

1. Title of the submission:

Bridging Two Horizons in Educational Thoughts: East and West

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6. Abstract of paper:

This presentation probes into the possibility of a non-Western perspective in theorizing educational practice. Western educational agendas such as the social-constructivist paradigm have been well received in the contemporary world. Yet, beyond the constructivist zone, alternative possibilities do not diminish. This paper seeks to explore some way to imagine and reconceptualize teaching and learning. In particular, the Zen lens is adopted. It is suggested in this presentation that Zen ideas and beliefs can help to shed new lights on contemporary educational practice. At the first glance, the Zen doctrine seems to contradict every tenet of our educational ideals, especially those put forth by constructivist theorists. For instance, students are encouraged to take an active role in their constructing their own learning; whereas, Zen appears to value effortlessness over effortful action. While students are expected to strive for success and excellence in schools nowadays, Zen stresses on the importance of being non-aggressive. Such contradictions, however, do not overshadow the potential common ground as well as useful implications that Zen can afford. A closer inspection can unveil that Zen can lend us valuable insights into our educational practice.