

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Second Advanced International Colloquium on Building the Scientific Mind - BtSM2007



under the patronage of the
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

*Science is not a mechanism but a human progress,
and not a set of findings but the search for them.*

Jacob Bronowski, 1956. (in: Science and Human Values)

This is to invite you to participate in the *Second Advanced International Colloquium on Building the Scientific Mind* to be held from Monday 28 till Thursday 31 May 2007 in Vancouver, BC, Canada. This unique event brings together innovative thinkers, researchers, practitioners and policymakers from across disciplines and sectors. We shall be honored by your decision to take part.

THE ORGANIZERS

The event is being organized by the US and France-based Learning Development Institute, a transdisciplinary networked learning community devoted to excellence in the development and study of learning, in close collaboration with the Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design in Vancouver, Canada, and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

RESTORING THE MIND AS A FOCUS OF ATTENTION

The colloquium aims at giving the human mind the prominent place it deserves. In many endeavors, both in education and communication, the tendency exists to depart from too narrow and restrictive a focus, failing to take into account the interpretation that individuals make of the context in which they live and operate. Thus, education systems address specific competencies in the context of compartmentalized fields of knowledge. Likewise, communication efforts focus on behavior change in ways that are frequently unrelated to the larger set of preoccupations and frameworks of experience with which human beings live. Yet, to borrow from the work of prominent brain researcher Susan Greenfield, our neuronal makeup is such that we continually make and remake ourselves as we grow and personalize our brain through the experiences that we, as individuals, live through. Such experiences provide us with a diverse set of dispositions, or 'mindsets', that help us make sense of the world and enable us to interact with it in a purposeful and mindful manner.

In addition to the scientific mind, different other mindsets can be identified, such as the entrepreneurial mind, the spiritual mind and the lyrical mind, to name but a few. We consider the scientific mind a useful starting point for a conversation among experts from different disciplines about the importance of mind and how to nurture its growth. That conversation ought to focus on how to change course in addressing fundamental problems of human learning through education and communication by focusing on the mind in an integral fashion. The scientific mind still being a somewhat elusive concept, one of the tasks of the BtSM colloquium is to build consensus around what the concept

should look like and how the scientific mind relates to and interacts with other mindsets. The most distinguishing features of the scientific mind so far identified seem to focus on the disposition to not taking things for granted, questioning any given "truth," being inquisitive, seeking connections and patterns, and being relentless, methodical and probing in asking questions.

THE CHALLENGE

The BtSM2007 colloquium in Vancouver will build on the work of the previous BtSM colloquium held in 2005 in The Hague (see for extensive and detailed documentation the BtSM2005 page at <http://www.learndev.org/ColloquiumBuildingTSM2005.html>). Besides, and considering the crucial problems of today's world, BtSM2007 will have a specific overall focus on *Learning in the Perspective of Complex and Long-Term Change*. Part of the colloquium will be devoted to critical debate and discussion around overarching questions and issues, including such crucial concerns as the dimensions and attributes of the scientific mind and that of other mindsets, the conditions that foster development of the scientific mind, its potential applications in multiple learning settings, practical ways to improve and complement existing implicit and explicit efforts to develop the scientific mind, and the implications of the scientific mind for innovative interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. Because the issue of mindsets and mindfulness, and in particular of the scientific mind, is of potential relevance to such a wide variety of areas, the colloquium series has set itself the additional challenge of exploring this issue in the context of a number of thematic areas, including but not limited to such fields as scientific journalism, human rights and peace education, early childhood development, the crucial interaction between creativity, artistic spirit and scientific exploration, as well as the role of communication and education in relation to public health issues such as HIV and AIDS, care for the environment, the sustainable use of limited resources, and the development of a harmonious planetary society.

WORKING TOWARDS CONCRETE OUTCOMES

The purpose of the colloquium is to generate an environment for critical discussion and debate around the scientific mind, and to prepare the ground for research, further thinking and concrete action in this area. Participants are invited to contribute to the event by submitting specific proposals for a session or activity in their field. A workshop style approach will be adopted throughout the event to provide ample room for dialogue, exchange of experience, and to enable participants to work toward concrete final products. The establishment of frameworks for continuing the thinking and work around the scientific mind through post-colloquium collaboration will be encouraged and facilitated through the colloquium process.

ORGANIZATIONAL DETAILS

Dates: Monday May 28 until and including Thursday May 31, 2007.

Venue: Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design, 1399 Johnston Street, Granville Island, Vancouver BC V6H 3R9, Canada.

Working language: English (papers in other major languages may be considered for inclusion in the Web-based proceedings if accompanied by an abstract in English; however, oral presentations are in English).

Registration, fees, accommodation and meals: US\$ 200 / € 160 if paid until April 1, 2007; US\$ 250 / € 200 if paid after April 1, 2007. Participants are asked to make their own hotel bookings. A list of hotels can be found on the Web page of the event, listed below. Lunch for the four colloquium days is included in the colloquium fee, as is the official colloquium dinner. During morning and afternoon sessions, coffee and tea will be served.

Further information: <http://www.learndev.org/BtSM2007.html>.

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