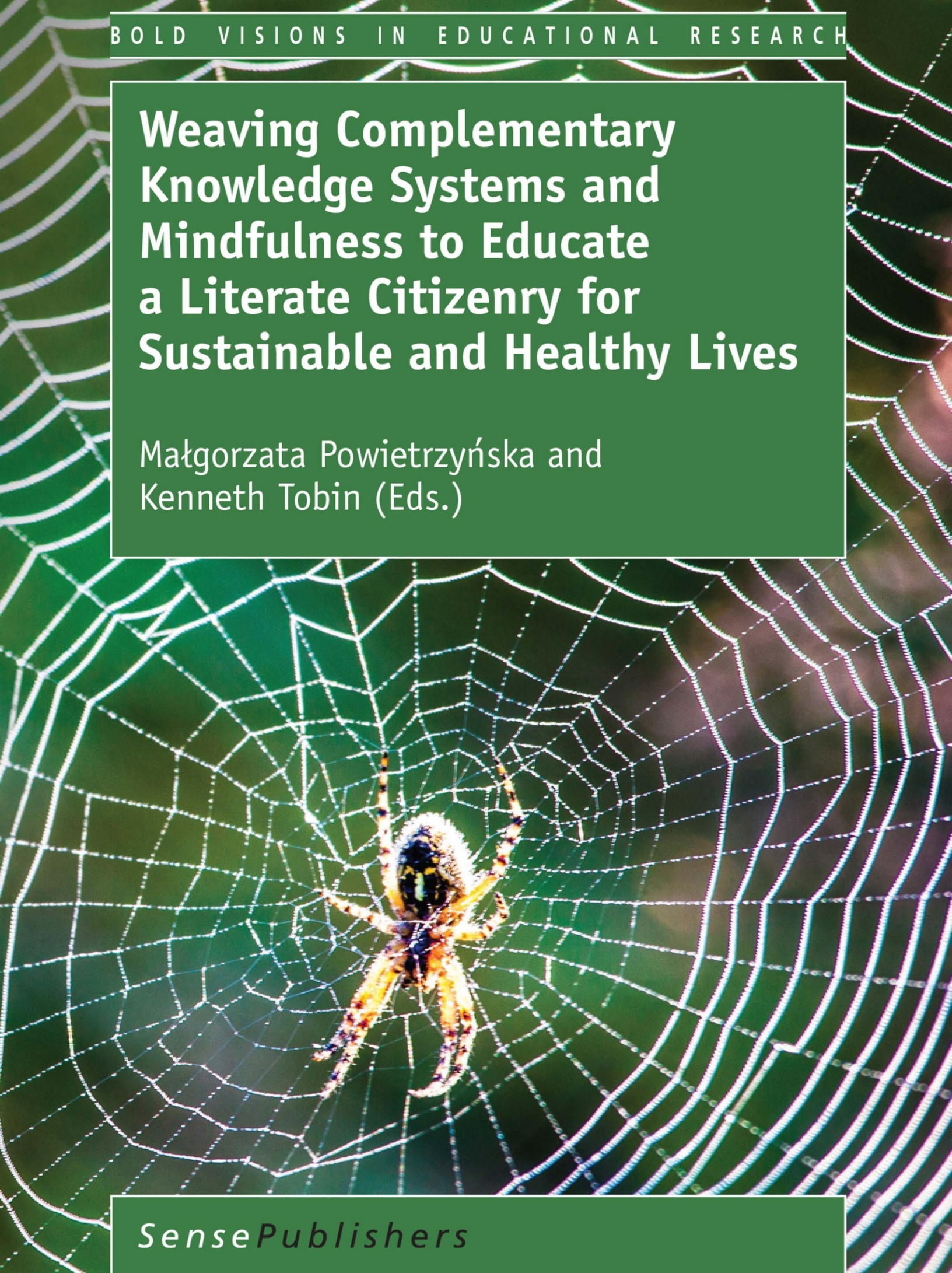
BOLD VISIONS IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Weaving Complementary Knowledge Systems and Mindfulness to Educate a Literate Citizenry for Sustainable and Healthy Lives

Małgorzata Powietrzyńska and
Kenneth Tobin (Eds.)



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Weaving Complementary Knowledge Systems and Mindfulness to Educate a Literate Citizenry for Sustainable and Healthy Lives

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Part II: Mindfulness and Wellness

KENNETH TOBIN

1. RESEARCHING MINDFULNESS AND WELLNESS

ABSTRACT

In this chapter I address mindfulness and wellness as priorities for educators and citizens in a complex, rapidly changing world. The issues I address include the context of everyday life, emphasizing stress and emotions as salient to the quality of interactions and wellness. The importance of educating the citizenry from birth through death is identified as a priority. Meditation and mindfulness are presented as components of a toolkit that is pertinent to improving lifestyles by, when it is desirable to do so, enabling people to detach emotions from what they do. Also, meditation and mindfulness can be options for people to use to change the emotions they express in particular situations and also reduce the intensity of emotion, if and when it is considered desirable.

A second section of the paper provides an advance organizer for many chapters in this volume that concern complementary approaches to health and wellbeing. In this chapter I focus on Jin Shin Jyutsu as an approach that individuals can use, as self-help, to maintain wellness and address health projects that emerge. Jin Shin Jyutsu is presented as a complement to Western medicine, not a replacement for it. The examples I provide in this introductory chapter set the stage for what is to follow in the remainder of the book.

Keywords: mindfulness, wellness, complementary medicine, Jin Shin Jyutsu, emotions, research priorities, literate citizenry

MINDFULNESS

Awareness and Change

Television and electronic media are ubiquitous in the lives of citizens across an age spectrum of birth through death. It is common to see young children using iPads and iPhones to access digital media, games, and a variety of live and stored television programs. Similarly, TVs are used to occupy time, ostensibly entertaining and educating senior citizens in a variety of places, including their homes, retirement villages, nursing homes, and hospitals. At many restaurants and gyms, for example, TV sets broadcast news and entertainment "in the background," and in many US households, perhaps most, family members returning to their home instinctively switch on the TV to catch up with the latest news. When they are on, these devices

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are resources for learning, whether or not the learner pays attention. Learning is continuous, aware | unaware and intentional | unintentional (the vertical bar, represents a dialectical relationship; Tobin, 2015).

I regard it as increasingly important for researchers to explore what is being learned from these pervasive media. For example, what might we be learning about talking and listening? What models for verbal interaction are projected on television programs? Consider debate as an example. I learned to debate when I was in elementary school. We were taught to focus on a topic, present a carefully structured argument, and coordinate that argument with a team of speakers, taking care to listen attentively to members of an opposing team that made the case for the antithesis to what our team was presenting. The debate was scored by one or more moderators and we knew the rules. Arguments were to be based on fact and when good points were expressed by the other team, they needed to be identified, acknowledged, and refuted. We had to make a case for our thesis within the allotted time and refrain from interacting directly with participants from the opposing debate team (e.g., distracting/disrupting). It was absolutely forbidden to interrupt a speaker verbally or non-verbally. Compare this form of debate to what is happening at the present time on many media (e.g., TV, internet). Ever so gradually, the meaning of debate has morphed into argument, characterized by antagonists rapidly laying out a position, emphasizing key points early on because of an awareness that probably they will be interrupted by an opponent. Exaggeration and telling lies have become part of the standard repertoire featured on presidential, and other forms of political debate, White House news briefings, and other fields where panels are often selected to ensure balance in political ideologies. Participants constantly interact to disrupt – shaking heads, rolling eyes, using utterances to show disdain, talking over others, shouting, and speaking while others are speaking. Often, participants intentionally misrepresent one another's positions and use hyperbole in an endeavor to succeed in the moment. Rarely observed are signs of valuing and respecting others, especially those who are different – for example, listening attentively, acknowledging strengths in others' perspectives, learning from difference, and exercising courtesy, compassion, and ethical conduct.

In our work in the learning sciences we have advocated and researched mindfulness in education and mindfully listening and speaking (Powietrzynska & Tobin, 2016). To act critically, while consuming electronic media, intentionally or not, there is a strong case for mindful consumption. Being aware is an important starting point, and knowing what to be aware of also is central. What does it take to be a critical consumer in an ever-increasing crescendo of controversy that characterizes the present? Participants need a level of education that allows them to opt in and opt out and expand their foci beyond being entertained and occupied. In an era where there seem to be overt threats to civil conduct (e.g., bullying, lying, misleading, and exaggerating), a goal is to educate the public for literate activism. Propaganda and brainwashing are dangers, potentially eroding democracy; replacing it with oppressive autocracy focused on individualism, competition, division, and winning at all costs.

Unattaching Emotions

The historical constitution of all actions is an important part of the framework I use in my everyday life (Tobin, 2016a). In our ongoing research on teaching and learning, which has had an emergent focus for more than 20 years, emotions have been salient. Initially, the concern was that an attachment to emotions appeared to have deleterious effects on the quality of teaching and learning. At the same time, in social life the news is replete with examples of personal conduct being impacted by emotions. Road rage is a good example of anger building to a crescendo that, too frequently, manifests in dangerous actions, such as inappropriate use of physical violence, firearms, and even motor vehicles as weapons. These all too common examples have persuaded me that there is an educational priority to learn how to get unstuck from emotions, so that conduct is not swamped by high-intensity, and/or persistent emotions. My thinking is that tools to ameliorate a buildup of emotions in the body might be a worthwhile outcome of education. This thought extends beyond school-based programs, to include any, and all fields in which teaching and learning occur. From the sociocultural perspective we employ, teaching and learning occur in all fields of the lifeworld. That is, the learning environment for building tools to ameliorate excess emotions is vast, encompassing participation in everyday life.

Within a context of educating for literate citizenry, tools that include, but are not limited to, meditation and mindfulness have an important place in affording lifestyles that do not succumb to the challenges of everyday life. Tools, including meditation and mindfulness, expand agency and thereby the potential for success in challenging times. Obviously, such tools, and others included in the chapters of this book, are not panacea that can eliminate dangerous ideologies such as neoliberalism and capitalism. And yet, education that targets contemplative inquiry can catalyze widespread changes in practices that have liberatory potential.

Identity

There is a tendency to focus K-12 schooling on academic achievement in valued subject areas that include reading, writing, mathematics, and science. Also, as teenagers get close to high school graduation, there is widely accepted policy and practice to focus schooling on preparation/entry to higher education and/or vocational education and skills. The idea that education is to enhance the aesthetics of being in the world and improving the quality of lifestyles often takes a back seat to getting through the essentials – passing examinations and clearing benchmarks. It is in this context that scholars from fields such as science and mathematics education might focus on possibilities of transforming K-12 education to focus on such issues as sustainability and educating stewards to transform present and future. Among the priorities to be addressed are grand challenges such as consumption, pollution, species extinction (Powietrznynska, Tobin, & Alexakos, 2015), and desirability of

eliminating toxic lifestyles that diminish and disadvantage less fortunate others (i.e., extinguish inequalities).

For many years, research proposals seeking funding from agencies like the National Science Foundation were encouraged to populate a pipeline into science with would-be scientists. School programs were to be more than science-friendly; they were to shape learners' identities such that they were enthused about becoming scientists in their employed lives, homes, and even in recreational settings. I am opposed to universalizing goals like these, mainly because, in my view, the purposes of education are to be liberatory and potentially transformative. Tools associated with science education would afford critique, not only of science itself, but also of scientists, and those that support them. I do not embrace a jaundiced, anti-science stance, but I do want learners to recognize accomplishments of science and scientists alongside challenges and social pressures associated with the history of science and its social contexts – including issues such as economic exploitation, warfare, addiction to prescription drugs, and emergence of crises associated with grand challenges, such as global warming, climate change, species extinction, and recognizing the historical and current (negative) impacts of humans on ecosystems. Targeting the creation of science-related identities as a goal for all science learners may be construed as indoctrination, and scientism.

Contemplative inquiry has a potential role for educating citizens, beyond formal schooling, to understand and experience fluidity of identities and egos. Chapters, including the next one, authored by Heesoon Bai, Michelle Beatch, David Chang, and Avraham Cohen, provide theoretical insights and practical suggestions in frameworks that include philosophical and empirical support for cautions and changed practices. Readers are encouraged to use critical lenses while reading all chapters in this volume, weighing their contributions, and considering how to appropriate what is learned to connect with their own contexts.

Emotions and Wellbeing

A strong rationale for educating the public to control emotions, if and as necessary, concerns relationships between health and emotion. My resolve to identify toolkits to ameliorate emotions strengthened when a teacher-researcher from my research squad required heart surgery. He was counseled by his physician to retire from teaching, because stress levels appeared deleterious to his health. That is, teaching was making this teacher sick. Of course, teaching is not the only stressful job. Just today a neighbor advised me that he had quit his job because of the stress associated with his work and especially the practices of his supervisor. The more stressed he became, the higher his consumption of hard liquor and food. His health deteriorated rapidly and a change of job became a life raft. Alleviating stress was an important life skill he did not have, and already his new job is proving to be stressful. With a goal of ameliorating excess emotions and preserving good health, there is a strong case for designing educational toolkits that would afford people across the age

spectrum expanding agency throughout their lifeworlds, including fields associated with employment, home, recreation, and wellbeing.

Mindful conduct is a priority for citizen education. Mindfulness, as it applies to teaching and learning, has potential applications that extend far beyond pre-k through college classrooms, museums, and other institutions such as zoos, hospitals, and prisons that often have formally designated education-related functions and associated spaces and resources. Indeed, wherever learning occurs, and that includes every aspect of social life, individuals are continuously involved as teachers | learners and mindful activity is potentially central to what is happening. That is, since teaching | learning occurs continuously, throughout social life, mindfulness can be considered as a constituent of what happens. I am not arguing that mindfulness always occurs or that it should always occur – just that it is an activity that has potential applicability to the quality of social life. Context always is important, and so too is contingence.

A case for multilogical research. From a standpoint that values contingence and emergence as central components of viable research, I include in a multilogical approach, a tenet that either/or analyses and associated challenges are rarely fruitful. I view labels as reductive, though necessary for communication. Also, I accept a crisis of representation; that all efforts to use language to present/describe what is happening fall far short of representing what is happening. Representations of what is happening reflect frameworks used, explicitly and implicitly, and a values hierarchy that always is in play. That is, frameworks illuminate what is experienced in social life while obscuring much of what is happening. All efforts to describe are reductive and fallible representations of what is happening. Crises of representation demand nuance when claims are made based on research (inclusive of all claim-making, including empirical, philosophical, narratology, and etc.).

It is wise in our scholarly tradition to embrace nuance. Forceful, bluntly expressed claims are flawed, just as nuanced, carefully hedged claims also are flawed. How then to proceed? Consistent with post-Bourdieusian theorizing we embrace William Sewell Junior's view, that culture is experienced by participants as patterns of thin coherence, along with dialectically interrelated, ever-present contradictions (Sewell, 2005). Accordingly, all attempts to describe/represent what is happening are accompanied by descriptions of contradictions.

As a researcher who has used a multilogical approach for several decades, I have sought to design studies that search for, and seek to understand difference in its salient manifestations. Thus, it is not enough to search for, and learn from, assertions. Instead, we seek contradictions and endeavor to learn from their transformative potential. We named this approach event-oriented inquiry (Tobin & Ritchie, 2012).

In a context of mindfulness and wellness, we are not engaged as truth seekers with a mandate to learn and describe. Instead, we adopt authentic inquiry, in which we are transformed by doing research that is itself an agent of transformation

of all participants and associated collectives/institutions. We reject a fly on the wall approach to research in favor of an approach that incorporates subjectivity as strength and values all participants benefiting from research while eliminating harms that emerge as research is enacted. As a transformative activity, based on what we learn, we do our best to improve quality of the lives of all participants, including our own.

My Appropriation of Mindfulness

When I first began to study mindfulness, it was in a context of the use of breathing meditation to foster improved learning environments. In ongoing research on emotion in Australia we were undertaking research in classrooms, focusing on the expression of emotion and ways in which emotion was associated with the quality of interactions between teachers and students, emergence of shared mood, collective effervescence, solidarity, and changes in prosody (Tobin, Ritchie, Hudson, Oakley, & Mergard, 2013). We noted that there appeared to be low incidence of mindfulness. Also, collective effervescence of emotions, such as happiness, disrupted participants from academic work for extended periods of time. Emotions seemed to be stuck, mediating teacher and student participation in deleterious ways. With this in mind, we designed breathing meditation as an intervention and a mindfulness heuristic that could be used to view a potentially changing landscape of mindful action and serve as a tool to foster transformation (Tobin, 2016b).

Our approach to research. When I first began to do research in science classrooms in 1973, there is no doubt that my goals were to use interventions to improve teaching and learning in ways that had been worked out by me and those with whom I collaborated. We not only designed interventions such as wait time and questioning quality, but we also designed lesson plans to ensure that enacted curricula were somewhat controlled. It was more than a decade later, in 1984, when Walter Doyle, then a researcher at the University of Texas, challenged me to study more closely what teachers did in the classroom when they did what they valued and/or were constrained to do. Since that time, I have embraced coparticipant/collaborative forms of inquiry that have been framed by multiple ontologies and axiologies. I have not sought to privilege my axiology over others or to undermine macrostructures like high-stakes testing, or unfair accountability systems – preferring instead to afford success as participant communities expressed their goals and priorities. The authentic inquiry we engaged is intended to be emancipatory and responsive, consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology and principles of emergence and contingence. Importantly, we valued ethical conduct that included a multilectical mix of honesty, truthfulness, courage, and compassion. When I saw injustice, I stepped forward and spoke out – in ways intended to support those who could not so easily speak for themselves and stand in opposition to powerful others. Ethical action, including speech, is part of authentic inquiry (i.e., tactical authenticity). Usually, this involved acting with equity/social justice, if, and as necessary.

Physiology and emotion. The connection between emotion and physiology was prominent in the literature I was accessing at the beginning of the millennium. For example, a study by Pierre Philippot, Gaëtane Chapelle, and Sylvie Blairy (2002) was an aha moment for me. The research revealed that breathing was closely related to an individual's emotional expression, and changes in emotion were related to the individual's breathing patterns. My awareness of this study catalyzed my uses of breathing meditation in numerous activities as a researcher, teacher, and more generally in my daily practice. My goals were not so much to enhance the quality of a forthcoming activity, as to signal my priority for the value of breathing meditation as part of a toolkit that people could use to ameliorate emotions – if, as, and when they so desired. In addition, since I was persuaded by the research, I considered that breathing meditation might be a tool that would be useful in producing and maintaining wellness. Having such a tool available was a useful outcome for the education programs in which I was involved as a professor. Examples included doctoral level courses I taught weekly at the Graduate Center, a seminar program I coordinated each month, and weekly research meetings. Also, with colleagues, I studied breathing meditation in my research, including research conducted at Brooklyn College that involved several of the chapter authors of this volume (e.g., Malgorzata Powietrzynska, Konstantinos Alexakos, Olga Calderon, & Ferzileta Gjika).

When we enacted breathing meditation, we did not seek to control students who agreed to participate. Simply put, we regarded meditation as a lifestyle change, for citizens to use in their lifeworlds as they deemed it desirable. Like chemistry and physics, I regarded knowledge of meditation to be a tool that would enrich life in and out of school, now, and in the future. Although I valued research on meditation and wellness, including neuroplasticity and resistance to disease (Davidson with Begley, 2012), I had a more generic view that meditation might be used when an individual wanted to detach from intense emotions, to address perceived health concerns (e.g., panic attack, dizziness, nasal drip, and road rage). I did not pre-plan or prescribe meditation as a solution to macrostructures that pervaded education in the US. Instead, through educative authenticity, research participants would find benefits of meditation, hear others talk of benefits they experienced, and possibly read what had been written by researchers and regular citizens who happened to find breathing meditation beneficial, or for that matter, harmful. Similarly, participants would learn about contradictions and harms through first-hand experiences, including others' reports.

Applications of meditation and mindfulness. When I first used meditation in the Brooklyn College study, my colleague, Konstantinos Alexakos, was nervous about the intervention being regarded as religion (Alexakos, 2015). Accordingly, to the extent we could, we made meditation optional and emphasized that several religious and secular institutions used meditation for purposes that suggested it would foster productive learning environments, improve learning, enhance wellness, and be a useful tool in social life. Having said that, I was acutely aware that there was much

more to meditation and mindfulness than was expressed in the academic, secular, literature. This idea is taken up in depth in the next chapter.

Like many of the authors in this book, I felt there were additional toolkits that also were a priority for use in my teaching, research, and other dimensions of personal life. Chief among these was mindfulness. I felt strongly that the demands of life necessitated a mindful approach to being in the world. I did not feel a need to separate science from religion, and was determined to learn from many discourses. A personal goal was to learn much more about meditation, and mindfulness, through a deepening understanding of Buddhist literature – including the work of Thich Nhat Hahn (2011) and Ajahn Brahm (2006). In this volume, several chapters critique the appropriation of mindfulness in education – see for example chapters authored by Heesoon Bai and her colleagues (Chapter 2), Caroline Castano Rodriguez and Deborah Tippins (Chapter 7), and David Forbes (Chapter 10).

Learning and generalizing from research. I share a concern that is explicit in chapters written by Forbes and Bai et al. concerning micro-determinism. Because of amazing advances in technology, we now have windows into previously indiscernible aspects of social life. New tools and associated theories enhance learning potential – sometimes expanding what we have learned and in other cases contradicting parts of the knowledge base. How to deal with the contradictions can be a problem when researchers make claims about what they have learned without the nuance that comes from identifying and interpreting contradictions. Nuance can be a hedge against a temptation to use what is learned from research as a master narrative.

My work in multilevel studies has revealed patterns we didn't even know about before we used technology to look at the voice (Roth & Tobin, 2010). For example, we learned a great deal by looking carefully at intervals of hundredths of a second of digitized video, teasing apart utterances into constituent amplitudes, frequencies, and durations. What we learned at a micro-level informs what we could and did learn at a meso-level. In aggregating across levels, fresh insights (i.e., patterns) were obtained and, of course, contradictions emerged, demanding nuance. We resolved not to privilege micro-level data or meso-level narratives associated with everyday life. Similarly, we acknowledged that macrostructures saturated every field of social life, but should not be privileged over what was learned from micro- and meso-level studies. Synthesizing across social levels was no easy matter and we fought the common sense of applying Geertzian views of culture (Geertz, 1973). We resisted master narratives, insisted on nuance, and above all the necessity for humility. Whatever we could learn from inquiry always would fall short of what could be learned, and in fact, our representations of what we learned, we knew, always would be underrepresented.

A need for more and different forms of research. I am comfortable for calls for more research and deeper understanding of mindfulness and wellness. My comfort rests within a polysemic frame, grounded in hermeneutic phenomenology with a critical edge, that culture reveals itself in unsettled times (e.g., Swidler, 1986). That

is, to ascertain what is really going on in a social setting, and to get to the truth of the matter, it is often necessary to push to unsettle – to caste a boulder into an otherwise placid pond carefully studying the ripple effects, which is akin to generalizability. Other studies also are essential, including those framed to produce and elaborate new theory. Such studies, might be empirical, or they might not. Importantly, the criteria for judging viability and associated worth of studies designed to generate theory would not be the same as those used to assess the validity and reliability of statistically oriented research. As Margaret Eisenhart (2009) made clear, theoretical generalizability has its own quality criteria. Similarly, philosophical and historical analyses (Kincheloe, 2008) also can yield new insights into mindfulness and wellness, and judgments on quality should reflect the methodologies utilized in studies that incorporate such logics.

Much of the research I engaged in the past decade has employed authentic inquiry and focuses on an ethical stance that research, to the extent possible, should benefit all participants in a study, not just in the places where research is undertaken, but throughout their lifeworlds (e.g., not just in schools, but also in homes, employment, recreation, and other fields such as visits to the doctor). An important part of authentic inquiry involves use of emergent and contingent designs, to enable what is learned from ongoing research to benefit individuals and collectives associated with the research. That is, interventions are designed to benefit participants. As individuals learn and change on the basis of their participation in research they interact differently in many and perhaps all fields of their lifeworlds. Accordingly, others with whom they interact experience changes in their interactions, and thereby in the cultural flux they experience. That is, they too can change and benefit from a process we refer to as ripple effects.

In a call for more research on mindfulness and wellness, we no doubt will have in mind the forms of inquiry we value, and will eschew forms of inquiry for which we have little respect. I am not exempt from this likelihood – so, I am not blaming others when I urge caution on this matter. We all should take heed that research is methodological and the theories we use illuminate reality in particular ways while obscuring what is outside the illuminated orb (Tobin, 2008). All forms of inquiry are potentially useful in adding to the knowledge bases of what we know about mindfulness and wellness. At the same time, all social inquiry, including the hard sciences and Western medicine, underrepresent what we know and what we can know. Research and its representations are fallible. Of course, this is no reason to cease doing research – just a cautionary note to be nuanced in claims based on research and the critiques we make of others' efforts to contribute through research we consider to be flawed in the many ways flaws are packaged.

COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES TO WELLNESS

For many years I have urged science educators to expand their roles to embrace a birth through death continuum and research fields across the lifeworld, not just those

formally designated as educational institutions. Throughout this chapter, and many I have written previously, I advocate emancipatory interests – education for freedom – especially from hegemony of modern lifestyles. Wellness is paramount, a field that is germane to science educators and especially to my argument about present day lifestyles. The vision I have for educators is to include contemplative inquiry as a central part of education and to connect contemplative inquiry to wellness, using what we presently know about contemplative activities, such as meditation and mindfulness, as they relate to physiological changes and good health. I do not enter the debate about complementary and/or alternative practices in considering Western Medicine alongside wellness grounded in other modalities, such as Traditional Chinese Medicine. Instead, I lay out some examples to illustrate that the public can be educated to employ simple practices that can harmonize Qi flow in the body and remediate symptoms of disharmony, such as sore muscles, bones and tendons, allergic reactions, headaches, addiction, and digestive problems. In the book, we have chapters that address yoga, sexuality, and counseling in relation to wellness. Also, we have six chapters that lay out how Jin Shin Jyutsu (JSJ) can be used to address a variety of health projects, either as self-help or treatment from a qualified practitioner.

There is no sharp dividing line between meditation, mindfulness, and wellness. These constructs are interrelated, compelling me to take a stance that all citizens should learn to know their own bodies and be aware of symptoms associated with disharmony and what it feels like when body systems are both harmonized and disharmonized. I adopt a stance that learners learn what to do when health projects become apparent, and to alleviate symptoms using regular routines from the JSJ knowledge base – to address health projects and restore wellbeing. A high priority is to develop a toolkit for restoring wellness through self-help. We can enhance agency relating to wellness by expanding what is known about improving the health of self and others. Just as individuals presumably can choose whether to consult their doctor, knowledge about complementary medicine practices opens the door for individuals to maintain wellness and deal with symptoms in the moment, as they emerge. That is, self-help can be a viable option alongside of consulting a doctor or going to the pharmacy.

Overview of What Comes Next

In the remainder of this chapter I provide some examples of ways on which JSJ is used as a complement to Western medicine. My purpose in providing these examples is to contribute to documented research that provides insights into uses of complementary medical practices to sustain wellness. I regard it a high priority to undertake research, report what has been learned, and address the problem that, although JSJ is practiced throughout the world, there is a dearth of research to support its use. The chapter is first of many in this volume that contribute to a growing research base to support use of JSJ as an aid to promote wellness.

JSJ and Wellness

JSJ is often referred to as light touch therapy. Based on a practitioner's reading of the body, the two hands are placed in specific locations to feel universal energy flow in the body (i.e., Qi flow). When artfully placed on the body, the fingers and palms assist in maintaining the flow of universal energy, as the body intends, to sustain harmony and well-being. A JSJ practitioner uses her hands to touch, and thereby connect, different parts of the body. The connections made by the practitioner's hands are metaphorically like jumper cables. When blockages in universal energy flow occur, placing the hands strategically in relation to those blockages and build ups (areas of congestion) can get the universal energy moving in an appropriate manner. Many people go to JSJ practitioners because the additional help they get is valuable.

Jiro Murai, Mary Burmeister, their students, and many with whom they collaborated, have created an impressive knowledge base, consisting of principles and practices that are grounded in Eastern medicine (e.g., Kaptchuk, 2000). As is clearly explained in other chapters in this book, and in the seminal texts published by Jin Shin Jyutsu, Inc. (Burmeister, 2017a, 2017b), JSJ is an extensive knowledge base that practitioners can use to understand different ways that universal energy can move through healthy living bodies/structures (e.g., humans, other animals, and plants) and foreshadow what can be anticipated when blockages and diversions occur in the flow of universal energy in particular locations within those structures. Based on extensive, worldwide uses and validation of JSJ's principles and practices there are carefully documented sequences of holds (i.e., sequences of placements for the left and right hands) that can assist in removing obstacles to the flow of universal energy and restore the natural energy flows, vertically and diagonally throughout the body. Blockages and diversions in energy flows can be associated with health projects such as stomach acidosis (acid reflux) and osteoporosis. Disharmonies can be addressed by sequences of holds for organ energy flows (e.g., stomach organ energy flow) and/or flows to harmonize one or more of 26 safety energy locks (i.e., SEL 1–SEL 26). The location of the safety energy locks (i.e., SELs) can be seen in Figure 1.1.

To provide deeper insights I provide a more detailed example. There are three locations where energy flow can be blocked on or near the shoulder blades (i.e., scapula). At the lower tip of the scapula is an important safety energy lock (SEL 9). Blockages in the flow of Qi, at the lower scapula (i.e., SEL 9), might be associated with a large variety of physical ailments, including soreness on the sole of the foot, corns on the toes, problems with the ankles, an enlarged chest, allergies, and high blood pressure. A potential blockage in SEL 9 might be inferred by feeling the density of the body at the lower tip of one or both scapulae. If a client is lying, back downward on a massage table (for example), the body feels heavy or dense when you endeavor to slide your hand under her body at the level of the scapula. Similarly,

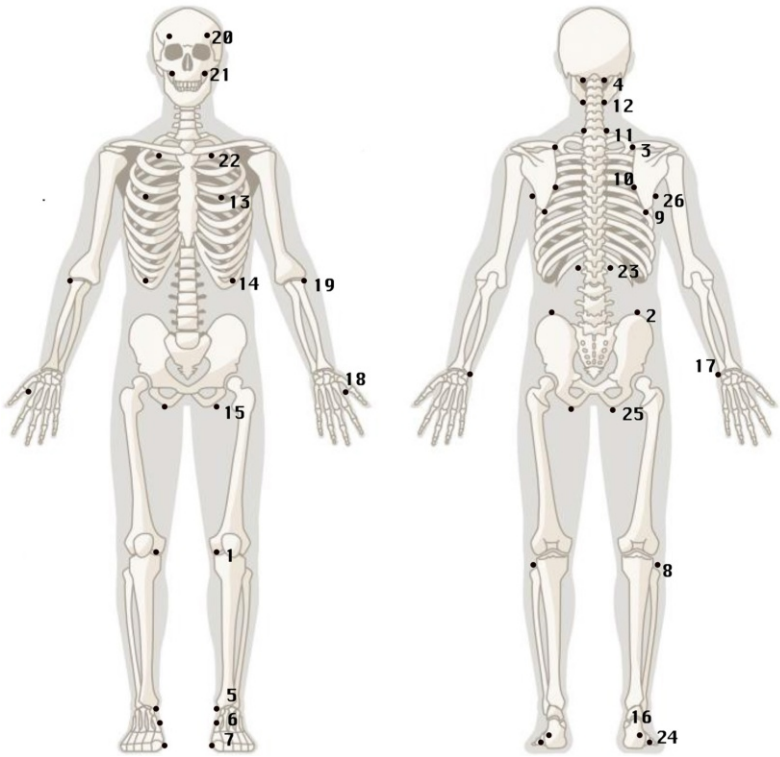

Figure 1.1. Jin Shin Jyutsu's 26 safety energy locks copyright for skeletal sketches: https://www.123rf.com/profile_elenabsl (elenabsl/123RF Stock Photo)

listening to what a person says, in terms of health projects like those listed above (e.g., my left ankle is really sore), can point to a potential blockage of Qi at SEL 9. A blockage in left SEL 9 might be associated with physical symptoms below the waist on the left-hand side (e.g., my left foot is sore) and above the waist on the right-hand side (e.g., an elevated right chest).

Self-Help

I awoke at 6:30 am after a night of feeling cold. I noticed a pain in the left sit bone region of my body (ischial tuberosity), and decided it was better to get out of bed than to try to get back to sleep. In JSJ the sit bone is the location of a safety energy lock, through which numerous energy flows pass, or can be blocked. As I made my way down the stairs to my study, where a massage table is set up, I decided that discomfort in the sit bone was possibly due to disharmony in bladder energy flow. Of course, there are other possibilities, and so I read my pulses to help decide what to do.

The pulses of both wrists, left and right, were faint, with the left wrist being least energetic. My reading of pulses on the left wrist suggested that gallbladder and heart energy flows each were not in harmony. Also, on the right wrist, pulses indicated that spleen energy flow was more prominent than others, seemingly confirming my low energy condition. There is more. I was craving coffee, a condition I associated with gallbladder energy flow. It happens that I have a caffeine allergy and often get nasal congestion if I drink too much coffee. Usually this symptom is quickly remedied by self-administration of gallbladder energy flow, on the same side as the nasal congestion. On this occasion, the problem was just the opposite. In terms of my body letting me know there was too little caffeine. My concern was not so much with craving for coffee, but with the ache in the sit bone region. I decided that gall bladder energy flow could address both issues.

When I administer self-help I usually opt for an energy flow on the same side as the most energetic pulses. However, on this occasion, my sit bone was aching and I decided that bladder energy flow left, which runs through the aching sit bone, was the flow of choice. Each step in the bladder flow took longer than usual since the pulses were slow to emerge and synchronize. I remained on each of the six steps of the flow for at least three minutes to assure myself that the pulses felt by the fingers of each hand were in harmony. When I completed the self-administered flow, my mind seemed clearer and my sit bone was no longer aching. I checked the pulses again and decided on a change of plan – to include a left kidney energy flow, which is also associated with pain in the buttocks region and is closely associated with bladder flow energy.

Also relevant is an associated decision to follow up with left heart energy flow. Whereas bladder energy flow focuses on energy moving through the safety energy locks on the back, the heart flow addresses safety energy locks mainly on the front of the body, the anchor point being a safety energy lock situated where the neck and shoulder meet. Relevant to the decision to administer heart energy flow is that my neck was stiff on both sides. Accordingly, I decided to administer heart energy flow.

As I began the left heart energy flow my right hand rested on the left ulnar styloid, the bump on the back of the wrist on the pinky side. I was aware that this safety energy lock, when harmonized, could change heartbeat rate and blood pressure. After a few minutes, I was feeling relaxed and the energy was draining away from the neck region of my body. When I completed the left heart energy flow, I initiated a left gallbladder flow, even though the pulses were now appropriately harmonized. I did not pause to reflect on this decision since my body consistently shows signs of disharmony in gallbladder energy flow. It is not just my attraction to caffeine. For example, my left middle finger, which is associated with gallbladder energy flow, was damaged during a fall some years ago and the finger still is slightly rotated, I have a tendency to get cranky, and I often have gas projects. Also, my skin tends to bruise easily. Each of these body characteristics is associated with disharmonies in gallbladder function energy.

I completed my JSJ self-help session by holding the safety energy locks at the occipital condyles (bones at the base of the skull), on either side of the spinal cord

(SEL 4). This hold is the traditional conclusion for a JSJ session – however, on this occasion it was especially salient since I woke up with a stiff neck on both sides. After approximately five minutes of holding these safety energy locks I completed my JSJ self-help session. I knew to be careful as I sat up and got to my feet after more than two hours of JSJ. I anticipated that I may be lightheaded and in need of water. Physical changes catalyzed by the flows afford Qi flowing harmoniously through the body, with changes occurring in the minutes, hours, and days ahead. What began as a response to an aching body, concluded with a clear head, no discernible aches and pains, and a sense of anticipation for a productive day.

Expanding Agency Regarding Wellness

Consider agency in the following vignette. Jennifer, a 77-year old woman wakes up coughing and then repeatedly sneezes in bursts of 7–8 sneezes. Reluctantly she scrambles out of bed, and visits the bathroom before carefully descending the staircase to the kitchen. As she moves she engages in audible, lengthy sighs and yawns. Another day is beginning.

As I experience what is happening, I think that Jennifer needs more sleep and the lengthy sighs are indicative of resignation about myriad underlying wellness projects. The sighs are signs that Jennifer does not feel well. As she prepares breakfast, Jennifer works her way through a cocktail of prescribed medication that includes tiotropium bromide for emphysema, amitriptyline for depression, and diclofenac for arthritis. Breakfast, consisting of eggs, toast, a slice or two of pear, and coffee is prepared and consumed. After breakfast, Jennifer leaves to buy a newspaper and take a walk in the winter sunshine.

I wondered about simple non-threatening ways to help Jennifer when, during a live telecast of a sports event, she began a ritual of lengthy sighs, occasional wheezing, and frequent bouts of coughing and sneezing. My background in JSJ prompted me to suggest Jennifer hold, respectively, her left and right middle fingers to harmonize gall bladder energy flow. My reasons for leaning toward this flow rather than others, such as lung or large intestine organ flows, were the long sighs and what I considered to be a depressive framework. Jennifer enthusiastically held her middle fingers and in 20 minutes there were no more sighs.

In addition to the symptoms broadcast by sight and sound, I noticed that Jennifer suffered throughout the previous day, from constipation – likely a side effect of prescription medication. Earlier in the day, I suggested she seek relief from constipation by holding the outer, back-side of the knees, working her hands and fingers downward slowly, fingers pointing down the upper calves. Later that night she was no longer constipated. Although she did not approach me for additional suggestions about uses of JSJ as a self-help tool for her myriad health projects she did discuss possibilities with two other women who were using JSJ regularly (including Tina, see next vignette). Both women recommended that Jennifer try Waltraud Riegger-Krausse's (2014) *Health is in your hands*. This easy to use

resource provides summary cards that would allow Jennifer to align her symptoms with particular JSJ holds and flows. Importantly, Jennifer was interested in the experiences of others like her who had used JSJ as a self-help practice, and she did not want to be persuaded what to do – rather, Jennifer wanted to review possibilities and make up her mind. Presently, she is waiting for the arrival of the JSJ card set.

JSJ as a Complementary Practice

Tina, a friend of mine, experienced discomfort during a leisurely walk in the park. Accordingly, she decided to return to her home. By the time she walked a half-mile to her home, she experienced considerable pain and, within an hour, could only walk with the aid of crutches. Because this event happened at the weekend, I was able to administer JSJ to provide some relief. The top of the left foot was swollen, the big toe was stiff and sore, and the ankle, on the little toe side, was discolored and swollen. I felt/read Tina's pulses and decided on several appropriate flows. After an hour of treatment, the pulses were balanced but the swelling and pain were sources of ongoing discomfort. Cognizant of the complementary role of JSJ, Tina made plans to seek the opinion of a Western doctor, a podiatrist she had previously visited. Before the visit Tina used the Internet to shed light on the likely problem – identifying gout and stress fracture as potential labels for her symptoms. The podiatrist agreed with her diagnosis and ordered a variety of tests that included bloodwork, x-ray, and MRI. The blood test showed that uric acid levels were normal and the x-ray and MRI showed no evidence of fractures. Even so, the podiatrist leaned toward gout as the most likely cause of Tina's significant pain. While pushing gout as the likely culprit, the doctor recommended foods to avoid and others to include in the diet. Since Tina is vegetarian, diet was not a strong contender as a causal factor for gout. The doctor's suggestions concerning diet were accompanied by others, including the use of an orthotic insert in the left shoe.

Over a period of seven months Tina obtained regular diagnoses and suggestions from medical practitioners and continued to have tests that included a bone scan and an ultrasound analysis. All tests revealed nothing more than "just arthritis." A second doctor felt that arthritis was the most likely cause of the problems, especially in the hip region – which was catalyzed by a heavy fall about two decades ago. During this six-month period of time, Tina got around as best she could, and developed an abnormal gait that may have precipitated additional problems in the tendons, ligaments, and muscles. These additional problems included severe pain in both hips at various stages, and swollen ankles, on the little toe side of the left foot. Because of months of using modified gait, excruciating pain frequently occurred in the hips, knees, and ankles. As was the case from the outset, the big toe remained especially painful.

Using the JSJ framework, the foot contains numerous safety energy locks, at which Qi might be blocked. These include sites on both sides of the ankle, both sides of the foot, and the big toe. In addition, when I looked at the toes, they were bent, inward, especially the big toe and the pinky. Although the pain was associated

with the left foot, the toes on both feet were indicative of disharmonies in several energy flows. During the six-month interval, I conducted JSJ sessions with Tina at least once a week and often, every day. When the pain was at its worst, for example in left and right hips, I conducted flows that took into account resolution of the pain and treatment of the long-term problem. As well as the toes on both feet being bent toward the center, they also were pulled back toward the chest, and the tips of the toes were pulled downward toward the soles of feet. There were two sets of hammer toes – one set on each foot. That is, all toes showed signs of being pulled away from their normal orientation by blockages in the Qi flow. I considered these flows created vulnerabilities for symptoms like those Tina was experiencing, and unless corrections occurred and were sustained, serious damage might occur to bones, tendons, ligaments, and organs associated with the blocked flows. My sense is that the blockages were likely due to lifestyle, including intensive involvement in sports, including tennis and netball. I was confident that regular use of JSJ would facilitate harmonized energy flows, reduction of pain, and associated symptoms, and regeneration of damaged cells and body structures.

Figure 1.2. Tina's foot soon after the injury became apparent

My approach is to pay attention to what I hear from Tina, what I see on her body (e.g., symmetries, asymmetries, and changes), and what I feel with my fingers. Also, I listen to the pulses after I complete most flows, as well as at the beginning and end of each session. For the entire six months, the right-side pulses were quiet at both the superficial and deep levels. In contrast, the left pulses are relatively energetic and it is customary to begin a session with flows on the left side of the body, including gallbladder and liver flows.

JSJ Makes a Difference

Because I am treated by, and learn from Jed Schwartz (see Chapter 19), he asked me how my treatment of Tina was progressing. After telling him what I had done,

he suggested I try to clear the blocked energy by holding consecutively the left and right safety energy locks at the groins (SEL 15), while holding different parts of the left foot and the base of each of the left toes. The purpose was to move the energy blocked in the groins to the feet. Jed modeled what to do on my body and immediately I realized I also had buildups of energy in the areas likely associated with Tina's debilitating injury. I followed his suggestions and Tina's problems are beginning to be resolved as I also use the same approach in my own self-help routine.

SETTING THE STAGE

This chapter is an introduction to a volume on mindfulness and wellness, which builds on an earlier volume I co-edited with Malgorzata Powietrzynska (Powietrzynska & Tobin, 2016). The chapters expand what we accomplished in the first volume, which also was international in scope and addressed important issues pertaining to contemplative inquiry and wellness. This volume includes many of the authors who contributed to the first volume, plus scholars who were not involved in the first volume. The chapters go beyond description and advocating for new directions and practices. As a set, the authors incorporate a critical perspective grounded in diverse research methodologies and theories used to frame meditation, mindfulness, wellness and numerous constructs associated with contemplative inquiry.

In my introduction, I use an autobiographical approach that situates mindfulness and wellness in a web of interconnected social practices that provide a foundation to set new priorities for educating citizens for productive, sustaining lifestyles that acknowledge the importance of autonomy, emancipation, and responsibility for self and others while enacting roles as stewards of all ecosystems that comprise Mother Earth and the universe in which we live.

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Kenneth Tobin came to the Urban Education doctoral program at the Graduate Center of CUNY in the fall semester of 2003. Presently he is coordinator of the Learning Sciences strand. Prior to his position at the Graduate Center Tobin had positions as tenured full professor at Florida State University (1987 to 1997) and the University of Pennsylvania (1997 to 2003). Also, he held university appointments at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (now Curtin University), Mount Lawley College and Graylands College (now Edith Cowan University).

Before Tobin became a university science educator in Australia in 1974, he taught high school physics, chemistry, biology general science, and mathematics for 10 years. He began a program of research in 1973 that continues to the present day – teaching and learning of science and learning to teach science.

PART I

MINDFULNESS IN EDUCATION

HEESOON BAI, MICHELLE BEATCH, DAVID CHANG
AND AVRAHAM COHEN

2. RECALIBRATION OF MINDFULNESS FOR EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, we the authors critically examine how mindfulness is taken up in education, and attempt to re-calibrate its use in education so as to suggest better ways to work with what mindfulness practice is truly capable of: liberating humanity from the narrow and limiting confines of reified ego consciousness and its perpetual condition of schism and conflict, internal and external. We make the case that for mindfulness to fully function in this liberatory capacity, it must not be offered as a stand-alone technique, taken out of the whole contemplative ontology and epistemology, such as, for example, the Buddhist path of liberation. As well, the usual cognitive approach to mindfulness that leaves out the affective dimension of contemplative practice that cultivates compassion, kindness, and empathic joy, is also limiting and does not do full justice to the liberatory aims of meditation. At its most limited application, mindfulness becomes just a temporary pacifier for stress-ridden individuals who have been and continue to be subject to increasing socioeconomic pressures and geopolitical oppression. We are critical of such ethically unaware uptakes of mindfulness, especially in the way schools use mindfulness for self-regulation, and we further raise concerns over the usage of mindfulness for suppressing or controlling feelings, especially negative feelings. Our chapter reiterates the purpose of mindfulness as a practice that aims at the transformation of ego-driven consciousness liable to self-other dualism and conflict to self-other integrative consciousness.

Keywords: mindfulness, Four Immeasurables, education, stress, self-regulation, integration

PREAMBLE

Compartmentalization and disconnection have been pervasive phenomena that have characterized and affected all spheres of human endeavour in modern times, including – and notably for the context of this chapter – education. Modern schooling has increasingly focused on teaching many different subjects, as students move up in

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grades and qualify for higher education. Although educators have advocated for care and human development as the primary goals of schooling, the reality is that such aims are most often subsumed under student academic performance. In other words, the primary focus of modern schooling has been knowledge and skills acquisition. Human flourishing and personhood development tend to play a secondary or instrumental role. In response to modernist educational aims, strong attempts have been made by educational leaders, philosophers, and practitioners in recent decades to steer education more towards development of whole human beings and whole communities, not just primarily as students and classroom dwellers who learn and master subjects and acquire skills. Holistic education movements, and more recently, contemplative education movements (Bai, Cohen, Culham, Park, Rabi, Scott, & Tait, 2014; Barbezat & Bush, 2014), which can be seen as part of holistic and contemplative educational reform, are at the vanguard of such educational reform or at least enhancement.

Unfortunately, contemplative methodology itself has been subject to the same pressure of compartmentalization and disconnect. For example, consider what yoga has generally become in North America: a billion dollar industry that proffers a homogenized version of the original intent of the practice and idealized and extreme images that consist of young and sexy bodies. Mindfulness has not escaped similar commodification and appeal to short-term benefits. In education, mindfulness has been turned into a technique for "self-regulation" that is brought into schools to manage students who are, in this age of distraction and dis-regulation, increasingly less able to perform academically.

Mindfulness in the context of education at times appears to be undertaken as a skill-based, cognitive-behavioural approach where its utility seems to be isolated to support individual cognitive processes. Such reductionist interpretations of mindfulness have resulted in it having lost connection to its original meaning in Western psychological theory and practice, and has led to the misconception that ethics and the discernment of the wholesome from the unwholesome are not part of mindfulness, when in fact they are central.

This chapter by the four authors critically examines how mindfulness has been taken up in education, and attempts to re-calibrate its use and offering in education so as to suggest better use of what mindfulness practice is truly capable of: liberating humanity from the narrow and limiting confines of a reified ego consciousness and its perpetual condition of schism and conflict, internal and external.

THE CURRENT MINDFULNESS UPTAKE SCENE IN EDUCATION

The growing popularity of mindfulness programs in schools can be traced in part to neuroscientific studies on the effects of contemplative practice on the brain. Beginning in the late eighties, scientists began to investigate the physiological correlates of meditative states as well as the effects of contemplative practice on neural circuitry. Ancient forms of Buddhist meditation, whereby the practitioner engages in full

and present awareness, have been known to produce mental states, characterized by clarity, and in some cases, ecstatic joy and warm compassion. Such meditative techniques have traditionally fallen under the purview of monastic contemplatives, who have renounced worldly life in pursuit of spiritual illumination. With the spread of Buddhism in the West, and interest in Eastern philosophies gathering momentum, Buddhist adepts who have devoted much of their lives to meditation became the subjects of study, and the states of consciousness arising from meditative practice began to attract scientific attention.

The neuroscientific study of meditation coincided with the neuroscientific revolution, also known as the decade of the brain (Jones & Mendell, 1999). The advent of imaging and diagnostic technologies such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), and positron emissions tomography (PET) allowed scientists to peer into the operational and structural intricacies of the brain. Using a variety of monitoring methods, scientists are able to correlate mental states with activity in different regions of the brain, and thus construct a physiological map of neurological functions that correspond to subjective mental states. Moreover, researchers have been able to detect changes in cortical structure as a result of repeated practice of certain activities, including spatial navigation, and memory (Maguire et al., 2006). These advances in neuroscience have produced the empirical evidence of physiological changes as a result of periods of intense meditative practice (Lazar et al., 2005).

Neuroscientific investigation into the effects of meditation effectively imports an ancient practice into a scientific paradigm. Experimental design attempts to isolate a variable in an effort to determine and measure the *effects* of meditation. Whereas ancient Buddhist traditions utilize meditation as merely one among a suite of practices that aim to develop and transform consciousness, neuroscience only measures the observable effects of meditative practice. The articulation of neuroscientific findings can sometimes convey observable *effects* as *outcomes*; changes in the brain are presented as the result of exposure to a given variable (i.e., meditation). In this figuration, significant results are often read by the wider public as recommendations for meditative practice. If meditators demonstrate emotional stability in the face of stress, and emotional regulation is thought a desirable feature of mental wellbeing, then the merits of meditative practice become apparent. However, this scientific apprehension tends to examine meditation outside of its traditional context, omit its original purpose, and neglect the suite of practices of which it is meant to be part. Thus, *effects* are mistaken for *aims*, and outcomes for methods. In Buddhism, emotional stability is correlated with deep and lucid non-dual awareness, consciousness that manifests when the ordinary consciousness of subject-object dichotomy dissolves, giving way to subject-object unity or integration. In common language this is often described as a flow state (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). Western observers, however, are likely to adopt meditation as a means to achieving what is only the secondary effect of a more fundamental transformation in the quality of consciousness and in the emergence of an increasingly kind, compassionate, and peaceful society.

As neuroscientific knowledge garnered attention, coupled with empirical science's current repute as epistemology *par excellence*, educators began to incorporate neuroscientific findings into discussions of pedagogical methods. Bolstered by scientific evidence, educators have turned to mindfulness practices in an effort to cultivate emotional stability, resilience, empathy and positive affect among students. The MindUP program (Hawn Foundation, 2011) is one example of a comprehensive mindfulness curriculum, designed to introduce students to the basic awareness and self-regulatory practices along with the rudiments of brain science. With lessons and activities for students from K-10, MindUP aims to "foster social and emotional awareness, enhance psychological wellbeing, and promote academic success" (Hawn Foundation, 2011, p. 6). Each lesson includes a segment on the brain and the physiological effects of recommended practices. MindUp sees wide implementation by teachers, and some academics have now presented its salutary effects (Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010).

In addition to mindfulness-based interventions for children, programs have also been developed for educators. Mindfulness can be brought to the classroom directly through programs for children, indirectly through programs for teachers, or through a combination of both approaches. Two interventions offered to teachers in Canada are Mindfulness-Based Wellness Education (MBWE) and the Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques (SMART) in Education program. Both programs draw upon MBSR and include teachings on mindfulness, and practices such as guided sitting meditation, body-scan meditation, and yoga.

A third program from the United States and just recently being brought into Canada is Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE). Founded on mindfulness-based practices and the Prosocial Classroom model, CARE emphasizes how teachers themselves must possess social-emotional competence and attend to their own wellbeing in order to develop and maintain teacher-student relationships, classroom management, and effective Social and Emotional Education (SEE) implementation.

A mindfulness-based program that combines both direct and indirect approaches is the Inner Resilience Program (IRP), which is grounded in research in SEE and contemporary mindfulness-based interventions. In 2009, the IRP became a two-year pilot project within ten New York City public schools (Lantieri, Kyse, Harnett, & Malkmus, 2011). It was hypothesized that there would be greater positive effects if administrators, teachers, parents, and children from each school all participated in various components of the program. The activities primarily focused on administrators and teachers, and were intended to reduce teacher stress, and increase their concentration, attention, and job satisfaction. It was theorized that such changes in teachers would have a positive impact on their classroom environments that in turn would affect students' wellbeing relative to their attention, frustration levels, stress, and acting out behaviors. In addition, students' wellbeing would further be improved by activities provided in the Building Resilience from the Inside Out curriculum (Lantieri et al., 2011).