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Identify patterns and risk factors of post-COVID-19 vaccination side effects

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The last two decades present a tremendous increase in the number of Yoga and Mindfulness seminars, programs, and interventions, particularly in the fields of science and education. In a post-pandemic world, young people grapple with one of the most relevant and upcoming crises: Mental health. Although many of these exercises lead to interventions in mental health issues, they are often stripped of their philosophical intention and pedagogical method, and consequently, commodified. Eastern schools of thought like Yoga, Vedanta, and Mindfulness are called Wisdom or Contemplative Traditions, as they represent indigenous practices that seek to bring about awareness, unity, and conscious living.

Put simply, contemplative approaches emphasize the inner life rather than the outer life. Whether it is through meditation, introspective dialogue, or empathy practices, these schools of thought argue that when one learns to be aware of emotions, cognition, and surroundings, the individual experiences a critical perspective towards one's beliefs and a sense of connectedness with others. Most Eastern Wisdom Schools, although varying in their Ontological arguments and metaphysics, present a clear purpose to their pedagogy: Citta Vrtti Nirodha [stilling of the fluctuating states of the mind]. The intent is to observe the mind to realize sources of suffering, misidentification with just the body and mind, and thus, an interconnectedness of all things. This contrast to Cartesian Dualism allows for a foundation towards empathy and self-worth, and most importantly, a newfound comprehension of mental wellbeing.

First, after establishing this pedagogical framework, I will highlight how teaching with this paradigm can affect the educator and young people. Then, after discussing those practices, I will emphasize the crisis and how empathy built into the teaching framework provides a visionary perspective. Finally, I will conclude with concrete practices done in school, undergraduate, and graduate classrooms. This piece will highlight the relevance of Eastern Contemplative Practices in teaching and learning through evidence of an increased awareness of self, community, and nature.

Recent publications

1. Pandya R. The Contemplative Approach of Indian Philosophies & Science Education: A Concentration on the Buddhist Principle of Pratityasamutpada. Religions. 2023; 14(1):54.
2. Pandya, R. (2022, Oct. 22-23). Eastern Contemplative Traditions - Their Role in The Climate Crisis. [Conference Presentation]. Conference for Spirituality in Education, New York, NY, USA.
3. Pandya, R. (June 2022). Spiritual Practices & Empathy in Classrooms. Spirituality in Education.
4. Kathryn McConnell, Christian V. Braneon, Equisha Glenn, Natasha Stampler, Evan Mallen, Daniel P. Johnson, Raaghav Pandya, Jacob Abramowitz, Gabriel Fernandez, Cynthia Rosenzweig. A quasi-experimental approach for evaluating the heat mitigation effects of green roofs in Chicago, Illinois. Sustainable Cities and Society. 2022; Volume 76.

Biography

Raaghav Pandya is an Educator, Scientist, and Consultant with a background in Climate Research, STEM Education and Wisdom Traditions. He is currently a scholar at Columbia University along with being a Physics/Engineering Educator. There, he studies the Intersections of Indian Contemplative Philosophies, Science Education, and the Nature of Science. As an Associate Researcher at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, he led teams on Geometrical Optimization of Solar Panels on Satellites and the Urban Heat Island Effect. He is currently a lab member at the Collaborative for Spirituality in Education and is a recipient of the Ruth Gottesman Award.

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