The Value of an Integral Education: A Mixed-Method Study with Alumni of the East-West Psychology Program at the California Institute of Integral Studies

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Abstract: This sequential mixed methods study examined alumni's perceptions of an integral education in the East-West Psychology (EWP) program at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), and explored how they connected their unique, integral educational experience to personal and professional development. The findings revealed that their experience and understanding of integral education in EWP is mostly in alignment with the ideals of CIIS; namely, honoring multiple perspectives, the multidimensionality of being, and multiple ways of knowing were identified as key aspects of an integral education. The results of the study also point to the areas where the EWP program is doing well in terms of the education students expect and what they actually receive, and to the department's or Institute's learning edges. The most significant findings are the revelations of the need for: (a) more professional development, (b) more practical application opportunities, (c) more community/ mentor support for students' personal psycho-spiritual unfolding, and (d) more training regarding the language and expression needed to communicate the value of an integral education effectively with scholars/employers outside of CIIS.

Keywords: Graduate Education Evaluation, Integral Education, East-West Psychology, Personal Transformation, Nontraditional Curriculum, Spirituality in Higher Education.

Introduction

Almost five decades ago, in conjunction with shifts in collective consciousness like the counterculture and civil rights movements, a small graduate school in San Francisco was founded by Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri, a Bengali philosopher, and his wife Bina. California Institute of Asian Studies, today known as California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), was unique for the time, and still is to this day. There, an integral approach to education was implemented, a method of educating that (a) meets students where they are and honors each individual psycho-spiritual

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unfolding, (b) honors the multidimensionality of being and encourages simultaneous, balanced development of these aspects (e.g., physical, vital, emotional, intellectual, spiritual), (c) honors multiple ways of knowing (e.g., intuitive, cognitive, somatic), (d) honors multiple perspectives, even those contradictory to one's own, and (e) commits to social and environmental justice. Such a model is inspired by the creative and harmonious living developed and expanded upon by Chaudhuri, derived from principles of Integral Yoga articulated by Aurobindo Ghose and Mirra Alfassa, who were more commonly known as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The integral worldview and philosophical significance of these founding aspirations will not be the focus of this paper, but are written about by other integral educators (e.g., Chaudhuri, 1965, 1974, 1977; Ghose & Alfassa, 2006; Shirazi, 2005, 2011; Ryan, 2005; Subbionodo, 2011; Wexler, 2005, 2011; Fraser Hageman, 2015, etc.); though, they are worth noting here, as this ancestral lineage, along with its founding vision and principles, distinguishes CIIS from all other progressive/alternative models currently in practice in higher education in the United States.

One program in particular, one of the oldest programs at the Institute, East-West Psychology (EWP), sought to explore an integration of Eastern wisdom traditions and Western Psychology and what it would look like to bring these diverse worldviews into dialog with each other; it was a marriage of psychology and spirituality, as it were, when in the mainstream the two had been divorced. Today EWP has evolved from bridge to hub, a meeting place for seekers of truth from all walks of life from all over the world. What would the value of such a degree hold? The present study sought to understand this more deeply.

Description of the Study

This research explores the nature of an integral education, and its personal and professional value, from the vantage point of those who completed an advanced degree in the EWP program at CIIS. Specifically, a sequential mixed-method research design that utilized a mixed-data survey, as well as semi-structured, in-depth interviews, was implemented to gather EWP alumni perspectives on: (a) how alumni perceived the personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal domains of his or her experience while, and since, completing a master's or a doctorate, (b) the characteristics of an integral education, (c) the EWP degree experience and its connection to personal transformation and professional development. These alumni perspectives were collected with the aim of assessing (a) how EWP graduates understood the ideal nature of an integral education, (b) how well they felt the department offered that ideal or not, and if so, to what extent, (c) how alumni felt their graduate education experience in EWP contributed to their personal development, and (d) how alumni felt their experience in EWP contributed to their professional development up until now. The main goal of investigating EWP alumni perspectives on the value of their non-traditional graduate education was to reveal the benefits and pitfalls of such a non-traditional program, from the perspective of those who completed their degree.

Overview of the Research Design

In this sequential mixed-method design, multiple angles were examined concerning the personal and professional value of earning an M.A. or Ph.D. in EWP. In the first phase, a mixed-data survey was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently. In the second phase, 10 participants from the first phase volunteered to participate in a qualitative interview, and

were given the opportunity to evaluate their EWP experience in the context of their life before, during, and following the pursuit of a graduate education in EWP at CIIS. The Likert scale in Phase 1 was analyzed using *SurveyMonkey,* and content analysis was used to process both the responses to the open-ended questions in the first phase, as well as the interview transcripts from the second phase. Following the data analysis, participants who were involved with Phase 2 were given the chance to reflect on the findings, and to add or omit anything they deemed necessary, for validity purposes.

Description of Participants and Recruitment Procedures in Phase 1: Quantitative Phase

In the first phase of the research, a mixed-data survey, utilizing both a five-point Likert scale and three open-ended questions, was created using *SurveyMonkey* (See appendix A). Subsequently, a link to the survey, along with a recruitment letter, was distributed through the CIIS Alumni Association. Although the current sample does not reflect the entire EWP alum pool on record (N > 300), the Alumni Association had 161 email addresses for EWP alumni. From this sample of convenience, 47 participants completed the survey, yielding a return rate of 29%. The participant population varied in age, ranging from 25 to 74, with 81% being 35 to 64 years old (N = 38). 55% of the participants identified themselves as female (N = 26) and 40% as male (N = 19); two participants chose not to disclose that information. 51% of alumni (N = 24) surveyed completed their master's in EWP, while 47% earned a doctorate (N = 22); one person did not respond to this inquiry, but indicated the year they graduated from EWP. Forty percent of participants (N = 19) came to EWP with a psychology background, 19% studied in the traditional sciences (N = 9), and some had backgrounds in English literature (N = 3), and philosophy and religion (N = 6). Five participants (11%) in the first phase of the study were already CIIS alumni prior to becoming one of EWP as well. The range of participation was broad; the eldest EWP alumni who participated in the survey graduated in 1976, and the most recent in 2013.

Analysis and Interpretation

The first five questions on the scale were demographic in nature. Specifically, participants were asked: (a) whether they identified male or female, (b) their age range, (c) what their studies encompassed prior to commencing their course of study in EWP, (d) and the degree level completed in EWP, and (e) about the nature of their spiritual practice, however each chose to define that. The responses to these five questions were tallied, and the question concerning prior studies and spiritual practice were examined for threads of commonality. Figure 1 is a visual summary of the demographic data collected.
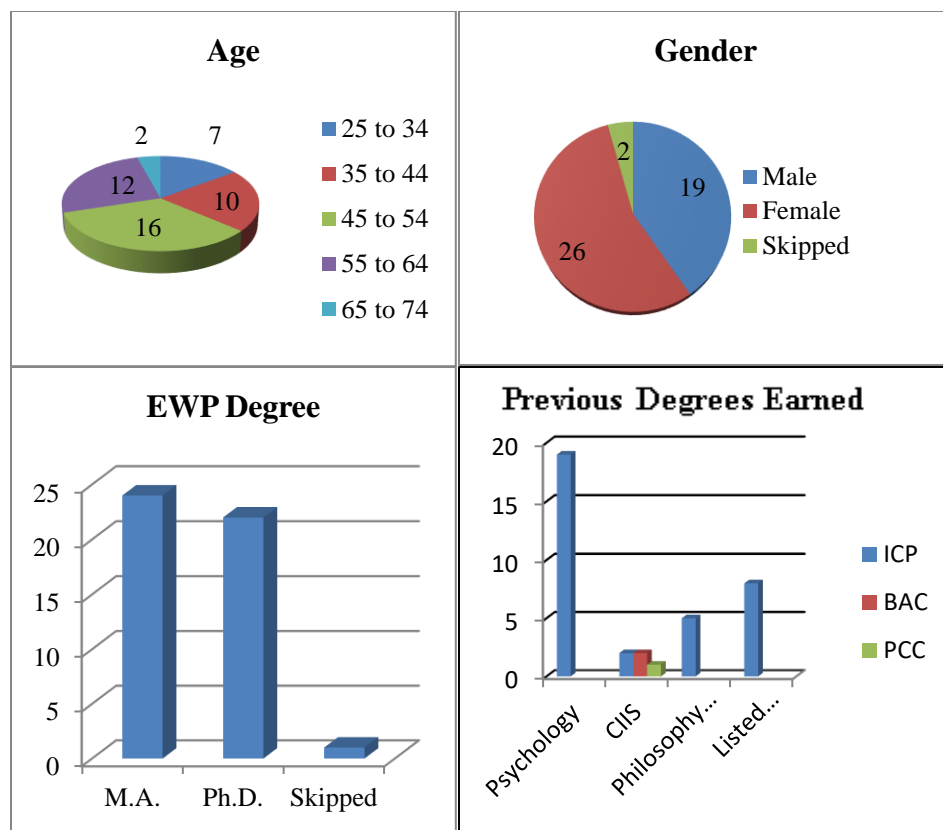
Figure 1: Summary of Demographics.

The Likert scale comprised the quantitative aspect of the first phase of this study. There were 40 statements organized into three categories: transpersonal, interpersonal, and personal. The categorization was used as a means to explore the participants' experiences in the context of the three dimensions of integral psychology as described by Shirazi (2005). The participants were asked to reflect on these statements as alumni, and as such, the time that had passed since they graduated varied among participants. The results of the data collected from the scale were organized into tables, which are reported below. Specifically, the responses were looked at in the order that they appeared in the scale, as separated by category, and by frequency. For example, the statements that respondents agreed with the most, and those that were agreed with the least, were highlighted.

The last three questions on the mixed-data survey were open-ended; this approach was used to give an opportunity for participants to express their experience in their own words. The responses to each of the last three questions were copied from each individual survey and pasted in a separate text document, one document for each question, so that every response to each of the open-ended questions would be all together in one place. Once the document was created with all the individual answers together, the responses were read through in their entirety and a summary of the open-ended responses was created as a way to explicate the threads of commonality that were revealed in participant's open-ended responses. These threads manifested both as repeated words or phrases, and some unique responses were revealed as well. These responses were then organized into different categories (see Table 5 for a summary of the open-ended response results).

Description of Participants and Recruitment Procedures Phase 2: Qualitative Phase

In Phase 2 of the research, the 47 Phase 1 participants were invited to contact the researcher if there was a desire to dig more deeply into the inquiry underway, to schedule a semi-structured, in-depth, qualitative interview. Ten people responded to this call and reached out, willing to share their story. Subsequently, 10 interviews were conducted in-person or via Skype. The participants who availed themselves to the second phase of this project were both M.A. (N = 6), and Ph.D. (N = 4) alumni of the EWP program.

Like in the mixed-data survey, there was a range of alumni participation. The diversity of alumni who were interviewed was synchronistic; in other words, there was a meaningful coincidence concerning the qualitative sample. Although the sample was one of convenience, the pool somewhat reflected the varied and fluctuating focus of the department over the years since its inception. The earliest alumni interviewed graduated in 1986, and the most recent was in the graduating class of 2013. To maintain complete confidentiality and anonymity of participants, particulars will not be disclosed, however, there was an international roster of identities reflected in the pool of interview participants, with folks identifying as both male or female, and having Western or non-Western backgrounds.

Analysis and Interpretation

The semi-structured interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions of the interviews were content analyzed for themes. Both the content, such as what is said, and the form, such as plot structure of the story, were taken into consideration. The interview recordings were listened to multiple times to assure accuracy in the transcription, and then read and reread to see into the revelatory patterns. "Topics that stand out are usually characterized by their high frequency of appearance, proportional length, or vividness in the text" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p. 73). Emergent themes concerning EWP alumni experiences were considered through this interpretive evaluation strategy suggested by Lieblich et al. (1998).

A thick-rich description was the aim in order to further address internal validity (Merriam, 1995). Every pause, um, laugh, and cry was documented. Boldface was used in the transcript to indicate words or phrases emphasized by the participant. Listening to the interview once through, before beginning the transcription process, gave the researcher a chance to reacquaint with the participant prior to the process of transcription. Once the interview had been transcribed, it was read four times. Time was also be taken away from the transcriptions before each subsequent reading, to give space for the development of further insight from the processes of gestation and indwelling, and what would potentially arise from the unconscious and dream states.

Each interview was looked at separately to first see what meaningful statements and phrases showed up for each of the 10 individual participants. "Qualitative coding, the process of defining what the data are all about" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43) was used in the analysis portion of the second phase of this study. "Coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data" (p. 43). After completing two of the four readings of each interview, the third and fourth readings were specifically geared towards

organizing the participant's words into groups and articulating the codes for each group of data. The data was grouped by looking for similarities or threads in each individual participant's experiences, with consideration for frequency, length, and/or vividness, as previously suggested by Lieblich et al. (1998). The analysis of each participant's interview transcription included a summary of their biographical information, as a way to offer the story of the person behind the data collected. For the sake of allowing interview participants to remain anonymous, these transcripts will not be included here. After each interview was looked at individually, the 10 transcripts were analyzed together, to determine overarching themes across interviews. (See Table 6 for a complete list of major and minor themes).

Phase 1: Quantitative Results Report

The Phase 1 results are comprised of two concurrent components: collection of demographic information and Likert scale, and open-ended questions.

The Quantitative Component of Phase 1: Likert Scale

The 47 participants who completed the survey were asked to rank the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with 40 statements concerning their EWP education. There was also the option for people to respond "Neither agree nor disagree." The following numerical values were used for calculation of each individual response:

Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5

The rating average for each response was calculated by dividing the total score for each question by the number of responses to that question. The average rating results and the median for each statement on the scale are summarized in Table 1. The list of statements in Table 1 begins at number six because prior to starting the scale, participants were asked to fill in some demographic information for example, age, gender, previous degrees earned, and whether they received an M.A. or Ph.D. in EWP. Also, participants were asked to briefly articulate the nature of their spiritual practice, orientation, and/or discipline, however they defined that. These first five pieces of the survey were optional.

Table 1: Overview of Transformation Evaluation Ranking Scale

Q#	Rating Average	Median	Question Details
Q06	3.30	3	EWP helped me develop a regular spiritual discipline.
Q07	4.11	3	Since completing my degree in EWP, I embrace an integral worldview.

Q08	4.06	3	The education I received from EWP helped me develop new levels of emotional maturity.
Q09	3.78	3	The education I received from EWP has helped me access my intuition.
Q10	4.22	3	My EWP education engaged the various aspects of my being.
Q11	4.13	3	Since completing my degree in EWP, my sense of self has expanded, allowing for more authentic spiritual expression.
Q12	4.09	3	My education in EWP taught me to support others in their psycho-spiritual transformation process.
Q13	4.02	3	EWP offered me an Integral Education.
Q14	3.81	3	My EWP education made it possible to relate to all beings more authentically.
Q15	3.59	3	Learning about psycho-spiritual disciplines inspired me to develop a personal, regular self-care practice.
Q17	3.62	3	As a result of my education, I actively seek opportunities to grow spiritually.
Q18	3.96	3	As a result of my EWP education, my ability for authentic self-expression improved.
Q19	3.79	3	I became more mindful as a result of my education in EWP.
Q20	4.11	3	My relationship with the sacred (however you define that) deepened throughout the program.
Q21	3.83	3	My education in EWP has inspired me to experience life as an ever-unfolding evolution of consciousness.
Q22	3.41	2	As a result of my education in EWP, I am more mindful of my impact on the environment.
Q23	4.17	3	As a result of my education in EWP, I was taught to honor multiple ways of knowing.
Q24	4.09	3	In my experience, EWP fostered my psycho-spiritual transformation.
Q25	3.62	3	Being emotionally supported while completing my degree contributed to my spiritual/transpersonal development.
Q26	3.55	3	I learned how to experience embodied knowing as a result of my education in EWP.
Q27	3.43	3	My education in the EWP program increased my capacity for genuine intimacy.
Q28	3.60	3	While in the program, I felt part of a spiritual community.
Q29	3.94	3	My education in EWP has helped me actualize my highest potentials.

Q30	4.17	3	The people I met during the program were instrumental to my growth.
Q31	3.70	3	Throughout the program, in general, I felt emotionally supported during class time.
Q32	3.48	3	What I learned in the EWP program catalyzed a significant change in my lifestyle.
Q34	3.77	3	The EWP program catalyzed a significant change in the way I relate to the world.
Q35	3.63	3	My EWP education has been indispensable to my professional development.
Q36	4.02	3	Being a part of EWP, I became part of a community which honors multiple worldviews.
Q37	3.66	3	My EWP experience catalyzed a significant change in the way I relate to others.
Q38	3.96	3	My education in EWP helped me to develop an expanded sense of self.
Q39	3.70	3	My education in EWP fostered the development of interpersonal communication skills.
Q40	3.81	3	I was challenged to become aware of and reassess my worldview assumptions through my EWP education.
Q41	3.72	3	My education in EWP helped me become more aware of the underdeveloped aspects of my personality.
Q42	3.68	2	Through my education in EWP I learned to respect worldviews contradictory to my own.
Q43	3.38	3	My education in EWP awakened in me a sense of global citizenship and responsibility.
Q44	3.91	3	My education in EWP taught me to honor the multidimensionality of existence.
Q45	4.23	3	In retrospect, I had a positive experience of EWP overall.

Of the 40 statements participants were asked to rank, there were 13 designated to address each of the three dimensions of life experience in integral psychology: the personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal (Shirazi, 2005). The final statement on the scale, "In retrospect, I had a positive experience of EWP overall" was categorized as "other," since it is a broad, overarching statement regarding the program itself rather than an inquiry into a specific aforementioned aspect of being.

In Table 2, the questions have been categorized, and presented in the order of average rating from high to low, and the main point of each statement is listed.

Table 2: Categorization of Likert Scale Statements: Personal (P), Interpersonal (I), and Transpersonal (T)

Q#	Rating Average	Category	Summary of key points in the question
Q10	4.22	P	engaged various aspects of being
Q23	4.17	P	taught to honor multiple ways of knowing
Q08	4.06	P	helped develop new levels of emotional maturity
Q38	3.96	P	helped develop an expanded sense of self
Q29	3.94	P	helped actualize my higher potentials
Q40	3.81	P	challenged to become aware of and reassess my worldview assumptions
Q19	3.79	P	developed mindfulness
Q41	3.72	P	increased awareness of underdeveloped aspects of myself
Q42	3.68	P	learned to respect worldviews contradictory to my own
Q35	3.63	P	indispensible to my professional development
Q26	3.55	P	learned to experience embodied knowing
Q32	3.48	P	learning catalyzed a significant change in my lifestyle
Q30	4.17	I	people I met were instrumental to growth
Q12	4.09	I	learned how to support others psycho-spiritual process
Q36	4.02	I	part of a community that honors multiple worldviews
Q14	3.81	I	authentic relating, support of others psycho-spiritual growth process
Q34	3.77	I	change in relating to the world
Q31	3.70	I	felt emotionally supported in class
Q39	3.70	I	developed communication skills
Q37	3.66	I	catalyzed change in relating to others
Q28	3.60	I	felt part of a spiritual community
Q27	3.43	I	increased capacity for intimacy
Q43	3.38	I	awakened sense of global citizenship
Q16	3.23	I	as an alum, still feels part of community
Q11	4.13	T	sense of self expanded, allowing for more authentic spiritual expression
Q07	4.11	T	now embrace an integral worldview
Q20	4.11	T	deepened relationship with the sacred
Q24	4.09	T	fostered my psycho-spiritual transformation
Q13	4.02	T	offered me an integral education

Q18	3.96	T	ability for authentic self-expression increased
Q44	3.91	T	taught to honor the multidimensionality of existence
Q21	3.83	T	inspired me to experience life as an ever-unfolding evolution of consciousness
Q09	3.78	T	helped access intuition
Q25	3.62	T	emotional support contributed to spiritual development
Q22	3.41	T	more mindful of impact on the environment
Q06	3.30	T	developed a regular spiritual practice
Q45	4.23	OTHER	overall, I had a positive experience

Table 3 shows the 15 statements, out of 40, in which respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with least frequency, while Table 4 reflects the 15 statements that respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the most frequency. These two tables are organized from high to low; in other words, for example, in Table 3, the statement that people agreed with the least was number 22, "as a result of my education in EWP, I am more aware of my impact on the environment." Categorically speaking, participants were least likely to agree or strongly agree with certain statements from each category: Transpersonal (N = 4) Interpersonal (N = 6), Personal (N = 5). Interestingly, all three dimensions were rated somewhat similarly, which indicates that one was not privileged over the other.

Table 3: Statements with the Lowest Agree/Strongly Agree Response Rate

Q#	Category	Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed	Total Respondents	Percentage of Agreement	Question Details
Q28	I	30	47	64%	While in the program I felt part of a spiritual community.
Q25	T	30	47	64%	Being emotionally supported while completing my degree contributed to my spiritual/transpersonal development.
Q42	P	29	47	61%	Through my education in EWP I learned to respect worldviews contradictory to my own.
Q39	I	28	47	60%	My education in EWP fostered the development of interpersonal communication skills.
Q17	T	28	47	60%	As a result of my education, I actively seek opportunities to grow spiritually.

Q15	P	27	46	59%	Learning about psych-spiritual disciplines inspired me to develop a personal, regular self-care practice.
Q26	P	26	47	55%	I learned how to experience embodied knowing as a result of my education in EWP.
Q27	I	25	47	53%	My education in the EWP program increased my capacity for genuine intimacy.
Q35	P	25	46	53%	My EWP education has been indispensible to my professional development.
Q6	T	24	47	51%	EWP helped me develop a regular spiritual discipline.
Q32	P	24	46	52%	What I learned in the EWP program catalyzed a significant change in my lifestyle.
Q16	I	22	47	47%	As an alum, I still feel part of the EWP community.
Q43	I	22	47	47%	My education in EWP awakened in me a sense of global citizenship and responsibility.
Q33	I	21	47	45%	My education had a noticeable positive effect on the quality of my relationships.
Q22	T	20	46	43%	As a result of my education in EWP, I am more mindful of my impact on the environment.

Table 4 shows which of the statements out of 40 participants agreed or strongly agreed with most frequently; the table is in order from high to low. It is interesting to note which categories the statements that were most agreed or strongly agreed with fell into: Transpersonal (N = 6), Personal (N = 5), and Interpersonal (N = 3); here it seems that agreement is more prevalent in both the transpersonal and personal domains. Eighty-nine percent of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the final statement on the scale, "in retrospect, I had a positive experience of EWP overall," which is categorized as "other" because it was included in the scale to serve as a reflection on the overall experience of the education in EWP. Although this is significant, a "positive experience" does not take into account the three different categories, personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal.

Table 4: Statements with the Highest Agree/Strongly Agree Response Rate

Q#	Category	Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed	Total Respondents	Percentage of Agreement	Question Details
Q36	I	42	47	89%	Being a part of EWP, I became part of a community which honors multiple worldviews.
Q45	Other	42	47	89%	In retrospect, I had a positive experience of EWP overall.
Q23	P	41	47	87%	As a result of my education in EWP I was taught to honor multiple ways of knowing.
Q38	P	37	47	79%	My education in EWP helped me develop an expanded sense of self.
Q7	T	36	47	77%	Since completing my degree in EWP, I embrace an integral worldview.
Q19	P	35	47	74%	I became more mindful as a result of my education in EWP.
Q18	T	35	47	74%	As a result of my EWP education, my ability for authentic self-expression improved.

The Qualitative Component of Phase 1: Open-Ended Questions

The participants who completed the Likert scale were also invited to reflect on their EWP learning experience in their own words. At the conclusion of the ranking scale participants were asked to articulate their thoughts concerning the characteristics of an integral education, as well as how their graduate education in East-West Psychology contributed both to personal and professional development, if this was applicable. Forty-six of the 47 participants who completed the scale opted to answer the open-ended questions─ one simply said "pass" on all three─ and although some themes were revealed, the answers to these questions also reflect a diversity of expressions. A summary of the major themes from the open-ended responses can be found in Table 5, as well as the number of times each occurred (in parentheses).

Table 5: Summary of Open-ended Results

Question Details	Themes
In your view, what characterizes an Integral education?	Theme 1: Honors Multiple Worldviews (13) Theme 2: Honors the Multidimensionality of Being (11) Theme 3: Honors Multiple Ways of Knowing (10) Theme 4: Psycho-spiritual Unfolding (8) Theme 5: Integration (5)

Please describe how your EWP learning experience and degree completion contributed to your personal development (If not applicable simply state that).	Theme 1: Expanded sense of self/Deepened Self-Understanding (23) Theme 2: Transformation/Development already in progress (7) Theme 3: Encouraged Exploration of Multiple Ways of gaining valid knowledge (7) Theme 4: Growth/Maturation (6) Theme 5: Not Applicable (5) Theme 6: Ph.D. process (4)
Please describe how your EWP learning experience and degree completion contributed to your professional development (If not applicable simply state that).	Theme 1: Not Applicable (14) Theme 2: Academic/Scholarly (9) Theme 3: Indirect Effect (6) Theme 4: Deepened Current Work (5) Theme 5: One Step on the Path (4)

Phase 2: Qualitative Results Report

Ten people agreed to go a little deeper into this inquiry into earning a graduate degree in EWP at CIIS and semi-structured interviews, in-person and via Skype, were conducted. Through the interviews, the aim was to have participants tell their EWP story; specifically, the curiosity that drove this work was the exploration of who these EWP alumni were before, during, and after their experience of earning a graduate degree in the program. In addition to this grand-tour question, there were 10 questions prepared to guide participants through this inquiry as well. In the spirit of EWP, all interviewed participants were invited to sit in mindful silence for a few minutes prior to the start of the interview with the researcher, as a way to encourage thoughtful and intentional presence during the interview itself. A summary of individual interview themes follows.

Summary of Interview Themes

There were certain themes that came up in multiple interviews and these are expressed in Table 6. The overarching themes are organized from high to low, with the number of occurrences noted in the table referring to how many times each individual interview theme showed up during the entire qualitative phase of the research. In other words, for example, seeker/self-directed learner was an individual interview theme that was apparent in each participant's transcript, so Table 7 indicates that particular individual theme to have appeared 10 times during the second phase of the project. The themes are categorized as major or minor, depending on how many instances that particular theme arose.

Table 6: Overarching major and minor themes from all interviews

Major themes	Theme 1. Seeker/Self-directed Learner (10) Theme 2. Positive Aspects of EWP (7) Theme 3. Takeaways (7) Theme 4. Synchronistic Unfolding (6) Theme 5. Spiritual Emergence/Emergency (4) Theme 6. Critiques (4)
Minor themes	Theme 1. Integral Worldview Foundation (3) Theme 2. What EWP Lacked (2)

Seeker/self-directed learner. A person who displayed a strong will to learn through an ongoing seeking to satisfy a passionate curiosity to know thyself was considered in light of the first major theme, seeker/self-directed learner. This theme also is considered as a characteristic of one's lifestyle, a characteristic that became apparent in all 10 participants' stories when asked about their life before their EWP graduate education experience. For example, all 10 interview participants spoke to the time prior to EWP and CIIS in a particular way. As each described life before EWP, the tendency to have a thirst for self-knowledge became evident, and a thread of commonality concerning previous studies and interests was present: all could be related to the intentional search for psycho-spiritual growth. Jean worked full time, yet on her own, she was taking various classes from all kinds of traditions from the Enneagram to grief work, to mythology. Susan was a nun who was deep into self-study through spiritual practice; she noted exploring many different wisdom traditions simultaneously, and while completing her master's in counseling psychology, she was reading humanistic and transpersonal psychology on her own. Charles said that his home country held education in high regard, and these times of learning were significant and meaningful to him; for example, many a night in college he would stay up until the wee hours and talk with his friends about their aspirations and what social justice projects they sought to implement. Ariel reported a spontaneous spiritual awakening and how she was very broken down by it; however, she also noted that it was "not in a bad way, just you know what happens when you start seeking" (Ariel's Transcript, p. 1). At the undergraduate level, Duncan declared two majors, in sociology and philosophy, and he was deeply embedded in the local music scene while he pursued his traditional studies. He also noted reading one or two books a week once he discovered Fields Bookstore, a shop in San Francisco that specializes in esoteric and spiritual wisdom traditions. Grace went to a non-traditional high school, in order to interweave her academic work with her love of theatre. Psychology and spirituality have long been interests of Lily, and she was studying Jung and Wilber on her own, a pursuit that actually led her to find CIIS. Phoenix had a regular *Vipassana* practice for nearly a decade, worked with plant teachers, as well as studied in the PCC department at CIIS for his master's. Holden traveled extensively in Asia and Europe, a venture that began when he was 29 and "feeling antsy" (Holden's transcript, p. 2). Theodore reports being a seeker all his life, and that seeking transformation is part of his recovery; "it is vitally necessary in order to actually escape from your addiction" (Theodore's transcript, p. 1). This tendency to search for opportunities to gain self-knowledge and experience psycho-spiritual growth is also apparent in each of the participant's decisions to embark on the journey and complete the course to earning a graduate degree in EWP.

Positive aspects of EWP. The positive aspects of earning a degree in EWP refers to the highlights and how people described what they valued most about their experience while in the program. Grace, for example, found it valuable that her teachers engaged with her, and she felt fully supported in following whatever she was passionate about. She also loved the flexibility to take courses in other departments, and felt that the program truly honored each student's individuality. Lily echoed Grace's feeling of being supported, and Theodore too, was just thrilled to find a beloved community, a flock of birds of his own feather, one in an "accepting, nurturing, familial kind of environment" (Theodore's transcript, p. 12). Ariel appreciated the "gentleness and

receptivity…[and the] soft welcoming and reassuring" atmosphere of the department that she discovered upon her arrival, and it is this initial vibe of the program that even allowed her to even begin her graduate education in the first place (Ariel's transcript, p. 6). Like Grace, Ariel also appreciated the flexibility to take courses from across departments within the Institute while working towards her degree in EWP. Jean and Holden spoke highly of certain courses; specifically, Jean mentioned Spiritual Counseling Skills, and Holden noted Integral Approaches to Dreams, Comparative Mysticism, and Eastern Theories of Self, Mind, and Nature as highly influential. Phoenix and Grace expressed gratitude for the foundational grounding gained in the Eastern theories course as well.

Takeaways. The takeaways are participants' reports of what they feel they received from earning a degree in EWP. There were seven participants who reflected on the takeaways. Holden felt that he broadened and deepened his understanding of the history of Eastern religions and how they connect with the nascent field of transpersonalism, and "things that used to be sort of loose and floating out there, now…a much stronger foundation from a theoretical and religious standpoint" (Holden's transcript, p. 12). He also spoke of an expanded awareness of the distinctness and inseparable inner and outer realms of experience, and was able to use the knowledge he gained in the course Cosmos and Psyche to critically reflect on non-dual experiences that he had prior to studying in EWP. Also, Duncan reported that he was able to take away a more logical and analytical approach to studying traditions that are often dubbed "just new age" (Duncan's transcript, p. 5), and are at risk of nebulousness. Theodore asserts that completing the program allowed for a deepened self-maturation. Grace said that since completing a degree in EWP she now has the ability to hold perspectives that may be new or contrary to her own, as well as an increased engagement with and integration of her wounds and the shadow aspects of her personality. Lily had the realization of being out of touch with her body, and after coming to CIIS and enrolling in EWP she began to actively come into contact with this disconnection, as well as other blind spots that she had. Besides increased somatic and emotional awareness, Lily also felt that her EWP experience helped her to connect with and better articulate one of her biggest passions: human development. Further, she deepened her understanding of what she envisions as her livelihood. She also reported a greater understanding of her intuition. Phoenix too emphasized that one of the gifts EWP gave him was a greater somatic awareness, which helped him to recognize that his mind tends to dominate his experience. He began to really value the body and its wisdom after the embodied spiritual work he completed while earning a Ph.D. in EWP. These are some of the examples of how people described what they received from the educational experience of earning a degree in EWP, which is distinct from the positive aspects of EWP because of its deeper specificity.

Synchronistic unfolding. Synchronistic unfolding refers to the particular way in which some participants described meaningful coincidences that occurred in and throughout their lives, as well as the capacity to see an interconnection and a larger picture through making meaning of these events. Some participants even used the term synchronicity when talking about certain moments in their life. For example, Lily recalled a time when she signed up for a class, and right at the last minute she could not attend; she ended up taking another class, the only class left, and she mentioned that "there was something bigger" at work orchestrating that shift in coursework during her final semester in the EWP master's. Ariel said that she was brought to CIIS "synchronistically" (Ariel's transcript, p. 1). Additionally, it was through her work at the café that she just happened

to hear about another job opening of interest from a friend who was leaving his position, and she soon after gained employment on a farm, which aligned with her passion to promote awareness of non-GMO and pro-organic movement. Jean told a story about how just after she had begun taking classes focused on personal development in her hopeful home country she returned to the place of her birth to work on getting her visa. While she was visiting, there happened to be a high school reunion. This was very odd; she said "we never ever meet up again…we don't care, you just leave school" (Jean's transcript, pp. 6-7). She felt that is was extremely ironic that her favorite teacher from high school, "the first person who actually saw me as a human being," mentioned her current teacher's name and was well acquainted with them. Additionally, she described that upon returning home from the school reunion, she enrolled in and was accepted into a course that usually has a 6-month waiting period, and instead she was able to attend the following weekend, since there was one space that mysteriously opened up, and her grandmother had just given her a birthday gift for the exact amount of the course. Susan also described certain stories of her life in a particular way, in a way that she described as unfolding meaningfully. She was admitted into the EWP program in less than a week's time; she also asserted that she had no idea where she would complete her internship hours and somehow received the grace of being awarded a teacher's assistant position, which then led to a co-teaching/adjunct faculty role in the subsequent semester, and in turn paved the way to her teaching her own courses at that school, eventually leading to her becoming a program chair and creating her own integral degree program. Phoenix said that when he was in Asia, he ran into some CIIS professors who let him know about certain mentorship opportunities, which then led him to study in EWP with his eventual dissertation chair. He also said that he "happened to move close to one of the best massage schools in the country after graduation" and that his fruitless pursuit of a job in academia was a blessing because it showed him what his calling really was (Phoenix's transcript, pp. 9-10). Duncan's responses also reflected a synchronistic unfolding; for example, he moved to California to pursue music, but discovered CIIS while he was living in San Francisco, and decided to go back to school there. Additionally, he had been reading Stan Grof on his own time, and found out that he happened to be teaching two blocks from where he worked. The instances noted here may seem insignificant to some, but it is the way in which the participants made meaning of them as they told their stories is what makes them stand out in this research as the theme synchronistic unfolding.

Spiritual emergence/emergency. Spiritual emergence/emergency denotes non-ordinary states that participants reported experiencing, states that were spontaneous and not substance-induced. Holden recalls a time that he was hiking in the Himalayas and he felt a sense of oneness with the land and all that surrounded him; he said he felt "permeable as though I was connected to the animals, the mountains everything, it was just this wonderful sense of interconnectedness" (Holden's transcript, p. 3). He reported a similar experience in Scotland when encountering huge monoliths at the Ring of Brodgar; it was like "a psychic merging with one of the stones" (p. 4). Lily mentioned two instances where she was having a "peak experience," although she said one was "extremely ungrounded…I didn't really sleep or eat properly…it got really scary, like everything was so on all the time. I couldn't leave my house…stand bright colors or strong smells" (Lily's transcript, p. 5). Ariel experienced a similar intensity in her experience of emergence; she said she "had a big…spontaneous spiritual awakening *kundalini* episode" that left her "broken down" (Ariel's transcript, p. 1). Phoenix's spiritual emergence experiences were more subtle; he said "I started having these spiritual experiences…basically massive encounters in the dream state, and some synchronicities with entities that I would later define as my guides" (Phoenix's transcript,

p. 1). Although the quality of participants' spiritual emergence varied from positive to challenging, all these reports indicate encounters with a domain that is beyond ego understanding.

Critiques. Another overarching theme in the qualitative interview phase was critiques of EWP, and these often came with a disappointed or dissatisfied undertone. Duncan cited his surprise with the student body, stating that it "was kind of confusing and shocking…it was a lot more kind of Northern-Californian well-to-do…middle-aged people" and furthermore "the student body was very mixed…in the sense that there was a wide range of rigor" (Duncan's transcript, p. 3). The hefty student loans were also mentioned as a downside, although that has more to do with the Institute than the department. Jean felt that the master's was "an unfinished product" and "it wasn't an academic experience" but a "concentrated form of inner work" (Jean's transcript, pp. 16-17). She also said that it did not provide her anything for a "professional basis" (p. 17), and she was troubled by the inappropriateness on the part of some of the faculty members in relation to students. Charles had much to say about EWP in terms of critique. He found "the climate anti-intellectual and…it did not address spirituality in [a] very systematic and detailed manner" (Charles' transcript, p. 3). Additionally, he felt that some of the professors "have taken a slice of their study and made it the end all be all… [and he] personally feels that they have basically killed the dream of Dr. Chaudhuri" (p. 3). Charles was also discouraged that the school openly advertises allegiance to the integral educational vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, yet he came here is did not find that allegiance present, and he noted this "lurking as a huge shadow of CIIS" (p. 5).

In contrast to other participants who noted the EWP community in a positive light, Ariel felt this is where the department could further develop, stating outright "EWP was not very good at community" (Ariel's transcript, p. 3). Additionally, she noted "there were a few people with whom I entered [that] transferred out of EWP because of issues about: what am I going to do with this?" (p. 3). Here, there is a hint pointing toward the uncertainty of what comes next professionally after earning a degree in EWP. She also said "I don't feel that EWP at the time was really teaching to race or gender or class awareness or social justice issues on a kind of practical…pedal to the medal kind of way" (p. 3). The aforementioned critiques theme concludes the summary of the major themes from the qualitative interview phase and a review of the minor themes from Phase 2 follows. These themes were categorized as minor because the number of times they manifested in participants' interviews was three or less (see Table 6 for complete list).

Integral worldview foundation. Three participants displayed characteristics that show an integral worldview foundation in their life; in other words, there are particular ways in which the three following participants show up in the world that can be linked to having adopted an integral worldview as their ontology and epistemology. Susan was very much influenced integral theory; not only by the work of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, but Ken Wilber as well. Above all, how she communicates with herself, and her active seeking to know her calling, is very much aligned with the way integral yoga honors the unique unfolding of each individual soul. She spoke about how she sought self-knowledge in this way: "I just sat in meditation, and I said my sacred intention for this life is to be a vehicle for spirit" (Susan's transcript, p. 7). She also asserted that "integral is probably the most profound teaching that I got at CIIS, and integral within an evolutionary movement" and she went on to further elaborate, saying "so everything I've done in my life, both personally and professionally since then, has had an integral, evolutionary, unfolding foundation, perspective, emphasis…it's the container through which I seem to experience and feel

everything…and everything I teach" (p. 7). Charles also depicts a lifestyle and teaching philosophy aligned with the integral vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother specifically. He said " I am very respectful to all spiritual teachers…across traditions…the way I see [it] is that they [have] access to a particular truth and that truth is important because it came from their own experience of pursuing the divine" (Charles' transcript, p. 6). The integral worldview foundation also showed up in his description of his approach to teaching students: "it is like truly honoring their inner constitution and giving them what would really benefit them…which will actually…help them walk a path which is in accordance with the seekings of their inner being" (p. 9). Duncan also mentioned that his work in EWP affected everything he does in life, which includes teaching and mentoring, as well as engagement within his music community. For example, although he is deeply involved with his music nowadays, he recently wrote a book about music production. Interestingly, he included a philosophical and historical context for the reader, and connected the emergence of electronic music to what certain musicians were reading at the time, which included the works Sri Aurobindo, and D.T. Suzuki.

What EWP lacked. What EWP lacked was named a distinct theme from critiques because two participants specifically pointed to what was missing from their gradate experience in EWP rather than speaking indirectly about what they did not like, or what the program could do better, as with those classified as critiques of EWP. For example, Susan felt that the social dimension was underrepresented in the program; in other words, there was a lack of connection between the work being done at CIIS and how it could connect or be implemented in the world at large to address social issues. She mentioned that "they really didn't do much with the social, but it was sort of implied that…as we went up the ladder of integration, it would go towards social issues eventually [but] it didn't integrate it as much as I would want" (Susan's transcript, p. 7). Also, Lily noted that there was a lack of professional and practical skill development during the time she completed a master's degree in EWP. She would have benefitted from learning about "marketing and business tools" because "just because you have a passion and you think you're aligning with the universe's purpose for yourself doesn't mean shits going to happen" (Lily's transcript, p. 9). Moreover she said "the gap I was sensing in EWP was that we're not sensing that development needs to be within your space wherever you are" and she cites the example of attempting to teach students about nonduality when they do not even know what it is like to be in their body; "it's a huge huge very dangerous spiritual bypass" (p. 6). Two other participants cited that EWP lacked a bridge from graduate school back to the mainstream, work-a-day world, however this warrants distinction as its own theme because of the intriguing specificity.

No bridge. A bridge may also be something that EWP lacked, but this theme was distinguished because of how two participants specifically spoke of their experience of trying to become gainfully employed upon graduating with a Ph.D. in EWP in a specific way wherein they both describe no clear cut path from graduate school to working professional. Both Holden and Phoenix also mentioned the difficult transition from their EWP graduation to the mainstream workforce. Specifically, Holden said that although his degree is "reputable," it has not been "very applicable in a mainstream sense" (p. 1) as of yet. He describes his job search since graduation in this way: "if you're spending your time chasing things, like a job in transpersonal psychology… [you're] susceptible to pent up frustration which inhibits the flow of the passion and inspiration" (p. 13). Similarly, Phoenix noted of his EWP experience that "there was something of it being like a womb-like container…and I feel there has been sort of a shock of coming out of there…coming out of

EWP there was not a bridge to the world" (Phoenix's transcript, p. 8). Additionally, he said "the nature of the work that we do in EWP is, it is very unlikely that you're going to have somebody knocking on your door saying whatever it is you do, I heard you're good, here's 60 dollars, just do your EWP thing for an hour" (p. 9). It is apparent here that not only does Phoenix feel there is a lack of a bridge, but, he is even unsure of how to describe what he can offer to the world after completing a degree in EWP.

Shadow of spirituality in higher education. Another minor theme could also be a subtheme of the overarching critiques theme that emerged concerning EWP; two participants specifically pointed to the shadow side of spirituality in higher education when they expressed certain aspects of their experience of the program. Holden said, "sometimes the ideals that are espoused at CIIS, the images people try to portray just don't match up…I think that's the shadow of CIIS. I think that people tend to forget their basic humanity sometimes in the process of espousing basic humanity" (Holden's transcript, p. 7). He noted several instances with different professors to support this point. Additionally, he said "when you go to a place like CIIS there are such high ideals and such high hopes and I think that [for] a lot of people it also brings out weird shit…I think there is a lot of unresolved angst at our school" (p. 11); he also mentions the pettiness and self-promoting nature of some faculty members, which is contradictory to spiritual and integral values of the Institute. Lily also noted a shadow side of spirituality in higher education. As previously mentioned, she talked about the danger of spiritual bypass, which could occur if you try to teach people about nonduality when they first have not even been able to experience their body first. She also said "when you don't deal with trauma through grounding, it is easy to go off into a bliss state and ignore your body" (Lily's transcript, p. 5), and she felt that this was not made explicit during her time in the program.

Double life. There were two participants who alluded to a disconnection between their career or work, and their pursuit of self-knowledge and personal growth through exploring psychological and spiritual traditions, a disconnection between their passion and how they made a living. Thus double life was used to describe this phenomenon articulated in their stories. Jean was deeply embedded in the world of finance; this route was very practical for her and she was making a great living. Yet she longed to study "other ways of seeing the world" (Jean's transcript, p. 5) and she did this often on her own time, reading and taking workshops on a wide variety of topics "from death and dying to grief counseling to healthy relationships to Reiki, anything alternative" (p. 6). Grace too spoke about a split between what she loved to do and how she made money. From a young age she reports "I've always had a double life" (Grace's transcript, p. 4) because as a theatre kid, she would go to school by day and "crew shows" (p. 4) by night. This way of being in the world continued when she was acting post-Julliard; she "had to work 9-5 to pay for acting," (p. 4) and most recently, all the while she worked on her degree in EWP she worked as a web consultant from home.

Results Summary and Discussion

The first phase of the present work gave a glimpse into the diverse perspectives of alumni who completed a degree in East-West Psychology in regard to the nature of their experience in the program on multiple levels (i.e., personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal); self-reports regarding the understanding of "integral education," as well as to what degree did the M.A. or Ph.D. in EWP

contribute to personal and professional development were also collected. The demographic information gathered reflected a wide array of identities and the ranking scale revealed that participants for the most part agreed with the statements on the scale. The open-ended questions complemented the ranking scale data, since participants were invited to speak to aspects of the scale in their own words.

The second phase of the project enriched the first. The semi-structured, in-depth interviews allowed 10 participants the space to more deeply articulate the value of their degree in EWP, and explore who they were before, during, and after their degree completion. Of the 10 interviews, there were 23 individual interview themes that became apparent, and 11 overarching: six major and five minor themes. In a latter section, some of the major themes identified, the positive aspects of EWP, takeaways, and critiques of EWP, are further categorized, since individual participant responses varied concerning these three themes.

Quantitative Phase: Likert Scale

In the first phase, there were two data collection strategies used simultaneously. Initially, participants were asked to offer some demographic information, and complete a ranking scale, which included 40 statements. Each of the 40 statements on the scale following the demographic information was categorized as personal, interpersonal, or transpersonal; this was purposeful. The categories were used as a way to gauge alumni experiences concerning multiple dimensions of their experience in the context of their graduate education in the EWP program.

As evidenced in the results of the scale, EWP alumni were largely in agreement with all of the statements and an overwhelming 89% (N = 42) of participants agreed or strongly agreed that overall they had a positive experience in EWP. For example, even statement 22, "my education in EWP taught me how to support others in their psycho-spiritual transformation process," which had the lowest agree/strongly agree response rate of all the statements on the scale, still yielded a 44% (N = 20) agreement response rate, and this low agreement response rate was not highly disagreed with. However, 46% of participants (N = 21) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement "as a result of my education in EWP, I am more mindful of my impact on the environment." This begs the question of clarity regarding the phrasing of the statement itself in regard to the exploration of the outcomes of earning a graduate degree in EWP, since more responses indicated participants were neither in agreement or disagreement, than disagreement or strong disagreement. There were however, a few statements that revealed some disagreement worth noting. Table 7 shows the percentage of neutral response rates and the disagree/strongly disagree response rates alongside the percentage of agreement rates for the 15 statements that participants agreed with least. Statements for which the disagree or strongly disagree responses exceeded the neutral response will be discussed in detail.

Table 7: Categorized Statements with the Lowest Agree/Strongly Agree Response Rate Alongside the Corresponding Neutral Response Rate Percentage and Disagree/Strongly Disagree Percentage

Q#	Cate-gory	A/SA RR	DA/SDA RR	Neutral RR	Total # of Responses	% A/SA Responses	% of Neutral Response	% of D/SDA Response
Q28	I	30	9	8	47	64%	17%	19%
Q25	T	30	7	10	47	64%	21%	15%
Q42	P	29	3	15	47	62%	32%	6%
Q39	I	28	2	17	47	60%	36%	4%
Q17	T	28	5	14	47	60%	30%	10%
Q15	P	27	7	12	46	59%	26%	15%
Q26	P	26	8	13	47	55%	28%	17%
Q27	I	25	6	16	47	53%	34%	13%
Q35	P	25	8	13	46	54%	28%	18%
Q6	T	24	12	11	47	51%	23%	26%
Q32	P	24	6	16	46	52%	35%	13%
Q16	I	22	14	11	47	47%	23%	30%
Q43	I	22	6	19	47	47%	40%	13%
Q33	I	21	3	23	47	45%	49%	6%
Q22	T	20	5	21	46	44%	46%	10%

There were three statements participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with that are worth noting here, since the percentage of participant disagreement exceeded the neutral response rate. Statement 16, "As an alum, I still feel part of the EWP community," was the statement participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the most: 30% of participants reported they did not feel part of the community as alumni (N = 14), when 47% agreed or strongly agree that they did. Although CIIS has an active alumni association, and EWP itself has bi-annual gatherings for all in the community, past and present, as evidenced in the response results of this statement on the scale, some people do not feel part of the community once they graduate.

Statement 6, "EWP helped me to develop a regular spiritual discipline," was another statement of interest, since it yielded a disagree/strongly disagree response rate of 26% (N = 12). Again, it would interest me to speak with these participants further; did they already have a spiritual practice developed prior to commencing their studies in EWP, or has EWP failed to support the development of a spiritual practice? In future studies, a clearer expression of what was initially attempted here may come in the form of two distinct questions, one inquiring into participants

experience of the spiritually based, community-oriented nature of the program, and the other asking participants more directly about the connection between studying in EWP and its connection to each individual's spiritual practice.

Additionally, when asked statement 27, "while in the program, I felt part of a spiritual community," 19% (N = 9) of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed, more than those who were neutral, or in agreement. This is interesting to note since the two statements just mentioned both inquired into a similar area of exploration: to what degree the course of study EWP impacted the development of a spiritual discipline, and to what degree did participants feel they were learning within a spiritual community? To have such response rates of disagreement indicates perhaps a point to consider in program evaluation and one avenue of future research, focused on the construct of a spiritual educational community, since CIIS asserts that the integral education they offer "affirms spirituality" and that they are "committed to the study and practice of multiple spiritual traditions and to their expression and embodiment throughout all areas and activities of the Institute community" (CIIS, 2014a, para. 2). Furthermore, I would be curious to know more about how respondents applied their studies to daily life during them, and since graduating, if applicable.

Quantitative Phase: Open-ended Questions

After participants completed the scale, the inquiry then shifted to explore how each characterized an integral education, and to what degree they felt that earning an advanced degree in EWP influenced their personal and professional development. The objective here was to offer participants the space to articulate in their own words the nature of their experiences and understandings of earning a graduate degree in EWP. Table 8 shows a summary of the major themes from the open-ended responses, and seven or more occurrences constituted the item as a major theme.

Table 8: Summary of the Major Themes from the Open-ended Results

Question Details	Major Themes
In your view, what characterizes an Integral education?	Theme 1: Multiple Worldviews (13) Theme 2: Multidimensionality of Being (11) Theme 3: Multiple Ways of Knowing (10)
Please describe how your EWP learning experience and degree completion contributed to your personal development (If not applicable simply state that).	Theme 1: Expanded sense of self/Deepened Self-Understanding (23) Theme 2: Transformation/Development already in progress (7) Theme 3: Encouraged Exploration of Multiple Ways of Gaining Valid Knowledge (7)

Please describe how your EWP learning experience and degree completion contributed to your professional development (If not applicable simply state that).	Theme 1: Not Applicable (14) Theme 2: Academic/Scholarly (9) Theme 3: Indirect Effect (7)

Analysis of the survey data collected from the open-ended questions was most revealing. There were three themes that presented in the responses gathered regarding the initial question "in your view, what characterizes an integral education?" (1) multiple worldviews, (2) multidimensionality of being, and (3) multiple ways of knowing.

The first question is interesting because it does not directly inquire into the nature of the EWP program or CIIS per se, since it simply asks for the participant's view of how they characterize a particular educational method. Thus, one cannot assume that the responses are descriptors for the EWP department's educational offering. However, there was one participant who took it upon herself to add her thoughts concerning the lack of an integral education in the EWP program, stating "whatever it is I do not believe I received it in 2003."

At first glance, these themes generally correlate with the integral education espoused by CIIS today. Reflecting on the educational philosophy of the Institute, which affirms that the integral education at CIIS "encompass[es] all aspects of learning: the intellectual, the experiential and the applied" (CIIS, 2014b, para. 2), "values cultural diversity, multiple ways of knowing, spirituality, a sense of community… [and, by] exploring the interplay of mind, body, and spirit, integral education connects the spiritual and practical dimensions of intellectual life" (CIIS, 2014b, para. 3), the degree of correlation becomes more apparent.

At the time of this study, on the Institute's EWP website, the program's most up to date educational vision is reported as follows:

 − To create a learning community focused on the exploration of Western, Eastern, and Indigenous psychologies and spiritualities in the spirit of integral inquiry and open-ended dialogue.
 − To offer an integral education that honors not only intellectual excellence, but also the voice and wisdom of the somatic, vital, emotional, imaginal, and spiritual dimensions of the person.
 − To bring spirituality into academia and explore the transformative elements of inquiry, learning, and writing.
 − To foster the psycho-spiritual development of students, as well as their unique individual gifts and potentials. (CIIS, 2014d, para. 7)

Moreover, EWP today maintains that "through its unique combination of cognitive and experiential offerings, the department grounds academic excellence and the acquisition of professional skills in both the personal transformation of students and the cultivation of a spiritually informed scholarship" (CIIS, 2014a, para. 1).

Quantitative Phase Open-ended Questions: Personal and Professional Impact

The last two open-ended questions in Phase 1 of the present research sought to collect information about the personal and professional impact of participating in an integral education and earning a degree in EWP; this was intentional because the EWP department has historically offered a program that strives to nurture students ability to balance and integrate the many human dimensions, body, mind, spirit, alongside the development of professional skills, and a ground in practical application (see CIIS course catalogs from 1975-present). EWP's educational vision today maintains the heart of the original intent, and this study examined to what extent the vision holds true by collecting alumni perspectives of the personal and professional value they attribute to EWP since completing their advanced degree.

There were six themes present in participants' responses to the open-ended question, "Please describe how your EWP learning experience and degree completion contributed to your personal development (If not applicable simply state that)": (1) expanded sense of self/deepened self-understanding, (2) transformation/development already in progress, (3) encouraged exploration of multiple ways of gaining valid knowledge, (4) growth/maturation, (5) not applicable. The other open-ended question was similar, but professional is substituted for personal. "Please describe how your EWP learning experience and degree completion contributed to your professional development (If not applicable simply state that)"; there were five themes revealed as a result: (1) not applicable, (2) academic/scholarly, (3) indirect effect, (4) deepened current work, (5) one step on the path. Further analysis of each individual theme regarding participants' personal and professional development in light of the contemporary educational vision of the EWP department follows.

To summarize, the main characteristics of an integral education that were noted by participants were the honoring of the multidimensionality of being, or simultaneous development along multiple lines of intelligence, and the valuing of multiple ways of gaining valid knowledge. In regard to personal development, participants emphasized an expanded sense of self, and transformation in connection to their education in EWP. Professionally speaking, participants mostly reported no effect or an indirect effect, but others reported that their academic development while in pursuit of a Ph.D. was linked to their professional development post-graduation.

Qualitative Phase

In the second phase of the study, 10 of those who participated in the first phase volunteered their time for a qualitative interview. Each of the 10 interview transcripts revealed individual themes, and some overarching themes. There were 21 individual interview themes in total, and 11 overarching themes. As noted previously, Table 6 showed the major and minor overarching themes across the collection of interviews. The major themes were seeker/self-directed learner (10), positive aspects of EWP (7), takeaways (7), synchronistic unfolding (6), spiritual emergence/emergency (4), and critiques (4).

Participants used certain language to describe their experience, as if they were constantly engaged intentionally seeking out the next steps in their own psycho-spiritual unfolding. Thus, everyone interviewed showed characteristics of being a seeker/self-directed learner. Synchronistic

unfolding and spiritual emergence/emergency also lend themselves to this major theme, since this type of descriptive language is only used by a certain kind of person, a seeker. Positive aspects of EWP, and takeaways shed light on what alumni perceive as the benefits of a course of study in EWP. Participants who shared the highlights of their time in EWP or spoke to what they gained personally and professionally from earning a degree in EWP fell into these categories. Interestingly, some of the major and minor themes are so related, they could be combined, and thus constitute another major theme. Specifically, critiques (4), what EWP lacked (2), no bridge (2) shadow side of spirituality (2), all indicate the learning edges of the EWP department. In other words, these themes could be a major theme, such as zone of proximal development, in which case, would have occurred 10 times in the second phase. However, in order to preserve the words of participants as best as possible, these minor themes were designated instead.

I would like to bring the reader's attention to the relationship between some of the themes. Specifically, both spiritual emergence/emergency and synchronistic unfolding could be a way to describe certain characteristics of the life of a seeker. Additionally, takeaways could be a more specific way to describe a positive aspect of EWP, and what EWP lacked could be a form of critique. No bridge, as well as shadow side of spirituality could also fit into the realm of critique. The point here is that the themes procured from the data collection are very much interrelated, and some could be cross-listed. They have been articulated as such in service of greater clarity and acknowledgement of certain participants' original wording.

The forthcoming paragraphs will focus on deepening the reader's understanding of the more ambiguous themes: positives of EWP, critiques of EWP, what EWP lacked, and takeaways. Note: some individuals offered more than one example of any given particular theme; this becomes evident when reflecting on the number of times the theme occurred across interviews and the number of specific responses below. Table 9 shows the distinctness of responses concerning each of the aforementioned themes.

Table 9: Distinctness of Participant Experience Regarding Ambiguous Themes

Theme	Specific Responses
Positive Aspects of EWP (7)	(a) EWP 7793 *East-West Spiritual Counseling Skills* (b) grateful for the learning experience (c) newfound curiosity for the field of Psychology (d) concentrated inner work (e) soul work "I'm a more congruent person…we've all grown immeasurably" (f) professional/academic preparation (g) development of critical thinking skills (h) development of analytical thinking skills (i) 500 hours of internship (j) receptive (k) non-judgmental (l) freedom/flexibility to co-create one's curriculum (2) (m) faculty support (n) nurturance of each individual student's psycho-spiritual unfolding (o) EWP 6150 Eastern Theories of Self, Mind, and Nature (3) (p) opportunity to be a spiritual innovator

	(q) constant challenge of engaging with a community of scholars
	(r) full support from faculty mentors to follow passion/curiosity
Critiques (4)	(a) expected professional development/preparation; not delivered
	(b) inappropriateness of some faculty members
	(c) unsupported, concentrated form of inner work
	(d) anti-intellectual climate
	(e) systematic and detailed approach to spirituality not present
	(f) dogmatization of specialty
	(g) the dept. killed the dream of Dr. Chaudhuri
	(h) allegiance to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was marketed, yet not practiced/delivered
	(i) privileged/entitled student body (2)
	(j) hefty student loan debt
	(k) indefinable degree
What EWP Lacked	(a) lack of connection and applicability of studies to social issues
	(b) strong sense of community not present (2)
	(c) race/gender/class/social justice issues absent from the curriculum
	(d) professional development (2)
	(e) community/interpersonal support
	(f) more grounded approach to inner work and psycho-spiritual Development

Looking at the myriad of responses under each theme exposes a wealth of information regarding to what degree student learning outcomes match up with the educational vision set forth by CIIS and the EWP department. Student satisfaction levels were also indicated in the data collected, both in the sense of positive aspects of the program and what students report they are taking away from their time studying in EWP, as well as regarding more critical feedback and when students attest to feeling dissatisfied. Interestingly, one participant noted the professional and academic preparation in a positive light, and two others noted that was one aspect that was lacking in EWP. Sense can be made of this divergent perspective if one refers back to the CIIS course catalog literature from 1975-present. The participant who reported strong professional and academic preparation was an alumna of the EWP program back in the 1980s, whereas the two participants who mentioned this was an area of lack with EWP had been more recent, having graduated in the last five years. I would be curious to further explore the distinct iterations of EWP through alumni experience, using the course catalogs as a way to guide the organization of the sample. Also interesting to note is the evidence of correlation between the phases of research.

In the first phase of the study, 49% participants reported a deepened sense of self/expanded self-understanding when asked about their personal development in correlation to their EWP educational experience in the open-ended response data. The second phase also presented evidence of expanded self-understanding is present in the transcript data, and this was expressed in some of the responses categorized as takeaways. For example, interview participants reported increased somatic and emotional awareness, deepened self-understanding and self-knowledge, expanded awareness of shadow and increased integration capacity, as well as stronger sense of identity and passion as takeaways from their EWP educational experience. These examples warrant more exploration to be determined as qualities of deepened self-understanding, and they could prove useful in guiding future lines of inquiry.

The responses coded as "what EWP lacked," the "critiques," as well as "no bridge," and "shadow side of spirituality in education" were less present in the first phase of the research. However, interview participants did mention the lack of professional development, and two more reflected on the lack of a bridge from studying at CIIS to transitioning into meaningful contributor to society. These interview responses were akin to the most prevalent response regarding the open-ended question which inquired into the nature of alumni professional development and its connection to their course of study and degree completion in EWP; 30%   (N = 14) reported "not applicable."

Findings Summary and Conclusion

Considering all the responses from both phases, there is evidence of some correlation. The major themes revealed from the open-ended questions were validated in some ways through the qualitative interviews. Specifically, participants' responses in regard to personal and professional development in the first phase were shown in more detail in the second phase. For example, the most prevalent theme in the second phase, seeker/self-directed learner, was also present in the open-ended responses in regard to personal development. When asked about their EWP education and its connection to personal development, seven reported that their transformation and/or development was already in progress and would be a quality of their lives, whether they studied in EWP at CIIS or not. Both phases thus offer some information concerning the character, or personality of the students who decide to enroll and complete a graduate degree in EWP.

Overall the results of this mixed-method study point to the areas where the EWP program is doing well in terms of what students expect and what they actually get, and also to the areas that could use improvement if the department was to offer an education that better reflects the ideals of the Institute, as espoused by the program description and advertisement. The most significant findings are the revelations of the need for (a) more professional development for students completing a degree in EWP, (b) more practical application opportunities, for example, internships, teaching assistantships, scholarships, fellowships, and connection of studies to social and global issues, (c) more community/mentor support for students' personal psycho-spiritual unfolding, and (d) more training regarding the language and articulation needed to communicate the value of an integral education effectively with scholars/employers outside of CIIS.

There was also evidence in both phases that EWP is offering an educational experience that honors (a) multiple worldviews and perspectives, (b) the multidimensionality of experience, for example, physical, emotional, mental/intellectual, spiritual, relational, and (c) multiple ways of gaining valid knowledge, not just through the mind. Participants also reported across phases that they experienced (a) an expanded sense of self, (b) deepened self-awareness and/or knowledge, and (c) a new ability to hold multiple perspectives, even those contradictory to their own. Thus, there is evidence indicating that what CIIS aspires to is actualized according to some alumni reports.

The findings of this mixed methods study reveal perhaps more questions than answers; however, they are relevant to the EWP program, CIIS, and the field of higher education assessment research in general. Alumni perspectives on the personal and professional value of earning a non-traditional graduate degree helped to articulate what the Institute does well in regard to the practice

of integral education, what could be better implemented, and where the Institute could grow. These findings suggest best practices, critical reflections, as well as recommendations to improve the integral education model in practice at CIIS, thus inviting further refinement of the practice of integral education, and movement towards greater alignment with the educational values CIIS strives to uphold.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY QUESTIONS – TRANSFORMATION EVALUATION SCALE

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project exploring your educational experience in the East-West Psychology Program. Please read each of the following statements carefully. Reflect on your overall EWP experience as you consider each statement and then, using the following rating scale, please choose one of the five options listed below.

(5) Strongly agree
(4) Agree
(3) Neither agree nor disagree
(2) Disagree
(1) Strongly Disagree

1. Throughout the program, in general, I felt emotionally supported during class time.

2. My education in EWP helped me develop an expanded sense of self.

3. Learning about psycho-spiritual disciplines inspired me to develop a personal, regular self care practice.

4. The education I received from EWP helped me develop new levels of emotional maturity.

5. As a result of my education in EWP I was taught to honor multiple ways of knowing.

6. I became more mindful as a result of my education in EWP.

7. I learned how to experience embodied knowing as a result of my education in EWP.

8. I was challenged to become aware of and reassess my worldview assumptions through my EWP education.

9. My education in EWP awakened in me a sense of global citizenship and responsibility.

10. EWP offered me an Integral Education.

11. What I learned in the EWP program catalyzed a significant change in my lifestyle.

12. As an alum I still feel I am part of the EWP community.

13. My education in EWP helped me become more aware of the underdeveloped aspects of my personality.

14. As a result of my EWP education, my ability for authentic self-expression improved.

15. My EWP education has been indispensible to my professional development.

16. My education in EWP has helped me actualize my higher potentials.

17. My education in EWP fostered the development of interpersonal communication skills.

18. My EWP education made it possible to relate to all beings more authentically.

19. Through my education in EWP I learned to respect worldviews contradictory to my own.

20. The people I met during the program were instrumental to my growth.

21. My EWP education catalyzed a significant change in the way I relate to others.

22. My education in EWP taught me how to support others in their psycho-spiritual transformation process.

23. My EWP education had a noticeable positive effect on the quality of my relationships.

24. My education in the EWP program increased my capacity for genuine intimacy.

25. Being emotionally supported while completing my degree contributed to my spiritual/transpersonal development.

26. My relationship with the sacred (however you define that) deepened throughout the program.

27. While in the program, I felt part of a spiritual community.

28. EWP helped me develop a regular spiritual discipline.

29. As a result of my education in EWP, I am more mindful of my impact on the environment.

30. Being a part of EWP, I became part of a community which honors multiple worldviews.

31. My EWP education engaged the various aspects of my being.

32. The EWP program catalyzed a significant change in the way I relate to the world.

33. My education in EWP taught me to honor the multidimensionality of existence

34. Since completing my degree in EWP, my sense of self has expanded, allowing for more authentic spiritual expression.

35. My education in EWP has inspired me to experience life as an ever-unfolding evolution of consciousness.

36. Since completing my degree in EWP, I embrace an integral worldview.

37. As a result of my education, I actively seek opportunities to grow spiritually.

38. The education I received from EWP has helped me access greater understanding of my intuition.

39. In my experience, EWP fostered my psycho-spiritual transformation.

40. In retrospect, I had a positive experience of EWP overall.

The following three questions are open-ended

41. In your view, what characterizes integral education?

42. How has your EWP learning experience and degree completion contributed to your personal development?

43. How has your EWP learning and degree completion contributed to your professional development and current pursuits?