to integral education we now turn our attention to more explicit applications of integral principles to education. In this section we have seven case studies, which explore integral education in a number of contexts: online, non-academic, contemplative, assessment, science, and health. We begin with Ed Sarath’s *Jazz, Creativity, and Consciousness: A Blueprint*





1 for *Integral Education*. Sarah recounts an emergent model of integral curriculum  
2 that was central to a program he developed in Jazz and Contemplative Studies at  
3 the University of Michigan. His chapter explores the implications for embracing  
4 epistemological diversity—that is, first-, second-, and third-person perspectives on  
5 meditation, improvisation, and coursework and how this enriched view has brought  
6 about a more integral expression of jazz education.

7 Next, in *Grounding Integral Theory in the Field of Experience*, Terri O’Fallon  
8 presents a case study of the application of integral thought at *Pacific Integral*, a  
9 graduate-level professional leadership development program near Seattle, Washing-  
10 ton. The article showcases the deep learning behind the task of embodying integral  
11 principles and theories and how they led to insights concerning the relationship  
12 between state-stages and structure-stages of development. The chapter illustrates  
13 the transformative potential in working with key principles of integral education  
14 within a cohort group of professionals.

15 Then, Moshe Renert and Brent Davis present their work in *An Open Way of*  
16 *Being: Integral Reconceptualization of Mathematics for Teaching*. They use an Integral  
17 framework to analyze past and current research of mathematics for teaching and  
18 contend that Wilber’s Integral Methodological Pluralism is a suitable methodology  
19 for investigating the multiple layers and potentialities of this complex human activ-  
20 ity. They conclude by discussing some of the implications for teacher education  
21 entailed by an integral reconceptualization of *mathematics for teaching*.

22 In *Written in “Three Voices:” A Turn Toward Integral Education*, Irene Karpiak  
23 explores the pedagogical significance of integrating the objective, subjective, and  
24 intersubjective dimensions of integral education and development in her writing  
25 courses at University of Oklahoma. Karpiak structures these three perspectives  
26 through the voices of the Artist, Scientist, and Philosopher and provides examples  
27 of how her students practice related writing exercises as a means for promoting  
28 integration within their understanding of course content and their development  
29 as writers.

30 Next, Joel Kreisberg takes us into one of his courses through *Integral Educa-*  
31 *tion, Integral Transformation, and the Teaching of Mind-Body Medicine*. In this chap-  
32 ter, Kreisberg presents how he has used three different integral formats to engage  
33 students in embodied learning of mind-body medicine: Murphy and Leonard’s  
34 Integral Transformative Practice, Dacher’s Integral Health Assessment, and Wilber’s  
35 Integral Life Practice. Through these frameworks, students explore their own psy-  
36 chological and physical well-being directly through first-, second-, and third-person  
37 perspectives. Kreisberg’s resulting assessments provide educators with a number of  
38 considerations for using similar frameworks in their own classrooms.

39 In *Matching Educational Intentions with Assessment: Using an Integral Map*,  
40 Nancy Davis takes one aspect of Wilber’s AQAL framework, the quadrants, and  
41 describes how it has helped her and others she works with to disentangle various  
42 complex and even unrecognized issues in assessment. Her chapter shows how this  
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can connect educational intentions with appropriate assessment strategies and methods through learning to ask the right questions in the right contexts. Then in *Expanding our Vision in the Teaching and Design of University Science,—Coming to Know our Students*, Sue Stack narrates us through an examination of reforming physics teaching in Tasmania, Australia. Stack’s stories and reflections reveal the deep, complex, and multi-layered challenges being faced. By focusing on a few incidents, she allows us to feel into the depth of thought and capacity required to begin figuring out how to support such educational reforms in the systems and people we work with.

Section IV: Looking Ahead

In our last section, we have a number of chapters that speak to various considerations practitioners of integral education will want to be cognizant of as the field continues to emerge. The chapters in this section provide a unique perspective on the nascent field of integral education and establish possible directions for the field to take in the years ahead.

The first chapter is Katie Heikkinen’s *Integral Mind, Brain, and Education*. In this chapter, Heikkinen presents how the emerging field of Mind, Brain, and Education can benefit from an Integral approach. She uses Wilber’s Integral model as a comprehensive framework to support this new field in its goals of exploring the connections between educational, biological, and psychological sciences. In particular, she draws on Integral Methodological Pluralism to illustrate the relationship between various research approaches and the classroom.

Next, Carissa Wieler presents her *Embodying Integral Education in Five Dimensions*. In this chapter she draws on a number of educational contexts—formal and informal—to reflect on some of the key components of integral education. She takes us on a multi-layered journey of her own inquiry into the nature of being an integral student. The questions she raises and the insights she obtains along the way serve to invite us into our own exploration of all things integral, asking ourselves “am I fully engaged in my own learning?”

Then in *Opening Up the Path of Integral Education*, Olen Gunnlaugson reflects upon his previous integral assessment of the former holistic approach that guided *Holma College of Holistic Studies* in Sweden from 1996 to 2001. He revisits the integral perspective that emerged during the transition year to *Holma College of Integral Studies* in 2002–2003 and addresses the shortcomings and learning of this implementation phase. He then closes with questions and considerations for the development of future integral educational initiatives.

Next, Markus Molz’s *Contemporary Integral Education Research: A Transnational and Transparadigmatic Overview* surveys a great portion of current strands of integral education, focusing on European researchers and practitioners. This takes the previous historical thread in the opening chapters and brings it into the





1 current day, revealing the breadth of work going on within the notion of integral  
 2 education and parallel developments. His contribution can serve as a nexus, linking  
 3 likeminded theorists and practitioners and raising our vision of how integral educa-  
 4 tion currently exists to a significantly broader horizon.

5 In *Spirituality and Integral Thought in Higher Education*, Jonathan Reams  
 6 asks respected educational researcher Alexander “Sandy” Astin to reflect on his  
 7 long career in relation to integral approaches. In this conversation, Astin surveys  
 8 a number of forces at work in higher education in America today and how their  
 9 trajectory opens up the potential for higher education to move into a more explicitly  
 10 integral direction. In addition, he discusses his recent research project on spirituality  
 11 in higher education, and how the findings emerging lend further support for the  
 12 principles of education that an integral approach brings.

13 Last we have Jennifer Gidley’s *Evolving Higher Education Integrally: Delicate*  
 14 *Mandalic Theorizing*. In this piece, Gidley presents a display of integral thought  
 15 from her long research into understanding the core elements of an integral approach  
 16 to higher education. She briefly describes two dimensions through which integral  
 17 education theory could be broadened and deepened, the temporal and spatial,  
 18 and then goes into depth around a third, the pedagogical. She identifies four core  
 19 pedagogical values—love, life, wisdom, and voice—and shows how they enable  
 20 theoretic coherence to emerge between a unitive centre and the pluralism of the  
 21 periphery.

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 24 Coda/Afterword: Concluding Meta-Reflections  
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26 We conclude our introduction with a few words from our own meta-reflections  
 27 on the volume as a whole. Our intention here is to pull together several of the  
 28 threads that emerged throughout this volume and point to some of the key areas  
 29 facing integral education that remain to be explored. We also wish to leave you  
 30 with some thoughts for moving through the volume.

31 First, we want to direct your attention to some of the meta-issues that we  
 32 feel will be central to the development and evolution of integral education as an  
 33 academic field within higher education. One of these challenges is how integral  
 34 education as a *field of study* will require the careful unpacking of relationships  
 35 between what can at times be casually held and often enmeshed understandings of  
 36 integral as; a theory, a meta-theory, a model, or a meta-framework (i.e., AQAL).  
 37 A prime example of this involves challenges posed by the evolving relationships  
 38 between the work of Ken Wilber and other theorists who have either developed  
 39 integral ideas of education in parallel or built upon his work.

40 A second challenge revolves around what we feel to be a primary distinguish-  
 41 ing factor between holistic and integral education—the exploration of how best to  
 42 work with developmental models and theory in a classroom setting. How can we  
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engage multiple perspectives in order to build bridges from where students are and how they think to their next steps? What kinds of tensions exist between our desire to tell students all we know and their desire to learn what they feel they need?

The third challenge we perceive is about integral injunctions—actual individual and group practices for educators and students. In other words, how can any or all of this be put into practice? What kinds of limitations do we encounter in doing this, as well as in the concepts themselves?

Finally, we wish to leave you with a couple ideas for being mindful of the process involved in engaging an anthology like this. First, we recognize that it can be challenging to absorb and digest the contents of such a volume. Given this, what does it take to move through the process of encountering new perspectives, wrestling with them, taking in parts that resonate while holding a critical stance to others, to practice, experimentation, and moving toward embodiment? How can you as a reader support yourself through what this book stimulates? Second, it is clear to us that as an emerging field, integral education has no simple definitions, clear prescriptions or 10 easy steps to follow. How can you draw from the various chapters here and add your voice to the growing conversation of sorting out how we can better serve the deep callings that motivate us as educators? With that in mind, we invite you to dig in and explore these *new directions for higher learning!*

Notes

1. Throughout this volume we use *integral studies* to refer to the broad field of integral thought that includes both established and emerging approaches. We will allow the context of each article to determine if *integral* is being used in a general or in a particular sense (e.g., Wilberian). In alignment with the style guide of this series we have chosen to use “Integral Theory” (with capitalization) to designate a Wilberian usage. Likewise we will be capitalizing “Integral” when the usage is Wilberian and paired with terms like “Integral model,” “Integral approach,” and “Integral map.” This is because Ken Wilber has explicitly named his body of work “Integral Theory” and many authors in this volume predominately use these terms in this way.

However, we still feel that “integral theory” (without capitalization) is a legitimate usage to refer to a more generic collection of theories, models, and ideas that are “integral” in focus. Nevertheless, in this volume we will be using “integral studies” to signify the broad field of integral thought that includes well established as well as emergent approaches. Furthermore, our usage of “Integral Theory” (with capitalization) should be read in a broad Wilberian sense to mean beyond Wilber but anchored in the AQAL model he has developed and its associated distinctions.

We want to avoid a Wilber-centric discourse for a number of reasons. Toward this end, in Chapter 3 by Jim Ryan, we have retained his capitalization of the Aurobindoian terms “Integral,” “Integral Philosophy,” “Integral Yoga,” and “Integralists.” We do this to acknowledge the Aurobindoian tendency to also capitalize “integral” in these sorts of ways and to serve as a counter balance to a Wilber-only standard of capitalization. For us the





1 academic value of using capitalization in this way is to signify a specific usage of “integral”  
2 that refers to a particular corpus of theorizing and application.

3 It is important to us to support a plurality of integral streams of thought, especially  
4 in a dynamic new field like integral education. Thus, throughout this book we will not be  
5 capitalizing “integral education” even when used in an Aurobindoian or Wilberian context  
6 since this volume is explicitly using “integral education” in a broad way that includes these  
7 contributions but is not constrained by them.

8 2. It is worth noting that there are at least three different books with the title  
9 “Integral Education” coming out of the Aurobindoian context. The first one is a short  
10 book, less than 100 pages, that was published in 1952 and compiled by Indra Sen entitled  
11 *Integral Education: In the Words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother Selected from their Writings*.  
12 Thirty-five years later Raghunath Pani published *Integral Education: Thought and Practice*  
13 (1987). This is a comprehensive study (over 600 pages) comparing the National education  
14 policies of India with Sri Aurobindo’s contemplative approach. Most recently, Partho (2007)  
15 has published *Integral Education: A Foundation for the Future*. Partho describes the intent of  
16 this volume as providing “a personal Aurobindonian critique of integral education and not  
17 to present Sri Aurobindo or [the] Mother’s thoughts on integral education” (p. xvi).

18 3. For a more detailed description of these distinctions see Murray, 2009.

19 4. These two issues contained twelve articles, seven of which used “integral edu-  
20 cation” in their titles. This collection (guest edited by Matthew Bronson) showcased a  
21 variety of considerations and approaches to integral education (especially the Aurobindoian  
22 perspective). Three of the articles published in this two-part issue have been revised and  
23 published here.

24 5. In addition to these online offerings, JFKU has offered a Master of Arts in  
25 Integral Psychology on campus since 2002, which is based on Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga  
26 and Wilber’s Integral Theory. In addition, JFKU is now offering an integral psychotherapy  
27 track in their counseling program. JFKU currently has around a dozen core faculty and  
28 another dozen adjunct faculty who are exploring themes and issues related to integral edu-  
29 cation. Through its academic programs, hosting the biennial Integral Theory Conference,  
30 and housing the Integral Research Center, which is conducting original longitudinal integral  
31 research on education effectiveness, JFKU is currently playing a formative role in exploring,  
32 implementing, and enacting integral education at the graduate level.

33 6. The seven articles in the issue are arranged in a chronological order based on  
34 the age group each author-educator teaches. Thus, as you move through the issue, you  
35 can experience the full range of application of an Integral approach to education: mov-  
36 ing from the character education of elementary and middle school to the homerooms of  
37 high school to the majors of undergraduate campuses and the professional preparation of  
38 graduate universities.

39 7. The annual seminar is organized by *Next Step Integral*. Each year there are over  
40 attendees, over half of which are educators who present their insights on innovative ways  
41 to approach integral teaching and learning.

42 8. At the 2008 conference there were 16 presentations on integral education, many  
43 which had important implications or contributions to the conversation on integral education.  
44 Also there was a panel devoted to exploring education from an integral perspective and one  
45 devoted to the relationship between Integral Theory and academics. With over 500 people  
46 in attendance most of whom are involved with education or academics in some form (e.g.,





of the 100 presenters 75 of them had terminal degrees), this became an important event for integral educators.

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