Integral Leadership Review

Intention, Direction, Action: Inspiring Integral Leadership Through Process-oriented, Imagery-based Learning

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Abstract

Drawing on humanistic and transpersonal psychologies and phenomenological theories of the imagination, this paper seeks to contribute to the development of theories and practices at the intersection of transpersonal, transformative adult education and integral leadership, particularly by advancing the Metagogy model of teaching and learning, as recently outlined by McCaslin and Scott. The author explores the phenomenological nature of imagery in its encapsulation of tacit or explicit intention, intrinsic direction, and embedded action. She discusses the contribution of the imagination and creativity to personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal development as well as their role in transformative learning. Examples from students' responses to process-oriented, imagery-based exercises serve to illustrate how imaginal processes contribute to the practice of metagogy. Leading-off with the learner's imaginal world and through a creative process that integrates direct knowing with newly acquired knowledge, learners, as potential leaders, are inspired to realize their authentic callings, and actualize personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal possibilities.

Beyond meaning we long for presence. Beyond knowledge we long for something more direct and immediate with the world… a reversal of direction, a turn from doing first to being. This reversal is a humiliation of our consciousness, a humbling of our minds, which turns mind to nature, which soaks mind in the humus of *the anima mundi*, the world soul (Romanyshyn 67).

Imagination is the ground, container, as well as an agent of meaning — "seeing-through, hearing-into experience" (Hillman, 1979, p. 139). Returning to our imagination as the expression of soulfulness requires presence–not past or future orientation — a reversal of direction "from doing first to being" (Romanyshyn, 2002, p. 67) where intention reveals direction and direction births action (Netzer, 2008). In the process of drawing on inner knowing, integrated with external influences, the degree and nature of personal awareness transforms (Moustakas, 1967). Infused by the discoveries made when one is fully present to one's experience, activating all the senses, the intuition, and imagination, one's encounters with others change and transform as well (Netzer, 2008).

Refraining from analytical interpretation of the fruits of our imagination and, instead, sensing and fully embodying them, sustains our imagery integrity. Moreover, suspending conclusions — the product of linear, sequential thought progression — preserves our images intact. As we continue to develop, informed by discovery, our images unfold organically and shift, imparting new feelings and insight (Hillman, 1979). Such is the premise of a process-oriented, imagery-based learning. With a supportive, process-oriented, group shared structure, coupled with independent imaginal explorations, this form of learning unfolds from the inside out, personally and interpersonally. By giving primacy to the learner's imaginal world–a source of direct knowing — cross fertilized by other learners' imaginal expressions, and subsequently integrated with newly acquired knowledge–learners connect with their authentic purposes of learning.

To fully appreciate the ways in which learning experiences carry over into leadership, we must consider the broad scope of leadership, including the many ways in which humans accompany and guide each other in various formal and informal encounters. We may not realize the magnitude of our human capacity to lead in our various interactions with others (e.g., direct influence, unintended inspiration, energetic resonance). Moreover, the advent of internet-based communication (personal sharing and interpersonal exchanges) readily permits the individual's impact to be widely disseminated. In that sense, leadership is no longer the domain of a powerful few; neither does leadership always evolve in an organized a manner as it might have in decades past. Each one of us is a potential leader and we are all learners, regardless of our temporary position and roles in the leading-learning exchange. The realm of leadership is increasingly more inclusive and its boundaries are ever more permeable. Cultivating the Self (developing one's latent potential) to be competent in integral ways of being and relating (whole-person, authentic, and self actualized) may indeed be one of our primary tasks in higher education, with pivotal implications for the collective shaping of our world.

In recent decades, there has been a slow growing movement toward whole-person, contemplative, integral, transpersonal, and transformative learning approaches to adult education (where students' life experience and personal development are acknowledged as essential to their learning's meaning and purpose). This learner-centered shift has challenged educators to consider (a) the complex dynamics of the learner's inner life (self inquiry), (b) the value of process as vehicle for content integration, and (c) the complex relationships among students and teachers in the context of participatory learning (e.g., Braud, 2006; Doran, 1986; Dirx, 2001; Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006; Ferrer, Romero, & Albareda, 2006; Hart, 2004; McCaslin & Scott, 2012; McWhinney & Markos, 2003; Netzer & Rowe, 2010; Rogers & Freiberg, 1993; Yorks & Kasl, 2006). In the unique milieu fostered by attention to meaningfulness, where *being*, *knowing* and *acting* work in synergy, "what is learnt, the way in which it is learnt, and the way in which it is retained, all have an impact on the becoming of the student" (Blackie, Case, & Jawitz, 2010, p. 640). Further, when considering this reciprocal leading-learning paradigm, all involved may be potentially inspiring to others, but, at the same time, have the power to discourage others' contribution toward meaningful and purposeful learning.

These sensitive interactions in formally structured *learning communities* (McCaslin & Scott, 2012), invite educators to creatively design learning experiences and encounters by weaving experiential-knowing and acquired-knowledge in an embodied manner that requires a learner's personal engagement and the courage to enter "a space of vulnerability and uncertainty in which they can embrace their own beings" (Barnett, 2008, as cited by Blackie et al., 2010, p. 640-643). Ultimately, whole-person, integral, contemplative, transpersonal, and transformative approaches to teaching and learning link the world's many needs with diverse visions for change, in ways that encourage cross-fertilization among all learners–students and educators alike. Whereas the integration of established academic knowledge is specific to an individual's distinct learning objectives (increasing the likelihood of integral continuity between formal education and its personal and professional applications), the collective experience (the shared

journey) is equally as important to each learner's meaningful growth and development (e.g., McCaslin & Scott, 2012; McWhinney & Markos, 2003; Netzer & Rowe, 2010; Rowe & Netzer, 2012).

My experiences as an art therapist and adult educator have led me to explore the value of a process-oriented, imagery-based learning and its inspiration of constructive change, an awakening to one's calling for service in the world (e.g., Netzer & Brady, 2009; Netzer & Rowe, 2010; Rowe & Netzer, 2012). Through my research on imaginal processes in transpersonal development, I have explored the phenomenological nature of imagery in its embodiment of tacit or explicit intention, intrinsic direction, and embedded action (Netzer, 2008) – features that identify imagery as uniquely suited to being as a medium for authentic discovery, self-integration, and transformational action.

In this paper I seek to contribute to the development of theories and practices at the intersection of transpersonal, transformative adult education and integral leadership, particularly concerning *Metagogy* (literally, beyond the leader/teacher) — a term coined to describe an approach to teaching and learning, differentiated from pedagogy and andragogy, that seeks to inspire and advance human potential on personal and collective levels (McCaslin & Scott, 2012). As suggested by McCaslin and Scott (2012), the integral fruits of metagogy (e.g., self-actualization, compassion, creativity, wisdom, ethical conduct, and hopefulness) may be carried broadly into a variety of integral leadership opportunities in communities and organizations outside of academic settings. A process-oriented, imagery-based approach to learning resonates with the values of metagogy as it aims to cultivate the ground from which integral (rather than conflicted, hierarchic, competitive, power-driven) leadership could emerge "to bring authenticity, wholeness, a sense of relationship, and greater consciousness to self, community and the planet" (Rowe & Netzer, 2012, p. 1).

I begin by highlighting the contribution of creativity and the imagination to personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal development. I concisely describe the phenomenological nature of imagery (featuring intention, direction, and action) and discuss the value of activating the imagination as the means to approach learning in a creative manner. I offer examples from students' responses to process-oriented, imagery-based exercises, which were designed to increase personal meaningfulness and its transference into domains outside the academic setting through personal and professional actualization of learning. Finally, I consider how creative and imaginal processes contribute to the practice of metagogy and suggest future, practice-based research to understand the practical applications and implications of metagogy more fully.

Creativity

Creativity is an innate human capacity, a "universal heritage" shared across cultures, which is not necessarily conditioned on inventing, innovating, or producing works of art. Creative freedom is the capacity to

see the fresh, the raw, the concrete, the ideographic, as well as the generic, the abstract, the rubricized, the categorized and the classified . . . [and consequently the ability to] live far more in the real world of nature than in the verbalized world of concepts, abstractions, expectations, beliefs and stereotypes that most people confuse with the real world… As well expressed in [Carl] Rogers' phrase [creativity entails] openness to experience. (Maslow, 1962, p. 129)

Creativity of all forms, including informal activities in everyday life, in one's home environment and the workplace, engages our imaginative, playful mind; loosens linear thinking; and inspires analogical connections among all aspects of our lives. Viewed in this way, creative expression, in the process of *doing and undergoing* (Dewey, 1980), where we actively allow our experience to take a life of its own and guide us from the inside out as to its meaning, can become an aspect of our essential nourishment, and instrumental in self-care and interconnection with others.

Creativity thus contributes to personal growth, self-renewal, and self-actualization. A child-like capacity to imagine and play (e.g., Anderson & Braud, 2011; Nachmanovitch, 1990) may serve to heal the common split between the personal and professional aspects of one's identity, what Maslow (1962) referred to as the *synthesis of dichotomies* or *resolution of dissonances* — integrating one's inner life and work in the world.

Imagery as Action Catalyst

The imagination is a participatory, receptive, and active capacity, intentionally enacted, cultivated, and lived. Our ability to imagine possibilities beyond present circumstances and experiences is the manifestation of our spiritual freedom — recognition for that which extends infinitely beyond one's personal boundaries toward a transpersonal realm that includes oneself, others, the visible and the invisible, known and unknown (Netzer, 2008). If we are to consider this one facet of human spirituality as "the presence, influence, and priority of invisibility in our visible world" (Epstein's, 2004, p. 4), our imagination (making the invisible, visible) then appears as a vehicle of spiritual expression.

Although distinct from feelings, emotions, and reason, the imagination operates within all three response modes, and has intrapersonal and interpersonal unifying capacities that facilitate transpersonal awareness (recognition of the potential to expand beyond the egoic self and toward recognition of the interconnection among all aspects of life) as participatory and cocreative (Netzer, 2008). As such, the imagination can be developed toward becoming a channel that links self and self-transcendence, a form of self-observation; ingathering, awareness of the previously unconscious, as well as storing, self-integration, and, ultimately, transformation of psycho-spiritual energy (Assagioli 1965/2000).

A simplified explication of Sartre's (1940/2004) view of the *image-consciousness* points to human capacity to imagine as a distinct form of consciousness, linked with sensations, emotions, thoughts, and actions. From a phenomenological perspective, imaging appears to always refer to something outside itself. Mental images result in the formation of para-sensorial, trans-conceptual analogies that precede and expand rational thought–the latter being inherently bound to existing knowledge. Sartre considered the active and receptive nature of the imagination and defined it as a "pure, unreflected, hence pre-subjective consciousness" (as cited by Trifonova, 2003, p. 80).

Phenomenology concerns itself with the nature of being and becoming, with the subjective and intersubjective life-world — our lived experience (Husserl, 1913/1999).

Every actuality involves its potentialities, which are not empty possibilities, but rather possibilities intentionally pre-delineated in respect of content—namely, in the actual subjective process itself — and, in addition, having the character of possibilities actualizable by the Ego" (Husserl, 1913/1999, p. 109).

In this vein, the imagination is the origin of the attitude with which we approach events and transform them into subjective experiences. Further, our imagination shapes our experiences, imbuing them with particular meaning.

The essential structure of mental imagery (as differentiated from dreams, fantasy, and hallucinations, which feature subconsciously derived images) is (a) *intentionality* —being about something, (b) *directionality* — moving toward something, and (c) *action-orientation* — possibility, potential, and the fulfillment of actual experience (Sartre, 1940/2004). In that sense, the realities of the imagination and the corporeal are intertwined; that is, one's intentions, direction, and potential actions in life are reflected in the intention, direction, and action encapsulated in the mental images one beholds (Netzer, 2008). Imagining is the capturing of an original intuition or unmediated knowing, the seed of creativity and transformation. As Henry Corbin (1969/1998) noted, the effect of the act of imagining is so powerful that it forms and transforms the visionary into the shape he or she has imagined. Furthermore, the relationship between imagining and the lived experience operates in an ongoing cyclical manner, as each action may become an opening for a new imaginal intention.

Images are not limited to visualizations, but rather involve all the senses. They are neither mimetic, nor are they a mere projection of human signification but reveal the world in analogous relationships in which neither world nor image are secondary to one another (Hillman, 1979). There is a marked difference between intellective, verbal response to experience compared with an imaginal response. When we engage our imagination, we are truly present to our experience, not constricted by habitual patterns or intimidated by the expectation to grasp external concepts, and free to tap into subjective meaning and creative discovery (Netzer, 2008).

Imagination and Learning

"Images give external form to our feelings and preconscious responses to external events. As such, images can be a potentially powerful tool for reflection on how one's experiences have become embedded in their person and are shaping their actions" (Wang & Yorks, 2012, p. 61). When activating the imagination in an academic context, learners have the opportunity to bridge cognitive gaps in a way that is distinct from linear, analytical, and product oriented learning, in ways that "allow for the possibility of conceptual flexibility and multiplicity" (Hart, 2004, p. 34).

Learners can ground their learning in the direct knowing that is encapsulated in imaginal response to self inquiry (i.e., What do I know about the topic? What do I bring with me into the learning process in terms of thoughts, beliefs, and feelings?). This initial grounding provides for the opportunity to find security in the intrinsic motivation for learning (what I know, and how this knowing leads me to what I don't know yet and want to learn more about). Consequently, learners are encouraged to overcome the fear of not knowing (Netzer & Rowe, 2010) and are more willing to open to the potential gifts embedded in uncertainty and vulnerability (e.g., overcoming undesirable habitual patterns, undoing false convictions, making new discovery, and developing the capacity for empathy for self and others). Through the practice of imaginal explorations *prior to* engaging with scholarly texts, learners begin to trust their images as instrumental for clarifying intentions and conveying the direction for their inquiries, as they learn to swim in continuously expanding bodies of knowledge, in ever-deepening oceans of learning possibilities. When contemplating their imagery, the actions embedded in it present themselves (sometimes loud and clear, and other times in subtle or enigmatic ways), waiting to be actualized.

The following is an excerpt account from a student in the early phase of her doctoral studies in transpersonal psychology at Sofia University (formerly the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology), where she expresses frustration for uncertainty about what topic she wants to study. This is an example of how a visualization exercise has served to ease that tension, tension and at the same time inspired insight for possible direction in which she may proceed:

 I was feeling frustrated that my mind is still debating on a research idea. I had been juggling three ideas… I decided to engage in the [Three Visual Gifts exercise, Anderson & Braud, 2011, imagining three boxes containing three imaginal gifts that are revealed in response to a query]… to see if it would break up the ambiguity. Within the yellow box was a book. I mentally reached to open the book but I already knew it held the stories of the healing process of soul-injured children/adults. I held the book in my hands with respect and awe. As I held it I noticed the incredible weight of it; so many unheard tears and so many steps to move from broken to whole. I stayed with the book for a while before trying to put it back in the yellow box. However, I couldn't release the book. I felt as though I had made the choice to take on this mantle and if I set it aside I would be turning from the unheard voices. The magnificence of this made me withdraw from the visual exercise. Throughout the rest of the day I reflected on the book I carried in my heart. Who are the people in this book? Do they realize they are not alone, that they share a common thread with others from every cultural and every race? Do they realize how brave they have been to create a sense of self from broken parts? What was their spiritual journey in healing? What stage of healing are they at? Are there common landmarks or turning points in the healing process that can be used in clinical practice? Are these common turning points the natural process of spiritual growth? By the end of this day, I felt solidly planted in a research topic and with relief looked forward to engaging with the visual practice the next day… (V. Sanderson, personal communication, October 10, 2012)

This student's imaginal exploration unfolded independently. However, the process-oriented, imagery-based course structure, as well as the supportive environment for this type of sharing among learners, inspired the depth and richness of the exploration, and welcomed its outcomes.

Another example is an excerpt from a student's final paper in a graduate course at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (currently Sofia University) entitled Inquiry into Creative and Innovative Processes (Rowe & Netzer, 2008). This unique, yet exemplary account serves to illustrate how the introduction of imagery as the ground from which the learning process emerges is supportive of the student's integration of course learning. It is also depictive of the courage with which the student is willing to encounter and work through insecurities, toward a sense of mastery and creative synthesis. As an integral part of the course design, students were guided to begin each week of

the course with an imagery-based/creative exercise (ultimately learning how to design their own imaginal journeys, and engage their peers in the experiential activities they independently conceived). This imaginal exercise guided students to imagine meeting their teacher and inquiring about their learning process. The exercise expanded the construct of "teacher" far beyond the course instructor and suggested that by journeying into the imaginal realm, we may encounter our inner teacher, spirit guides, messengers in nature, and other forms of non-embodied teachers (Rowe & Netzer, 2008). This student describes her imaginal process in preparation for an interview with an artist (which was designed to be incorporated into library research and scholarly reflection). The subject matter she explored was the nature of self-doubt in creative growth and development, while keenly aware of her own experience of self-doubt, and its implications on her own creativity, learning experience, and actions in the world.

Before the day of the interview, I did an intuitive exploration through an experiential exercise. This exercise involved engaging the active imagination and going on an imaginal journey to meet a teacher and learn from him/her/it. In my imaginal journey I found myself walking through a forest that was blanketed in fog. The forest was silent, as though all of nature was waiting and watching me. I sensed that I was coming to an open area because the fog had turned to swirling mist. I was walking through tall grasses. A man appeared and took my hand. He smiled at me, and it seemed to me that he could see and knew exactly where we were. He reached his arm into the fog and as he swept it through the air in graceful arcs, the fog cleared. Now I could see the horizon and blue sky through the lines that his arm had traced in the mist. He smiled at me again, encouraging me to do the same. I tentatively wiped my hand through the mist, leaving a trail of clear air behind. Excited, I began dancing around the field and clearing the mist with confident strokes of my hands through the air. We laughed and played with this game like children. Later, lying in the grass, he taught me to be open and present to my senses in order to feel the fullness of the moment as we listened and watched and felt and breathed the abundance of life around us.

My teacher demonstrated that in meeting the unknown and exploring it, the picture emerges. We discover new vistas and new perspectives. It is up to us to clear the fog. In clearing the fog I connected with my playful, inner child. This helped me open to spontaneity and let go of my self-consciousness. My teacher also taught me to connect with my natural wildness through my senses. In opening my senses I was able to quiet my mind and be present to all of the natural wildness around and within me . . . . On the morning I sat down to begin the process of bringing this journey of intuitive inquiry into the form of this paper, I decided to draw a mind map to highlight themes, insights, and key points of theory. I was working on a large artists' pad of paper; there was so much to capture in the mind map. Soon the familiar presence of self-doubt emerged in a felt sensation, swirling around me energetically and clouding my thoughts. I was facing another mountain, and I was feeling naked once again. I fought it for a while, telling myself, "focus, just focus". I put words on paper, but felt that I was just going through the motions. The energy and inspiration weren't there. In their place hung a cloud of hesitation, uncertainty and self-doubt. Old fears about writing exams, facing a large audience teaching a seminar, sitting down at the piano for my conservatory exams . . . the felt sense of these moments was filling my presence. How ironic, and how frustrating.

The image from my imaginal journey came into my awareness. It told me to clear the fog. I reached for my journal. Writing is a modality with which I feel I am able to express myself clearly, and I was seeking clarity. Being in self-doubt was not a place I expected to be at this point, nor was it where I wanted to be, but I realized I had to face it and give it voice or it would continue to haunt my efforts. I opened my senses and allowed myself to fully experience the self-doubt, and I gave voice to that experience with as much description and clarity as I could muster. Tears and words flowed. When I was finished I felt drained and exhausted. I gave in to the fatigue and went to bed, feeling frustrated that I had not made more progress on my paper. I woke up feeling a sense of peace. The self-doubt was gone. I felt calm, clear and present. I returned to my dining room table to resume my mind map and opened the book *The Zen of Creativity* by John Daido Loori (2005), looking for a reference I had highlighted in my previous reading. The page I opened to held the following insight: "Barriers in the creative process sometimes appear in reaction to painful experiences, and these provide a very rich place to study ourselves . . . . The only way through the barrier is to *be* the barrier" (p. 121). This was not the reference I had been seeking, but I felt a strong sense of déjà vu. I was stunned by the coincidence that I had just done what the author was suggesting . . . . Indeed, to ask for explanations would be but to step back onto the path of self-doubt. To ask for explanations would be to give in to the ego's need to analyze and to know. Creativity teaches us acceptance–of the present moment, the mystery, the beauty, the imperfections, and the pain. (S. Kofler, personal communication, January 27, 2009).

This student's reflection of her transformative and integrative learning is indicative of the necessity to allow one's creative expression to reveal unanticipated insight and interesting connections between process and subject matter — as they are often reflective of each other.

Process-oriented Learning

Process-oriented learning is grounded in experiential knowing (Maslow, 1966/1998), facilitating movement toward self-actualization and transcendence of the ego by "becoming and being what is to be known" (p. 82), Fully immersed in the experience at hand, free from self-consciousness and the binds of preconceived goals, one experiences (a) a form of innocence, without expectations or concerns for external standards of appropriateness nor fears of the unknown; (b) nonjudgmental acceptance of circumstances, without striving for improvement; (c) surrender and selflessness; and (c) *fusion knowing*, a kind of melting together with the world. "All of this adds up to laying aside all the characteristics of our most prideful rationality, our words, our analysis, our ability to dissect, to classify, to define, to be logical. All of these processes are postponed" (Maslow, 1966/1998, p. 84).

"The notion of 'process' suggests a multiplicity of components [stages] with independent ways. But the word also carries within itself a sense of unity, a faith that all of our experiences gather together in a creative process that ultimately knows where it needs to go" (McNiff, 1998, p. 4). All too often, educators exercise methods that don't leave much room for surprise. Conversely, an open learning process aims to encourage imagination and playfulness and to reverse habitual patterns and common perception of creativity as fine art making. Priming the creative pump, I often encourage students to experiment with creative expression in the beginning of each week, regardless of the course content (i.e., theory, research, practice), but especially in courses that involve the reading of large amounts of theory and historical accounts. I suggest that they gather hardware-store materials, such as wood, nails, twine, and wire (manmade, industrially shaped, colors and textures) and objects gathered in the natural world (organic forms, natural colors and textures). Giving expression to feminine and masculine forms, shaping and reshaping, layering, and reconstructing in the process of contemplating the course weekly topic, all serve as analogy for the fluidity of process-oriented learning, where the focus is not on information (the raw materials) but rather to how it is meaningfully constructed. Activating the imagination, drawing on thoughts and feelings, and engaging with simple media in a playful manner, sensitize learners to the theoretical material, and encourage them to risk vulnerability and authentic expression, which they ultimately recognize as conducive to their personal, scholarly, and professional growth as they cultivate their own voice, unique strokes, and authentic movement in the world.

My integrative formulation of the practice of attuning to one's intention, direction, and action via imagery necessitates the articulation of learning objectives in ways that permit discovery of unique meaning and particular purpose by each learner. I, too, continue to reflect on my own calling to learn and actualize my learning while undertaking a guiding role. Emphasizing the cumulative, unpredictable fruits of an exploratory process over assured delivery of preconceived objectives is consonant with the, so called beginner-mind practice–a Zen Buddhist attitude with which to encounter even the most familiar (e.g., preparing a lecture, designing a syllabus, writing a final research paper) each time anew, open to a breadth of possibilities, responding beyond words, with humility and wonder; then "answer that wonder with the deepest expression of your own nature" (Suzuki, 1970/2006, p. xiii). To do so, one must feel free to be "disorderly, sloppy, anarchic, chaotic, vague, doubtful, uncertain, indefinite, approximate, inexact, or inaccurate" (Maslow, 1962, p. 130).

For example, in a course that features creative expression (with transpersonal psychology graduate students), I guide students to accompany their reading and writing with what I call the *Process Work*. This could be a single artwork or a series of pieces of any form of creative expression (e.g., poetry, music, visual art, authentic movement) that eventually may become linked through an unforeseen thread. The intention is to allow the piece or group of related forms of expression to continue to change over time, through intuitive discerning, layering, cutting and pasting, reworking, adding and subtracting, without concern for the conclusion of the work by the end of the course or at a later time (students share their work in progress). In that way the process is freed from the tension that often accompanies the expectation of presenting a finished product, or the pressure of an external timeline (which students nonetheless must contend with in regard to other assignments, such as their final paper). This process is not aimless, however. Images are intentional, and, as they begin to reveal themselves, one could observe their intrinsic direction. Further reflection uncovers an embedded action—the image communicates an analogy, an understanding for its

equivalent in the learner's inquiry, and could be brought to a satisfying completion (but not necessarily conclusion) through actualization of its meaning in the world.

The orientation toward process and imagination is not unstructured. Structure as containment of process is different from fixed goals for preconceived learning outcomes. Structures can be designed as journeys for authentic transformation (Rowe & Netzer), as they intentionally facilitate the necessary conditions for a participatory process where "order and shape are created not by complex controls but by the presence of a few guiding principles" (Kapitan & Newhouse, 2000, p. 116). Process-oriented structures permit fluidity, adaptability, and personal discoveries.

An example for an imaging exercise that stimulates awareness of the value of both structure and open-endedness is one in which I guide students to imagine themselves holding a bow and arrow, aiming at a target with steadiness and resolution. At the moment they imagine releasing the arrow, they imaginally close their eyes, relinquishing attachment to where the arrow hits the target (Herrigel, 1953/1989). Following this exercise students reflect on the embedded possibilities in discovering their imaginal arrow, which is often found in a different spot from what they have expected or hoped for. This image serves as an analogy for the interplay between structure and *openness to experience*. It mirrors the delicate balance between inner discipline and concentration coupled with authentic manifestation in the world —a seeming paradox of effortless effort — aiming in a desired direction, but remaining receptive to the complexity of outcomes in our inner lives and external circumstances.

In process-oriented learning, students observe how their creative expression, along the way, serves to illuminate the intentions of their imagery and to elicit new forms of inquiry. Overall, I have found that students accept the invitation (though at times hesitatingly, and sometimes even with trepidations) to be receptive to the ambiguity and uncertainty embedded in an open-ended process. More often than not, they readily recognize that their courage to plunge into the unknown has its intrinsic reward—discoveries they did not anticipate to make in an academic setting, that ultimately make their learning experience highly meaningful, and often profoundly transformative. Knowing that their coursework will be evaluated based on their degree of engagement in their process rather than measured by what they have produced, students have come to appreciate the freedom in slowing down, meandering, and even being lost and disoriented at times. Ultimately, the course's structure provides containment for the process' overarching intention (pertaining to course topic and its role in the overall curriculum), and serves as a reminder to attend to imagery as one source of guidance for the next step in the learner's process.

In Support of Metagogy: Actualizing Human Potential

Process-oriented, imagery-based learning requires the provision of integral means to support learners at their respective stage of personal and transpersonal development. "Building a metagogical learning community means appreciating the diverse gifts of each individual as well as where they currently reside within the synergistic learning continuum" (McCaslin & Scott, 2012, p. 5). Because the images emerge authentically from within the learner and their meaning is intuitively received (not interpreted by others), they tend to make personal sense (as exemplified in this paper by the two students' accounts). The imagery offers possibilities that are within the learner's reach, revealing his/her present intention, direction of development, and (potential) action. It is, then, not likely that the learner will be challenged beyond his/her own capacity to integrate acquired knowledge or, as importantly, be at risk of remaining captive to the intellect's tendency to comfortably dwell in ideas and ideological convictions, far above the ground of experience, and thus further from action. That being said, the application of process-oriented, imagery-base learning is best suited for a learning community where learners (students and instructors alike) are mature and developmentally inclined to join in an exploratory process where "learning transforms in radical, irreversible, and often unexpected ways (McWhinney & Markos, 2003, p. 21). Such immersion in the depths of inner self, without the basic "swimming" skills (both personal and scholarly) might very well be counter-indicative.

Creativity

Metagogy "speaks directly to the nature of creativity, intuition, imagination, play–to a spirituality uncommon in today's learning places and organizations" (McCaslin & Scott, 2012, p. 4). Of particular relevance to this paper is McCaslin and Scott's vision of *catalytic teaching*, at the core of which is. . . "the belief that creativity and the act of

creating are sacred to the human condition, that spirituality is a birthright that holds the soulfulness of possibility shaped by our innate need to create and to be creative and that empowerment is a growing inward force of creativity dedicated to the full actualization and expression of human potential" (2012, p. 4).

In resonance, I suggest that learners' imaginal worlds encapsulate direct knowing that informs, enriches, and enlivens catalytic teaching and metagogical learning experiences at large. A process-oriented, imagery-based approach to learning supports McCaslin and Scott's advocacy for learning environments that understand creative growth and development as essential for meaningful and purposeful actualization of learned content. As an educator, my focus is on the value of process-oriented learning that fosters the very integrative and actualizing dynamics McCaslin and Scott highlight when discussing catalytic teaching. Table 1 depicts the unfolding creative process, as has been conceptualized and observed for several decades by theorists from the sciences, humanities, and the arts (Lubart, 2001), highlighting the various, iterative and cyclical stages of the creative process and their relevance to the purpose of metagogy.

Creative Process as Learning Structure	Metagogical Purpose
Preparation: Setting intentions, for example, to transform personal wholeness (inner knowing) into a new, relational whole (integrated with newly acquired knowledge and the understanding of others).	To become receptive to new discovery by suspending goals, expectations, and judgment o: outcomes– "move away from objective-based education and toward potentiated mutual growth the student, the teacher, and the community" (McCaslin & Scott, 2012, p. 8). To allow a shift habitual patterns, and observe new patterns and new possibilities.
Immersion: Giving oneself fully to the present activity, without concern for existing time and space limits. Engaging with learning materials without analysis or commentary, but with receptivity to spontaneous insight. Being with the activity rather than talking about it.	To catalyze open-ended inquiry that permits a more "holistic understanding" of new concepts (McCaslin & Scott, 2012, p. 8). Encouraging the "pure pleasure of learning for its own sake" (p. !
Incubation: In the midst of process, one is not clear about its conclusive completion. Rather, each step is viewed as complete (indicative of the direction of next step). Directions may be inward (introspective), toward others (relational, consonant or dissonant with others' processes), outward (expansion/transcendence of perceived limitations), etc.	To acknowledge "learning as a dynamic and synergistic relationship contributing to the creat of opportunities used to address personal destini within community" (McCaslin & Scott, 2012, p 9).
Illumination/Communication: Insight and discovery lead to an unexpected shift in awareness when new knowing emerges in consciousness. The meaning of the discovery can be articulated through discernment of the "new" and how it relates to what we've known before, and what possibilities it presents in terms of action in the world. Since the creative process is cyclical, actions take us back into the	To self-transform in the context of one's interdependence (commonality of purpose with other learners and the larger community, the world). To embody knowledge, so it becomes wisdom, which naturally translates into moveme toward the "betterment of the community" (McCaslin & Scott, p. 9). To support the cyclical visionary nature of learning (not limited to a sin transaction).

Table 1: The Creative Process as Learning Structure and its Metagogical Purpose

Spirituality and Interconnectedness

At the heart of metagogy is the recognition of human spirituality as the source of creativity, intuition, imagination, and play (McCaslin & Scott, 2012, pp. 3-4). In process-oriented, imagery-based learning, the educator inspires a return to one's inherent spirituality by serving as a *liminal guide*the initiator and supporter of a journey into a liminal realm (on the threshold between the known and the unknown). This form of leading necessitates joining others (as a co-learner) in an experience that is creatively unique to the moment and which cannot be entirely predicted nor duplicated. Thus, the facilitation of a *liminal space* (Turner, 1974; McWhinney & Markos, 2003; Rowe & Netzer, 2012)—a symbolic intersection between the outer and inner dimension of being and experience—not only encourages the formation and transformation of the nature of community, but strengthens unique expressions of individuals who respond to and correspond with others' unique expressiveness. This approach "honors cultural and spiritual diversity and is not blind to the boundaries that separate them, but recognizing the interconnection of all living beings . . . Employing multiple ways of knowing, it seeks to dissolve these barriers and transcend them" (Rowe & Netzer, 2012).

In the process of articulating the intention, direction, and action embedded in the learner's imagery, the learner purposefully harnesses the imagination. In turn, the learning experience is more integral to the learner's potential and is then more likely to be integrated and further shared with others in ever expanding co-creative circles. The liminal guide, as does the metagogical *potentiator* (McCaslin & Scott, 2012), must first fill his/her own spiritual well, cultivating qualities such as self-awareness, keen listening, genuine interest in self and others, and persisting faith in our human capacity for healing and constructive change, as the Presence with which to encounter the student's imaginal process.

The examples from my experience of giving primacy to learners' direct knowing as a vehicle for meaningfulness and purposefulness of newly acquired knowledge are unique to the specific students, yet exemplary of my observations of art-therapy and transpersonal psychology graduate students' experiences within process-oriented, imagery-based learning. That being said, I believe that a more systematic observation of students' experience with any of the alternative approaches to education mentioned in this article is desirable. Practice-based research (Candy, 2006) is also needed for the advancement of metagogy in various academic disciplines as well as in other leadership potentiating settings. While the significance and urgency of potentiating integral leadership through metagogy is not in question, as it has been anecdotally confirmed, the full understanding of metagogy's value cannot be obtained without direct, systematic and longitudinal research of its outcomes.

Looking Ahead

Traditional academic teaching has been largely limited to intellectual discourse, quantitative investigation, and verbal expression, contained within a lecture-based pedagogy and teacher-centered didactics. Whole-person, contemplative, integral, transpersonal, and transformative approaches to education, on the other hand, have advocated learner-centeredness as well as personal, social, and spiritual meaning, and the inclusion of multiple ways of knowing–the imaginative, intuitive, embodied, and creatively expressive. Process-oriented, imagery-based approach to learning taps into all of the above approaches with emphasis on imaginal processes, creative expression, and the learners' contemplative reflection on the analogous implications of their imagery for their learning process and its future applications.

All of these alternative educational approaches fulfill many of the core values of metagogy. However, metagogy distinguishes itself philosophically (and in practical terms) by its emphasis on the motivational and inspirational dynamics within the learning community. Not only does metagogy calls for the balance of the objective and the subjective, the measurable and the mystical, the established and the newly imagined, it views the potentiating relationship between learner and teacher (the potentiator) and the intersubjective experiences within the learning community as pivotal in cultivating this balance. The integrity of all students' learning (personal-development and advancement of one's community toward the greater good) is catalyzed by the potentiator's own integrity, and is made possible through the interdependence among all learners.

Through process-oriented, imagery-based approach to learning, learners discern relevant, worldly applications, and connect with their professional callings through their very essence–their capacity to be receptive and creative. This transpersonal, transformative approach fosters the needed conditions for unhindered expression (e.g., supportive, unconditional regard for the outcome and a sense of safety to delve into personal material as it informs academic inquiry and professional development). Partaking in the intimacy of stepping into the imaginal realm humbles the educator and relieves the classroom's hierarchical dynamics. Since the learner's imagery cannot be debated, the image takes on the teaching. The transformative structures of imagery-based learning–journeys and processes that permit new discovery–benefit the entire learning community, since mental images and creative expression often give rise to shared meaning of collective relevance.

Process-oriented, imagery-based learning resonates with *metagogy*'s attention and priority for the "synergistic relationships contributing to the creation of opportunities used to address personal destinies within community" (McCaslin & Scott, 2012, p. 9). This approach to learning could be seen as one of metagogy's possible manifestations toward "revealing and actualizing unrealized potential" (McCaslin & Scott, 2012, p. 2). Guided by metagogy's light, I see how my contribution to inspire process-oriented, imagery-based learning will continue to evolve–a colorful, multidimensional collage of visions and wisdoms imparted by the learners within both students and educators–revealed as we dare to imagine, stepping into the liminal, on the threshold between what we already know and what we are called to envision.

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