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Community Dreamwork as Intercultural Peacelearning

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A First Breath

A Vignette

On the second morning, I sat down at a table with a group of people I hardly knew. The eagerness superseded any self-consciousness of oversharing too soon with strangers. I animatedly recounted my dream that featured the horror movie character, Chuckie, eliciting gasps and laughter from the others. Thus began the dream table at breakfast at the International Institute for Peace Education (IIPE) in 2022, which took place at Casa Xitla in Mexico City.

Introduction

In this article, we will explore community dreamwork as a form of intercultural peace learning pedagogy and community building and will connect this to themes of epistemic justice, decolonial praxis, and the importance of the learning that occurs in the in-between spaces. We will explore questions of formal

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and informal learning spaces, our assumptions about where learning takes place, and the transformative potential of spontaneous, organic, emergent learning spaces that happen in the cracks of formal structures. We will also explore our experience of simultaneous translation (Spanish-English) as a pedagogy of intercultural peacelearning that promotes epistemic justice and slowing down. We will further critically examine the reliance of Freirean pedagogy within the field of peace education, particularly for its emphasis on rationality, as we believe it is necessary to reach beyond critical pedagogy through emotional, embodied, and other ways of knowing and being to achieve intercultural peace learning and sentipensante pedagogy. Building on Cremin, Echavarría, & Kester's (2018) call for transrational pedagogy in peacebuilding education, we offer our experience of community dreamwork as an example of a transrational pedagogy that allows access to embodied, emotional, and spiritual ways of knowing.

In this spirit, we believe educational spaces need to follow the wisdom of natural cycles such as metabolism and respiration, taking in and releasing, as exemplified and embodied in the in-breath and out-breath, with which we are most intimately connected. As a way of engaging embodiment and cyclical flow, we have written this article as a series of in-breaths and out-breaths, and we invite you to breathe with us as you read, to sense and feel into this rhythm.¹ The in-breaths of this article are more of the intellectual content, and academic writing, the taking in. The out-breaths, woven throughout, will engage more directly with the transrational ways of knowing we are making a case for in this article, the processing, reflecting, releasing. The article is intentionally nonlinear, in an attempt to disrupt the linearity of Western rationalism. We invite you to breathe and flow with us.

1. Outbreath: Seeds of Friendship and Dreamweaving at IPE Mexico

We, the co-authors of this article, Minna and Stephanie, met on the first day at the 2022 IPE Mexico. Our relationship deepened and grew through the spontaneous emergence of the dream table. We believe that all learning is relational, and feel it is important to begin our article by naming our relationship to each other and our respective and collective relationships to dreams.

I (Stephanie) have been writing down my dreams since I was a teenager. No one taught me to do this, and no one I knew actively worked with their dreams- it

¹ The breathwork framing is inspired by yesworld.org's Jam gatherings, in which there is a balance of time allotted for sessions (in-breaths) and breaks (out-breaths). Since the pandemic, more time has been allotted for out-breaths, to account for the pandemic's impact on participants' capacity for socializing and need for more rest.

was more of an impulse and a fascination, a way of honoring what felt like gifts when I woke up in the morning. I found that the more I wrote them down, the more I could remember, and I have developed this relationship over decades. I later studied community dreamwork as part of my doctoral coursework in Depth Psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute. At IPE, when Minna came to breakfast and said, “I had a wild dream last night! Does anyone work with dreams?” I was excited.

I (Minna) grew up hearing my mother and her friends share about their dreams, at times in hushed earnest and at other times in utter delight. In my Korean ancestry, dreams hold wisdom that are not accessible in the waking-state. My mother’s dream of three Korean peppers, two green and one red, were interpreted by my aunt as two daughters and one son; I am the eldest daughter followed by my sister and a younger brother. Ajummas (Korean word for married women) coming together for what could be described as an informal Dream Table, is an ancestral practice that simultaneously nurtured deep, meaningful connections and honored the power that emerges from collective wisdom. Today, my connection to dreams is deeply inspired by ajummas. And surely, my ajumma-ancestors must have blessed my friendship with Stephanie, as it continues to blossom since IPE, ever since that morning we bonded over our shared enthusiasm and appreciation for dreams.

The community dreamwork table began organically on Tuesday when Minna arrived with her dream and lasted throughout the week. There were several participants who joined every day, several who floated in and out, and some who joined later in the week. There was excitement to see who arrived with “material,” and an excitement to both share and listen to one another’s nocturnal stories. Each person who had a dream would share, and we would ask each other questions, like “What did it feel like? What was the emotional tone?” We would make meaning together, and we would also make some thematic connections between one another’s dreams.

2. In-breath: Community Dreamwork

Dreamwork is the practice of attending to and working with dreams, which generally speaking refers to the images and stories that unfold while we are in a sleeping state of consciousness, but can also include daydreaming images (when one is awake but in a semi-altered state of consciousness). Dreams are a transrational way of knowing and allow us to access states of knowledge in a more metaphorical, non-linear, image-based way, grounded in *sentipensar* (sensing/thinking or feeling-thinking, explained in detail later).

Dreaming is an intercultural experience, common across humanity. All humans (and more-than-humans that we are aware of) experience dream states.

Dreamwork is present across cultures, and there are culturally specific ways dreams are worked with, interpreted, or given significance and meaning. Thus dreamwork, with dreaming as a common shared human experience, has the potential, as we experienced at IPE in our diverse multicultural group, to serve as a thread for weaving intercultural peace learning.

Community dreamwork is, as the name implies, dreamwork that is done in the context of two or more people and the land. As Taylor (2009) notes, dreams have multiple meanings, and working the dreams in a group allows for multiple insights to unfold. Some indigenous cultures, such as Aboriginal cultures and the Senoi as will be discussed below, see dreams as the land dreaming through us, and dreams as central to the relationship between land and humans. There are many formats for community dreamwork, including informal sharing, talking circles and ceremonies, social dreaming matrix (Morgan, 2010), and dream theatre (Lipsky, 2008; Watkins, 2017). At IPE Mexico, the spontaneous emergence of the dream table involved informal sharing and discussion around dreams, which would sometimes lead to sharing beyond dreams and the themes they brought to the surface.

According to Tyson Yunkaporta (2020), in Aboriginal worldviews, dreaming mind is one of five different states of thinking (along with kinship-mind, story-mind, ancestor-mind, and pattern-mind). Yunkaporta describes dreaming-mind as a feedback loop between abstract knowledge from the nonphysical world and tangible knowledge from the physical world. Abstract knowledge from the nonphysical world occurs through metaphors in “images, dance, song, language, culture, objects, rituals, gesture, and more” (p. 151). According to Yunkaporta, the feedback loops between the worlds must be completed with practical action” (p. 151). Yunkaporta further describes how the Aboriginal Australian flag depicts Dreaming (yellow) at the center of their flag, between the symbols for people (black) and land (red) (Yunkaporta, 2020, p. 66). For Aboriginal cultures as Yunkaporta describes, there is an interaction between the dreaming-mind and the more tangible (rational, intellectual, linear) knowledge. Community dreamwork is one method of bridging these two worlds of the abstract and tangible through engaging in a thinking-feeling dialogue about the dreams (and beyond them).

Another example of indigenous relationship with dreams is told by Ursula Le Guin, whose science fiction novella, *The Word for World is Forest*, was inspired by the Senoi tribe living in the highlands of Malaysia. As Le Guin (1976) describes:

The Senoi dream is meaningful, active, and creative. Adults deliberately go into their dreams to solve problems of interpersonal and intercultural conflict. They come out of their dreams with a new song, toll, dance, idea. The waking and the dreaming states are equally valid, each acting upon the other in complementary

fashion...They have built a system of inter-personal relations which, in the field of psychology, is perhaps on a level with our attainments in such areas as television and nuclear physics. It appears that the Senoi have not had a war, or a murder, for several hundred years. There they are, twelve thousand of them, farming, hunting, fishing, and dreaming, in the rain forests of the mountains of Malaysia...

Many ancestral and indigenous practices value dreaming as a way of knowing. In contrast, Euro-western modernity overvalues rational, intellectual, and linear thought, and values thinking over feeling, intuition, and other ways of knowing. Within modernity dreams are often reduced to a phenomenon that occurs during sleep and not taken seriously. Dreaming, in all its variations, known and unknown, is not a senseless sentiment, as it might be perceived to be in colonial thinking which dismisses the nonrational and nonlinear ways of thinking, being, and knowing.ng.

As such, dreaming and even more so, dreamwork in community, has boundless potential and power for healing and transformation as a decolonial praxis through reclaiming this ancestral way of knowing and disrupting modernity's overvaluing of rationality. Dreamwork is a transrational way of knowing, and is a decolonial praxis in centering an indigenous way of knowing that is embodied, emotional, and in relationship with the land and nonvisible worlds. Attending to our dreams allows us to reach beyond the rational to access different forms of intelligence not accessible by rational, linear thinking. Dreams are a form of knowledge and understanding, and dreamwork is a process of meaning-making from the images, scenarios, and feelings that arise in dream states. Even if one does not remember their own dream, it is possible to access this way of knowing through being present to others' dreams and making meaning together, collectively.

3. Out-breath: Re-Membering Our Nature Through the Breath

By the end of our first full day, my (Minna) head felt heavy and oversaturated. The day's panel, group experience, and plethora of workshops were decadent. I recall wondering aloud to another IIPE participant how I would make it through this entire week at this rate. My body was inflamed by the fullness of the day and yearned for time to digest all that I had consumed. In other words, I wished for a full and long outbreath after taking in a long stretch of nutrient-dense inbreath.

The dream table was sparked organically during the outbreath, the less structured time in our schedule. While we were bound to the hours of meals being served, there was much more space to exercise our autonomy and imagination for what emerged within this container. As we filled our bellies with nourishing food, we were simultaneously reflecting, synthesizing, integrating, and daydreaming

about all that was teeming with possibilities seeded during the in-breath moments.

The dreamstate is a peculiar place, one that is initiated during out-breath, yet similar mechanics of in-breath are present. During inhalation, the diaphragm contracts to create space in our chest activity, allowing for air to enter the body for gas exchange of oxygen into the bloodstream while carbon dioxide is carried to our lungs (National Heart, Blood, and Lung Institute, 2022). Similarly, during exhalation, the diaphragm relaxes, deflating our lungs to push the waste product of oxygen being converted into energy, carbon dioxide, out. We could not survive without the full cycle of the breath (National Heart, Blood, and Lung Institute, 2022). No matter how pure and nutrient-rich the oxygen is and no matter how immaculate an inhalation is, an exhalation of equal quality, if not better, is necessary for wellness and sustainability. There is growing research (Gerritsen & Band, 2018; Couck, et al 2019) that indicates the extended exhalation reduces stress and increases executive functioning skills. Even during exhalation, there is dynamism albeit in reverse in some ways - a beautiful balance of opposites.

The breath is also the thread that connects us with the world beyond our own physical body. The reciprocity of oxygen and carbon dioxide is critical to sustaining life on this planet. Thus, the ways in which we balance or lack balance between in-breaths and out-breaths can reveal how we regard and interact with the living organisms around us. We are inextricably linked to one another and the breath is the most simple yet profound evidence of it.

However, historically and presently, the colonial conditioning of Euro-Western modernity separates us from this awareness and disconnects us from our natural inclination to balance the metaphorical in-breath and out-breath of daily living. So, how can we look to our breath as a decolonial praxis for more dreaming, more out-breath, and ultimately co-liberation?

4. In-breath: Intercultural Peace Learning and Sentipensante Pedagogy Interculturality

According to Catherine Walsh (2018), the conceptualization of interculturality draws its roots from the late 1980s and early 1990s from the Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca, Colombia (CRIC) and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), and their response to the neoliberalization of Latin America. Walsh describes interculturality as signifying “more than an interrelation or dialogue among cultures...it points towards the building of radically different societies, of an ‘other’ social ordering, and of structural economic, social, political, and cultural transformations” (2018, p. 57). It is important to note the distinction between interculturality and multiculturalism. Interculturality is not the same as multiculturalism, which Walsh notes is part of

the project and logic of neoliberalism used to “pacify resistance, fragment movements, and bring the excluded into global capitalism’s all-consuming framework and structure” (2018, p. 57). Accordingly, interculturality is “a permanent and active process of negotiation and interrelation in which difference does not disappear” (p. 59). Thus interculturality goes beyond the multicultural tendency to include (and consume) cultures within the Western hegemonic capitalist project, and includes a critical analysis and active disruption of modern colonial power structures and violence.

5. Peace Learning

The concept of peace learning is at the heart of peace education praxis and IPE pedagogy. According to the IPE Mexico theme description (International Institute on Peace Education, 2022), peacelearning “is pedagogically grounded in the core values of human dignity, diversity, solidarity, and cooperation” and “is directed toward both inward and outward change.” Furthermore, peacelearning “is pursued through an inquiry praxis that connects cognitive concepts to the learner’s experience of the world.” However, peacelearning is not solely a cognitive process, and as stated in the program description, our task as IPE Mexico participants was to “inquire together into transformative practices for fostering constructive interconnectedness and interdependence that engage the balance of thinking-feeling, cognitive-emotional, ‘sentipensar’ processes” (International Institute on Peace Education, 2022).

5.1 Sentipensante Pedagogy

Since IPE specifically references sentipensar processes and pedagogy, it is important to clarify this term, which is also essential to our exploration of community dreamwork. Laura Rendon (2009), author of *Sentipensante Pedagogy*, describes sentipensante pedagogy in the following way:

The world sentipensante comes from a combination of two Spanish words: *sentir*, which means to sense or feel, and *pensar*, to think. [Eduardo] Galeano is taking the stance that rationality and intuition can exist in dynamic and complementary opposition. Our early ancestors all over the world recognized this epistemological position, but as consciousness evolved, Western philosophers assumed that intellectual training and rationality alone were key for understanding (p. 131).

For Rendon (2009), sentipensante pedagogy represents a teaching and learning approach based on wholeness, harmony, social justice, and liberation. Accordingly, the three goals of sentipensante pedagogy are:

1. to disrupt and transform the entrenched belief system that disrupts wholeness, which privileges and perpetuates separation, monodisciplinarity, competition, intellectualism, and passivity at the expense of collaboration, transdisciplinarity, intuition, and active learning
2. Cultivate well-rounded individuals who possess knowledge and wisdom
3. To instill in learners a commitment to sustain life, maintain the rights of all people, and preserve nature and the harmony of the world (Rendon, 2009, p. 135-136).

Sentipensante pedagogy is an invitation to move beyond the rational by including and embracing ways of knowing that are grounded in embodiment and emotionality, while disrupting violent belief systems that produce domination and separation. Importantly, a sentipensante approach does not dismiss rational and intellectual thought, or seek to remove it or disregard it, but rather to include sensing and feeling in the process of knowledge creation, learning, and unlearning.

Epistemic violence refers to the phenomenon of centering one knowledge system in a hegemonic relationship to others, and the devaluing, demonization, and attempted erasure of all other knowledge systems. Within modernity/coloniality, this looks like the centering and overvaluing of Eurocentric Western knowledge, and the devaluing and delegitimization of other systems of knowing. A sentipensante pedagogy as described above is a way of disrupting epistemic violence, and furthermore promoting epistemic justice, which includes linguistic justice and the decentering of English language in intercultural settings.

6. Outbreath: Murmurings Epistemic and Linguistic Justice: Inspired by Starlings

IPE Mexico was conducted in both Spanish and English. Usually, when I (Minna) have been a part of multilingual spaces, English is defaulted to with truncated or rushed side-interpretations and sporadic translated documents. This is the first time I have attended a community gathering where both languages were used consistently and interchangeably throughout the entire program that it nearly felt as though the English language was actively being decentered for refreshingly comforting/discomforting lengths of time.

In addition to translation devices being readily available during group sessions, individuals who had varying degrees of bilingual ability could be found translating throughout the week. At times volunteers were asked for and at other

times, individuals would swoop in to translate in a low-whisper to the person(s) next to them. Once it was clear that translation was needed, the configuration of the group would shift to accommodate certain people needing to be closer to each other and the waves of murmurs in either English or Spanish would carry in the backdrop of the language being spoken to the group.

Often there are invisible moments of tension in which we know some are being excluded yet remain unattended to. However, at IPE Mexico, we always chose to visibilize the friction of being in a bilingual space to the best of our abilities; it was as if there was an unspoken collective commitment to ensure inclusivity that naturally translated into the murmurations of our group in physical formations and spoken languages. This is very much aligned with Walsh's (2018) description of interculturality as described above, in which differences are actively engaged with rather than flattened or erased.

In *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, adrienne maree brown (2017) writes:

My dream is a movement with such deep trust that we move as a murmuration, the way groups of starlings billow, dive, spin, dance collectively through the air – to avoid predators, and, it also seems, to pass time in the most beautiful way possible...each creature is turned in to its neighbors, the creatures right around it in the formation...each creature is shifting direction, speed, and proximity based on the information of the other creatures' bodies. There is deep trust to this: to lift because the birds around you are lifting, to live based on your collective real-time adaptations. In this way thousands of birds or fish or bees can move together, each empowered with basic rules and a vision to live. Imagine our movements cultivating this type of trust and depth with each other, having strategic flocking in our playbooks (p. 71).

During IPE Mexico, we practiced linguistic justice in the form of a murmuration. In recalling this detail that may seem trivial or obvious as this was publicized as a bilingual gathering, I am filled with awe and hope at the way we organically became a shape-shifting flock, whether it was for the sake of survival or to simply enjoy one another.

In so many ways, the gift of being in a murmuration is needing to be present and to slow down. If we are to notice when translation is needed, we must be present to the moment as the person recognizing they require it or as the person checking in on another about needing linguistic support. If we are to translate, we must slow down - the speaker, the translator, and the listeners. In being present and slowing down we are bestowed with the gifts of practicing community care through

exercising our patience and empathy. In both the in-breaths and out-breaths where translation was happening, our shared moments were made more conscious and intentional. Thus, we were better able to attune to one another, allowing for more fluidity and easefulness of shape-shifting to naturally occur.

The murmurs of translations continue to invite in the practice of forming a murmuration in the monthly IPE Mexico Zoom gatherings. In this regard, it is a real joy and honor to witness the dreaming and reimagining of peace learning, linguistic justice, and movement building as an on-going praxis we get to shape and shift together.

7. Summary

Bringing these themes together, an intercultural peacelearning sentipensante pedagogy:

- Seeks radical transformation at all levels (inner, interpersonal, social, political, etc.)
- Is an active process of interrelation in which differences do not disappear
- Actively disrupts colonial ways of thinking, being, and relating
- Is embodied, emotional, and moves beyond the intellectual/rational

The field of peace education has contributed the idea of peace learning, which to a large extent is aligned with interculturality and sentipensante pedagogy and its goals and approaches. However, in the next section we argue that the overreliance on Freirean critical dialogic pedagogy results in overemphasizing the intellectual and rational and does not always leave room for other ways of knowing such as the intuitive and embodied. We argue that community dreamwork is one way of integrating transrational sentipensante ways of knowing.

7.1 In-breath: Reaching Beyond Freire

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's (1970) work on critical pedagogy and liberatory education has been deeply influential on the peace education field. Freirean notions of horizontal student-teacher relationships, education that is grounded in local context and that values the knowledge of everyone in the process, and education as a liberatory process are all core tenets of the peace education field. If we want to transform society, we must transform the way we learn and how we see the purpose of education, and Freire's work has been revolutionary in this regard. Freirean pedagogy is cited as informing the pedagogy of IPE which is described as "an adaptive form of critical participatory peace pedagogy" (International Institute on Peace Education, 2023).

However, Freirean pedagogy also has limitations, which have been identified by many Indigenous, feminist, decolonial, and peace education scholars (Grande, 2008; Alexander, 2006; Walsh, 2018; Bajaj & Hantzopoulos, 2021; Zembylas, 2018; Cremin, Echavarria, & Kester, 2018). Some of these limitations include anthropocentrism (Grande, 2008), privileging reason and dialogue over other ways of knowing (Zembylas, 2018; Cremin, Echavarria, & Kester, 2018), and overemphasis on class and lack of attention to other forms of oppression such as racism and sexism (Zembylas, 2018). In acknowledging these limitations, Catherine Walsh (2018) suggests seeing Freire as an elder and pedagogical guide rather than an authoritative source. Rather than rejecting Freire because of these limitations, she and others (including Sandy Grande and M. Jacqui Alexander) invite us to think beyond and with him.

Relatedly, Cremin, Echevarria, & Kester (2018) call for the need to promote transrational approaches to peacebuilding education to reduce epistemic violence, and promote epistemic justice through disrupting Eurocentrism that is often found within the peacebuilding education field. They argue that among the crises facing peacebuilding education today is the “dominant reliance on rational forms of learning often inconsistent with the transformative and inclusive purposes of peace education” (Cremin, Echavarria, & Kester, 2018, p. 295). We posit that community dreamwork is one such method of transrational peace pedagogy that can be employed to disrupt Eurocentrism and overreliance on rational ways of learning, to foster epistemic justice, transrational learning, and intercultural sentipensante pedagogy.

It is important to note that IPE (2023) describes its critical participatory peace pedagogy as being “adaptive,” and this creates space for such transrational approaches to emerge, and they *did* in fact emerge in the space available at the breakfast table and beyond. In order for IPE to move further towards transrational intercultural sentipensante peacelearning, it requires us to reach beyond - in the sense that Sandy Grande, Catherine Walsh, Jaqui Alexander and others have proposed - Freire and hyperrational dialogic ways of co-constructing knowledge and meaning, and towards other ways of knowing that include (and emphasize) the embodied, sentipensar, intuitive, nonlinear, circular, emotive. We propose dreamwork of one such methodology and approach to access intercultural peacelearning grounded in sentipensar.

7.2 Outbreath: Rest and Play as Peace Learning

As we continue to intellectualize and dialogue about peace learning principles, it is important to consider how these principles might manifest (or not) in the structures we put in place for peace learning. Our thinking and feeling have been colonized and conditioned to disregard the out-breath as an essential element,

and to overemphasize activity, productivity, and doing over being. In thinking about intercultural peace learning and sentipensante pedagogy, we are called to consider the structures and forms that we are creating for this kind of learning. When we design a schedule to be completely filled, where is the time for emergence, rest, and play? When we have formal sessions from morning until night, what does this communicate about our perceptions about the relationship between informal spaces and peace learning?

While the IPE Mexico description of the program highlighted themes of inward and outward change, inquiry, imagining, and reweaving, there was some rigidity and resistance to change the format and structures that have been used over time. Resistance to change is part of being human, and while it can serve as a protection to threat, it can also create unnecessary stress as we speak with unwavering conviction for positive change yet so many of us often falter when we must reckon with the reality of what we must give up and give into. Many times, we lack the awareness of this conundrum, an indication of how deeply ingrained colonial conditioning is.

As Tricia Hersey (2022) writes in *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto*:

We are socialized into systems that cause us to conform and believe our worth is connected to how much we can produce. Our constant labor becomes a prison that allows us to be disembodied. We become easy for the systems to manipulate, disconnected from our power as divine beings and hopeless. We forget how to dream. This is how grind culture continues. We internalize the lies and in turn become agents of an unsustainable way of living (p. 99-100).

Hersey's ministry on rest as a form of resistance - to white supremacy, capitalism, and the resulting grind culture - is aligned with sentipensar. When we have the space to engage in receiving information with other parts of our being beyond brain-cognition, we honor the wholeness of our intelligence.

Stephen Harrod Buhner (2004) presents readers with scientific research that disrupts the idea that the brain is the center of intelligence:

Analysis of information flow into the human body has been perceived by the heart. What this means is that our experience of the world is routed first through our heart, which "thinks" about the experience and then sends the data to the brain for further processing. When the heart receives information back from the brain about how to respond, the heart analyzes it and decides whether or

not the actions the brain wants to take will be effective. The heart routinely engages in a neural dialogue with the brain and, in essence, the two decide together what actions to take (p. 83-84).

Colonization has disembodied us from our intuition and feeling so much so that we overload our schedules with rigid structures, compulsive rationalizations, and performative acts of producing that we have forgotten how to simply be and to allow for emergence. The antidote to this is rest, not “to recharge and rejuvenate so we can be prepared to give more output to capitalism” but because we “were born to heal, to grow, to be of service to [ourselves] and community, to practice, to experiment, to create, to have space, to dream, and to connect” (Hersey, 2022, p. 122).

The dream table was an antidote to the toxic pervasiveness of colonial capitalism, and was a space to dream and connect. After each person shared about their dream, we asked each other, “What was the feeling? What did you sense?” At the dream table, sentipensar was centered. For a brief moment, we could suspend our colonial conditioning and rest in our dreams, not rush to find a rational or linear “sense” to them, relish in one another’s wildly bizarre universes, and reconnect with the ancestral practice of harvesting collective wisdom gifted to us through our dreams. Like the ajummas. Like the Senoi people. Like the Aboriginal Australians.

7.3 Dreamwork as Weaving Community

The dream table also became a site of profound and deep community building. Part of the purpose of IIPE is to build a learning community for the week, and the threads of peacelearning that we wove at the dream table were strong. At this table, we shared deep emotions that arose in the dreams, about how these were connected to things taking place in our lives, and really got to know each other in meaningful ways through this process. We also laughed - a lot! The laughter and joy of the dream table was a beautiful way to begin our days and reverberated long past breakfast. The relationships themselves have continued, and several of us continue to share about our dreams over text and conversations.

7.4 Dreamwork as a Space In-Between

The dream table became a site of learning in the cracks, an in-between space of literally weaving together our sleeping and waking experiences, between sleep and our formal learning sessions, while simultaneously weaving relationships with each other. It was a space of dancing between our dreams and “reality,” as we shared with one another what had taken place in our dream consciousness.

One of the themes that our experience with the dream table illustrates is the question of where learning happens, and our assumptions about this. The IIPE learning community format is such that each participant is both a learner and a facilitator, and every person who comes offers something to the learning community. This is very much aligned with peace education and Freirean pedagogy to value the knowledge that each person brings. As such that the schedule is very full, and there is very little free time for spontaneity to emerge. The dream table took place at breakfast, one of our only pockets of unstructured time. It emerged organically and spontaneously from participant experience and interest.

Just as much un/learning was inspired during unstructured time. To be clear, we are not arguing against structured time. However, we are articulating the need for outbreaths, for unstructured pockets where the mind can wander, where processing and digesting can happen, where relationships can deepen over coffee or a walk through the neighborhood. When everything is in-breath, we become oversaturated, and don't have the mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual bandwidth to integrate. We need integration, digestion, processing time.

There was much to be appreciated, as every participant was gifted with the opportunity to share their insights and wisdom through plenaries and workshops. Throughout the week, several participants named that they were tired or saturated from all of the amazing offerings. The sparks of inspiration and magnetic draw to dreamweave with one another was undeniable! What reimaginings would take root and emerge if a balance of structured and unstructured time was scheduled into the week? How can we honor the necessity of both in-breaths and out-breaths for a healthy thriving ecosystem?

8. (In)Conclusions: The Pause Between In-breath and Out-breath

The complete cycle of a breath actually includes the space between the in-breath and out-breath, known as the inspiratory pause, or kumbhaka (breath retention) in Sanskrit (Yartsev, 2021). Intentional inspiratory pause or practicing kumbhaka in breathwork has been shown to result in many benefits “on the neurocognitive, psychophysiological, respiratory, biochemical and metabolic functions” (Saoji, Raghavendra, & Manjunath, 2019, p. 50). Some examples include reduction in stress and increase in mental clarity (Saoji, Raghavendra, & Manjunath, 2019).

When bringing awareness to this liminal space, it can be characterized as a fertile void. The pause offers us the opportunity to decide how we will take the next in-breath or out-breath; this intentional act is ripe with possibilities. As such, the invitation is for each of us to be intentional about the next breath we take and to notice the pause between, informed by preceding in-breaths and out-breaths. So, how do you wish to breathe?

As we write this article, we are in the fertile pause between IPEs, which take place every two years. We invite you, dear reader, to join us in this pause, with questions:

How do we move forward in the spirit of transrational intercultural sentipensante pedagogy?

How do we carry forward the wisdom of the past while making space for what needs to be birthed?

How do we honor legacy and lineage, while also reaching beyond it towards what the times ask of us?

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