The Spirit of Teaching

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Abstract

As we live in a world deeply torn apart with political, economic and social upheavals being a daily norm, the need to find peace and support has become increasingly essential. When human sufferings occur, there is a spiritual awakening to find peace within ourselves and for others. The importance of human interactions and experiences, the meaning and purpose of life and how important it is for future generations to understand and learn the dynamics of the rapidly changing world is becoming more and more important. The lack of spiritual awareness and development in the community is leading to various personal and public issues such as cultural and racial differences, violence, lack of acceptance between cultures, lack of identity and so on. The importance of self-knowledge and its usefulness is not fully realised in educational institutions.

As international education involves multicultural challenges, this paper discusses the importance of self-knowledge in order to help face these challenges and to incorporate the wisdom of selfhood in multicultural education from the perspective of open and distance education. A teacher's inner life is explored in relation to self-knowledge. Discussions also cover self-reflections as an important aspect of gaining self-knowledge by using a teaching-learning model to illustrate the benefits and dynamics within the teaching practice and to show its contribution towards self and global transformation.

Keywords

international, multicultural, self-knowledge, spiritual, reflections, wisdom

Introduction

"Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher."

(Palmer 1998b, p. 10)

Teaching is about being involved in the process of knowledge giving where one person playing the role of a *knowledge giver* (e.g. the teacher) passes knowledge to another person playing the role of a *knowledge receiver* (e.g. the student). The passing of information or knowledge to another person can be done by anyone, at any place and at any time. Teachers have their own style of teaching and learners have their own style of learning. The knowledge giver does not have to be in a teaching profession in order to teach. There is also no one right perspective in teaching and this is clear from Pratt's General Model of Teaching where he introduces five teaching perspectives i.e. the transmission perspective, the developmental perspective, the apprenticeship perspective, the nurturing perspective and the social reform perspective (Pratt 1999). Regardless of which teaching method is used, the effectiveness of the teaching process cannot be reduced to techniques and methods (Palmer 1998b). For example, engaging with students does not necessarily require teachers to be face-to-face with students. Engaging with students can be achieved through distance education also. The important thing is to be able to connect with students regardless of whether it is face-to-face or distance education. So educational communities cannot be reduced to techniques and methods (Palmer 1998b). There is another dimension of teaching that needs to be explored, which is more to do with the selfhood and the identity of the teacher. According to Palmer (1998b), the ability to connect with students depends more on the degree he knows and trusts his selfhood than on the methods he uses. Sembylas (2003, p. 225) believes "teaching calls for a massive investment of the self ….". So gaining self-knowledge is very much an integral part of the teaching-learning process.

As international education involves multicultural challenges, this paper discusses the importance of knowing oneself in order to help face these challenges and to incorporate the wisdom of selfhood in adult education from the perspective of open and distance education. As self-reflections are an important aspect of gaining self-knowledge, this paper also discusses its importance by using a teaching-learning model to illustrate the benefits and dynamics within the teaching practice and to highlight its contribution towards self and global transformation.

Multicultural education

Distance education is not a new phenomenon. Its role and nature has expanded and evolved over the years from the traditional correspondence courses to open and distance education through electronic means. The Internet and the advent of information and communication technologies (ICT) have created new possibilities for international education. Societies around the world are becoming more and more internationally oriented as globalisation continues to increase. The concept of virtual instruction through the Internet is becoming more appealing as the preferred mode of education in the face of economic, political and social upheavals. This is because ICT has generated a new kind of marketplace where students can consider enrolling in distance educational programmes regardless of where they live in the world. Students can gain a foreign qualification by remaining in their home countries and avoid the travels, the emotional loneliness or separation from their families. So "education is increasingly faced with a culturally and linguistically mixed audience" (Van den Branden & Lambert 1999, p. 173). This increases the need to understand and appreciate other cultures and student learning more deeply.

Digital divide
According to Gorski (2005a), the biggest barrier to multicultural education is the digital divide where there is no equitable access to ICT between groups of people based on social, cultural and economic status. The digital divide refers to differences in access to ICT based on various external factors such as gender, ethnicity, level of income, personal circumstances, lack of skill to benefit from the given knowledge and education, lack of time or ability to travel to a campus and so on (Farrell 2001). However, ICT is seen to be a powerful means to bridge the digital divide (Kelley-Salinas 2000; Gorski 2005a). The OECD (2000a, p. 3) explains that the digital divide consists of various "interlocking divides" that separate segments of society to those who have access to ICT and to those who don't. There is considerable concern for the digital divide as it deprives learners from reaping the significant benefits gained through ICT to valuable information and knowledge. While researchers and industry experts strive to bridge the digital divide, the OECD (2000b, p. 50) believes that the most serious divide is the educational divide in relation to the "extent and quality of human knowledge and learning". This concerns the level of reflections and connections made during the learning process and the understanding gained from it. This is because reflections and connections are the means to achieving greater understanding and quality of learning.

The spiritual divide
In relation to the quality of learning, exploring the educational divide more deeply brings forth another divide, which is often overlooked or disregarded and that is the divide that exists at a spiritual level between the virtues and vices in the soul i.e. the *spiritual divide*. The virtues represent the strengths in a person and the vices represent the weaknesses. This divide is subtle but it is reflected through thoughts, words and actions in verbal, non-verbal (i.e. body language) and written communication, which has an impact on relationships, the political, economic and social arena. When there is a lack of knowledge, understanding or acceptance of the differences that exist between people, issues and challenges can arise. In multicultural education, where students of different cultures interact, the differences are greater and so the chances of misunderstandings can arise easily. There are differences not only in the culture, race and language, but also differences in the students' expectations of their teachers and the educational system, their moral and ethical values, the teaching and learning styles and also differences in the students' expectations of how they would be assessed (Natanasabapathy 2003, p. 9). Some of these differences may not be immediately obvious since face-to-face contact with learners are minimal in open and distance education. Teachers cannot rely on body language or physical appearance to understand students' needs, as they are mostly perceived through written communication. Therefore significant emphasis is placed on the tone and the choice of words used. The ability to interpret written communication and to extract the deeper meaning from a message is important in distance education, as it helps to "reveal the social context in which, the message was formed" (*Hermeneutics* 2004, p. 1). By developing self-knowledge, the ability to interpret written communication more deeply is enhanced. This is particularly useful when interacting with international students from various cultures who may not be able to express

themselves well. It also helps to build teacher–student relationships with greater understanding. The knowledge of selfhood is explored in more detail below.

Self-Knowledge

The quest for truth and the meaning of life has been the research of many scientists and philosophers for centuries. They have used various technologies and methods to gain knowledge in search of truth (Usher et al. 1997), some of which "demands objectivity while others rely on deep *personal knowing"* (Hartman 1990, p. 4). Laurence (2005, p. 1) describes objectivity as knowing through detachment from external objects, however personal knowledge deals with the knowledge of reality where we draw "closer to the source of all that is real". People search for truth because it is seen to be real and it gives them authenticity for their beliefs (Kessler 2000). Researchers have raised questions about truth in an effort to find out how to best pursue it and to understand how it is represented or constructed. Usher, Bryant & Johnston (1997, p. 104) point out that, "knowledge does not represent truth of what *is* but rather *constructs* what is taken to be true". In other words, truth is based on what is believed to be true depending on how it is constructed. So a piece of knowledge being true to one person need not necessarily be perceived in the same way by another person. This is because knowledge can be constructed in more than one way. So it could be argued that there are many truths which are relative to one another, and depending on how a piece of knowledge was gained, there are many ways of knowing such as through construction of knowledge, experimentation, observation, reading, listening and so on. If truth is virtuous and if people act upon what is believed to be true, then it is not clear why there are so many upheavals and much chaos in the world. Donald Davidson (1984, cited in Bilgrami 2002) argues that the truth of beliefs is simply relative to one another and cannot all be true or represent truth in the absolute sense. Therefore actions based on the truth of beliefs or relative truth are not necessarily virtuous. The 'spiritual divide' between virtues and vices continue to influence peoples' thoughts in a negative way. It is this spiritual divide that needs the utmost attention as it has the power to influence all aspects of society.

From an intellectual perspective, Flynn (1998, cited in Sternberg 2001, p. 227) points out that IQs rise at the rate of 9 points for every generation, which spans about 30 years however according to Sternberg (2001) there is no reason to believe that increased IQs have improved international relations or people's relations with one another since we are continuing to experience political, social and economic upheavals. In other words, the spiritual divide between virtues and vices remain. The daily newspaper is a testimony of this as we see power struggles, personality clashes, marital problems, wars, and political and socio-economic problems. Spiritual knowledge or wisdom related knowledge can help to narrow this divide by actively identifying the vices within and eliminating the barriers that hinder our own personal development. Sternberg (2001) believes wisdom-related skills or the development of wisdom is worthwhile in public education in order to help students acquire the power to judge correctly and develop wise use of the knowledge learnt. This would help to address some of the multicultural challenges that people face.

From a teaching perspective, Tubbs (2005b, p. 289) relates objectification to Martin Buber's *I-It* teaching model where people are treated as things and the output of their efforts as commodities. The value of human relationships is lost, and student needs are not taken into account, which demonstrates a teacher-centred education model. Self-knowledge on the other hand is based on experiential learning where we use our own experiences, challenges and victories as a basis for further reflection and understanding of ourselves. As with any problem resolution process, an analysis is required before steps can be taken to manage and resolve a problem. Similarly, self-analysis allows us to find weaknesses or areas for improvement within ourselves in order to self-manage and develop ourselves accordingly. The more we analyse and understand ourselves, our thoughts, words and actions, the more we can relate to the emotions of our students, understand their interactions and behaviour, understand the reasons for the processes that are in place around us and our environment at large. By understanding others, we embrace diversity and automatically practice inclusion, which is one of the motivational factors for culturally responsive teaching (Wlodkowski 1999), which will benefit international education as a whole. We become the object of our own analysis and evaluation where we look deeply within ourselves and analyse our own thoughts, words and actions. This practice forms a 'pathway' to high order thinking, which contribute to the transformation of the self and the society at large when each and everyone carry out this practice. Tubbs (2005b, p.289) relates this teaching approach to Martin Buber's *I-Thou* model where the focus is on self-education and relationships. It is an effective pedagogy for building teacher-student relationships as it takes into account the emotional and spiritual development of not only the teachers but also the students. It is very much a student-centred pedagogy where we shift our dialogue with

students from "communication to communion" (Tubbs 2005b, p. 290). Gorski (2005b, p. 6) also points out that students' experiences, ideas and perspectives should be included in the educational process if we are to provide student-centred education. Vella's (2000, cited in Tisdell 2000, p. 9) view of having a spiritual dimension in adult education is close to Martin Buber's *I-Thou* (Tubbs, 2005b) teaching model where the student is honoured as a 'subject' as opposed to an object. Therefore I would argue that having a spiritual dimension in teaching is important if we are to enhance student-centred education.

From an institutional perspective, this calls for a shift in our paradigm of doing business where the same principle behind Martin Buber's *I-Thou* model needs to be applied on a larger scale throughout the organisation in order to foster similar patterns of thinking, teaching (i.e. knowledge giving) and learning (i.e. knowledge receiving) in our day-to-day operations. Constant self-exploration and reflection need to take place to embrace diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Adopting such a practice would be a step towards preparing staff for international education. When businesses work towards inclusion or use inclusion as part of their business strategy, it is able to function more as a cohesive unit, which can work towards a common goal. This would also help to address any barriers in place, which hinder businesses from moving forward and contribute to business sustainability overall. As Buchanan (1999, p. 9) points out, organisations self-destruct due to their own barriers, which are put up internally, which drive opportunities away.

Spiritual awareness and development
Spiritual knowledge is knowledge that teaches us about ourselves. It is like nourishment to the soul in the same way as food is to our body. We need to be able to foster a way for people to communicate and express their thoughts and feelings from the heart for their personal development and inner growth. However, the need for a spiritual dimension in education is not fully realised in educational institutions. This could be due to the teachers' lack of understanding between spirituality and religion or simply the term 'spirituality' being misconstrued to take on a religious connotation (King 2003, p. 1). People often tend to link spirituality with religious beliefs or think of it as one and the same thing. Since both 'spirituality' and 'religion' strongly address aspects of morality, human values and educate people into doing righteous deeds, this is not entirely surprising. The two subjects are inter-related but they are not the same. Spirituality is focused on the exploration of *who we are* as individuals and religion is more to do with *idol worship*. Tisdell (2000, p. 308) relates spirituality to "personal belief and experience of a higher power or higher purpose" and religion to an "organised community of faith that has written codes of regulatory behaviour". If we were to simply take the word 'spirituality' as it is, it could simply be referred to as the study of the human soul or simply a deeper understanding of mankind. Young (1997, cited in Tisdell 2000, p. 9) believes spirituality is the underpinning of values in higher education. It can also be referred to as a study in search of truth, or as a study to understand the meaning and purpose of life. Students use their own lives to reflect and find meaning to address the spiritual dimension of adult learning. As Palmer (1998a) points out, it is about evoking the spirit in education where students are drawn to think about their own lives more deeply in relation to their personal interactions, experience and learning.

However, the challenge is in how to bring about an educational curriculum where one may be able to acquire the knowledge of selfhood or how well a spiritual pedagogy could be used in educational settings (Sefa Dei 2002; Kessler 2000). Many researchers feel it is important to incorporate spiritual development in the educational curriculum but they are not sure how to best do it. Kessler (2000) believes a soulful approach to teaching is needed and the education would require students to use some level of introversion and self-reflection to seek answers to questions about life and their spiritual yearnings. It is a very subjective area because there is no one right or wrong answer. Answers would vary depending on peoples' background and experiences, their circumstances, their role in life, their attitude and principles, their perceptual capacity, their commitments, obligations and so on. Furthermore, how students think, interact and the way they construct their knowledge is also influenced by other factors such as culture, customs, traditions and race. People from different cultures relate to life, relationships and knowledge differently, and so they understand and construct knowledge differently also. According to Tisdell (2003) spirituality plays an important role in culturally relevant education because teaching is most effective when it is culturally relevant and meaningful to a learner's life.

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According to Dirkx (1997, cited in Tisdell 2000, p. 9), spiritual development in higher education should be focused on nurturing the soul as opposed to teaching spiritual knowledge literally. Assessment questions aimed at capturing reflections and connections are a good way of bringing a spiritual dimension into the class. Journaling or writing critical evaluation reports are some examples of developing reflective thinking and writing skills where students use their life's experiences to explore their own beliefs and share their personal thoughts. The Heri Project Team at the University of California carried out a national study about how spirituality could be introduced in syllabi and found that spirituality could be used to enhance disciplinary knowledge, to serve as a new paradigmatic view for everyday life and to use it is as a pedagogical technique (*Spirituality & Higher Education Curriculum: The HERI Syllabi Project* 2005, p. 2). So depending on the nature of the course and its objectives, spirituality can be applied in a way that best honours the students and their learning styles.

Kessler (2000, p. xiv) believes the reason spiritual development has not been popular in educational curriculum in the past is because teachers have been "vigilant about keeping religion out of their classes for fear that it may lead to differences of opinion and violate peoples' beliefs". It has become "a common practise for teachers to suppress students from expressing their yearning for a spiritual and meaningful experience" (Kessler 2000, p. xiv). If students do not have the freedom to express themselves then their freedom of engaging in intellectual debates or participating in class is reduced and their learning is affected. Palmer (1998b, p. 75) points out that learning happens when students speak their minds and are able to "express their ideas, emotions, confusions, ignorance, and prejudices", all of which contributes to a spiritual experience. Therefore, a spiritual experience is not necessarily a religious one. Spirituality is an integral part of human experiences. People have spiritual experiences throughout their lives when they experience happiness, fear, sorrow, wisdom, confusion, yearnings, joy, bliss, and so on. For example, people can feel uplifted when listening to music or feel inspired after reading a good book or when watching a movie. They are spiritual experiences where the human spirit is touched or kindled. These experiences need not be tied to any religious ritual. Elizabeth Tisdell (2003, p. xi) points out that spiritual education is not about pushing a religious agenda as it is to do with bringing about the awareness of selfhood, in the way one makes sense of knowledge, and in the way they understand knowledge. So spirituality is very much about gaining self-knowledge.

A Teacher's Inner Life

Palmer (1998b) refers to a teacher's inner life with reference to the words *inner teacher* that exists in all of us. It is like an *inner voice*, which seems to speak with conviction and it is always empowering us to move forward. It seems to be like a guiding light helping us to make decisions, and serves to be our best companion during troubled times. Everyone has an inner teacher and everyone has the ability to tune in and have a dialogue with his or her inner teacher from time to time. It is when people fail to tune in to their inner teacher that they sway from their true self, and are led to actions that may seem superficial (Kessler 2000).

Palmer believes "academics often suffer the pain of dismemberment" (1998b, p. 20). He describes the pain as being more "spiritual than sociological" where "people who thought they were joining a community of scholars find themselves in distant, competitive, and uncaring relationships with colleagues and students" (Palmer 1998b, p. 20). This is when it is helpful to tune in to our inner teacher to find a way to handle situations at hand and to move forward.

From a personal perspective, reflecting back on personal experiences as a learner has led the author to remember interesting memories at school and at the university. Teachers are remembered for both the good and bad experiences. As a learner, the author has found that having a teacher with whom she could discuss her problems openly without fear of being patronised or discouraged, helped her learn and move forward. They were ones who could understand her argument and the problem she was facing and knew how to explain in a manner in which she could comprehend. These teachers were those who made efforts to understand the students and ensured that they understood the course material. The channels of communication were always left open if there was a need for questions in future. Their credibility and integrity was visible from their knowledge of the subject matter and in their attitude. Such teachers were not necessarily ones who had a long teaching experience. According to Brookfield (1995, p. 7) the length of experience does not even "confer insight and wisdom". The length of experience may provide teachers with the knowledge about how the system works, the kind of student issues that arise, the kind of

strategies used, their outcomes and may even develop their knowledge on the kind of techniques and methods they could use to teach better, which would contribute to good teaching. However, to learn the inner dimensions of the teaching learning process, a self-reflective nature is needed to analyse one's own actions against the student's. The more we understand about ourselves with regard to how we learn and interact, the more we will be able to relate to the student to answer their questions appropriately and satisfy their needs. According to Palmer, "what we teach will never 'take' unless it connects with the inward, living core of our students' lives, and with our students' inward teachers" (1998b, p. 31). So in order to connect with our students (i.e. to speak to the inner teacher of our students), we need to be in speaking terms with our own inner teacher (Palmer 1998b). This gives the opportunity to study situations as they arise both from one's own perspective as well as from a student's perspective. It leads to increased self-knowledge and allows teachers to incorporate the wisdom of selfhood in adult education. So it is useful to have spiritual awareness of oneself and self-reflection can help to gain this awareness.

Self-reflection

Self-reflection is about having a dialogue with oneself and it is an iterative process that can lead to self-realisation and understanding. The practice of self-reflection is an important aspect of spiritual development. As we reflect and connect, our cognitive processes form pathways for people to construct knowledge and meaning, and so it is an integral part of self-exploration and development. With continuous practice, the ability to reflect and connect well develops over time.

Figure 1 below shows the essential components of a teaching-learning process, which apply to both contact and distance education. It illustrates where self-reflections can potentially take place. The effectiveness of the teaching and learning process is governed by the amount of self reflection the tutor and learner carries out. According to Hormozi (1998, cited in Abdullah 2004), students who are successful are those who possess a positive self-concept.

From a teacher's perspective, critical self-reflection is crucial for a teacher's survival (Brookfield 1995, p. 1). Considering teachers were once a student themselves, there is a lot that can be gained from self-reflection. Judging the course content, as a student and teaching it like the way one likes to be taught help to identify the emotions and experiences of students. They not only get to understand about how they have learnt but they also understand the outcome resulting from how they were taught. When teachers "become students to themselves", they are able to serve the freedom of their students to learn (Tubbs 2005a, p. 241). Garrison, Andrews and Magnusson (1995) also argue that good teaching can only be understood by considering learning from the student's perspective, since the aim of teaching is about facilitating learning. According to Dinham (1996, p. 310), "...to understand students and to communicate with them, one must first understand oneself". Self-reflection is a process of understanding oneself. Deep reflections or pondering of ideas at depth can lead to deeper self-knowledge (Cunningham 2000, p. 2).
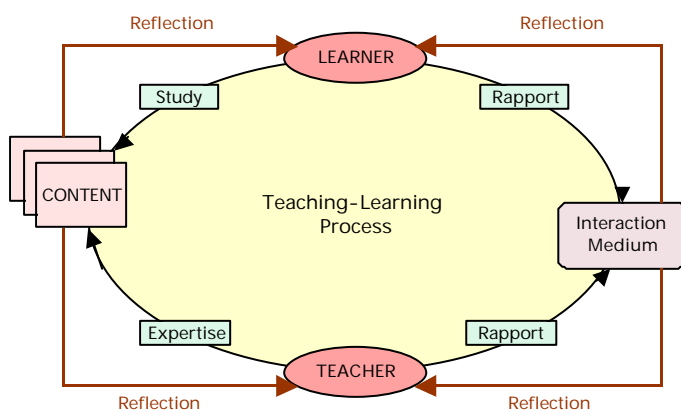
Source: Natanasabapathy (2005)

Figure 1. Potential Reflections in a Teaching-Learning Process

Reflections on personal teaching

From a personal teaching experience, having a journaling component as part of the assessments, help students to develop their reflective thinking and writing skills. The author has found that while some students had a natural ability to reflect on how they were progressing, some students had difficulty capturing their reflections and putting them down on paper. As a result they were not sure about how to meet the journal requirements and therefore had trouble understanding what a journal was. These students who experienced difficulties fail to realise that the very difficulty they face could serve as a basis for further exploration about their learning process and to develop their self-knowledge. For example, any confusion, or areas where they lack understanding, could be used positively for further analysis and understanding about the self, the processes in place and the subject matter. Changing the name of the journaling component to something other than a 'journal' or providing techniques to help students reflect could help to ease the difficulties.

Many students who had initially struggled with the journaling concept have learnt to appreciate the value of the journal eventually when their understanding increased and when they discovered more about their learning style, which led to an improvement in their self-management skills. The journal provides students an opportunity to find out more about themselves, their learning style and how they are progressing. It helps to highlight difficulties faced and opportunities to find resolutions in order to address their problems.

Self & Global Transformation

Gorski (2005a, p. 14) believes the "goal of multicultural education is to contribute proactively to the transformation of society …". Education has the ability to transform individuals through realisations and understanding that takes place through learning. However, unless individuals transform, we can acknowledge the possibilities of social transformation or transformation of society, since society is made up of individuals. So transformation of society starts with the self. From a learner's perspective, when we transform, we contribute to transformation of society and ultimately to global transformation.

From a teaching perspective, Aristotle has pointed out that, "teaching is the highest form of understanding" (Boyer 1990, p. 23). So when we teach, our understanding not only leads to self-transformation but it also helps to transform our students. As Brookfield (1995), points out when we teach, we change the world. So both learners and tutors contribute to global transformation.

Figure 2 below shows the contribution of the teaching-learning process from Figure 1 to self and global transformation. The diagram illustrates that self-reflection carried out by teachers and students in the teaching-learning process can potentially lead to transformation if realisation and understanding takes place. According to Schön (1983, cited in Saroyan & Amundsen 2001, p. 345), "reflection is the key process in changing practice". It is the means through which the essence of a piece of knowledge can be extracted. Realisation is a process in the same way as knowing is a process, but understanding is the outcome (i.e. the product) of our efforts in learning (Bruner 1966, p. 72). Gorski (2005a, p. 13) highlights that constant self-exploration and transformation is needed in order to be an effective multicultural educator.

If generations are getting more and more intelligent with increased IQs (Flynn 1998 cited in Sternberg 2001), then having the academic intelligence alone is not sufficient to educate students in a world that is rapidly changing. Wisdom related knowledge or tacit knowledge is regarded to be the key aspect of practical intelligence (Sternberg 2001, p. 227). While there are active steps taken to address various private and public issues in society, incorporating wisdom related knowledge in public education would be a strategic move to educate future generations to understand and learn the meaning and purpose of life with a sense of responsibility. This would help to develop self-knowledge, which in turn would help to bridge the 'spiritual divide' between virtues and vices which education today does not fully address. According to Sir John Daniel (1999), Vice Chancellor of the UK's Open University, understanding means going beyond information and knowledge and acquiring knowledge with a sense of responsibility that can make it a foundation of action. As wisdom related knowledge is not formally taught at institutions, it is therefore important that teachers take the appropriate measures to acquire and regularly update themselves with implicit knowledge in the same way as they would with disciplinary knowledge in order to incorporate the wisdom of selfhood in education. By implicit knowledge the author is referring to wisdom-related

knowledge or tacit knowledge where one knows "when to apply this knowledge, where to apply it, how to apply it, to whom to apply it and even why to apply it" (Sternberg 2001, p. 232).
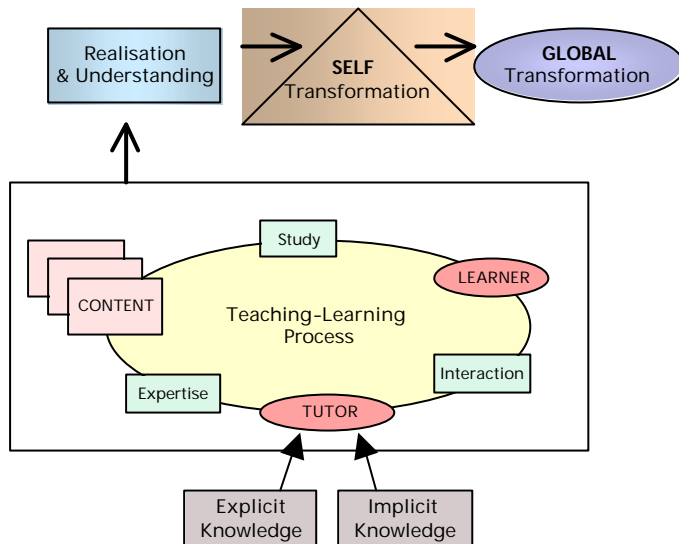

Figure 2. Teaching-Learning Model showing contribution to self & global transformation

Without regular input of implicit knowledge, teachers are left to use their innate qualities or apply what they have learnt from their life experiences. The job of fostering learning among students therefore becomes a lot more challenging. While numerous articles have highlighted that implicit knowledge cannot be explicitly taught or the process of acquiring it is not clearly understood, Atherton believes it can be learnt (2002). Implicit knowledge is most commonly learnt through one's life experiences, so the process of acquiring this knowledge takes longer than it would normally take to acquire explicit knowledge. However, if appropriate measures are taken to formally incorporate wisdom-related knowledge in education, then the process of acquiring self-knowledge could be reduced.

Conclusion

Teaching effectively is an art and regardless of which approach is used, it cannot be reduced to theories, concepts and strategies. There is a spiritual dimension within the teaching-learning process that underpins its effectiveness. Spirituality not only enhances student-centred education, but it also brings a sense of wholeness and connectedness to the teaching-learning process. It embraces diversity and so has a place in culturally relevant education. The spiritual dimension should be explored further to bring spiritual awareness and development into education in order to bridge the spiritual divide that influences all aspects of society. The development of self-knowledge would help to bridge similarities and differences in the community and most of all empower the spirit to understand and deal with the self.

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