In a fragmented world, where scholars and practitioners across disciplines continue to identify failings within current systems, spirituality is continually being held up as a possible solution. Within this exploration, the various ways of knowing have become a major focus across many disciplines as we move forward through the 21st Century. In the post-post-modern world, attempts are taken to recognize various way of knowing and great effort is made not to be homogenous. However, does this positioning actually work to maintain a fragmented world? And if so, can spiritual theory actually assist in learning to hold all ways of knowing as one? This paper explores a section of findings, pertaining to ways of knowing, from a comprehensive and rigorous qualitative research program using the process of
meta-triangulation, which explored spiritual perspectives from paradigm to practice. Three distinct ways of knowing were identified for both the physical and spiritual. It was found that paradigmatic positioning within the physical created fragmentation, as most paradigms only recognized one way of knowing, while the spiritual paradigms explored predominantly recognized, and actively sought to include all ways of knowing. This insight offers a valuable contribution as it provides a possible pathway to holding the all as one, for both the individual and society.

Spirituality and Education – Session ED1 (Room G)
LAMBTON Anne
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Practical Spirituality: The role of spiritual intelligence in teaching and supporting Combined Subjects students
The Combined Subjects Programme at the University of Sunderland has approximately 700 students who are managed by a core team of six people. The programme has a large mature student population and this, coupled with the increasing burden of student fees and debt, means that many students are in part time (or in some cases full time) employment in order to fund their studies and support their families. This can result in less time being spent within the University environment both academically and socially, leading to a sense of isolation. In addition, the nature of a combined studies programme means that the students work across faculties, which can result in a feeling of fragmentation and a lack of identity, in comparison to traditional single honours students. This presentation will examine how the core teaching team use a spiritual leadership model, and exhibit spiritual intelligence in their support for students on the programme. This is expressed in a practical manner when supporting and teaching students to help them develop a sense of identity, belonging and interconnectedness. Individually and collectively, the members of the team seek meaning and purpose in the workplace through constant reflective practice, questioning what they do and how they can do it better to enhance the student experience. This has resulted in refined models of student support and teaching that have developed out of the team’s own values and beliefs. These models are student centred and are enthused with personal authenticity, empathy and express spirituality in action.

TUESDAY 15 MAY 2012
17.30 – 17.55PM

Spirituality and Health – Session H2 (Room C)
MARQUÈS-BROCKSOPP Lorna
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Existential wellbeing & sight loss: Towards a holistic framework for research and practice.
This presentation will discuss a project into holistic wellbeing and sight loss by a doctoral student and researcher at Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. A review of the literature suggests a significant positive relationship between existential spiritual wellbeing and chronic illness, and this link has also been made with sight loss. Nevertheless, the specific area of spirituality and its relationship to vision-specific wellbeing has not been addressed by Guide Dogs, or by the vision impairment sector in the UK. Therefore, this presentation will show how thematic analysis of in-depth interview transcripts has enabled an understanding of the role of existential spirituality in the overall wellbeing of individuals with sight loss. It will draw upon personal narratives of spiritual engagement through holistic health activities such as yoga and meditation, highlighting how such practices enable individuals to find meaning and purpose in life, and how existential spirituality may act as a “buffer” to counteract the negative impact of vision loss. Finally, the construction of a holistic framework will enable future research to appreciate not only the functional and physical needs of blind and partially sighted individuals, but also the emotional, social and spiritual impact of sight loss. In doing so, it is hoped that practitioners will consider sight loss rehabilitation that is sensitive to the whole of the person, thus integrating the bio, psycho, social and the spiritual.