

Using the Three Modes of Nature (Guna-s) in Invitational Education: Five Levers for Learning

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Abstract *Designing effective learning invitations, which encourage a learner to engage and overcome inhibitions that may hold them back, becomes easier when the problem is approached from Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Invitational Education perspectives. This paper introduces five styles of learning invitation and explores how they may be employed to lever positive educational outcomes. The levers engage the three modes of nature (guṇa-s) as evoked by Satish Kumar’s “Spiritual Compass.” The leverage aims to raise learners away from the mode of inertia and darkness (tamas), toward compassion, peace, and clear-sightedness (sattva), typically, via the fire of action (rajas). The value of tamas as a motivation and fulcrum for change and the problems that develop when rajas (i.e., action) becomes both the way and the goal, are discussed. So are the limitations of sattva, goodness, which while it may be holistic, reflective and serene, needs help (rajas) to convert its dreaming into reality. Using the approach would help internationalise educational curricula and shift education’s current focus from “Doing” (rajas) to “Being” (sattva).*

Keywords invitational theory, learning invitations, dharmic pedagogy, Sāṃkhya-Yoga, guṇa, sattva, modes of nature, spiritual compass

Introduction

The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task master [but] a helper and guide... [whose duty is to show where knowledge lies and how it can] rise to the surface...(Aurobindo, 1995, p. 119)

The arts of teaching involve helping learners engage with a curriculum. Invitational teaching is “*an intentional and caring act of communication*” that invites positive feelings and a desire to learn (Shaw & Siegel, 2010, p. 109). Effective learning invitations encourage learners to engage and help them overcome the inhibitions that hold them back. Learning invitations exert positive psychological influences

that emerge from the whole learning experience, which should provide “environments and climates where people want to be and where they want to learn” (Paxton, 2003, p. 23). Such learning environments emerge from the combined influence of people, processes, and places, as supported by empowering programs and policies (Haigh, 2011; Purkey, 1992). In sum, they invite belief in both the practical utility of learning and the learner’s own capacity to achieve goals, which are supported by trust in the authenticity and competence of teacher, teaching and institution (Pajare, 2001).

This article looks at the design of different styles of learning invitation. It does this by applying Sāṃkhya–Yoga and its concept of the three modes of Nature (guṇa-s) (Haigh, 2009; Kumar, 2007). Its aim is to show how these three modes may be used as a guide to the design of educational goals and as practical aids to foster enhanced learning.

Why Sāṃkhya-Yoga?

In the West, the task of Curriculum Internationalisation is made difficult by the extraordinary monopoly claimed by globalised, secular, “Western” society, not only, as Krishna Kumar points out, on what is worth knowing and teaching, but also on how pedagogy and, indeed, the whole world should be understood (Kumar, K., 2009). Certainly, there are (and have always been) alternative voices but, even today, these “Other Educations” are marginalised by labelling: Asian, Indigenous, Latino, African, East European, Feminist, anything spiritual (Islamic, Christian, Vedic), etc. Vandermotten & Kesteloot (2012) lament “Anglo-Saxon academic imperialism” and their own academic marginalisation (despite being located) in Brussels but, in truth, greater hegemonic exclusions apply across the wider world.

Of course, the balance of power is shifting. Increasingly, international business is concerned with the BRIC and other Asian nations, where the Eurocentric blinkers of the West are less appreciated. Increasingly, there is awareness of a need to cross boundaries, to explore other cultures and other “ways of seeing.” While this may help redress current patterns of exclusion and inequity, the real motivation is less altruistic. Universitas 21, a leading global network of elite universities, notes the “need to provide international experiences to all university staff and students so that they will perform successfully (professionally, economically and socially)” (Welikala, 2011, p. 4). In truth, originally, the model described here was constructed in an attempt: first, to internationalise the curriculum in the West by exposing learners to other ways of thinking; second, to create a level playing-field for international students coming to the West, a pedagogy relatively free of the Eurocentric presumptions within current hidden curricula, a kind of “Esperanto” for internationalised education and, third as an approach that did not “deform education” by focussing only “on economic and political goals” (Haigh, 2009; MacPherson, 2012; Merrill & Rodman, 2012, p. 4, p. 21).

As P.R. Sarkar notes:

Though the human society is one and indivisible still there are certain differences in the attitudes to life and the world between the East and the West....The East throughout its development has maintained a subjective approach whereas western countries put great stress on objective development...[but] we can build up an ideal society only on the basis of a happy adjustment between the subjective and the objective approaches.”
(Sarkar, 1969/2009, p. 1)

At the risk of overgeneralisation, it may be argued that mainstream, secular, education in the West has a tendency to see the world as a material construct, while that rooted in the East’s Dharmic thought (Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Gandhian, etc.) conceives the world as a consequence of primordial consciousness (*puruṣa*) (cf. Fuerstein, 2013, p. ii). In a typical critique of the current mainstream, Bera (2007, p. 1) notes: “the present system of education is information-oriented not character-based. It is consumerist in nature....It sharpens reason but hardens the heart....The net result is...a strongly individualistic and materialistic culture...”

While all agree that the material world may be comprehended and ultimately re-formed by processes that may be taught, in the secular West, these processes tend to be based in material action (“Doing”), while in the Dharmic systems, they involve changes in consciousness (“Being”; see: Penman, 2015, p. 38). For example, in the *Tripura Rahasya* 11.63 (Ramanananda Saraswathi, 1980), the Guru and Hindu Deity, Sri Dattatreya, argues: “Just as reflections have no substance in them outside of the mirror, so also the things of the world have no substance in them outside of the cognising factor.” Applying such notions, in the “engaged Buddhist” tradition, Thich Nhat Hanh (2013) argues that the best way to save Planet Earth is through mindfulness and meditation.

Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy lies at the heart of many Dharmic traditions (Jacobsen, 1999; Larson, 1979). Technically, Sāṃkhya and Yoga are distinct, two of six classical systems of Indian philosophy, but they have a relationship as intimate as that between theory and practice and are often treated together (Dasgupta, 1922). The *Bhagavad-gītā* 3.3 links Sāṃkhya to the path of knowledge and Yoga to the paths of action (Prabhupada, 1972). In Sāṃkhya-Yoga, reality has two components. The first is the witness - pure, changeless, consciousness (*puruṣa*). The second is material Nature (*prakṛti*), which is composed of three strands or modes (*guṇa-s*) that in combination create and control the dynamic objects of everyday reality (Figure 1).

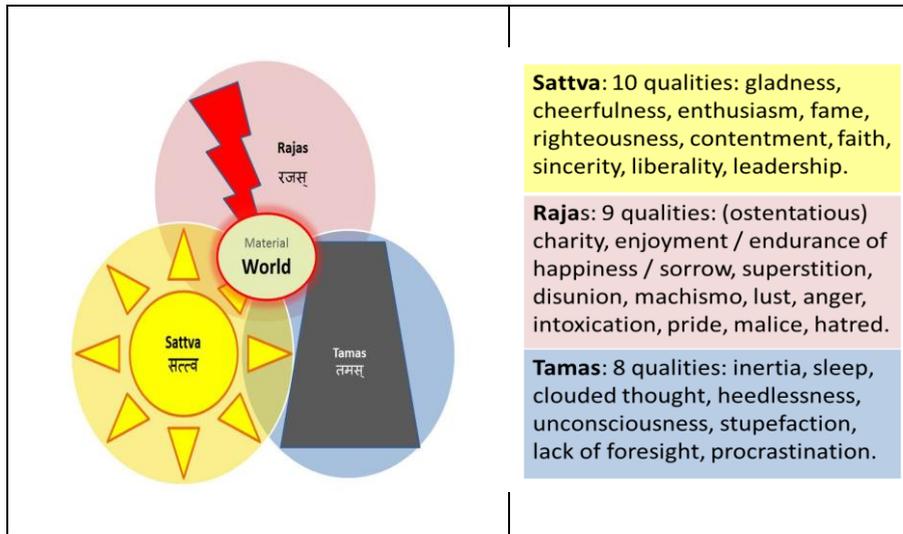


Figure 1. The Three Modes of Nature (Triguṇa) and their qualities according to the Mahabharata Shanti Parva (Ganguli, 1883-1896/2004).

In the Sāṃkhya Theory of Evolution, originally, the three guṇa-s (modes) are in balance and prakṛti (Material Nature) is not manifest. However, disturbed by the glance of consciousness (puruṣa), this balance is lost and prakṛti begins to “dance” (Davies, 1881/2013). In this process, the guṇa-s recombine in different, but ultimately transient, ways and a myriad of different forms tumble forth. An evolutionary process is triggered which, ultimately, creates the manifest universe and everything it contains.

This process is not random. Sāṃkhya philosophers explain the evolution of the natural world as a process of (commonly) 24 steps. These steps commence with the universal consciousness of puruṣa and culminate in the appearance of the gross elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth. In Darwinian evolution, the human intellect is a late arrival. Here, intellect (buddhi) arrives early, followed by the sense of ego-self (ahaṃkāra), the mind, the senses, the sense organs and the objects of the senses. However, all are transformations of the one materiality and all are created by local imbalances in the three guṇa-s.

In Sāṃkhya-Yoga thought, the human problem is that, fascinated by the movement and variety of prakṛti, consciousness, puruṣa becomes engrossed. It begins to identify with aspects of Nature (prakṛti) and, like an obsessive video game player with their digital avatar, forgets that it is only their witness. The aim of Sāṃkhya-Yoga is to help puruṣa recall its own true character and detach itself from

its obsession with the transient and illusory dance of Nature (Perrett, 2007). Success in this venture is called enlightenment or liberation (mokṣa).

The three modes of nature

In Sāṃkhya-Yoga, the material world is an interacting energy field composed of three basic strands that, in different combinations, create each object in the world in the same way that pixels of three colours combine to create each colour photographic image. Here, it does not matter what that image depicts, it is always the creation of those three primary colours, albeit in different proportions. Similarly, every object in nature, every human being, every human thought, is an outcome of the interplay of these three modes of nature, the three guṇa-s. They are the primary colours of the whole material universe.

Sattva guṇa (sattvogūṇa), represented by the colour gold, embodies all that is pure, light, sentient, serene, ethical and peaceful. Sattva has ten properties: gladness, cheerfulness, enthusiasm, respect, righteousness, contentment, faith, sincerity, liberality, and leadership (Mahabharata Shanti Parva, Ganguli, 1883-1896/2004). It emphasises mindfulness of this moment now.

Rajas guṇa (rajogūṇa), represented by the colour red, fires everything that is energetic, active and that moves through desire or passion. Rajas has nine properties: belief in the deities, (ostentatious) charity, enjoyment and endurance of happiness and sorrow, disunion, machismo, lust, anger, intoxication, pride, malice, and the disposition to revile (Mahabharata Shanti Parva, Ganguli, 1883-1896/2004). It is future oriented, always “going to....”

Finally, Tamas guṇa (tamogūṇa), represented by the colour dark blue or charcoal, restrains everything that is immobile, inert, dark, banal, heavy, obstructing, veiled or dull. Tamas has eight qualities including: unconsciousness, stupefaction, inertia, clouded thought, blindness to consequence, sleep, heedlessness, and procrastination (Mahabharata Shanti Parva, Ganguli, 1883-1896/2004). It emphasises the past, “used to....”

The guṇa concept contains two layers. First, there are the essentially static opposites of light and dark, water and food, etc. Second, there is an active element that resolves the tensions between them (Harzer, 2005). Colourfully, Sri Aurobindo (1918/1972) compares rajas to a noisy, smoky, manic motorcar, tamas to an oxcart with a fat, sleeping, driver, and sattva to the chariot of God.

These three qualities of life, the guṇa-s, can be deployed as a “Spiritual Compass” to guide decision making and ethical choices (Kumar, 2007; Jacobsen, 1999). In communication, for example, sattva involves dialogue where truth is brought from within through shared understanding and trust. By contrast, rajas treats with diplomacy that guards self-interest beneath a smooth and agreeable exterior, while tamas resides in monologue, self-asserted, unquestioned, and fearful of argument.

In everyday life, the three guṇa-s vie for supremacy. Sattva illuminates when rajas is stilled and tamas exposed but rajas dominates when sattva and tamas are overpowered by the desire for action and change. Tamas stifles when sattva is ignored and rajas neglected (Bhagavad-gītā, 14.10, in Prabhupāda, 1972, p. 611).

The guṇa-s in action

The three guṇa-s act together, in different combinations and proportions, in every action, every situation and every object. The creation of this essay illustrates this process (cf. Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1953, pp. 17-19). First appears a vision (sattva): the idea for a new way of inviting more enlightened learning (Haigh, 2009). So, the would-be author amasses (rajas) sources, texts, books on philosophy, research papers on education, and the notes that remain from a host of false starts and abandoned projects. This inert, formless, pile of dry and disconnected information represents tamas; it is material to work with but it is also an obstacle to overcome.

Even more tamasic are emotions arising from memories of previous failure. “I worked hard but my vision became clouded, the path was lost, the writing bogged down...” and “Anyway, you know, I really do not have the time for this, there are many other things I could be doing, so why bother... who really cares? Even if I finish the work, it will be mauled by annoying peer reviewers, mangled by the publisher’s copy-editor and, then, totally ignored after publication” (cf. Haigh, 2013).

Fortunately, the sattvic vision of a good outcome resurfaces and rajas, creative energy, comes to the rescue. “I can do this, other things can wait, this insight needs to be spread and the message may be useful for the future. This time, I will finish the work as a meditation. I will overcome the obstacles along the path, including any criticism peer reviewers may make, and my publishers will do their best for me.”

The struggle begins and, finally, after many months, the vision is realised, the path is cleared, the article is written and its message shines through persuasively. In contemplative peacefulness, I imagine a ray of light claimed from tamasic darkness, rajasic energy can be stilled and the result is beautiful, sattvic.

Of course, as Swami Prabhavananda & Isherwood (1953, pp. 17-19) note: sattva alone is just a vision, but rajas guided by sattva is creative energy, the power needed to make something new and good. By contrast, rajas without sattva is merely aimless activity; rajas alone is “like a lever without a fulcrum,” it needs something to work upon. Typically, this raw material is the insensate raw material of tamas. Of course, tamas alone is inert, dull, fearful and dispiriting, like wasted time, while rajas guided by tamas is worse, negative, divisive and destructive.

The Guṇa-s as teaching styles

In different combinations, the guṇa-s create, condition and control everything in the material universe. This includes teaching and learning (Haigh, 2009).

Tamasic teaching is heavy, oppressive, prescriptive, shallow, and oriented to memorisation like the “banking approach” critiqued by Freire (1998). It assumes the unquestioned, unquestionable authority of the teacher who lays down the Law of what must be known, what must be done, what is correct and what is not. As Parker Palmer (1992) emphasises, sometimes this is driven by the fearfulness and insecurities of that teacher.

Rajasic teaching is about action. Its currency is change, action at all costs, ultimately, action for the sake of action. However, it encourages the development of skills and new projects and, in the modern world, often dominates the entire teaching process. Rajas is about passion, enthusiasm, ambition, desire and about achieving goals and targets. Its method is analysis, step by step efficiency and focus, even if this leads learners to see things in isolation and separation. Rajas encourages classification, reductionism and because it is powered by material reward, selfishness and greed.

Sattvic teaching evokes the silent witness and peace. It encourages learners to see things as a whole; it promotes synthesis and holistic learning; it distinguishes between the eternal and ephemeral. Sattva appreciates the underlying unity that governs everything and also the transitory and changing nature of all material things (Bhagavad-gītā 18.20-22 in: Prabhupāda, 1972).

In sum, sattva is the reflection of the reflective practitioner, the ethical awareness of the conscientious, the overview of the holistic and the contemplative mindfulness of those who are one with their world (Hanh, 2013; Orr, 2012). Sāṃkhya’s goal is liberation from the endless, ephemeral churn and cycles of the material world (Davies, 1881/2013). Sattva is the platform from which that liberation can be realised.

Learning invitations, levers and the three guṇa-s

Sattva alone is a golden meditation in the present moment; tamas alone is dark, inert and sullenly abides in the past: both are static qualities. However, a learning invitation is rajas, a respectful, intentionally designed request for a learner to engage with learning that the instructor believes will be positively beneficial to the welfare of that learner (Haigh, 2011; Purkey, 1992). Learning invitations based in sattva alone are high-minded, enlightened but purely intellectual, while those based in tamas, whether consciously or unconsciously, tend to be negative and inhibit learning by misinformation, misdirection or incomprehension; although they may foster positive learning through disgust and rejection (Fuerstein, 2006). Rajas is the active lever of desire and will-power that works on fulcra of sattva, tamas and, sometimes rajas itself, to make things happen.

Of course, invitations that are only rajas merely tread water; they involve action but, ultimately, action for the sake of action and no other purpose. Sattva and tamas are static qualities but they provide the motivations that guide rajas. Sattva bends rajas toward doing good and the creation of the harmonious and serene. Tamas bends rajas towards revolution, negativity and destruction. In other words, if a learning invitation is sattvic, then rajas will create positive constructive sattvic attributes and, if it is tamasic, then rajas will create negative tamasic attributes.

The guṇa-s combine in every activity. The traditional approach to learning is often described as “stick and carrot.” The tamasic “stick” is the threat of negative consequences that will harm the learner’s future well-being. The “carrot” can be as little as being spared these consequences or a dream of some rajasic or sattvic future benefit. Curiously, some recent medical research on brain chemicals suggests that both reward and punishment may be essential to learning; it suggests that inherited genes influence how the brain responds to stimulation by the serotonin and dopamine chemicals released by previous experiences (den Ouden et al, 2013). Even, essentially sattvic, “mindfulness” is said to be something that must be attained through rajasic practice (Williams & Penman, 2011).

The model of the lever is useful for considering how learning invitations may be formulated as well as for showing how different styles of learning invitation engage the guṇa-s. Of course, a simple lever has four components. It has a load that needs to be moved, which provides the motivation for the activity. It has a fulcrum against which the lever pivots. It has the lever itself and the force that works that lever to lift the load. Finally, there is the envisioned outcome of the work, which is the load raised and, perhaps, transformed by the work. Naturally, the three guṇa-s, in different proportions, provide the essence for each of these four components. Rajas, by its nature, dominates the force of the lever. Tamas is, typically, the bulk of the load to be raised and/or the fulcrum across which the lever pivots. Sattva, typically, is the light of the envisioned goal, the outcome and, occasionally, the lamp that the lever aims to raise to greater heights as in much coaching and mentoring practice.

In each case, the task of the instructor is to identify both the nature of the load/problem that the learning invitation must overcome and the character of the learning outcomes that will be achieved. In Invitational Education, this is called the “intentionality.” The instructor must also identify the means, the lever/force and the fulcrum, against which it will work, in order to resolve the problem and achieve the desired goals, which Invitational Education calls “the plus factor” (Purkey & Stanley, 1991, p. 65).

Classic Invitational Education (Purkey, 1992), often uses the illustration of a polite invitation to dance. This includes the suggestion that dancing would be “fun” (rajas), better than remaining seated (tamas) and worth the risk of embarrassment (tamas) for the promise (rajas) of exhilaration (sattva). Here, rajas is the lever that

the instructor applies to lift the weight of tamasic inertia and “eliminate the negative”—in this case, the whisperings of self-doubt (Purkey & Siegel, 2003, pp. 44-47). Here, rajasic fun, especially the example of others having fun, provides the fulcrum against which the lever works to overcome tamasic restraint and advance the promise of feeling good (sattva). Figure 2 attempts to represent this process graphically.

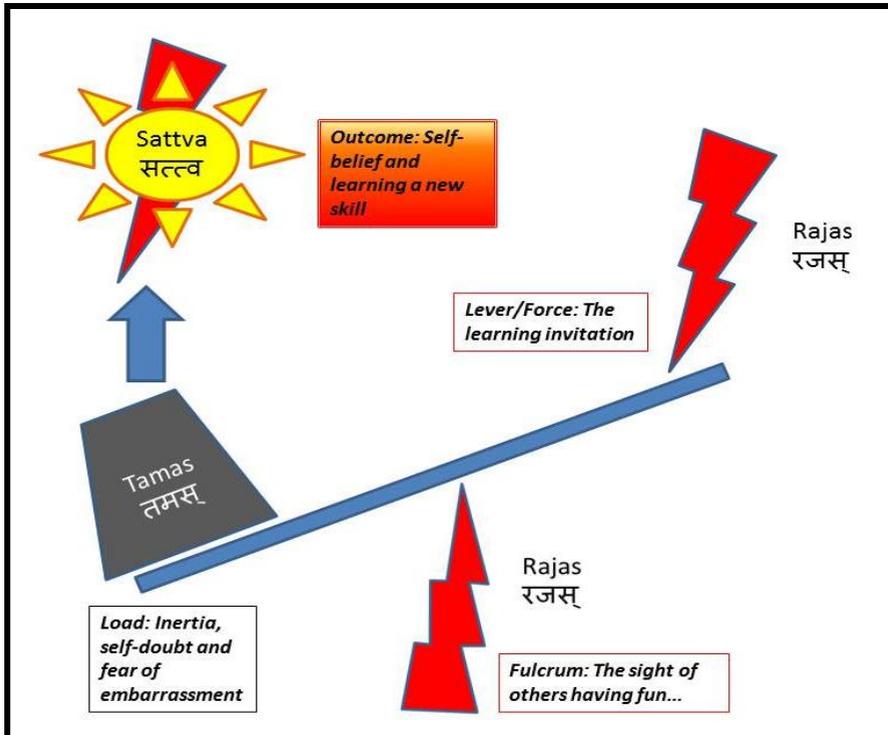


Figure 2. Invitation: “Learn to Dance.”

Of course, not everything is so simple and the above, mainly, rajasic example suggests at least five major styles of positive learning invitation (Figure 3). The first style includes learning invitations evoked by good example (sattva) and the will to *be* good. Invitations of the second style include those inspired by the desire to *do* good and altruistic creativity (sattva with rajas). The third includes invitations driven by the self-ish desire for reward, success, admiration and the hormonal thrills of enaction (mainly rajas). The fourth evokes the desire for competition and the search for victory at the expense of rivals (rajas with tamas), while the fifth seeks

positive results from bad example, the repugnance and rejection that drives the will to revolt, reform, and make things different (tamas with rajas).

Invitation type	Applied motivation (Rajas)	Example
Sattvo-rajasic	Attraction by good example.	The role model (Acharya; Bodhisattva, Saint, Gandhian-style leader) inspires the learner who resolves to follow their path. (e.g., Easwaran, 1989, p. 46; Figure 7; also cf. Thomas Aquinas: Ozoliņš, 2013, pp. 10-11).
Rajo-sattvic	The will to do good.	Compassion, empathy and the desire to make situations better (e.g., Kumar, 2007, 2009; Figure 4 – Writing this Essay).
Rajasic	Action for the sake of activity.	The joy of accomplishment, the “adrenalin rush,” thrill, the self-assertion that gains the admiration and respect of others (Figure 2 – The Invitation to Dance).
Rajo-tamasic	The will to win and to overcome.	The lure of “victory” or problem solving, the learner is encouraged to overcome tamas, to compete and to win (e.g., Figure 5 – Problem-Based Learning). (N.B. In very common, but certainly not positive, rajo-tamasic learning invitations, “begging the neighbour,” the defeat and destruction of rivals becomes the main motivation (e.g., military and some business education).
Tamo-rajasic	Repulsion from bad example.	Darpana Guru—the teacher acts as a mirror that shows learners unpleasant aspects of themselves or their life and so invites them to change for the better (cf. Feuerstein, 2006; Haigh, 2007).

Figure 3. Five types of positive learning invitation.

Using the invitational levers

Earlier, it was suggested how the three guṇa-s worked together in the creation of this article. In this case, a sattvic invitation, the mental vision of a golden final result, inspires the use of the rajasic lever of creativity and, later, hard labour against a tamasic fulcrum of unshaped and undigested writings and, again, a load of mental inertia and lack of self-belief (Fig. 4). Many forms of teaching have this design, especially those that aim to impart special creative skills, as in fine art or dance, or competences (such as the ability to critique art, literature, architecture, landscape or organisational structures), rather than just knowledge or a practical ability. This presumes that good teaching involves more than dispensing subject knowledge but also promotes analytical and reflective thinking and engages learners (Bhattacharya, 2004).

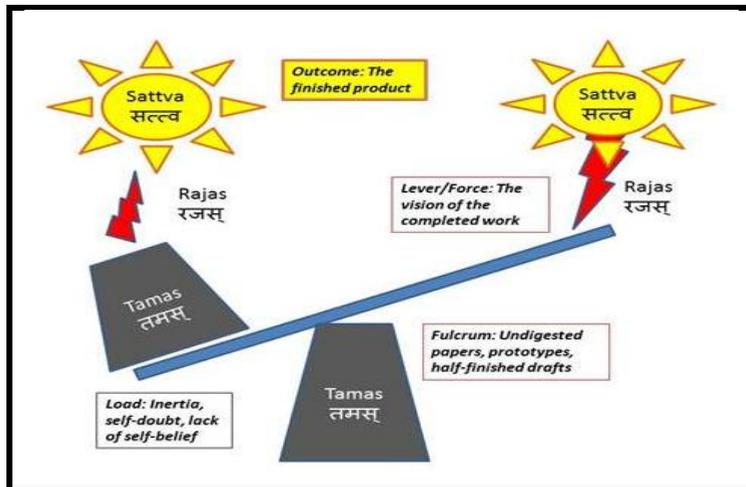


Figure 4. Writing this Essay.

Problem-based learning (Pawson et al., 2006), is a good example of a rajo-sattvic learning invitation. Problem-Based Learning (PBL), whose “death” (due to problems of cost and staffing challenges) was proposed prematurely by Herreid (2007, p. 153), is an approach that has special application in research training (Spronken-Smith, 2005). Here, the tamasic vision, a problem or situation, is used as the lever of the learning invitation, which invites learners, usually organised as teams, to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to tackle or manage similar problems in the future (rajas). As before, the load is ignorance about the problem how to deal with it—undigested theory and undeveloped skills that will be needed to deal with the problem (tamas). The problem itself provides the fulcrum upon

which the energy of knowledge and skill acquisition works (tamas). Sattva manifests in this, essentially, rajo-tamasic model, as post-project reflection on practice and, as before, as a vision of what constitutes a resolved problem or better situation. However, even more than in the case-study previous approach, the educational goals involve the acquisition of skills and a problem solving mentality (rajas), rather more than any actual outcome (sattva) (Figure 5).

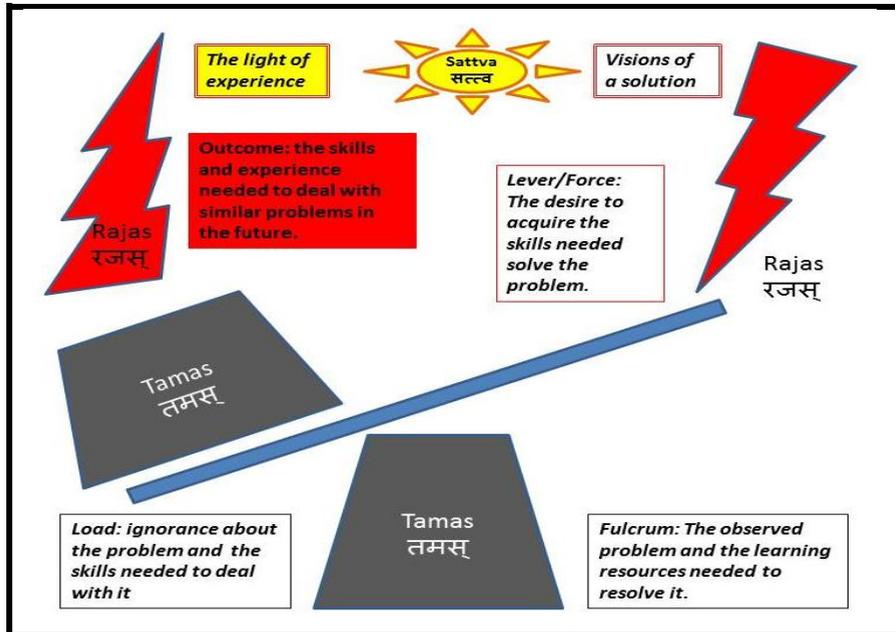


Figure 5. Rajo-tamasic Learning (e.g., PBL).

Traditionally, much environmental and engineering education has worked on a similar model (Harris, Pritchard & Rabins, 2005). Since the time of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962/2002), the aim has been to spotlight a major and repugnant tamasic problem, which is usually caused by careless, callous or selfish neglect but also sometimes by error, ignorance or accident. The intention is to harness rajas in the form of an urge to remove that problem and make matters better. The load of tamas inspires rajas to work upon a sattva fulcrum provided by the vision of an improved situation (cf. Figure 4 and Figure 6). Of course, the case study approach, which is founded upon the recognition of a bad situation, is very widely used in engineering, environmental management, medicine, law and much

practical education (Herreid, 2007; Yin, 2012). As Herreid notes, the approach starts with a back story and leaves the learner with a dilemma to resolve through discussion or perhaps a problem to resolve by experimentation or modelling.

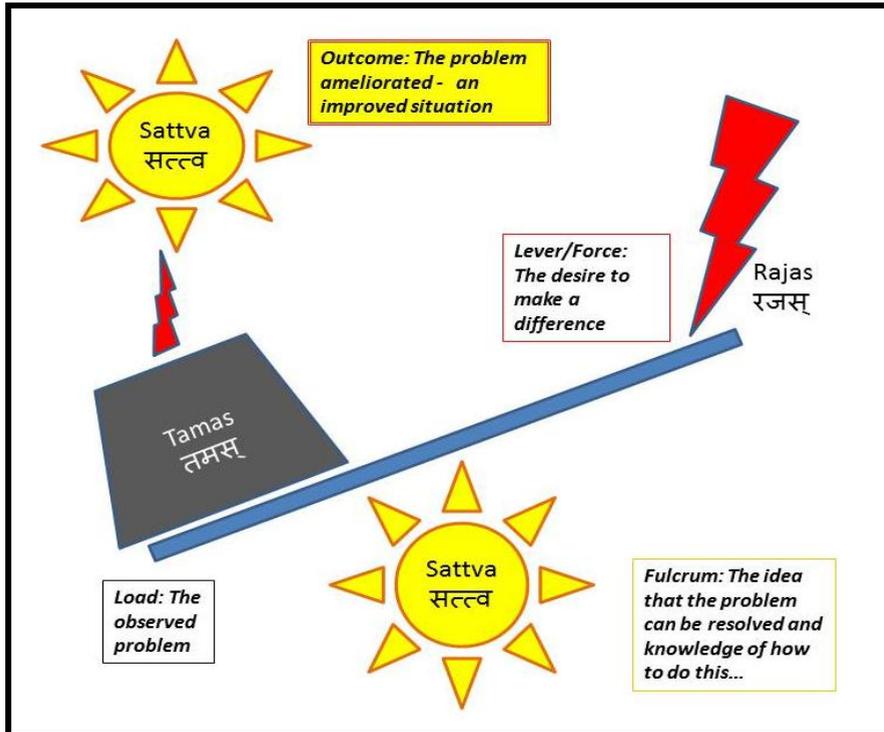


Figure 6. Rajo-sattvic Learning (e.g., the case study approach)

There are many other possibilities. Providing a good example can prove an effective way of leveraging learning. One example is the teaching of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Gandhi's disciple, who, from 1951, walked the length of India in an attempt to persuade villagers to give land or labour to help their less well-off neighbours (Sen, 1964). Subhash Mehta (2001, p. 1) comments:

Perhaps none of Gandhi's followers have created so many worshippers of Truth and Non-violence, so many genuine workers, as has Vinoba Bhave. In Vinoba, as in very few others, thought, speech and action work in harmony, so that Vinoba's life is like a melodious song.

Satish Kumar (1987, p. 12), describes Vinoba's sattvic vision. He:

walked with the message that just as air, sunshine, and water are nature's gifts which you cannot own or possess, similarly the land, the earth, is our mother, and ... no one should claim ownership on it. However, since he was not the government and he could not change the law, he wanted people to at least change their consciousness, to understand that they must not possess land while there are millions of people totally landless. So he went to the landlords and said, "If you have five children, consider me, the representative of the poor, as the sixth child, and give me one-sixth of your land to distribute among the landless." And it was quite a miracle. He collected five million acres of land in gifts....So I left the Jain monk's life and joined Vinoba and walked with him for three years. It was a tremendously exciting time because thousands of people, doctors, lawyers, students, professors, businessmen, left their work and joined Vinoba to support him....But for Vinoba, the land-gift movement was only one aspect of his work. The people who were walking with him were his students. He and we, all together, were a walking university!

In this example, Vinoba's sattvic vision works on the rajassic fulcrum of the Bhoodan (land gift) Campaign to create sattvic outcomes. "First put the bhakti (devotion) into karma (action). Now, we add jnana (knowledge) to it, we make the divine elixir, which will transform life" and the world (Bhave, 1932/1981, (15.7), p. 184). In sum, a sattvo-rajassic invitation represented by the acharya-inspired rajas (constructed on a tamasic foundation of rural inequity) with sattvic direction achieves a sattvic end result (Fig. 7), which disciples like Satish Kumar amply demonstrate (Kumar, S., 2009).

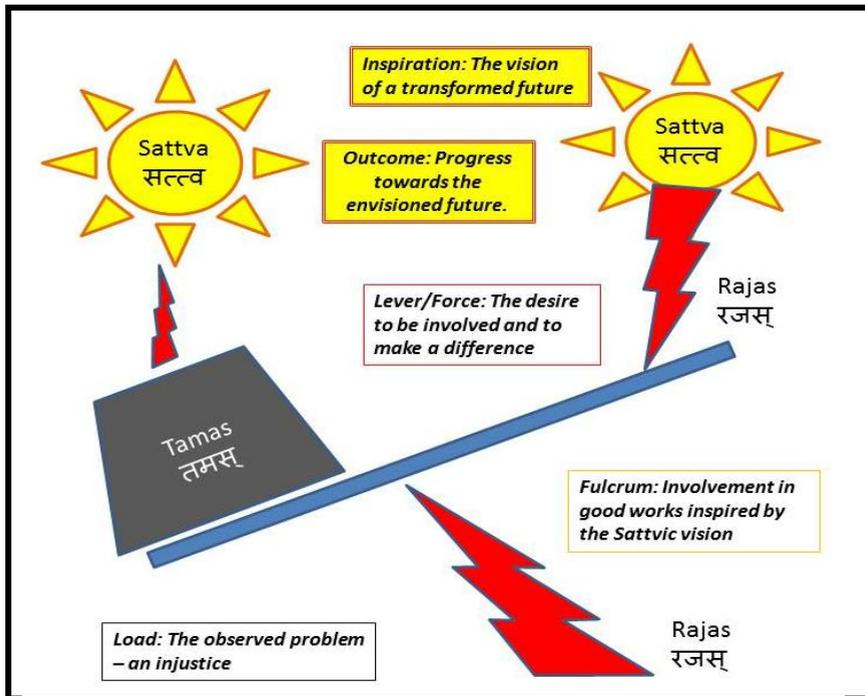


Figure 7. Sattvo-rajasic—a sattvic vision inspires rajas for a greater sattva (e.g., Bhoodan Movement).

Learning invitations invite multiple interpretations: Moving from theory (design) to practice.

Vinoba Bhawe (1986, p. 12) argues that education is about sattva rather than rajas. He notes that: “Education is a well-spring within, overflowing naturally into the outer world [sattva]... Education is not like algebra; it is not a matter of applying the formula and getting the answer ready-made [rajas].” In other words, there can be greater learning when the task is more open-ended, student-centred and active. However, the less learning is constrained by the designs of the teacher, the more diverse and unpredictable may be the outcomes. It remains the case that: “Education is fundamentally an imaginative act of hope” (Novak, 2002, p. 14; Purkey & Novak, 1996), while learning is strictly a matter for the learner, especially, when the outcome of that learning is not strictly proscribed. Multiple modes of learning may emerge from the same exercise in differently engaged individuals.

For example, the present author’s “Mirrors in the Trees” exercise invites learners to engage with planting some hundreds of trees (the tamasic obstacle), a

task sufficient to challenge to both body and mind (rajas), and then to reflect upon the significance of the work they have done (sattva) (Haigh, 2016). The official purpose of the exercise was to help a course called “The Ethical Geographer” (Boyd et al, 2012), become “Carbon Neutral.” However, those involved are told that its real intention is to encourage them to “act locally but think globally,” to promote their understanding of the meaning of “Global Citizenship” and to build awareness of their responsibilities toward the future well-being of both planet and people (Annan, March 14, 2001; Gregg, 2012).

The exercise included mindfulness prompts in the form of participation questionnaires. These explored the learners’ understandings about what the exercise meant to them, to their teachers, for the world, and how it served the course curriculum. Analysis of questionnaires showed that participants found personal meaning by several routes. For some, the exercise was sattva, it concerned their personal development and that alone, so participation was incidental, merely, a vehicle for introspection. So sattvic reflection (with rajasic leverage) worked on a sattvic base of awareness to achieve a sattvic outcome. For others, the invitation was mainly rajas, the creation of a practical outcome variously expressed in terms of trees, Carbon Neutrality or course credit. This outcome was still positive, in that it encouraged thinking about Carbon Neutrality, Carbon Sequestration and the tasks needed to gain course credit. Here, the lever of rajas worked on a tamasic base of soil, trees, and the mechanics of attaining course credit achieving an outcome that was rajo-sattvic, or if course credit was the main motivation, rajo-tamassic, because, essentially marks, like other credentials, are only a means to gain advantage over others. For a few, the learning invitation was pure rajas. The class had provided them with some fresh air and exercise and suggested that should get more. Finally, a few, on discovering that their task was not just a day out but hard work planting trees that did not, in any immediate sense, benefit themselves took the class as an invitation to do nothing or to act the fool. While, this tamasic few gained nothing by their indolence and clowning, inadvertently, they created a classic tamasic learning invitation for others, who felt disgust, and as a consequence, focussed more strongly on their own rajasic or sattvic goals. In this case, the tamasic example provided by these few inspired rajas to work on a tamo-rajasic fulcrum of revulsion and anger to overturn load of the tamasic bad example and transform it through positive action toward something better (rajo-sattva) (Figure 8).

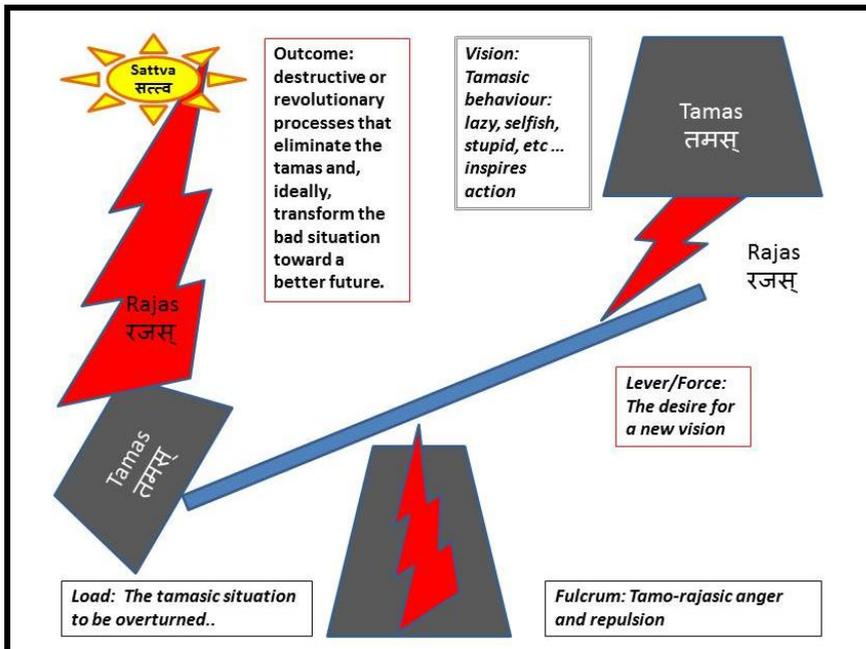


Figure 8. Tamo-rajasic—a tamasic vision inspires action across a fulcrum of anger for change toward a new order.

The moral of this story is that learning invitations, especially open-ended learning invitations, are open to a variety of interpretations by the invited learners. In the above case, these interpretations span all five of the positive learning invitation styles described in Figure 2 plus at least one negative, dis-invitation, to learn. Of course, the approach suggested here encourages instructors to consider the full range of possible interpretations and responses and plan accordingly, even as they plan ways of inviting learners to engage with more rajas and sattva.

Currently, even best practice in education rarely goes beyond the statement of “learning outcomes” and reflections upon why these were or were not achieved, sometimes expressed in performance related terms, (e.g., “the better students will...”). Sāṃkhya-yoga, of course, insists that multiple outcomes are an inevitable consequence of the interplay of the guṇa-s. This understanding emphasises the importance of fostering subsequent reflection upon a learning experience and, perhaps, the reinforcement of its message by careful, guided, mature reflection (sattva). In this case, the prompts of the participation questionnaires fed into structured classroom discussions and learning journal-based reflection (Haigh,

2016). It also encourages design that accommodates a range of learner reactions to any given learning invitation.

Discussion

This paper invites readers to consider an “Other” way of fostering learning. It introduces an approach and methodology of inviting learning that goes beyond the usual prescriptions of Invitational Education, by employing the guṇa concept from Sāṃkhya-Yoga. The approach is unusual because it sets goals that are not, in general, prioritised by mainstream education. As Mindfulness guru Penman (2015, p. 38) notes: “In the West, we have traditionally emphasised the Doing mode and allowed the Being mode to lie fallow” (see also: Steel, 2012, p. 47). In other words, modern education, despite better advice from many of its leading thinkers, tends to emphasise rajas and neglect sattva. Alexander (2001) laments that contemporary education has retreated from the cultivation of goodness, sattva, and the spiritual quest. In Sāṃkhya-Yoga, of course, sattva is always the goal, even if rajas is commonly the way.

This approach, then, suggests a gentle transformation of conventional learning outcomes away from the narrow focus of Doing, and even learning how to Do, towards the broad focus provided by sattvic reflection on Being, with its associated ethical concern, and contemplative holistic vision. However, like Invitational Education, the approach also recognises the significance of tamas, not simply as an inertial and inhibitory negative to be overcome and transformed but also as a reservoir of raw material that can be shaped and used for constructive purpose.

Sāṃkhya-Yoga emphasises the combined role of the guṇa-s in everything and their capacity to create multiplicity (Davis, 1988). This perspective encourages instructors to think on more general term, about the range of outcomes that any particular educational message may generate and plan accordingly to deal with tamas as well as the rajas and sattva that it would foster.

Of course, the approach is limiting, like the lever metaphor: why use a lever to overturn tamas when you could smash it with your tamo-rajasic hammer (Figure 8)? Sāṃkhya-Yoga is just one way of seeing the world. It may smudge together two of the six classical darśana-s of Indian philosophy but there are many more ways of creating a worldview. However, Sāṃkhya-Yoga, by conceiving the whole universe in terms of puruṣa, prakṛti and the three guṇa-s, does provide a worldview that has a simple and logical base. The present author’s “Sattvic Curriculum” sketched out a three year conceptualisation for undergraduate education (Haigh, 2009). Of course, its first phase sought to dispel tamas, ignorance and lethargy, by engaging rajas, while its second phase engaged rajas in practice and problem solving. Finally, its third phase, which emphasised reflection upon practice, ethics and synthesis, aimed to raise learners beyond rajas to pursue wisdom on the platform of sattva (cf. Steel, 2012).

In Sāṃkhya-Yoga, you solve problems in the world by changing your “self,” your conscious Being (cf. Hanh, 2013; Penman, 2015). Some find this argument counter-intuitive, they equate it with Doing nothing, and while a few might advocate the power of prayer, most express solutions in terms of Doing. However, increasingly, it is recognised that most of the world’s problems arise from the collective human mind (Annan, March 14, 2001). For example, David Orr (1994, p. 294), who asks: “How are minds to be made fit for a planet with a biosphere?” and answers—by means of a change in the human spirit that recognises its “affinity with Nature.”

Of course, similar ideas are inherent in many educational models, although most lack the spiritual and self-developmental associations of Sāṃkhya-Yoga. For example, Steel’s (2012, p. 51), critique of Bloom’s “Cognitive” and “Affective” taxonomies of educational objectives (Bloom, 1956) finds that their “low summit ... does not recognise [our] full ...cognitive abilities.” Closer is Jarvis’s three level typology of learning (Jarvis, 1992). This begins with tamasic “non-learning” through non-consideration, presumption or, more rajasic, rejection; then continues to describe “non-reflective learning” involving the development of skills, preconscious conditioning, and tamas tinged memorisation. The highest, most sattvic, level is “reflective learning,” which involves contemplation and reflection, but also includes the building of cognitive skills and experimental learning, which are rajas (Jarvis, 1992).

The evocation of sattva, which involves serenity, harmony, interdependence and stillness, the peace of cognitive deep thought, ethical reflection and introspection; evokes spiritual and personal values thought deficient in most secular Western educational models (Hari Krishna, 2012). Of course, there are exceptions, systems that do emphasise sattva (Being) over rajas (Doing). These include the macrostructure of Ken Wilber’s “Integral Spiral Dynamics” and John Miller’s “Holistic Education” with its cultivation of a “compassionate service level of consciousness” (Miller, 1981, p. vii; Wilber, 2007). Similarly, in Christian Education, Dwayne Heubner also wonders how to make our “evolving techniques...subservient to [our] evolving spirit” (Heubner, 1999, p. 112), while Parker Palmer (2007, p. 11) agrees that: “The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in...the place, where intellect emotion and spirit will converge in the human self.” Such thoughts also drive India’s “Values Education” approach to holistic education, which proposes that India’s secondary school teachers address the “five levels of peace” that extend from the individual at the centre outwards to the interpersonal, community, national and, finally, global levels (CBSE, 2012, pp. 3-4; cf. Alexander, 2001, pp. 176-177). Similarly sattvic are the “Five Cs” that guide its classroom implementation: connection, caring, critical awareness, collaboration and commitment, allied with conviction and courage (Gulati & Pant, 2015; pp. 75-76). The approach follows Alexander’s

concept of “collective spirituality,” which involves seeking good in “the frameworks to which we belong” (Alexander, 2001, pp. 77-78). Alexander (2001, pp. 3-8) worries that “over-secularised” modern education has created an ethical void and argues that the first task of education is not to produce good lawyers, etc, but good people, sattvic people.

A key benefit of this Sāṃkhya-Yoga system is that it introduces an “Other” education that replaces the current emphasis on producing performance, Doing, rajas, with that of producing peace, harmony, sattva, the mode of goodness. The approach invites learners to climb up to the platform of sattva from where the big picture, the dance of the material world, may be observed and comprehended. From this detached and enlightened platform, the learner may understand how to separate themselves from the spectacle of material life and how they need to change personally in order to progress. These are changes of consciousness. Of course, later, learners may conclude, after the fashion of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Gandhi, and Swami Vivekananda, that the situation requires enlightened action in the world.

Conclusion

Most of the World’s problems are problems created by of the human mind and spirit (Hanh, 2013; Palmer & Findlay, 2013). Here, Sāṃkhya-Yoga’s concept of the three modes of Nature are explored as ways of refocussing education away from its orientation to Doing, the mode of action, rajas, and toward an new orientation of Being in the mode of goodness, sattva (Jacobsen, 1999; Kumar, 2007). The approach was originally proposed as a kind of “Esperanto” (artificial universal language) for internationalised education; something that would put all learners on the same “level playing field” of exploring a new way of thinking, free of the problems of the hidden curricula that favour stay-at-home learners (Haigh, 2009). Here, the approach is applied to curriculum design and staff development. It employs the three modes of nature, guṇa-s to help instructors design effective “learning invitations.”

In Invitational Education Theory, a learning invitation is a respectful, positive, approach to a learner that encourages them to surmount their inhibitions, engage self-belief, and engage with learning that will bring them future benefit (Shaw & Spiegel, 2010). The guṇa-s are used to sketch out five types of positive learning invitation that might achieve sattvo-rajasic or more purely sattvic, outcomes. Since the Sāṃkhya-Yoga guṇa-s are the cause of multiplicity, it is shown also how single learning invitations can be interpreted by learners in many different ways, both positive and negative, and how to plan for and deal with the situations that result.

It is argued that the guṇa-s provide an easily understood and applied way of designing educational experiences and that, by shifting the educational emphasis away from simply Doing (rajas) and towards Being (sattva), they help promote deeper, more ethical and holistic consciousness in learners. Using the approach may

help offset the materialistic mind-set that permeates modern society and is the cause of so many of the world's problems. In its place, it offers a personal "Spiritual Compass" (Kumar, 2007) for learners' thoughts that may show a way out of our collective present troubles, perhaps something "worth teaching" and worth knowing (Kumar, K., 2009).

This article builds upon ideas from Sāṃkhya-Yoga, especially the "concept of the three qualities or modes of nature and life," the guṇa-s, which, recently, have been used for Satish Kumar's (2007) Spiritual Compass and as a way of assessing human habitats and designing internationalised curricula (Haigh, 2008, 2009). This article tries to shape these ideas into a conceptual framework for inviting and leveraging learning through curriculum design.

Mahatma Gandhi criticised the "Western way" for being dynamic but centrifugal (rajas) and lacking a goal (Parel, 1997). However, Sāṃkhya-Yoga is contemplative, centripetal and convergent upon sattva, while rajas, action, is reduced to being a means to that end, not the end itself. This paper describes ways of both inviting and leveraging greater sattva in educational outcomes, of creating graduates who are more detached from their own material self-interest, who are more liberated from the distracting dance of everyday material existence, who see the "big picture," who are more reflective as practitioners, who practice compassion, and who aspire to harmony and peace and spiritual advancement.

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