

ZEN IN THE ART OF TEACHING:
CONTEMPLATIVE/MINDFULNESS PRACTICE IN THE PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

by

Kenneth R. Vorndran

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
WITH A MAJOR IN RHETORIC, COMPOSITION,
AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2009

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Kenneth R. Vorndran entitled ZEN IN THE ART OF TEACHING: CONTEMPLATIVE/MINDFULNESS PRACTICE IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

_____ Date: 9/17/09
Ken McAllister

_____ Date: 9/17/09
Thomas P. Miller

_____ Date: 9/17/09
John Warnock

_____ Date:

_____ Date:

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

_____ Date: 9/17/09
Dissertation Director: Ken McAllister

STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at the University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this dissertation are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: Kenneth R. Vorndran

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank: my wife, Jennifer, for everything, the details of which are impossible to articulate; my daughters, Carly and Ali, for their patience, support, and love; my committee members—Ken, John, and Tom—for their willingness to let me take risks, for their encouragement of this project, and for their many thoughts and suggestions, which guided and shaped my work; my extended family—mother, father, brother, sister, and in-laws—for their encouragement, their hospitality, and the trips to the beach; my colleagues—John, Matt, Erin, Pat, Randy, Bob, Maha, Gail, Steven, and Ted—for listening, for celebrating, for encouraging, and for the bottle of non-alcoholic cider; my friends—Terry, Michael, Lucill, Dave, Dan, Dawn, and Jim—who always reminded me of my center; my teachers—John and Joan—for their insight; Gina for the hoorahs; Michael for the lunches and wisdom; Alison for always knowing the answers; and Ken for his mindfulness and direction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	7
CHAPTER 1: ZEN IN THE ART OF TEACHING: CONTEMPLATIVE/MINDFULNESS PRACTICE AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT	8
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW	8
“DHARMA TALK”: THE STORIES BEHIND THE DISSERTATION	24
STARTING POINT FOR THE ARGUMENT: THE PRECIPITATING CONCERNS OF THE DISSERTATION	30
A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: THE BACKGROUND TO THE DISSERTATION.....	42
LAYOUT OF THE ARGUMENT: THE FRAMEWORK OF THE DISSERTATION	56
CHAPTER 2: THE WORLD IS MEDICINE. WHAT TYPE OF MEDICINE ARE YOU?	60
INTRODUCTION	60
“DHARMA TALK”: ENCOUNTER WITH THE KOAN	63
RHETORICAL ANALYSIS: THE KOAN	80
ANALYSIS: ZEN EPISTEMOLOGY	94
CONNECTIONS: ZEN AND POSTMODERNISM CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES	109
CONCLUSIONS.....	124

TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

CHAPTER 3: THE KOAN AND THE CLASSROOM:	
WHAT KIND OF MEDICINE ARE WE?.....	127
INTRODUCTION	127
“DHARMA TALK”: MEDICINE HAPPENS	130
THE INTRAPERSONAL ASPECT OF TEACHING:	
WHAT KINDS OF MEDICINE IS IT?.....	140
THE INTRAPERSONAL, TEACHER TRAINING, AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES	174
CONCLUSIONS.....	202
CHAPTER 4: CONTEMPLATIVE/MINDFULNESS PRACTICES AND THE CLASSROOM: WHAT TYPES OF MEDICINE ARE THEY?	
INTRODUCTION	205
“DHARMA TALK”: THE MEDICINE OF STILLNESS	208
WHAT TYPES OF MEDICINE ARE CONTEMPLATIVE/MINDFULNESS PRACTICES?	213
CONTEMPLATIVE/MINDFULNESS PRACTICES ARE MEDICINE. WHAT TYPES OF MEDICINE MIGHT THEY BRING TO THE CLASSROOM?	235
MINDFULNESS IS MEDICINE. CAN WE BRING IT TO TEACHER TRAINING? CONCLUSIONS AND A CALL FOR MORE RESEARCH	252
WORKS CITED	264

ABSTRACT

This dissertation uses a Zen koan as a foundation for discussing teacher training and development. It suggests that teacher training attends to issues of theory, pedagogy, and technology, and it contends that teacher training and development does not adequately attend to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. In spite of the use of reflective techniques in teacher education, teachers are not trained in a significant way to navigate, negotiate, or manage the issues of identity, the issues of self-belief, the patterns of thought, and/or the emotional patterns, which affect their teaching and their classrooms. This work looks at research regarding the importance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching in relation to teacher effectiveness and classroom climate; it considers current practices in pre-service and in-service teacher training; and it reviews research related to the efficacy of mindfulness and contemplative practices, such as meditation. It argues that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant to teacher effectiveness and classroom climate; that contemplative and mindfulness practices may offer systems that support and sustain teachers as they navigate, negotiate, and manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching; and that pre-service and in-service professional development may provide vehicles to deliver this training.

CHAPTER 1: ZEN IN THE ART OF TEACHING:
CONTEMPLATIVE/MINDFULNESS PRACTICE AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In this dissertation, I will be making four related claims: First, intrapersonal knowledge and skills are important aspects of teaching that may be supported and developed through the use of contemplative/mindfulness practices. Second, as a teacher develops his intrapersonal knowledge and skills, this has the potential to transform the teacher's experience of the classroom and the interactions he has with his students. Third, the intrapersonal aspect of teaching—both the development of intrapersonal knowledge and the management of intrapersonal skills—remains underdeveloped in teacher training and development. And fourth, because much of the research I use to suggest the efficacy of contemplative/mindfulness practices comes from medicine and psychology, more research is needed within the field of education to examine the connections that may exist between a teacher's use of contemplative/ mindfulness practice and a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. And ultimately I want to make these claims in order to suggest that contemplative/mindfulness practices might be included within the scope of teacher training and development.

The “intrapersonal” aspect of intelligence, as Howard Gardner defines it in his theory of multiple intelligences, involves a high degree of self-awareness, including accurate self-assessment of one's own strengths, limitations, thoughts, feelings, desires, and motivations, and the ability to act on the basis of this self-awareness. It is the ability

to know and understand oneself, and it is the ability to act in positive ways based on that knowledge. Intrapersonal intelligence is a measure of the skill with which one works with one's own thoughts and feelings. The intrapersonal is about the “inner life.” And Gardner’s work suggests that some people are more astute than others when it comes to navigating/negotiating/managing the intrapersonal terrain of thoughts and feelings.

Throughout this dissertation, I will use the term “intrapersonal” in much the same way as Gardner does. I will use the term to refer to the thought lives and the emotional lives of teachers. I will consider the “intrapersonal” to include the highly personal beliefs, histories, and identities from which teachers operate, as well as the complex professional beliefs and identities that teachers construct and navigate/negotiate/manage. I am particularly interested in those aspects of a teacher’s intrapersonal workings that may be classified as habits of thought, habits of emotion, and/or habits of being. By habits of thought, I mean the typical intellectual pathways one follows, the typical assumptions one makes, and/or the typical narratives one uses as one navigates/negotiates/manages one’s life. By habits of emotion, I mean the emotional responses one typically experiences or employs. And by habits of being, I mean the patterns of behavior in which one engages and/or the character traits (i.e. courage, integrity, honesty) that tend to define one. I am interested in these habits of thought, emotion, and/or being because they may, as I hope to show, become manifested in the classroom in many ways. I am also interested in them because I believe—and again hope to show—that a teacher’s ability to navigate/negotiate/manage his habits of thought, emotion, and/or being may be central to transforming what happens in the classroom.

I will be using the term “intrapersonal knowledge” to refer to a teacher’s familiarity with his thoughts and emotions, to the level of self-awareness that he has, to the ways in which he is able to understand himself. To what extent and in what ways is a teacher conscious of his thoughts and feelings? Is the teacher able to identify his thoughts and feelings? Is the teacher able to examine them? Is the teacher able to separate himself from them? Or is the teacher aware of his thoughts and feelings only to the extent that he reacts to the experience of them? The term “intrapersonal skill” will refer to the teacher’s ability to work with his thoughts and feelings. One might be aware of his thoughts and feelings, but unable to do much with them. Although this example may be imprecise, many addicts are aware of their addictive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, but until they get clean and sober, they find it difficult to do much with them except respond to them.

And I will use the term “navigate/negotiate/manage” when I am talking about working with the intrapersonal. I will use this term because it brings up different aspects of this internal work. In some ways, the work is like navigating a river, trying to avoid specific hazards and trying to find the clearest channels, while making the way from one place to another. In some ways, it is like entering into negotiations, where one seeks to compromise. And in other ways, it is a conscious management process, in which one makes executive decisions and enacts them. There are times when all three functions are happening simultaneously, and there are other times when one aspect of this internal work seems to dominate the others. Sometimes one is concurrently trying to figure out the flow of one’s thoughts and emotions, to bargain with oneself about one’s thoughts

and feelings, and to decide which thought or feeling is most valid or productive. Other times one simply makes a decision and moves on.

I decided to use the term “intrapersonal” for rhetorical reasons. Terms such as “inner life” may seem too soft. They may be perceived as too “wifty” according to Parker Palmer, the founder of *Courage to Teach* and an advocate for attending to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. And for some, such phrasing may introduce an element of spirituality into the conversation, which could be distracting in an academic work. Unlike Palmer, who recognizes the possibility of alienating audiences in public educational institutions and who still continues to use terms like “soulful matters” to describe the intrapersonal aspect of teaching (“Heat and Soul” sec. 3), I wish to avoid this rhetorical pitfall. As will become apparent later on, one piece of the argument I will be making is that rhetorical choices, such as the use of terms like “inner lives” and “soulful matters” may limit how the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is received in academic conversations about education. Such rhetoric may also help to explain why the intrapersonal aspect of teaching has been underserved in teacher training and development—a claim I will develop fully—in spite of the reflexive methodologies that are often used in pre-service and in-service teacher training.

When I use the term “the intrapersonal aspect of teaching,” I will be referring to the very personal side of teaching. The term will encompass the teacher’s internal responses to situations in which he finds himself, including responses that are rooted in the teacher’s personal beliefs, identities, and narratives. A teacher’s responses to his circumstances may be intellectual and/or emotional. However, the term, as I use it, will

not be limited to the “personal thoughts” or the “personal feelings” that teachers have related to their circumstances. It will also refer to how they navigate/negotiate/manage the internal terrain related to these thoughts and feelings, including how they navigate/negotiate/ manage habitual thoughts and emotions. For instance, a teacher may be prone to fearful thoughts and/or feelings, which exacerbate the pain he feels from the circumstances he encounters. The “intrapersonal aspect of teaching,” as I use it, will refer to this fear, but it will also refer to the internal strategies the teacher uses to deal with these thoughts and/or feelings. Does the teacher indulge or deny the thoughts and/or feelings? Is he able to detach from them and put them in perspective? And, whether the former or the latter is the case, what are the steps in these processes? All of these—the thoughts, the feelings, and the ways they are handled—are facets of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching.

The term “intrapersonal aspect of teaching,” as I use it, will also include the internal struggles involved in navigating/negotiating/managing the complex terrain where the professional and the personal intersect. Throughout their careers, teachers will face situations to which they will have layered responses. What does one feel, think, or do with the student whose work demonstrates significant mastery of skills or content, but who does not turn in enough work to pass? What does one feel, think, or do when a student confesses that she has been molested? What does one feel, think, or do when a student says there is no sense in completing schoolwork because he won’t live to see twenty-one? What does one feel, think, or do when a student or a supervisor completely dismisses something that a teacher holds personally important? What does one feel, think,

or do when one is continually confronted with attitudes, comments, and opinions—expressed everywhere from parent conferences to newspapers to state houses—which denigrate teachers?

How one navigates/negotiates/manages the intersection of the personal and the professional—within the context of the classroom, the school, the district, or education as a whole—is not only a professional, theoretical, pedagogical, legal, ethical, or interpersonal matter. It is an internal, personal matter too. These situations have the potential to put teachers up against very personal issues, beliefs, assumptions, and feelings. “The most common problem teachers face,” Dr. Jeff Combes, a Priority Staffing Teacher Advisor in Los Angeles says succinctly, “is deciding how much of their personal beliefs will show up in the classroom” (“Ethical Dilemmas”). And the ability to “decide” what feelings, beliefs, and/or thoughts “show up” up in the classroom may be in part a function of a teacher’s skill at navigating/negotiating/managing the intrapersonal. The more skillful, the more choice. So, the term “intrapersonal aspect of teaching,” as I will use it, will refer to a teacher’s internal, personal responses to all aspects of teaching and it will also refer to their internal navigation/negotiation/management of those responses.

I will be using the term “contemplative/mindfulness practices” to refer to a range of activities from meditation (Zen and other) and contemplative prayer to Mindful Based Stress Reduction (MBSR, a popular secular meditation technique). As I will attempt to show, these types of activities—whether secular or spiritual—develop the practitioner’s ability to consciously focus his attention in order to quiet the mind, to cultivate a capacity for concentration, and to allow space for personal insight. Contemplative/mindfulness

practices offer tools of reflexivity; tools to help achieve broader, more inclusive perspectives; and tools to navigate the thought life and the emotional life, enhancing the ability to have a calm awareness of one's thoughts and feelings in the present moment. Though I am using Zen and Zen koans as my metaphor throughout the dissertation, I am most interested in how to include secular contemplative/mindfulness practices in teacher training and development, since secular contemplative/mindfulness practices seem to have the best potential to dodge the thorny issue of "church and state," which often arises in public educational institutions in relation to "spiritual" issues ("Teaching with" sec. 3).

Two other terms I will be using frequently come from the Zen tradition. The "koan," which I will explain in detail in chapter two, is used in some, but not all, Zen traditions. A koan is a word, a phrase, a question, or a story that serves as the focal point for one's meditation. It is supposed to free the practitioner from discursive/rational/analytical/systemic/linear logics. The term "dharma talk" refers to the talk that the Zen master gives in conjunction with a period of meditation. A dharma talk is a lecture that is meant to focus on a Buddhist topic. In addition to knowledge they have gained through their years of study, Zen masters often include personal stories from their own experience to illustrate points they are trying to make. The dharma talk is often used to set the stage for the time of meditation. In this dissertation, I will include sections that I will label as "dharma talks." In these sections, in the tradition of actual dharma talks, I will use personal narratives to set the stage for the work that is going to be done in a chapter. However, these sections will not necessarily deal with Buddhist topics.

As I suggested, one of my main claims will be that intrapersonal knowledge and skill—the inner resources a teacher has at his disposal—are important aspects of teaching. The ability to gain awareness of one’s own thoughts and emotions, the ability to step back from them and examine them, and the ability to navigate/negotiate/manage them in “real time” are important in any professional setting. But these intrapersonal skills—these internal resources—seem especially important in the highly interactive space of the classroom, where teachers are responsible for maintaining clear and clean relationships with students, who are vulnerable in many ways, including that they are still developing physically, emotionally, and socially. And it is possible—as I hope to show—that the support contemplative/mindfulness practices might offer teachers in navigating/negotiating/managing the intrapersonal aspect of teaching has the potential to transform the teacher’s experience of the classroom, as well as the relationships that are central to creating effective learning environments.

The first part of the argument that I will make is that intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant to what happens in the classroom and that intrapersonal knowledge and skills are important because it is the intrapersonal knowledge and skill of the teacher that shapes and sets the limits for the interpersonal relationships that occur in the classroom. I will make this argument first because it is the foundation for the rest of my argument. If the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is not pertinent to what happens in the classroom, then the rest of the argument is a moot point. I will make the argument that it is the relationships that the teacher fosters that are the foundation for the work that is done in the classroom and I will argue that the intrapersonal creates the contours for those

relationships. I also intend to show that many of the traits that are consistently found to define “good teaching” and “good teachers” have both intrapersonal and interpersonal components to them. And I want to suggest that there is a link between a teacher’s ability to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspects of these traits and the interpersonal manifestation of these traits in student-teacher relationships.

The second claim in this dissertation is that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching—both the development of intrapersonal knowledge and skill—remains underdeveloped in teacher training and development. The practice of self-reflection has certainly become embedded in pre-service teacher education. Most pre-service teachers are asked, as part of their training, to reflect on their experiences in the classroom. Some teacher education programs, as part of their processes of reflection, ask students to consider their teaching within the broader context of their whole lives. These are both steps in the direction that I am suggesting. However, I will be suggesting that most processes of reflection that are used in teacher training do not go far enough into issues of emotion, belief, or identity, and I will propose that teacher training and development—including in-service training and development, which seems to be spottier in terms of the attention that is given to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching—needs to move beyond where it is today, and that contemplative/mindfulness practices may provide a solid next step.

In making this argument, I will recognize that outside of the mainstream of teacher training and development, there are programs, such as Parker Palmer’s *Courage to Teach*, which are addressing the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and which are interested in the development of teachers’ inner resources. I will discuss how their efforts

are largely excluded from academic conversations in education because the rhetoric used in forwarding these agendas tends to rely on religious/spiritual language that can make them somewhat suspect in the academy, or that renders them outside the scope of training and development in public educational institutions, which are rightfully concerned about issues involving “religion” because of strong prohibitions against the mixing of “church and state.” I will also explore some other rhetorical issues that might make adoption of contemplative/mindfulness practices difficult in today’s teacher training.

The third part of this argument will be that contemplative/mindfulness practices such as Zen and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction are powerful ways to learn how to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal, to become aware of thoughts and feelings, to examine them, and to decide which ones are useful in the practitioner’s life and which ones no longer serve it particularly well. Using a variety of techniques, contemplative/mindfulness practices ask: to what extent is each thought or feeling “true,” and what would life look like if one were to let go of his thoughts or feelings? They challenge practitioners to release their thoughts and feelings, or to put them into larger contexts—regardless of whether the thoughts and feelings are considered negative or positive—so that new perspectives become possible. Using experience-based and research-based evidence, I intend to show that contemplative/mindfulness practices are efficacious tools for transforming the intrapersonal and the interpersonal. Although the experiential evidence may appear to be anecdotal, the consistency with which it appears throughout a prolonged history adds weight to its credibility. And the research-based evidence is

interesting in that it comes from a variety of sources in the fields of medicine and psychology.

Finally, as my argument is largely theoretical, I will be calling for research to explore the possible connections between a teacher's use of contemplative/mindfulness practices and a teacher's efficacy in the classroom. While the medical and psychological research into contemplative/mindfulness practices is compelling, it does not really focus on education or the classroom. And I recognize the need for any decisions about teacher training and development to be based on solid research within the field.

The study of rhetoric has often involved making connections between different disciplines, as well as bringing together disparate voices, ones that might otherwise have remained separate. For example, James Baumlin, Jim Corder, and Richard Young all explore the theories of psychologist Carl Rogers and what they might mean in the contexts of the fields of communication and education. In "Rogerian and Platonic dialogue in—and beyond—the Writing Classroom," Baumlin connects Rogers and Plato to make the case that both are more interested in promoting understanding than persuasion, and he uses this as a foundation to argue for classroom assignments that create real opportunities for coming to understand, to witness, and to know "the other" in education (not only in writing classrooms). In "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love," Corder discusses Roger's notion of "unconditional positive regard" and wonders how to make communication work when one party is unable or unwilling to regard the other. And Young, in "Rogerian Argument and the Context of Situation: Taking a Closer Look," discusses Roger's theories in the context of the Greek concept of *kairos*. In the

tradition of the Burkean parlor, I attempt to bring together voices from distinct corners of the room, from East and West, from Zen, medicine, psychology, rhetoric, and education. And by placing them together in conversation with one another, I hope to create a space for the “emergence,” as Jim Corder from the Western tradition or Joan Sutherland from the Eastern tradition might say.

The lens of rhetoric has also been applied to many fields. It has been focused on everything from video games to women’s sermons. It has been turned on issues of race, class, and gender. It has been turned on history, the arts, and science. The study of visual and spatial rhetoric even looks at how the spaces we create communicate. And the lens of rhetoric has been applied to Zen. Carl Olson, in *Zen and the Art of Post-Modern Philosophy*, explores the language of Zen and postmodernism to draw connections between the two philosophical traditions. And Mark Lawrence McPhail, in *Zen in the Art of Rhetoric: An Inquiry into Coherence*, turns the tables and uses Zen as a means of exploring some basic assumptions in western rhetoric, including dualism and the presupposition of two-sidedness in argument. I hope to continue in both these veins, using rhetoric as a means of exploring contemplative/mindfulness practice and contemplative/mindfulness practice as a means of exploring the rhetoric about education. In addition, I intend to apply the lens of rhetoric to teacher training and development, in order to explore—from the perspective of language and discourse—what is being done and what is not being done in teacher training and development. And I will use the lens of rhetoric to discuss issues of resistance related to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and contemplative/mindfulness practices.

Within the field of rhetoric, there has also been interest in issues beyond the writing classroom. For example, Min Zhan Lu and Bruce Horner, in their article “The Problematic of Experience: Redefining Critical Work in Ethnography and Pedagogy,” begin with the writing classroom, but they move beyond it to discuss how teachers in general act as ethnographers and the problems that arise in this process. John Trimbur, in “Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning,” does not confine his observations to the writing classroom, but speaks in terms of education as a whole. And James Moffet, in *Harmonic Learning* and *The Universal Schoolhouse*, reaches beyond the boundaries of the writing classroom and looks holistically at education, and among other things, at how to “spiritualize” it. Similarly, it is my intention to write about education in general and not specifically about the writing classroom.

Lastly, in the field of English Education, which is a likely next step for me and which is often closely allied with Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English (RCTE), there is interest not only in issues related specifically to the teaching of English, but there is also interest in issues related to teaching in general. Because the graduates of English Education programs will most often be teaching in high schools, they need to know about the general challenges and situations all teachers face. Tremmel’s book, *Zen in the Practice of Teaching English*, illustrates this. Much of the discussion in the book pertains to teaching in general, and many of the questions he responds to are not specifically about English, but about how to make the life of a high school teacher work. My own experience in an undergraduate program in English Education mirrored what I found in Tremmel’s book. As future high school teachers, my classmates and I were as

worried about how to handle student discipline and how to juggle the demands of teaching—i.e. hall duty, twenty minute lunches, one planning period, 150 to 180 students, statewide tests, parent conferences, keeping attendance, etc.—as we were about specific methods for teaching English. So, not only is it my intention to write about teaching in general, but my hope is that this work will be inclusive of teachers that are in K-12 settings.

I have tried to identify my intentions for this dissertation. However, it is important to note some things I will not be doing. While I will be exploring how contemplative/mindfulness practices forward a different kind of epistemology and come from a different epistemological point of view—in the hope that this will provide a foundation for the reader to understand contemplative/mindfulness practices—I will not be focusing on "students" and justifying/explaining/discussing the use of mindfulness-related practice/ theory/pedagogy with students in the classroom. I am trying to focus on teachers and how contemplative/mindfulness practices have the potential to transform the teacher's experience of and in the classroom by helping them to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and by helping them to re- envision and/or release habits of thought, emotion, and/or being that do not seem to serve them or their classrooms well. I am trying to argue that this transformation has the potential to influence the classroom, not because the teacher will necessarily be employing mindfulness-related theories or pedagogies in the classroom, but because the teacher himself may be transformed, and this transformation has the potential to revise the student-teacher relationship, which is central to the classroom. While I find the

epistemological implications of contemplative/mindfulness practices interesting (and important to discuss as a foundation), and while I think the pedagogical implications for students are also interesting, neither is my focus. On the other hand, some of the research related to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching suggests that there may be some interesting connections between teachers' senses of identity and their pedagogical approaches.

In this first chapter, I will discuss the concerns that precipitated this argument; I will offer a general review of the literature; and I will provide the framework for the rest of the dissertation, along with some more qualifiers about the scope of the project. However, before I do that, I want to begin this chapter in the manner of a Zen meditation with a “dharma talk.” As I noted, in the Zen tradition, a period of group meditation often begins with a lecture by the Zen master. While I can't presume to do an actual “dharma talk,” the stories I tell in this section are meant to serve—like the talk by the Zen teacher—as an invitation into the work that is about to be done. I am doing this to embody and to honor the Zen tradition, which I am attempting to blend with the academic tradition of the dissertation. The stories I tell in the “dharma talks” are based on my twenty-five years of teaching experience, and I will rely on that experience, rather than on formal research, as the foundation for my discussion in those sections. Although no gesture is without a persuasive element, this “dharma talk”—like the other “dharma talks” in this dissertation—is not meant to be a formal piece of the argument itself. It is meant to be an invitation into the ideas that will be discussed more formally as the chapter is developed. And since the “dharma talk” is based in my experience, any bad assumptions about which I confess were, in fact, my thoughts at the time. Any strange connections I made were my

own understandings (or misunderstandings). From the “dharma talk” in this chapter, I will proceed to the grounds for the argument, a brief literature review, and the layout of the argument.

“DHARMA TALK”:

THE STORIES BEHIND THE DISSERTATION

“I’m pregnant but I think I’ll keep this one,” Michelle said.

When she came in, I was staring out the window of my classroom, allowing the day to seep from me. Schools and churches seem especially quiet after hours, when concerns, struggles, triumphs and failures settle into an exhausted silence. She pulled up a chair and sat close—tall, reedy, tough like dried bamboo. Her eyes stared with fixed precision, as if she were trying to mill and miter exacting pieces into a complex joint. They were neither afraid nor demanding, neither ashamed nor concerned. Just concentrating on some distant point, creating an artificial confessional screen.

Michelle seemed giftless, futureless, unwed to any particular dream, certainty, or even intuition about herself. Not much interested her. The only definite: she wanted a Jetta and a house. Not an apartment like her mother. There were too many drugs at the apartment.

Michelle was eighteen. I was twenty-two. Both of us were adrift without a ritual to guide us. No “forgive me father for I have sinned.” No rosaries. And nothing in my training—in life or in schooling—had prepared me for this particular moment. Perhaps there is little in any training that could. She was not a friend. I could not take her into confidence and tell her of the scare I had when I was her age. It would have been meaningless anyway. There was an expectation, but I was not sure exactly what it was. Direction, silence, support, absolution?

“Are you okay with that decision?”

“Yeah. I don’t want to get rid of another one.”

“Is your family okay with it?”

“They don’t care. My mom probly be excited. She like little kids.”

She said kids as if it were pronounced keeds.

“Is the father going to be able to help out?”

“He there. He got a job,” she said.

We sat in silence and waited. She looked out the window, which faced a depleted courtyard where some stubby weeds passed for grass. A decaying circular concrete bench dotted its middle like a dull bulls-eye. There was little more. Even the few vandals who periodically gave themselves temporary marquees on school walls found this abandoned courtyard too boring, perhaps too demeaning, to decorate. Surrounded by three tedious tan brick walls, buried in morning and afternoon shade, it quietly diminished into nothingness.

Michelle’s eyes were no longer a confessional screen. They were gone. She had folded into herself, into a private wordless room.

“How do you feel?”

“Okay. I don’t have no morning sickness or nothin. I’m okay.”

“Can I do anything to help?”

“No. I just needed to tell somebody. Thanks,” she said.

“The other one?” I asked before she could leave.

“I was too young to have kids.”

The room returned to silence.

When I reflect on my years as a teacher, I realize I have encountered many of these types of moments, which placed me beyond the bounds of what I learned in my courses about educational theory and pedagogy, and which were not only demanding in terms of how to navigate/negotiate/manage the interpersonal, legal, and ethical dimensions of the situation, but which were also demanding personally, both in terms of my emotional responses and in terms of how I navigated/negotiated/managed my internal reactions: Did I really do my best? Could I have done more? Should I have responded differently? Why was I feeling angry, hurt, afraid, or confused? Could I trust my thoughts and perceptions about the situation? Shouldn't I feel differently, more mature, more detached, more compassionate? How do I stop thinking about/worrying about this? I don't know any teacher who hasn't lain awake at night asking these types of questions, or having these types of thoughts, while struggling with the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. It is inevitable that some student, some class, or some situation will force a teacher into an internal conflict.

I think of Takcha, an incredibly gifted writer who was failing my high school English class. When I tried to encourage him, he replied it was my system, not his. He didn't care if he was perceived as failing by a system he didn't respect. And Perry, who was from a gang-controlled neighborhood and said there was no sense in doing school work because he would be dead by the time he was twenty-one anyway. And Alwen, who told me, when I commented offhandedly about how proud her parents must be about her exceptional performance, "I live in a trailer, my parents are drunks, I sleep on a cot, I can't wait to graduate and get out." And Josue, who was the last of his friends in school.

The rest were selling drugs or in jail. Except for Micky. He quit school when he got his girlfriend pregnant because he had to get a job. Josue wanted better. And I think of a handful of difficult classes throughout the years that not only challenged teaching strategies, which I had employed successfully many times before, but which taxed me emotionally and made me question my personal identity and my personal beliefs.

All of these situations involved combinations of theoretical, pedagogical, and/or interpersonal uncertainty, but they were always tied to the intrapersonal: to the internal navigation/negotiation/management of emotions related to stress and/or personal doubt, of personal narratives/stories that were at odds with the situations at hand, or of habitual thoughts and emotions that were confining me in some way. I was attempting to untangle knots of fear, anger, and resistance as I tried to find acceptance, compassion, and forgiveness. All of which are complicated internal processes, especially when some of the fear-filled, anger-filled, and resistance-filled thoughts and feelings were so well rehearsed that they had become automatic, automatically accepted, and thus almost invisible.

Day-to-day life as a teacher also presents its own sets of intrapersonal issues to navigate/negotiate/manage. How do you maintain a sense of passion and compassion for the students and for the teaching profession, while you are actively involved in the deluge of demands that accompanies teaching? Over the course of fifteen, or twenty, or twenty-five years, how do you find the space to listen, to hear, to acknowledge, and to respond to the complex invitations you receive? Once you have found your footing in the classroom and know how to make your classroom work efficiently, how do you make your classroom a place of vitality, not just for your students, but for you as well, so that you

can thrive? How do you respond to the “same” problems and situations, which tend to recur over the course of a teaching career?

It was when I began to try various forms of contemplative/mindfulness practice—the practice of deep self-reflection; of quieting the mind in the midst of daily distractions, disturbances, and chaos; of careful attention in the midst of the mind’s continuous chatter—that a sense of rejuvenation happened. As I explored the stories I was telling myself about every facet of my life; as I considered my habits of thought, emotion, and being; as I reconsidered my assumptions; as I focused more consistently on acceptance, gratitude, and forgiveness; as I placed myself and my life in a larger context; as I became more “mindful,” as Thich Nhat Hahn—a Buddhist teacher and author—says, I found a new life in the old spaces I inhabited. Contemplative/mindfulness practices reorganized my orientation toward my internal landscape, and maybe, over the long haul, the internal landscape itself. And ultimately, as I will attempt to show, it is internal spaces that are manifested in external ones. As my thinking became reoriented about intrapersonal matters, my orientation toward external matters—including my classroom—changed as well. New paths and new possibilities opened up.

I began to realize my professional training and experience were geared toward the interpersonal, toward achieving mastery of external circumstances and in creating solid classroom environments. While technique/methodology/pedagogy/praxis is critical to being a successful teacher, it was not enough for me. I had become a good and well-informed craftsman. I knew how to be reflexive about my teaching practice, and I had training and support in that. But in order to continue to thrive in complex and demanding

environments, where teachers are often undervalued and mistrusted; where students present ever more complicated sets of circumstances; where local, state, and national politics consistently enter the classroom; where school personnel are asked to take an increasing role in delivering social services; at a point in career when the freshness had worn away and I had to begin to dance with a profession as a long-term and intimate partner, I had to learn to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching in larger, more efficacious ways. I had to learn to wear my thoughts and feelings like a loose garment, one that provided space for movement and flexibility. Contemplative/mindfulness practice became the vehicle for that work, and consequently for my transformation.

I don't want to be misinterpreted. I am not condemning my training or experience. It is hard to imagine—though not impossible to imagine—how to include contemplative/mindfulness practice into pre-service or early-service teacher training, when the main questions are things like: what am I going to do this coming Monday, how do I handle this particular student, or how do I control that unruly class? Contemplative/mindfulness practice requires a certain level of readiness. However, readiness seems to be more a matter of stage than age. There are many people who come to contemplative/mindfulness practices very young. And the skills that one learns through contemplative/mindfulness practice may be developed across the course of a lifetime.

STARTING POINT FOR THE ARGUMENT:

THE PRECIPITATING CONCERNS OF THE DISSERTATION

As Toulmin points out, every argument must have a beginning, a reason for being, a precipitating cause or event; and the grounds for this argument are both personal and professional. The idea for this project connecting contemplative/mindfulness practice, the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, and a teacher's ability to thrive in the classroom came at an interesting juncture in my life. I had been teaching for over twenty years, I had been pursuing various forms of contemplative/mindfulness practice for roughly fifteen years, and I was coming to the end of my doctoral studies, a personal goal from which I had been side-tracked earlier in my career.

From this vantage point, I saw my work, my relationships, my hobbies, my play—my whole life, really—as continuous invitations to intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth. And though I had been engaged in different forms of contemplative/mindfulness practice, it was Zen that eventually drove home the point that my whole life was an invitation to contemplative/mindfulness practice. The reality is: everyone engages in habits of thought and habits of feeling. Daniel Siegel, a brain researcher at UCLA whose work I will be discussing later, contends the brain does not randomly respond to the world. It sees, selects information it thinks is important, fits the information into preexisting frameworks, and then it responds. And it has patterned responses to the patterns it sees. Siegel does not necessarily see this as a negative. “If every moment of our lives we approached experience as if it were a baby's first step,” he says, “we would never learn to walk” (135).

The question is: What are the habits of thought and feeling that create and color one's experiences, and how does one navigate/negotiate/manage them? Zen and other contemplative/mindfulness traditions—as I will show—invite people to examine their patterns of thought and feeling and to see through and beyond the limits they set. Through different techniques that promote careful observation of one's thoughts and feelings, as much as possible from the point of view of a “detached observer,” contemplative/mindfulness practices enable practitioners to catalogue their intellectual and emotional pathways. And they each—in their own way—provide a framework for deciding which thoughts and feelings are most “true”—in all senses of the word—and for choosing which ones they want to follow and which ones they want to release. In Zen, as I will discuss more thoroughly in chapter two, practitioners are schooled to remove value judgments from all thoughts and emotions, whether they are perceived as positive or negative, and to place them in the largest possible context in order to gain perspective.

For me, it took time to see through the personal stories that guided and shaped my experiences, but eventually the contemplative/mindfulness practices I used were liberating and transformative, both personally and professionally. I was better able to choose internal paths that were more helpful and more productive for me. And it was around the time I became engaged in Zen as a contemplative/mindfulness practice that I recognized the confluence of events that was occurring. My studies in rhetoric, composition, and the teaching of English (RCTE) were in full swing. My career in education had matured, and I was being asked to take on additional responsibilities, including mentoring new teachers. And my contemplative/mindfulness practice had

become anchored to solid foundations. All of these became points of convergence. Each informed the other.

However, it was my work as a department chair—in ways I will explain shortly—that brought me back to a question, which plagued me when I was a younger teacher, which has continued to be of interest to me throughout my career, and which acted as the starting point/the precipitating concern for this dissertation: How do teachers remain productive and satisfied (maybe even flourish) in the classroom over the course of an entire career? This question, of course, has personal and professional implications. It is important to my own life as a teacher, and I believe it is important to most teachers on a personal level. But it resonates at the level of profession in the issues of “good” teaching, teacher burnout, and teacher turnover, specifically how to promote the first and avoid the latter. And it was my work with contemplative/mindfulness practices that led me to think that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and contemplative/mindfulness practice were areas that needed greater exploration in relation to this question and these issues.

The issues of “good teaching” and teacher burnout, then, are the first professional starting points/precipitating concerns for this argument. It would seem obvious that educators and the field of education have a compelling interest in fostering “good teaching” and limiting teacher burnout, so I will not belabor the point. While “burnout” has a narrower definition—teachers who detach themselves from their careers, who often become emotionally negative, and yet who remain in the classroom—“good teaching” may mean many things. By “good teaching,” I mean not only the ability to be effective in

the classroom—i.e. the ability to achieve verifiable student outcomes—but the ability to remain committed to, engaged with, and passionate about teaching and students.

I remember asking one of my mentors, sometime during my first few years of teaching, if she thought I would become jaded. I wanted to be a “good teacher” and I did not want to burn out. I told her I did not want to become the guy in the teachers’ lounge that had nothing but negativity to offer. Her response was that I wasn’t the type, but if I wanted to raise the odds that I wouldn’t fall into the negativity trap, then it was important to hang out with people that kept positive attitudes. This was simple and sage advice. But over the course of a career, it turned out not to be enough for me. And I am not sure general or natural disposition—which is what my mentor implied in her comment about “type”—is enough either. Our cultural rhetoric may suggest that good teachers—like good writers—are born with the proper disposition for their tasks, but it seems unlikely that this alone is enough to sustain a satisfying career or to enable a teacher to thrive in the classroom, given the increasingly complex demands of modern teaching.

And the ability to “thrive”— which may be central to both “good teaching” and teacher burnout in that one hints at the ability to thrive and the other hints at the inability to do so—is important for teachers. On a personal level, it may make their careers more satisfying, and since career is a central factor in most peoples’ lives, the importance of this cannot be underrated. However, on a professional level, a teacher’s ability to thrive may have material consequences for their students, both in terms of “good teaching” and teacher burnout. Throughout my career, I have overheard students talking about the teachers they “love,” and invariably their comments have a common theme. They “love”

teachers that are passionate about the subjects they teach. They “love” teachers who are passionate about teaching. They “love” teachers who are passionate about students. Students may respect a teacher’s knowledge, may demand it as a foundation for their respect, but they are most drawn to people who bring vitality—in all of its forms—to the classroom. And, at least in some part, this seems related to the ability to thrive, which seems connected to the ability to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. If one is unable to internally navigate/negotiate/manage—in some positive and productive way—the complex thoughts and emotions that come with a career in teaching, how can one survive the classroom, let alone thrive in it?

As a department chair, I see these same types of comments on evaluations I read. Over the years at the community college where I now teach, I have read evaluations for over a hundred different instructors, in fields ranging from the administration of justice to writing. Students rebel against instructors they perceive as incompetent; students may be blasé or indignant about instructors that appear disengaged; students respect knowledgeable instructors; but students are jazzed by competent, passionate ones. And I hear similar comments when I deal with student complaints about instructors. It is in part a product of situations that have spun out of control, but when I deal with complaints, I often witness students’ anger over teachers they perceive as incompetent or disengaged.

It may be arguable which teacher traits make a teacher competent and effective—one aspect of “good teaching”—although different ones have been proposed. Pajares suggests teacher self-efficacy is the largest determiner of teacher success. Giovannelli suggests a reflective disposition is strongly correlated with effective teaching. Thompson

suggests a host of qualities are related to teacher effectiveness, including fairness, positive attitude, preparedness, sense of humor, creativity, willingness to admit mistakes, forgiveness, respect, compassion, and high expectations. Day, Stobart, Sammons, and Kington suggest among other things that stages of personal and professional development, as well as a teacher's ability to adapt to change have a bearing on teacher success. And Kyriakides suggests that it may be doubtful whether a teacher's personal traits have any affect on student outcomes at all.

It may also be arguable to what extent a teacher's ability to thrive makes him a "good teacher," or how much a teacher's ability to thrive influences what a student learns. However, it seems relatively clear—based not only on the student evaluations I read, but on the work of Thompson (who reviews student evaluations and the types of comments that are found on the highest evaluations) and Palmer (who writes about the intrapersonal aspect of teaching), both of whom make similar observations to my own—that students equate "good teaching" with "love" and "passion," and that they find these teachers most engaging and appealing. And this seems important in several ways, but if for no other reason than a positive teacher seems to have a positive effect on student attitudes (Kyriakides 317). Again, at least in some part, the traits of "love" and "passion" would seem related to a teacher's ability to thrive in the classroom, which in turn would seem to be connected to his ability to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. The question, of course, is to what extent and in what ways, which is part of what I will try to uncover in my discussion of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching.

On the other hand, there seems to be a more direct correlation between the inability to thrive and teacher burnout. It is possible one may have a “good teacher” who is not thriving, but it is unlikely that one will have a “burned out” teacher who is thriving. This would be something of a contradiction in terms. And a “burned out” teacher can stifle the classroom. Martin Haberman, in “Teacher Burnout in Black and White,” suggests that burned out teachers use less task-oriented behaviors, offer less positive feedback, and have a negative effect on student performance. However—as I suggested in the previous paragraph—whether or not student outcomes are affected, a teacher’s demeanor in the classroom has a bearing on classroom climate and student attitudes (Kyriakides 317). And this directly shapes the students’ classroom experience. Certainly one of the more uncomfortable scenarios a student encounters—if my experience as a teacher and a student, if the evaluations I read, and if the complaints I handle are any indication—is that of the teacher who burns out and stays in the classroom, where—as Haberman suggests—he disengages from his students and does the bare minimum to get by. Anyone who has endured or witnessed this situation knows how painful it can be.

So, whether a teacher’s ability to thrive is directly related to student success, or whether it is related to a positive classroom environment, or whether it is mainly related to students’ perceptions that they are being attended to properly and adequately, the sense that thriving was related to promoting “good teaching” and avoiding teacher burnout, the sense that thriving was connected to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, and the sense that it might be positively influenced by contemplative/mindfulness practice were some of the starting points/precipitating concerns for this argument. And it was the question of

what roles the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and what roles contemplative/mindfulness practices might play in a teacher's ability to thrive that seemed intriguing.

The second professional starting point/precipitating concern for this argument is teacher retention. Beyond the affect that the teacher's ability to thrive may have on the classroom, there is also the issue of how it is related to teacher retention. Studies have consistently demonstrated that the high turnover rate of teachers is connected in a significant way to "dissatisfaction." Richard Ingersoll, of the University of Pennsylvania, in a study called *Teacher Turnover, Teacher Shortages, and the Organization of Schools*, states that "the data suggest that school staffing problems are primarily due to excess demand resulting from a 'revolving door' where large numbers of teachers depart their jobs for reasons other than retirement" (26). Ingersoll indicates there are a number of reasons—other than retirement—that teachers leave, including but not limited to: "low salaries, inadequate support from the school administration, student discipline problems, and limited faculty input into school decision-making" (5), all of which were related to higher levels of teacher dissatisfaction. And Ingersoll concludes that "the data show that the solution to staffing problems does not primarily lie in increasing an insufficient supply, but rather in decreasing excess demand. In short, this analysis suggests that recruiting more teachers will not solve staffing inadequacies if large numbers of such teachers then leave" (26).

Ingersoll's argument that teachers leave the profession because of dissatisfaction and that the solution to teacher turnover lies in retention not recruitment may indicate the importance of teachers learning to thrive in their classrooms. Initially, issues such as low

salaries, inadequate support from administrators, discipline problems, and limited input into decision-making may seem removed from both contemplative/mindfulness practice and the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. But, as I hope to show, there is an intrapersonal aspect to almost every situation in teaching, including personal reactions to situations one might label as dissatisfying, annoying, frustrating, angering, and/or intolerable. And as I have already suggested, contemplative/mindfulness practices might be effective tools for navigating/negotiating/managing such reactions, which in turn may allow teachers to find senses of satisfaction in spite of their perceptions that difficulties exist.

Sonia Nieto, an educational researcher at the University of Massachusetts observes, “it takes a great deal of dedication to walk into school every day with enthusiasm, energy, and love, often in spite of conditions that make doing so a constant struggle” (8). How do teachers stay genuinely engaged after they recognize the limits of the teaching communities in which they find themselves? How do teachers thrive so that they can experience rich, full, satisfying lives as teachers; so that they can have the optimal chance of connecting with their students; and so that they stay in teaching? These concerns about “good teaching,” teacher burnout, and retention—which I connect with personally and professionally, which might be related to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, and which might be positively affected by the use of contemplative/mindfulness practices—were the starting points/the precipitating concerns for this argument.

A final concern, which functioned as a starting point/precipitating concern for this argument, is the sense that teachers need support in all aspects of their teaching in order to thrive and to be effective in the classroom, but—as I intend to show—the intrapersonal

aspect of teaching seems to be underserved in pre-service and in-service training. Teachers, administrators, and researchers tend to look at environmental factors (i.e. school culture and/or climate) or professional factors (i.e. teaching methods and/or interactions with students) to find solutions for the issues teachers encounter and to make the classroom a vibrant place. As part of this, teachers are asked to be reflexive about their teaching practices and how these influence their students. And in some ways, this reflection does address the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, although—as I hope to show—it is only a beginning. But while working with environmental factors and professional factors are important, the intrapersonal—in the broadest sense of attaining a high degree of self-awareness (both personally and professionally), including accurate self-assessment of one’s own thoughts, feelings, strengths, limitations, motivations, and desires, and the ability to act positively on the basis of this self-awareness—needs more attention.

Throughout my teaching career, I have witnessed how my personal spaces have spilled into my professional ones. I have struggled with numerous situations—including student behavior and “poor” administrations—because I was tangled in the complex webs of my own perceptions, emotions, thoughts, and stories (many of which had more to do with my “personal” self than my “professional” self). And throughout the years, I have witnessed the same types of struggles in others, most recently in a younger colleague, who came into my office to reveal the senses of relief, freedom, and connection he found through releasing a set of unreasonable expectations, which were based on some long-held personal stories, which he had been wrestling with over the course of several years,

and which had been confining him and his students. Releasing the network of expectations, he said, transformed his experience of his classes and changed the interactions in his classroom.

I've been part of the conversation in teaching long enough to know that we do not tend to discuss the intrapersonal aspect of teaching—not in the broadest and most inclusive senses—in formal professional settings. Informally with colleagues, perhaps, as my anecdote of my younger colleague suggests. But much less often in formal situations, such as training and development. As Parker Palmer suggests, exposing the “inner life” within formal professional contexts is not considered acceptable in most academic environments and it leaves one quite vulnerable (“Heart of” sec. 6). And it is the concern that teachers need more support in exploring the intrapersonal aspect of teaching within formal professional settings that acted as another starting point/precipitating concern for this argument.

Still, discussions about the intrapersonal aspect of teaching—in the broadest and most inclusive sense of the term “intrapersonal”—are happening. At this point though, they tend to be limited to places in which mixing the topics of “spirituality” and teaching is acceptable. For example, in Palmer's organization “Courage to Teach” and Victor Kazajian's program “Education as Transformation” at Wellesley College. But discussions are happening, and Zen may provide a unique way to participate in this conversation.

Combined, concerns about fostering “good teaching,” avoiding teacher burnout, aiding teacher retention, and developing support for the intrapersonal aspect of teaching at the institutional level were the starting points/precipitating concerns for this argument.

They raised questions about the part the intrapersonal aspect of teaching played in the lives of teachers and about the ways contemplative/mindfulness practices might be used to attend to the intrapersonal needs of teachers. Although there is no way that I can address all of these concerns in a single dissertation and although my research eventually led me in slightly different directions from these concerns, they were the concerns that started this work and initially shaped its focus.

It was as I considered the personal facets of these issues in the light of my Zen practice that the idea for this argument began to form. Zen focuses on the intrapersonal. But Zen also calls its practitioners to action. And as such, Zen also focuses on how the intrapersonal shapes the interpersonal. It is a constant process of revelation of the thought-life and how the thought-life shapes the individual's interactions with the world. It was Zen that really helped me to rethink my classroom, and it was Zen that became the starting point for the answer to my question about thriving in the classroom. However, I do not want to limit my argument to Zen. Zen is merely a vehicle for discussing the role contemplative/mindfulness practices may play in the classroom, not as epistemological or pedagogical practices, but in their ability to transform teachers' intrapersonal experiences of the classroom.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:

THE BACKGROUND TO THE DISSERTATION

I will be looking at many different types of research throughout this dissertation, from historical research on Zen to modern psychological and medical research related to the efficacy of contemplative/mindfulness practices. And I will review these pieces of literature in relation to the arguments I am making in specific chapters. However, in this introductory chapter, I will look at the work that is being done currently in RCTE to suggest how this dissertation might fit into that larger body of work. To do this, I will review some of the work that is being done in RCTE related to theory, pedagogy, and student-teacher relationships. This review is meant to illustrate that complex conversations related to teaching are happening in RCTE, which call on teachers of writing to be reflexive about their practices, and that there may be some gaps in the conversation that this work may fill.

The disciplines of rhetoric and education both have longstanding traditions of asking teachers to be reflexive about theory and pedagogy. And today, we—in RCTE—are still actively engaged in conversations, which ask teachers to be reflexive about their teaching practices. Min Zhan Lu, for example, suggests that writing teachers tend to look at errors in student writing one of two ways, as a matter of language deficiency or lack of education. On a theoretical level, Lu notes that language is a “site of struggle among conflicting discourses with unequal socio-political power” (“Professing” 444). Then she calls on teachers to reflect on the assumptions they are making about their students’ language choices. Joy Ritchie discusses what she calls the “essentialist problem,” the

reduction of groups of people—in Ritchie’s case, the reduction of women —to stereotypes that limit their identity and their power. Then Ritchie calls on teachers to problematize cultural narratives so that more complex notions of identity emerge. bell hooks complicates the notion of being marginalized by claiming the margins as one of the sources of her power as a writer, which calls teachers to question their assumptions about what it means to be marginalized. Jim Corder discusses the role of nostalgia in the “basic skills” movements, which tend to disregard concerns similar to those expressed by Lu, Ritchie, and hooks. He calls on teachers to recognize that language development takes place over the course of a lifetime. And Edward M. White discusses how assessment is grounded in values and value judgments, and calls on us to question what these are as we struggle to assess our students’ writing. Patricia Bizzell, David Bartholomae, Carolyn Eriksen Hill, Bruce Horner, and Patricia Sullivan also write about the complicated intersection of language, power, and pedagogy, challenging teachers to review the assumptions that shape their teaching practices. Similarly rich conversations may also be found in RCTE in relation to other aspects of basic skills, basic writers, critical pedagogies, collaborative learning, assessment, and writing processes. In each case, teachers are called to be reflexive about their teaching practices.

The field of RCTE also includes lively discussions about methodologies and other pragmatic issues related to the teaching of writing. Again, a call to reflexivity is central in this work, even if it is only implied. For example, Peter Elbow argues for a way to simplify the scoring of portfolios, which would make them more efficient tools for assessing student writing. In this process, he also argues against the use of rubrics and for

more descriptive forms of assessment, which will not force raters to place the papers they are evaluating into preconceived categories with which they may not fully agree. Andrea Lunsford—on the twentieth anniversary of the study she did with Robert Connors—revisited the issue of student error. She discovered that error rates remained steady throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, but that technology had created some new categories of mistakes, including wrong words—i.e. “defiantly” instead of “definitely”—because students are using spellcheck. And James Moffett discusses some of the practical problems that teachers encounter when they try to update their methodologies, including resistance from administrations and parents.

In addition, there are any number of journal articles related to teaching methods and pragmatic issues. A recent issue of *Teaching English at the Two-Year College (TETYC)* discussed how to use three-dimensional models to help highly visual/spatial kinesthetic learners map out the structures of their essays. A recent issue of *College Composition and Communication (CCC)* discussed the role of hospitality in composition courses and explored specific aspects of creating inviting environments in writing classrooms. A recent issue of *English Education* discussed how teachers can use theater and drama to teach writing. And a recent issue of *Research in the Teaching of English (RTE)* discussed writing workshops and ways to include voices that might be considered disruptive.

As one would expect, there is extensive writing in our field dedicated to students and to various aspects of the student-teacher relationship, all of which call on teachers to be reflexive. Jim Corder spends some amount of his writing considering the relationship

he has with his students, how his assignments work for them, how he might better invite his students into his classroom and into their own writing, and how he hoped they would find their own authority. Peter Elbow expresses his faith in his students and his faith in the power of their authentic voices. From instruction to assessment, Elbow writes about ways to engage students with writing and about ways to make writing a conversation. Mike Rose, Donald Murray, Mina Shaughnessy, and Susan McCleod also include various levels of discussion about relationships with students. And Lad Tobin wrote a very interesting book about how the student-teacher relationship complicates the process of assessment.

As this brief literature review is meant to show, critical reflection is a standard practice in RCTE. Most teachers of writing are asked to be reflexive regarding theory, pedagogy, and student-teacher relationships. However, the intrapersonal aspect of teaching—teachers navigating/negotiating/managing personal thoughts and feelings, including habitual thoughts, emotions, and/or ways of being—remains less explored and articulated.

When I say this, I do not mean to minimize the work that is going on, especially in regards to pre-service teacher training, where students are often asked to explore their beliefs about themselves and teaching. And there is certainly a movement within the field of education to consider the intrapersonal. Victor Kazajian and James Moffett are both interested in the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, specifically in relation to pedagogy. Kazajian, who is president of Education as Transformation at Wellesley College and who co-edits the journal *Education as Transformation* and the book series *Studies in*

Education and Spirituality notes that he is interested in the role of spirituality in educational institutions, particularly its relationship to teaching and learning pedagogy. And Moffett, as I mentioned earlier, also became interested in how to “spiritualize education.” In *Harmonic Learning*, he states, in regards to revising education so that it becomes more effective, that:

The real solution...is to develop the individual even further, to continue the evolution of freedom inward until mental liberation matches political liberation.... Education can be spiritual without manipulating minds, without teaching Spirituality 101 replete with textbooks, lectures, and mid-terms.... The first step toward spiritual education is to put students in a stance of responsible decision-making and in an unprogrammed interaction with other people and the environment. (28-29)

Moffett’s concern with what I am calling the intrapersonal is evident. He is advocating that students should look “inward” and that educational systems should support students to be in charge of their own decisions and to explore their lives.

However, as I said earlier, while I find the pedagogical implications of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching interesting, I am not interested in creating a pedagogy based on or in contemplative/mindfulness practice. I am interested in exploring how contemplative/mindfulness practices might change a teacher’s habits of thought, emotion, and/or being, and how this change might transform the classroom, not through the intentional use of pedagogies related to contemplative/mindfulness practice, but because a teacher’s patterns of thought, emotion, and/or being have been transformed.

As I already mentioned, Parker Palmer's work has been instrumental in this area. Palmer articulates the importance of the teacher's "inner life." He is concerned with the "self" and how it inevitably enters into the classroom. Palmer states that the teacher teaches about his "self" as much as he teaches his subject. And he contends that the "self" of the teacher is more important than any techniques the teacher masters because it is from the foundation of "self" that the teacher truly does his work. Palmer encourages teachers to live examined lives, because students must constantly live in the shadow of the teacher's "self." And he rails against teachers and systems that thwart self-exploration because of the ramifications such mindlessness may have for the classroom.

However, Palmer's work seems to operate more on the margins of disciplinary conversations than in the middle of them. There are several possible reasons for this. First, as Palmer notes, he is part of "an academic culture that distrusts and devalues inner reality" and that disregards or minimizes the experience of the individual ("Heart of" sec. 4). And this is the focus of his work. Second, embodying his message about the centrality of personal experience and trusting it, Palmer tends to speak from "the heart" and from his individual experience. And third, his language is often very "spiritual/religious" in nature. Still, when he speaks of the need to move beyond discussions of technique to discussions of the intrapersonal, he mirrors many of my concerns. Palmer writes:

We [in education] are obsessed with manipulating externals because we believe that they will give us some power over reality and win us some freedom from its constraints... [but] technique is what teachers use until the real teacher arrives, and we need to find as many ways as possible to

help that teacher show up.... My concern for the "inner landscape" of teaching may seem indulgent, even irrelevant, at a time when many teachers are struggling simply to survive. Wouldn't it be more practical, I am sometimes asked, to offer tips, tricks, and techniques for staying alive in the classroom, things that ordinary teachers can use in everyday life? I have worked with countless teachers, and many of them have confirmed my own experience: as important as methods may be, the most practical thing we can achieve in any kind of work is insight into what is happening inside us as we do it. ("Heart of" sec. 4)

Palmer clearly sees the intrapersonal aspect of teaching as central to what transpires in the classroom. He places its importance above technique (i.e. methodology/pedagogy/praxis) in terms of performance in the classroom. Palmer also echoes my concern that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching might sound irrelevant or insignificant next to issues of pedagogy and praxis.

Kazajian and Moffett address the intrapersonal aspect of learning in relation to pedagogy and students. Palmer addresses the intrapersonal aspect of teaching in relation to teachers—my central concern—and he does so directly in his work. However, there is another category of research exploring the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. These bodies of research tend to indirectly focus on the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. Such research deals with intrapersonal aspects of teaching—such as the effect of a teacher's feelings on his performance—without overtly focusing on the intrapersonal. I want to use research on

teacher anxiety and teacher stress—which might be seen as an intrapersonal matter with interpersonal ramifications—as a means of illustrating what I am trying to say.

Research on teacher stress and the classroom is quite abundant. There is significant work pertaining to the factors in the environment that cause stress and to the various impacts of it. And the research seems to indicate that the feeling of stress may be positive and/or negative. To a certain extent the feeling of stress seems to function as a positive factor, which boosts teacher performance (Koran 1981). Some studies indicate teacher stress may have both positive and negative effects on the teacher's performance in the classroom (Swick 1980; Chong 2005). And still others indicate that at some point the feeling of stress becomes overwhelming and begins to have a negative effect on the classroom (Blix et al. 1994; Fish and Fraser 2001). However, very little of the research frames stress as an intrapersonal issue or discusses it as an intrapersonal aspect of teaching. The tendency in the research on stress is to focus on the external manifestations or causes—a tendency Palmer suggests is common in academic discourse—and the intrapersonal aspect of stress, how teachers internally navigate/negotiate/manage the feeling of stress, which might make a difference in terms of whether stress becomes positive or negative, is less explored.

For instance, in the article “Teacher Burnout in Black and White,” Martin Haberman, a professor and an educational researcher, discusses the negative effect of teacher stress—which he suggests is a main cause of teacher burnout—this way:

(Burned out teachers) go through the motions of teaching with no emotional commitment to the task and no sense of efficacy. They have

come to believe that what they can do will make no significant difference in the lives of their students and see no reason to continue caring or expending any serious effort.... They have become detached job-holders who feel neither responsible nor accountable for students' behavior, learning, or anything else. Their only goal is to do the minimum required to remain employed (Haberman 1995).... It has long been established that burnouts who remain use significantly less task oriented behavior (i.e. less hands-on, active learning), and provide fewer positive reinforcements to their students (Koon 1971). They also have negative effects on student performance (Young 1976). The research supports the contention that stress affects teachers' effectiveness with students (Blasé 1982). When teachers feel good about their work student achievement rises. (Black 2001)

In essence, Haberman seems to indicate the dry or barren intrapersonal landscape of the burned out teacher becomes the dry or barren interpersonal landscape of the classroom. And vice versa, citing Black's research, he seems to indicate that positive intrapersonal spaces yield positive interpersonal ones. Yet Haberman's research, like most of the other research in education, does not examine how learning to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of stress might shape the interpersonal space of the classroom. Rather, its focus remains investigating the environmental factors that cause stress and the material consequences of it.

The point I am trying to make is this: research is going on in the field of education that looks in the direction of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. Kazajian and Moffet look at it, but from the angle of students and pedagogy. Palmer looks directly at it, but because of his rhetoric, his efforts seem to lie on the margins of disciplinary conversations. And there is research that looks indirectly at it, though much of this research tends to focus on the external, particularly causes and/or effects. In this argument, I will be trying to suggest that if we leave the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and how teachers navigate/negotiate/manage that internal terrain unexplored, under-explored, or explored on the margins of disciplinary conversations, it may mean that we are missing an important aspect of what shapes our classrooms. And as a consequence, we may be missing valuable opportunities to transform our classrooms, specifically through the use of secular contemplative/mindfulness practices, which might support teachers as they navigate/ negotiate/manage their “inner lives.”

There is another category of research I need to mention, and that is related to contemplative/mindfulness practices themselves. Outside the discipline of education, in the fields of medicine and psychology particularly, there is much work going on in relation to contemplative/mindfulness practice. Although I will detail this research later, I want to briefly look at some of it now in order to establish that the focus of this dissertation has a foundation in current research. In *The Mindful Brain*, Daniel Siegel, head of UCLA’s Mindful Awareness Research Center—whose research looks closely at the intersection of the intrapersonal, the interpersonal, and contemplative/mindfulness practice (i.e. how one’s internal processes become manifested in behaviors and how

mindfulness practices transform both the internal processes and the behaviors)—details different types of research related to contemplative/mindfulness practice that have been done in the fields of medicine and psychology. He notes that:

Mindfulness has influenced a wide range of approaches to psychotherapy with new research revealing significant improvements in various disorders with reduction in symptoms and relapse (Hayes, Follette, & Linehan, 2004; Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999; Linehan, 1993; Marlatt & Gordon, 1985; Parks, Anderson, & Marlatt, 2001)... Mindfulness can also prevent relapse in cases of chronic depression via cognitive therapy (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale 2002)... Similarly, mindfulness has been used as an essential part of the treatment borderline personality disorder in dialogical behavior therapy (DBT, Linehan, 1993)... The principles of mindfulness are also inherent in the application of contemporary behavior analysis in acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT, Hayes, 2004). (6-25)

I took these snippets from *The Mindful Brain* to illustrate the number of ways that contemplative/mindfulness practices are being explored within the medical and psychological communities and to observe that researchers have noted the efficacy of contemplative/mindfulness practices in a variety of situations with a variety of clients, which suggests that one of the central notions of this argument—that contemplative/mindfulness practices may be able to transform teachers' interactions in the classroom—seems to be a reasonable possibility.

There is also research within the field of education that is looking at either directly or indirectly at contemplative/mindfulness practices. Ellen Langer takes a basic assumption of contemplative/mindfulness practice and applies it to what she calls “mindful learning.” Langer looks at ways to have students pay close attention to whatever they are being asked to learn—i.e. to be “mindful”—in order to see the subjects they are studying in new ways and in order to avoid operating from mindsets that unnecessarily limit their perceptions of these subjects. Langer is concerned that much learning is done “mindlessly” because students are not truly asked to engage with what they are being asked to learn. The processes through which students are taught, she claims, become repetitive, so that the student—like a driver who has taken the same road a thousand times—goes onto autopilot and is not really present to the task at hand. Or, Langer claims, students are asked to accept information, without considering how it might be perceived from different points of view, which creates a state of mindlessness because students are not really thinking about the information, but accepting it at face value. Langer seeks ways to keep students actively involved in their learning so that they are mindfully engaged in the moment of learning. So, Ellen Langer uses some basic concepts from contemplative/ mindfulness practice as the root of her work, even though her pedagogical approach does not rely on contemplative/mindfulness practice. And, of course, the language that she uses to frame her pedagogy—“mindful learning”—clearly has a connection to contemplative/mindfulness practice.

Robert Tremmel is also interested in how contemplative/mindfulness practices may be used in education. In *Zen and the Practice of Teaching English* discusses how his

contemplative/mindfulness practice shapes his interactions with the pre-service teachers in his English Education program. He discusses the ways in which his own contemplative/ mindfulness practice has enabled him to interact differently with the pre-service teachers he oversees and how this seems to have benefited his students. He also considers the practice of teaching from the point of view of his Zen practice, offering anecdotes and advice from that point of view. However, there is significantly less research related to contemplative/mindfulness practice coming out of education than there is coming out of medicine or psychology.

This literature review was meant to establish that the field of RCTE has much writing related to reflexivity, including work that asks teachers to be reflexive about their theory, pedagogy, and student-teacher relationships. It was also meant to establish that there is a body of research regarding the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and that this body of research seems to fall into three main categories: work that connects the intrapersonal aspect of teaching with pedagogy; work that looks directly at the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and its impact on teachers; and work that indirectly looks at the intra-personal aspect of teaching and its impact on teachers. Finally, this review of the literature was meant to show that there is a body of research related to contemplative/mindfulness practices, their efficacy, and their uses in the classroom.

This dissertation will fit into this larger body of work in several ways: It will work within the RCTE tradition of reflexive practice (asking teachers to be reflexive in a different way about their practices); it will directly consider the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and how it is related to teacher effectiveness (exploring how various facets of

feeling, beliefs, and identity shape a teacher's interaction in the classroom); and it will consider how contemplative/mindfulness practices might affect the navigation/negotiation/management of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. The project's use of Zen as a metaphor stems from two factors I already mentioned: Zen provides a unique way to explore education and the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, and my growing practice in Zen along with my studies in RCTE seems to position me in an interesting place to do this exploration.

LAYOUT OF THE ARGUMENT:

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation will be organized around a specific koan: “The world is medicine. What type of medicine are you?” This koan provides a good platform for discussing koans (what they are and how they are used), different Zen koan traditions, and contemplative/mindfulness practice. It is also a good platform for discussing the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. I am drawn to the idea of this koan because its accessibility makes it a good bridge from the more comfortable conversation about theory and pedagogy to the space that I really want to investigate: how helping teachers to work with the internal experiences of teaching might transform what happens in the classroom.

One of the more interesting—and oddly, fun—aspects of this project has been trying to honor the two disparate traditions it connects: the highly structured academic tradition of the dissertation and the more freewheeling metaphorical tradition of Zen. In my attempt to knit these two radically different traditions together, I have adopted a rather traditional meta-structure for my dissertation. In honor of the Zen tradition, which is very narrative driven, I begin each section with a “dharma talk.” And based on that foundation, I move to the discussion of the chapter. Also in honor of Zen, I combine my experience with research to develop, illustrate, and support my conclusions.

Two qualifications: There are many types of contemplative/mindfulness practices that can yield the same type of introspection to which Zen invites its students. Ultimately, I am asking the reader to consider how deeply self-reflective practices—not just Zen—may become part of teaching praxis. And second, my understanding of Zen is still

growing. I am not expert. For this dissertation, my work in rhetoric is as much a lens into Zen as Zen is a lens for my claims about educational practice. As I said earlier, each piece of my experience—my study rhetoric, my practice of Zen, my other contemplative/mindfulness practices, and my years in the classroom—informs the other. Zen seemed the best and most interesting platform for the discussion I wanted to have.

Next, a disclaimer: There are many traditions within Zen, each of which has its own philosophical slant on what Zen is and what Zen means. “Zen” does not literally say anything. The various communities within Zen do. I use constructions like “Zen says, Zen suggests, and Zen implies” because they are the most expeditious and least cumbersome way to negotiate what would otherwise become a linguistic quagmire. I try to make my statements about Zen broad enough that they will be acceptable across the various intellectual traditions within Zen. However, there may be times when my particular understanding of Zen runs counter to or is not developed enough for a specific community.

Finally, my sense is that life can take care of much of what I am talking about in this dissertation. It certainly has a way of stripping away, or at the very least challenging, our stories, concepts, ideas, and habits of thought, feeling, and/or being, whether or not those challenges result in any awakening or transformation. What I am advocating is an attempt to enter into a conscious process, one that is acknowledged by and supported by the teaching profession; or if you prefer the metaphor that has guided this chapter, this dissertation is an invitation to make the process of contemplative/mindfulness practice part of the ongoing development of teachers.

The organization of the dissertation is as follows: Chapter two serves two purposes. First, it offers a foundation for the rest of the dissertation by providing an analysis of Zen, koans, koan practice, and the specific koan I am using as my lens for the dissertation. Second, it illustrates that Zen and other contemplative/mindfulness practices step outside many discursive/rational/analytical/systematic/linear forms of logic that dominate academic thinking, that shape academic discourse, and that influence educational programs. In stepping outside the dominant modes of thinking, Zen may offer ways to re-envision how we educate educators.

Chapter three shows that there are many types of “medicine” that may be effective in teaching. However, it specifically focuses on the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, arguing that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant to what happens in the classroom, and that as much as good teaching depends on theory and pedagogy, good teaching depends on the intrapersonal awareness and skill of the teacher. And it argues training related to the intrapersonal is underserved in teacher training and development.

Chapter four argues that contemplative/mindfulness practices are powerful “medicines” for addressing the intrapersonal. It looks at current research in medicine and psychology to illustrate that contemplative/mindfulness practices are showing efficacy with many different types of populations in many different contexts. And I suggest this offers hope that these same skills may have a positive effect on teachers and the classroom. However, I also suggest that the research related to contemplative/mindfulness practice and teachers is too limited to make a strong research-

based case for their efficacy, and in my conclusion, I call for more research on contemplative/mindfulness practices within the field of education.

CHAPTER 2: THE WORLD IS MEDICINE. WHAT TYPE OF MEDICINE ARE YOU?

INTRODUCTION

As I stated at the beginning of the first chapter, in this argument, I will be making four related claims: First, intrapersonal knowledge and skill are important aspects of teaching that may be supported and developed through the use of contemplative/mindfulness practices. Second, as a teacher develops her intrapersonal knowledge and skill, this has the potential to transform the teacher's experience of the classroom and the interactions she has with her students. Third, the intrapersonal aspect of teaching—both the development of intrapersonal knowledge and the management of intrapersonal skills—remains underdeveloped in teacher training and development. And fourth, because much of the research I use to suggest the efficacy of contemplative/mindfulness practices comes from medicine and psychology, more research is needed within the field of education to examine the connections that may exist between a teacher's use of contemplative/mindfulness practice and a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

This chapter is meant to serve three purposes. First, it is meant to offer a foundation for the rest of the dissertation by providing an analysis of Zen, koans, koan practice, and the specific koan I am using as my lens for the dissertation. Second, it is meant to illustrate that Zen and other contemplative/mindfulness practices step outside many of the forms of logic that dominate thinking in education, that shape discourse in academia, and that influence educational programs. And that in stepping outside the

dominant modes of thinking may offer ways to re-envision the classroom and how educators are educated. And third, because postmodernism is the lens through which many readers will attempt to understand Zen, it is meant to discuss the ways in which Zen and postmodernism converge and diverge, in order to troubleshoot some of the concerns that may arise from using Zen and Zen koans as the metaphor in an academic argument.

The chapter begins with my personal encounter with the koan, a sort of “dharma talk,” which is based on my experience and written from that perspective. It is meant to invite the reader into the work of the chapter. Next, I engage in a rhetorical analysis of the koan. From this, I move to an analysis of Zen epistemology. And finally, I discuss Zen and postmodernism.

Even though I will spend time discussing this in the rhetorical analysis, it is important to note up front that the term “medicine,” as it is used in the koan, does not necessarily imply that there is sickness or disease in the world that needs to be cured. Rather, “medicine” as it is used in the koan implies “power,” that the world has vast and varied kinds of power in it, some of which may heal what is sick or broken, some of which keep the already healthy in good shape, and some of which take the healthy and make it even stronger. It is natural for Western readers, given the cultural discourse about medicine, to assume that some sort of sickness is being implied by the term “medicine.” But, as I will discuss in the rhetorical analysis section, the term “medicine”—in the context of the koan—has larger implications.

It is also important to note that postmodern concepts—such as deconstruction—will arise in the rhetorical analysis of the koan and the analysis of Zen epistemology. However, I will not develop the discussion of the intersections between Zen and postmodernism until the final section of this chapter. Related to this, Zen’s concept of an “absolute reality” will be very present as I discuss Zen and the koan. This notion may be problematic for many postmodern readers, and it too will be discussed in the section on Zen and postmodernism. In the sections about the koan and Zen epistemology, I am not trying to affirm Zen’s assumptions about an absolute reality. Rather, I am trying to articulate them.

“DHARMA TALK”:

ENCOUNTER WITH THE KOAN

My first experience with Zen came through my wife. She had been practicing for several years and invited me to a daylong meditation at a sangha—a Zen meditation group/community—in Phoenix. I wasn’t completely new to meditation. I’d been using different prayer and meditation techniques for years, but I cannot honestly claim that I had been practicing anything regularly or formally. I memorized the Prayer of St. Francis and Reinhold Neihbur’s Serenity Prayer. I learned a little bit about contemplative prayer from an old Jesuit who spoke at a retreat. I liked Meister Eckhart’s idea that the only prayer I ever really needed to utter was thank you, which was—my Native American Indian students assured me—the essence of the prayers in their traditions. I had a church and other spiritually-based communities to which I belonged. However, my meditation was basically sitting still and trying to keep my mind still too. I knew I was supposed to let the ideas float through, like clouds, and to be gentle with myself. I had been told that my mind was going to drift, and that I should relax and return it to the present when it did. But my meditation mostly amounted to the semi-regular use of what I picked up here and there, through people and books.

The ride north to Phoenix from Tucson is one of the least pretty in Arizona. Picacho Peak, which is shaped like a saddle, catches the eye. But there is little else. On the other hand, to the east of Tucson, the Rincons fade into the distance before the Chiricahuas rise and the vast open expanse of desert makes you want to take deep full breaths. And when you leave Tucson to the west, you witness the saguaros thin and

watch clusters of mountains swell from the desert floor. But traveling Tucson to Phoenix on I-10, you move from one metropolitan area to another, through scrub, litter, and ever-increasing acres of tract housing.

The Desert Lotus Sangha, which sponsored the day-long meditation, was housed in a room in a small school that belongs to a Unitarian Universalist congregation. The room appeared to be a staff lounge of sorts. It had a kitchen area with a sink, a stove, and a full-sized refrigerator. There were floor-to-ceiling cabinets against one wall, some of which were dedicated to the sangha, which was also affiliated with the UU congregation. An enormous abstract painting—done by one of the sangha’s members, who is an artist and teacher—decorated the wall directly above a small altar area that was at the epicenter of a several semi-circular rows of cushions and chairs. The rows—cushions first and then chairs—rippled outward, as if a stone has been dropped right in front of the altar. The Zen master’s seat was to the side of the epicenter.

The day was arranged simply. In the morning, the Zen master gave a brief dharma talk. Then the day was divided into roughly equal periods of meditation and discussion. After each period of meditation, the Zen master asked the members of the group to reflect on what they observed during their meditations. He spoke to different issues that arose. He also talked about meditation, about koans, and about how koans work. And he spoke about koans without specifically defining them, allowing our understanding of them to emerge through the questions people asked. He reminded the members and the attendees of the sangha that koans were not intellectual exercises. We needed, he told us, to sit with the koan and to allow it to unfold. If we sat with the koan long enough, he said, it—or our

understandings of it—would transform. It would open up. It would become larger. We would open up. We would become larger.

Koans, I would learn, hold an interesting place of the practice of Zen. They are often at the center of the practice of zazen (Zen sitting meditation), but they are perceived as vehicles, which function as a means to an end: “enlightenment,” which is conceived of as an ongoing experience of deep understanding that allows clarity of perception. Koans are seen ways to break through limiting notions of “self” and “world”—and eventually to release notions of “self” and “world”—so that the experience of enlightenment, of deep, possibly perception-altering understanding, may occur. And though many practitioners of Zen may work with koans over the course of a lifetime, since koans are viewed as tools, practitioners of Zen may discard them when they have served their purpose. As one Zen story suggests, it wouldn’t make much sense to pick up your boat and carry it once you have reached the other side of the river. What I also discovered is that koans also offer a window through which to view some of the assumptions Zen makes about epistemology, about knowledge and knowing and how people come to know. And these assumptions intersect at some fascinating angles with many assumptions we—who operate in Western rhetorical traditions and in Western educational traditions—make about learning.

Philip Kapleau, Roshi (the term for Zen master and the proper way to address him/her is the equivalent of calling someone who has earned a PhD “doctor”) says koans might be considered “a special type of Zen problem” (8). They are linguistic puzzles and linguistic paradoxes. They are apparently nonsensical stories, questions, or phrases, and their purpose is “to exhaust the discursive intellect” (8). “By wheedling the intellect into

attempting solutions impossible for it,” Kapleau tells us, “koans reveal to us the inherent limitations of the logical mind as an instrument... [and] in the process they liberate the mind from the snare of language... pry us loose from our tightly held dogmas and prejudices, strip us of our penchant for discriminating good from bad, and empty us of the false notion of self-and-other” (70). They are designed to foil, to defy, to uproot, and to transcend traditional, sequential, linear, discursive, rational, analytical, and/or systematic logics.

Koans may be a word, a statement, or a question, or they may be entire stories. One of the most famous—perhaps infamous—and foundational koans is one simple word: Mu (No). Mu/No has been described as the fire that burns everything up, and it is often the first koan that a person receives when beginning a Zen practice. It also comes from a story about a Zen student who asks his master whether a dog has Buddha-nature. The Zen master hollers a resounding “No!” at the student, by which the master is said to have meant not that the dog didn’t have Buddha-nature, but that the very question was absurd because it was locked in dualistic thinking. One might focus on the word or the entire story during meditation. “Everything is welcome here” or “vast emptiness, nothing sacred” are examples of koan statements. And “what is the sound of one hand?” is a well-known Zen question, which doesn’t—in spite of common lore—usually include the word “clapping.”

Beyond confounding discursive/rational/analytical/systematic/linear forms of logic, koans are also designed to give a direct experience. Joan Sutherland, Roshi discusses koans as analogous to art in this aspect of their being and of their use. Like

powerful paintings, she says, koans are not merely opportunities to discuss interconnectedness or liberation or peace or spaciousness. They are opportunities to directly experience these things. For instance, she says, Vermeer’s paintings—which were created in a time when Europe was trying to knit itself back together after thirty years of war—are an invitation to feel peace. They do not simply say, “Look at this peaceful moment.” They say, “That feeling you are experiencing right now, this is peace” (“Koans and Peace”). Sutherland details how the koan tradition—which began 1300 years ago in one of China’s most chaotic periods of history—offers the same invitation. By turning discursive/rational/analytical/systematic/linear types of logic on their heads, by thwarting purely intellectual responses and solutions, koans offer the possibility of direct experience. They guide the practitioner of Zen—sometimes shove the practitioner—through the limitations of discursive/rational/analytical/systematic/linear logics, through the bondage of habitual thought and feelings, and through the boundaries of personal and cultural narratives into a deeper more direct experience/understanding of the self and of the world. Working with koans exposes discursive/rational/analytical/systematic/linear logics, as well as personal and cultural narratives, for what they are: quasi-logical and partial.

John Tarrant, Roshi, who is also a teacher in the koan tradition, describes koans as “a poetic technology” (46). “Koans,” he says:

are true to life because they rely on uncertainty, surprise, and the imagination. They depend on the inconceivable, which is the largest part of life. At the same time, if koans leap, they take off from a specific place;

they depend on the everyday world of the kitchen and the garden and on precise language. In this way they are like art; they encourage you to move beyond your self-imposed limits.... [However] in the koan universe a creative leap isn't "one, two, three, four, six"; it is more like "one, two, three, four, rhinoceros." (47-48)

In workshops and sesshins (meditation retreats), Tarrant literally says the last line with a smile—I have seen him—because he appreciates the humor and the frustration that is attendant in breaking through discursive/rational/analytical/systematic/linear logics and narrative cycles. Tarrant—like Kapleau and Sutherland—consistently speaks about the limitations of discursive logic and the limitations of language, and he does so in terms that will feel familiar to anyone who has studied any post-modernist theories. He notes that koans break the constant string of conversations that define how people see and experience the world. And he notes that koans do this by employing a metaphorical or symbolic logic.

John Daido Loori, abbot of the Zen Mountain Monastery and a lineage holder (master) in the Soto and Rinzai schools of Zen, phrases the koan's ability to break through the grip of language, culture, and conceptual—especially habituated—thinking this way:

The common view of koans...describes them as riddles or paradoxes, but the fact is there are no paradoxes. Paradox exists only in language, in the words and ideas that describe reality. In reality there are no paradoxes. In order to see into a koan we must go beyond the words and ideas that

describe reality and directly and intimately experience reality itself. The answer to a koan is not a fixed piece of information. It is one's own intimate and direct experience of the universe and its infinite facets. It is a state of consciousness. (Sitting 1)

Loori also points out the limitation of what I am trying to do in describing koans and koan practice. In discussing his own written work, he says, "Because of the nature of Zen training and its emphasis on direct experience, a book about [or in my case, a dissertation involving a discussion of] koan practice is, in a way, a contradiction in terms. Whole volumes on koans could not adequately explain how they work or what they're about" (Sitting 5-6). But even though words are second best—as Joseph Campbell notes—words are necessary, especially if one is going to complete a dissertation or write a book. And Loori admits this too (Sitting 6). For all their limitations, words are the vehicles we have to communicate. And because koans are unfamiliar—except in the most passing way—to most people, a general description of them and their function is needed in order to understand this project.

A final voice I'd like to offer on the nature of koans comes from the late 14th century in China. Chung-fen Ming-pen was a dharma successor (master) in the line of Gaofeng Yuanmaio. And I end with Chung-fen Ming-pen because his language describing koans seems most appropriate and fitting to a description of the koan tradition. He states, "The koan is a torch of wisdom that lights up the darkness of feeling and discrimination, a golden scraper that cuts away the film clouding the eye, a sharp ax that severs the root of birth-and-death, a divine mirror that reflects the original face of both

the sacred and the secular” (Sitting 15). The metaphorical language he uses captures many facets of koans and the experience of working with them. And it may shed light on Looi’s comment that koans are not a “fixed piece of information.” Koans and koan practice are not about discovering discreet facts and/or parcels of information, such as one might expect from reading a book or attending a lecture. They are not, in that sense, intellectual pursuits. They are vehicles to a multi-faceted experience of a multi-faceted universe. And all of this hints at how Zen conceives of knowledge and knowing.

The koan that day at the Phoenix sangha was: “The world is medicine. What type of medicine are you?”

I chose to begin my work with this koan not only because it was my starting point with Zen, but because this koan seems to offer an easy point of access to koans and the koan tradition. It does not require the “one, two, three, four, rhinoceros” leap that Tarrant describes. And I’m sure he would find that amusing too. Recognizing, playing with, and dismissing both irony and paradox hold a large place in Zen.

Over the next few months, I attempted to follow the Zen master’s instructions. I sat with the koan. I reflected on it. I came back to it when my mind wandered. I thought about it on my way to work. I thought about it when I dealt with my wife, my children, and my students. You could say that it grew, or opened up, or unfolded. But I came to think of it as a geode. The more angles I observed it from, the more rich and complex it appeared.

The first part—“the world is medicine”—eventually became a comfort and an assurance. But it—and I—didn’t begin there. I began with resistance, with what I believe

was a healthy skepticism, a reasonable uncertainty. I was willing to attempt the process the Zen master suggested. As a writer and a teacher of writing, I know how my understanding transforms in the process of writing, in the process of being with, playing with, and working with an idea over the course of time. I am not only comfortable with this process, which leaves me with piles of edited drafts and hours of conversation and more than a few 3:00 AM brainstorms, I am comforted by it. I trust it. I depend on it. I use it as a metaphor for understanding other parts of my life. And I used it as a way to connect with what I was being asked to do with the koan. But I wasn't intimate enough with Zen or with the process of meditation to give myself to it without hesitation. Creative processes, like writing and koan study, may seem similar. They may take the writer and the meditator to similar places. But they are not identical, and neither are their destinations. So, even though I was using the former to build a bridge to the latter, I was not prepared to leap across the divide.

Still, I found the koan—like any other quiet, creative process—shifted substance while I sat with it and while I worked with it. I say “sat” and “worked” intentionally. Some shifting happened when I very consciously and very deliberately considered the koan. Other shifts seemed to happen—as with writing—when I wasn't paying attention at all. At first, I couldn't say or believe the world *is* medicine. I could accept, could say, could sit with, could work with the idea that the world was *full of* medicine. I could see that the world was *full* of things that supported and sustained us, that healed us when we were sick, that enhanced our growth when we were healthy. I considered most of my friends and family to be offering “good medicine” into the world in the ways they raise

their children, in the ways they do their jobs, in the ways they are in relationship. When I drove through Tucson, I saw churches, schools, and community centers offering their different brands of “medicine.” I saw behavioral health services, centers for holistic medicine, hospitals, and acupuncturists. I saw AA meeting rooms, parks, coffee shops, and restaurants. I saw movie theaters, live theater, and symphony hall. All around me, I saw “medicine” dripping into the world, available for those who were prepared to receive it.

But the world *is* medicine? The very fabric of *being* is healing and healthful?

I began with the desert, which is my home.

The desert is a place of extremes. And yet everywhere, life grows. With hardly a drop of water for encouragement. Everywhere, I saw mesquite and palo verde prospering. Barrel cactus, prickly pear, cholla, and saguaro—tough and tenacious—waited for the monsoons. Desert broom clung obstinately to any toehold and mistletoe engulfed trees. A Buddhist monk who visited my house several years ago remarked how lush the desert is around Tucson. And he is right. Life brings forth the remarkable, the fascinating, the clever, the astonishing, and the seemingly magical—some of it quite dangerous—regardless of circumstances: in the desert, trees that drill down hundreds of feet to find water, cactus that can store a year’s worth of reserves from one good rain, animals that exist without ever having to drink, that get all the moisture they need from the seeds they eat.

I had always experienced a sense of comfort when I considered the intricacies of nature: that there are fish at the bottom of the ocean that must manufacture their own

light, that subatomic particles seem to have properties of matter and properties of pure energy, that our universe appears to be billions of years old. I had also experienced a sense of comfort in the presence of nature. In the mountains, by the ocean, out on the plains, hiking, rock climbing, or surfing—it didn't matter where I was—I had always felt a calm, akin to the oneness Thoreau and Emerson idealized in their writings. I had long been able to accept that nature was a balm for me. And in my best moments, I could even celebrate, as Gerard Manly Hopkins did, “Glory be to God for dappled things,” that both literally and metaphorically light always danced with shadow, that there was nothing in the world without both radiance and darkness.

But it was in the desert, as I came to respect both the subtle and the excessive—from the quiet change of seasons to the scorching summer heat—that I began to feel deep down the certainty that life would endure and the awe that such a realization engenders. So, as writing provided a metaphor I could use to understand meditation, the desert offered a metaphor for understanding the first part of the koan: “the world is medicine.” Even in extreme environments that upon first glance seem barren and inhospitable, I could find lushness, richness. Even in extreme environments where life seemed to exist on a razor's edge, the world was tending to itself.

Oddly, I felt almost embarrassed by these realizations. They felt romanticized, Pollyanna, unrealistic. I thought of William Blake's question in his poem, *The Tyger*: “Did He who made the lamb make thee?” I felt like I was focusing on the light and ignoring the dark. There is a wonderful—wonder-filled—side of life, but there is the awful—not awe-filled—side as well. Where did the inequitable, the unfair, the unjust,

and the morally and ethically wrong fit into this? What about catastrophes? Nature is as brutal as it is beautiful. As are people. And sure the lamb can lie down with the tiger, but it's usually when the tiger is having a snack. I felt, as my Zen teacher says, resistant.

Mind, as Zen teachers say, arose.

This was the first time I encountered more detailed instruction in what I have come to recognize as Zen epistemology. I was advised that in the practice of zazen these types of thoughts and questions mainly amounted to noise and internal static masquerading under a costume of practical, logical, or realistic thinking. It wasn't that this type of thinking didn't have a place. Neither was it that these ideas were unimportant. Practical, logical, and realistic thinking have built bridges over vast expanses of water and the cars to drive over them. And concerns about equity and justice are at the heart of important social, cultural, and political discourse. The issue, according to my Zen teachers, was that the types of questions and the type of reasoning in which I was engaging kept me stuck in the cycle of dualistic thinking—good/bad, right/wrong—I was trying to release. They were my mind's habit, my habits of thought and feeling. I didn't so much want to have answers to these questions. Rather, my mind wanted to use them to keep its habitual conversations spinning or to keep familiar emotions flowing. When I stepped back from dualistic thinking and had a slightly different vantage point—I was told—it would be easier and more productive for me to encounter the questions my mind kept asking. But at that moment, mind—my mind—was engaging in what amounted to a relatively useless and distracting exercise. I was told to allow such thoughts to float through my consciousness, neither indulging nor denying them. Again, I felt resistant.

As someone who values intellect, I felt leaving thoughts unchallenged seemed both reckless and irresponsible. But I was informed Zen's notion of the intellect—which is central to its epistemology—is that intellect is a valuable but limited way of coming to know. By challenging one thought with another thought, I remained identified with both thoughts. I treated both thoughts as absolute realities and responded to them as such. It was suggested that it would probably be more helpful for me to examine my thoughts much as I watched a film, with the understanding that all thoughts are to some extent—sometimes to a greater degree and sometimes to a lesser degree—fictions. Even good thoughts. Some thoughts/notions/narratives/ideas/principles/philosophies were more accurate than others, but even for the most accurate there was room for development. It was helpful not to identify with thoughts, to still them so that a larger picture could be more clearly witnessed. All of my thoughts—even the good ones—were really just stories I was telling to myself, were really just opinion. And even when my opinions were well founded and well reasoned, I needed to leave space for them to grow, to change, and to transform.

The relativism at the heart of these notions was familiar to me. It was a central theme in much of my graduate education. But what I found interesting, as I continued my study of Zen, is the level of absolutism beneath Zen's relativism, and that the absolutist notions beneath Zen's relativism seemed largely unattached to beliefs in specific dogma. I knew from my graduate studies that most postmodern philosophies—I will discuss these at greater length later in the chapter—are driven by the notion that reality is constructed, relative, and uncertain. Like Zen, these philosophical traditions are firm about the notion

that reality is contingent. I also knew the notion that the known physical world is an illusory shadow could be found far back in the Western tradition. Plato, of course, argued this in his analogy of the cave. And it clearly lay beneath the Christian tradition in which I'd been raised. Like Zen, this portion of the Western tradition sees an absolute reality behind the physical reality that manifests before us. But unlike Zen, it seems less yielding about the nature of the absolute.

Though some who come from postmodern philosophical standpoints might find notions of an absolute jarring, troubling, grating, uncomfortable, dissonant, or even ridiculous, I found it refreshing that Zen held both the relative and the absolute central in its teachings, that it recognized and honored its apparently paradoxical position. I liked that Zen envisioned a knowable absolute reality, a knowable absolute truth, which supported the forms of being that we witness through our senses. I liked that Zen's notion of an absolute coexisted with its radical notion of relativism: that *all* thoughts are contingent. And I liked that you couldn't understand Zen without understanding both notions coexisted at the same time, hand in hand. In this, Zen reminded me of scientists such as Stephen Hawking who openly admit that even the hardest of sciences, physics, is an unfolding story, which can only say, "this is our best understanding of the world at this moment in time." Hawking doesn't dismiss an ultimate, knowable reality. He simply assumes what is known and what is knowable at this moment—or any moment—is limited and subject to expansion. Still, I am enough of a postmodern being to have equivocated—at times—about Zen's notion about an absolute.

Eventually, I became willing—for the time being—not to chase myself around intellectual trees, not to engage in what Peter Elbow labeled as the “Doubting Game” (*Without Teachers* 147-191), in which students are trained in an adversarial tradition to deconstruct ideas by searching for disparities in them and doubting ideas until they are offered “proof.” I was willing—as one of my teachers suggested—to try the experiment and see the result. At the same time, I was dissatisfied with Zen’s notion that my personal experience was all I needed to know. I was able to accept my own experience as the basis for my understanding of reality. However, my experience is narrow. And connections are important to me too, even if they are driven by intellect.

So, I began to look for ways to unlock “the world *is* medicine” through ideas with which I was familiar. As I thought about the first half of the koan, I realized that it was connected to two very old religious-philosophical traditions. The idea that the world *is* medicine, that the world has the power to support and sustain all of us—whether we avail ourselves of it or not—is present in the Christian concept of grace and the Eastern concept of Tao. The concept of grace suggests that God’s love is pouring continually, unremittingly into the world. It is not earned. It is. Always is. Whether we accept it or not, whether we deserve it or not, our “daily bread” is given. The concept of Tao does not assign a personal conception of God to this process. Rather, it suggests that abundance *is* the state of the universe. Life *is* flowing and giving. Again, this has nothing to do with whether we are able to see it or to receive it. We may separate ourselves from the Tao in many ways. But the Tao is. Always is. Regardless. According to these traditions, Grace

and Tao are inherent in the world. Or, in the ontological language of the koan, the world *is* medicine.

When I reached the place of connection with the koan, the koan—as the Zen master predicted—began to transform. Though “the world is medicine” is worded as a state of being, it began to feel like a promise, not that I would get what I wanted in any given circumstance, but that I would always—regardless of circumstance—have access to what I needed, even in the darkest places. I thought of Dietrich Boenhoffer and Etty Hillesum, both of whom found peace in the worst of circumstances, in Nazi concentration camps. I thought of a former student, who spent a semester writing about how being raped changed her life, and how she would not go back and alter events, even if she could. I thought of men and women I encountered who brought their best selves into and out of the most intense and seemingly unbearable situations, who taught me access to healing and to thriving were available, if I am open, if I am prepared. I contemplated times I discovered the light inside the dark, and I began to trust the certainty—perhaps the truth—of this experience, that I could not only venerate the “dappled things” in nature, but that I could hold in regard the dappled relationships I had with and in every aspect of my life, that I might even hold space for the unlovable, for the metaphorical “tygers” I faced.

In retrospect, I realize what was happening. The work I was doing with the koan was producing and shaping an intrapersonal transformation. I was moving closer to “knowing” as it is conceived of in Zen. The place of knowing was moving from head to heart, from mind to body, from an intellectual level to the level of trust. Or maybe it is

more accurate to say my knowing was expanding to include all of these. What I knew intellectually broadened and deepened to include other aspects of how I am—and how we all are—able to know. *Grace is. Tao is. Medicine is.* They all began to resonate with me. And the question “what kind of medicine are you?” became very important. I began, very consciously and very deliberately, to ask that question as I was attending to my students, and it became a powerful guide for clarifying and transforming my actions and interactions. Of course, I had asked this question in different ways throughout my teaching, but the internal shift that had taken place was that I trusted my students would get what they needed, whether it came from me or from some other source. And the sense of trust that I began to develop through working the koan became instrumental in navigating/negotiating/managing the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. I found freedom in that trust. I was responsible for bringing my “medicine” into their lives, but I didn’t have to carry the emotional weight of responsibility, which—for me—had been a particularly difficult and tricky part of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. The sense of trust that I gained through working the koan helped me to revitalize and re-envision my classroom. And it made me wonder about the connection of the intrapersonal and interpersonal, and about how the use of contemplative/mindfulness practices may affect other teachers, other classrooms, and maybe education as a whole, all of which became the questions at the foundation of this dissertation.

The world *is* medicine. What kind of medicine are you?

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS:

THE KOAN

One of the things I value about writing is that the act of it creates space. I have to slow down in order to write. I have to slow down while I write. And writing also creates space in the subject I am writing about. I must revisit what I think, what I feel, what I believe, what I trust. Writing affords me the opportunity, as Donald Murray notes, to revise the way I see things, to “craft my life” (1-8). In writing about my experience with this koan, I noticed two things that bear mentioning: the *is* at the center of this koan not only connotes a state of being, but also acts as an equal sign between two sides of an equation; and I didn’t, when I was initially coming to know the koan, spend much time thinking about the terms “medicine” and “world.” I made personal assumptions about their meanings that I took for granted until the act of writing, when more facets of the koan began to be revealed.

As I began to think of “medicine” and “world” on opposite sides of an equal sign—like the inseparable yin and yang, which are equal though not in a hard-line-down-the-middle manner, which are equal though fluid, which are equal and inclusive of each other—I realized there were a number of implications I was including and excluding from my definitions. “Medicine” is an interesting and a loaded term. It may refer to the substances doctors prescribe to help one get well, or it may refer to an entire discipline of study. It may also, with slight modification, refer to specific points of view on the body, health, and healing. For example, “Western medicine” and “holistic medicine,” which are at the

heart of an antagonistic cultural conversation, immediately come to mind as broadly held and broadly understood points of view.

In some ways, the conversation between “Western medicine” and “holistic medicine” best captures the range of possible meanings of the term “medicine” in this koan. On the one hand, “Western medicine” is oriented toward a more mechanical approach to medicine: diagnosing, fixing, and repairing broken systems. It relies on discursive/rational/analytical/systemic/linear logics in terms of understanding the nature of the human condition. And sick, broken, and in need of repair is one way the term “medicine” may be understood in this koan. On the other hand, holistic medicine tends toward the notion of maintaining health by attending to a complex balance of physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of being. And this is the other way the term “medicine” may be understood.

In our culture, the Western medical model plays a powerful part in the discourse surrounding the term “medicine.” On more than a few occasions, when I was trying to explain the focus of my work, I was asked if the term “medicine” implied sickness, if the koan implied that the world was in some way broken and in need of healing. While Zen accepts that sickness and disease—in all their forms—are part of the “suffering” that is one of the truths of this world, Zen would still claim that the world is well and whole, and that the world and its inhabitants are not, in the ontological sense, broken. But the Zen notion of “medicine” does not preclude, neglect, nor deny the darker aspects of life that may be implied by the term “medicine.” In Zen the dark is always as present as the light. For example, in a related koan—one that builds on the koan I am using in this

dissertation—a “blade of grass” is said to have the power to give life or to take it. The notion that the simplest of things, represented by the blade of grass, may be medicinal or harmful is central to Zen. And if the simplest of things may heal or harm, the implication for more complex things/people/situations is obvious. They too may heal and/or harm. So, the Zen understanding of “medicine” includes the notion of healing sickness, but healing sickness—from the Zen perspective—does not imply a permanent state of brokenness, which is common to most Western theologies. And even though healing is one aspect of the term “medicine,” it is not the sole way in which “medicine” is understood in the koan.

From the Zen perspective, the term “medicine” also implies the energy or the power that is inherent in a person, in a situation, or in the world. “Medicine” may heal a sick person or situation. Or “medicine” may make a good situation even better. It may be the positive energy that enables the movement from wholeness to thriving. The Zen notion of “medicine,” as it is reflected in this koan and in various iterations of this koan, is one of inevitability and wholeness. “There is nothing in the world that is not medicine,” a related koan states. In this koan, a powerful ontological statement is made through the use of the two negatives. “Medicine” is perceived ontologically as part of the natural state of being. It is everywhere. It is everything. But the use of the two negatives has a larger implication, makes a stronger statement. “Medicine” cannot be avoided. It cannot be evaded. It cannot be prevented. There is nothing in the world that does not function medicinally, that is not “medicine.”

The term “medicine”—and the koan “the world is medicine”—may be loaded in a special way in the RCTE community. As English teachers know, teaching writing and teaching language have often been framed in terms of a Western medical model. If a student’s language use is less than proficient—however “proficient” is defined—the student’s language is seen as broken, and it is often referred to as such. For example, second language learners are often blatantly labeled as speaking “broken English.” But even when students’ language is not seen as completely broken, it is—as Min Zhan Lu suggests in “Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone”—still often viewed as deficient. And when students’ language is seen as broken and/or deficient—as opposed to being in some stage of development—it is viewed as being in need of repair. And since “broken” and “deficient” are viewed as problems that can be repaired through a mechanical approach, which is common to Western medicine, English teachers are asked to fix their students’ grammar/usage, to mend their students’ problems with writing. And the assumption that language and students may be fixed, repaired, and mended leads to the belief that students may literally—in medical language—be diagnosed (think “diagnostic” tests). And the attitude that students should have had their language inoculated last year, in the last grade, so that they are totally prepared for the current teacher to do great things with them is certainly not uncommon in teaching. Thus, teachers whose background is in RCTE may have a special sensitivity to the term “medicine” and its implication of brokenness.

However, in this dissertation, when I use the term “medicine” and when I discuss the “medicine” that contemplative/mindfulness practices may bring to teaching, I will be

talking about “medicine” from a perspective that does not imply broken systems or broken people. Rather, I will be considering “medicine,” contemplative/mindfulness practice, and education from the Zen point of view, which suggests “medicine” can add value to things that are already well. And I will speak of how contemplative/mindfulness practices may add to the wholeness of the “medicines” that already exist in education.

On the other side of the equal sign, “world” seems a simpler, less resistant, less loaded concept. My initial understanding of the concept was inclusive, and it still is. I understand “world” as including people, the social interactions and the social structures of people, as well as the natural world surrounding us. And I include as part of social interactions, social structures, and natural world those things—visible and tangible, or not—that give us emotional and/or spiritual support.

However, as I began writing and reconsidered the term “world,” I recognized the word has had somewhat tawdry connotations throughout history. Wordsworth lamented, “The world is too much with us, late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.” And I write this around Christmas having just revisited Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, in which the ghost of Jacob Marley warned Scrooge that the counting house—the ultimate negative symbol of the world of business being too much with us—was but a drop in the comprehensive ocean of his business. Farther back, John Milton, in a poem about his blindness, struggled to let go of the things of this world. Even farther back, the morality play *Everyman* and John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* pointed out the evils of the world and the necessity to forsake them. And even farther back still, the biblical story of Jesus tossing the tables of the moneylenders indicated an interpretation of “world” as

something to be rejected. The conception of the world—the human world especially—as a place of imperfection, of illusion, of temptation, of brokenness, and even of wickedness is an old one. It is foundational to most Western theological traditions.

A similar interpretation of “world” exists today. “In the real world” is a phrase that is often used to deny another’s experience or argument. It is usually meant to imply that the other is being too idealistic and does not have a firm grasp of reality. Reality is implied to be harder, more callous, more disturbing, and/or less trustworthy than the other suggests. This type of appearance-reality argument is often seen in education. Educators are frequently tossed the “in the real world of business” line during arguments, when others want to make a point about accountability, efficiency, tenure, vacation time, and a host of other issues. Likewise, teachers give students the line, “when you get to middle school, or high school, or college, or the real world...” in order to suggest that a student’s performance needs to improve.

But in sitting with this koan and in writing about this koan, I focused on aspects of the world that I found supportive. I set aside strip clubs, heroin addiction, the desire to make billions of dollars, and other things that are hazardous or illusory. I concentrated on relationships with family and friends, on nurturing and thought-provoking things I’ve read, and on interesting and incredible places I’d visited. I didn’t struggle with the fact that potentially harmful things existed. Their existence neither negated nor undermined the medicinal aspects of the world. Perhaps the image of yin and yang best described my perspective: dark and light flow together in one circle, dark inside light and light inside dark, interconnected, inseparable, dancing. For me, there was—and is—no binary of dark

precludes light or light precludes dark. So, even from the beginning, I was able to accept the world contained powerful, positive medicine. My struggle—as I already said—was ontological, with “is,” with my idea of the state of being of the world.

I don’t know if other people conceived of the “world” the way I did, but in discussing the koan “the world is medicine,” I never had a person question the term “world,” in spite of the fact that people frequently wondered about the term “medicine.” This suggests two things to me. First, I suspect in the context of the koan that the term “world” seemed more concrete than the term “medicine,” and that people were able to conjure an image or a definition of “world,” which was solid enough that they could turn their attention to the word “medicine.” In addition, it seems likely—given the total lack of concern about the term—that most people had a relatively strong conception of the “world.” Second, I suspect that if we had engaged in a conversation about the “world,” we might have disputed specifics, to what extent and in what ways the world is medicinal, or the ontological, whether the world *is* medicine or *contains* medicine. But it also seems likely—given the lack of argument about the concept of “world,” what it is and/or how it works—that most other concepts of “world,” on some level, were spacious enough to include the notion that the “world” *contains* healing aspects to it, whether or not others accepted the ontological implications of the koan.

The latter part of the koan originally seemed a request embedded in a question. “What type of medicine are you?” overtly asked me about myself, but it subtly asked me how I was going to participate or how I was going to be in the world. It asked me how I was going to assist others—my family, my friends, my students, the larger community—

and myself to heal and to thrive. However, during the process of writing, new aspects of the second half of the koan began to occur to me. The ontological level of the question became obvious, and I realized that the question directly told me that I am medicine, that I am part of the health and the healing of the world. The only ambiguity is what type of health and healing I am. The phrasing of the question made this ontological statement, and it is the phrasing of the question—so heavy with implication—that I began to find most interesting.

When I did my undergraduate work in preparation for entering the high school classroom, my methods teacher instructed us on a specific formula for the final question of any lesson. She didn't want us asking, "Are there any questions?" which might imply there should not be uncertainty about the lesson and which might suggest to students who were not certain that they better not ask a question and look foolish. Instead, we were to ask, "What questions do you have?" which implied it was likely there were questions and that having uncertainty was reasonable and expected.

By asking, "What *type* of medicine are you?" the koan clearly states the message that everyone is "medicine." There is no ontological question about whether one is or is not "medicine." One is. The phrasing of the question leaves no doubt. The only question in the koan is: "what type?" Beyond the ontological certainty implied by the question, the phrasing also suggests that there are many different medicines one can be. It implies that a wide variety of ways-of-being work as "medicine," and that all of them may be healthful and healing. So, the phrasing of the question anticipates that everyone can answer affirmatively and that an array of valid answers will be forthcoming. These

implications reinforce—maybe reiterate—the message in the first half of the koan. They also seem to suggest, in the words of another koan, “You are/everything is welcome here,” that anything may become the key to transformation, to growth, to health, to healing, to enlightenment. The Buddha holding up a flower for a sermon, the drill sergeant screaming instructions, the addict plunging into the abyss, the birth or death of a child may all become the foundation for enlightenment. Or the simplest things—the walk in the park, the cup of coffee with a friend, the billboard sign, the snarled traffic at a red light, or the kitchen and the gate (as still another koan suggests)—may become moments of clarity, whether or not they hold the power of an epiphany. And the question, again, is not “are we medicine in these events?” but “what types of medicines are we?”

The implication of this koan—that enlightenment, transformation, health, and healing are facilitated by many types of medicine, by many types of interactions, by many types of moments, by many ways-of-being—is well illustrated by a story Joan Sutherland, Roshi tells about two Chinese Zen masters from the 8th century and their contrasting styles of teaching. Shitou was noted for his gentleness, for the way he patiently deconstructed his students’ patterns of thought, and for the way he nudged his students toward enlightenment. Sutherland describes Shitou as taking a “plank by plank” approach to the deconstruction of the ideas that limited his students (I will return to deconstruction later in the chapter). According to Sutherland, Shitou ran “variations on, ‘are you sure about that?’ over and over and over again” until a student deconstructed and examined the assumptions and the certainties that shaped his thinking and vision (“Koans and Peace”). If a student asked about purity, Shitou asked what corrupted the student. If a

student asked about freedom, Shitou asked what bound the student (“Koans and Peace”). Through his gentle refusal to accept the ways his students perceived themselves and the world, Shitou forced his students into freefall and eventually into freedom from the bondage of their patterns of thought.

Ma, a contemporary of Shitou, was noted for a radically different medicine. Ma was known for his roughness. In a famous—or perhaps infamous—exchange, Ma was said to have kicked a student in the chest when the student asked the meaning of Chan (the Chinese word from which the word “Zen” originated). The kick was Ma’s way of dismissing the notion that the student didn’t know, of shoving the student out of his limited and limiting ideas, of sending the student into freefall beyond his normal patterns of thought, and of telling the student he had everything he needed, including the answer to his own question. The student, who went on to become another famous teacher of Zen, said he got up from the ground laughing and continued laughing every day after that incident (Sutherland).

Although the modern reader may recoil at Ma’s violence, Zen would not suggest that either approach—Shitou’s or Ma’s—is inherently better or worse than the other. As the koan suggests, there are many types of medicine that work in the world, from the gentleness of the Buddha to the harshness of the drill sergeant. Each style—Shitou’s and Ma’s—was its own kind of “medicine.” And each “medicine” facilitated transformation and health, though through drastically different means. Having said this, I am glad—at this moment—that I am not writing a dissertation about pedagogy, where this comment might be misinterpreted as a call for the return of corporal punishment as a motivational

technique. Still, according to Sutherland, the stories of the time indicate that Shitou and Ma were both so respected that students felt they needed to study with both to fully grasp Zen (Sutherland).

Perhaps different types of medicine are needed and efficacious because different students are at different levels of readiness. And as students, we get—Joseph Campbell notes—the lessons and the experiences we are prepared for. The Buddha’s flower sermon, in which the Buddha is reported to have uttered no words, but simply to have held up a flower, is said to have awakened only one listener, a pupil of the Buddha’s who was ready for such subtle instruction and who went on to become a teacher of and a successor in the Buddha’s lineage. The rest left without receiving that measure of enlightenment because the step the Buddha was asking them to take was too large. Conversely, drill sergeants have enlightened many recruits to the need to become more self-disciplined and to become part of something larger than their individual selves, even if the scope of this enlightenment may seem myopic by some standards. Shitou’s probing works for some and Ma’s kicks for others. Many teachers, many students, many situations, many types of “medicine.”

The intricacy, in terms of the “medicines” teachers bring to their classrooms, has always been one of *kairos*, choosing the appropriate and proportional response to the set of circumstances. And the difficulty, of course, is that there are few simple answers when it comes to selecting courses of action in the complex, culturally-driven, and/or situation-specific communication of the classroom. The complexity can easily be seen when one considers only the teacher’s side of the communication equation. On the one hand, the

teacher brings with her sets of limitations—which may include limited intrapersonal knowledge and/or skill, limited interpersonal knowledge and/or skill, limited pedagogical knowledge and/or skill, and/or limited cultural knowledge and/or skill—and these limitations may preclude some responses that would be useful and may include other responses that do not work very well. On the other hand, even after years of practice when a teacher is knowledgeable and has developed a wide variety of effective techniques, it is still easy to misjudge situations and to respond in a less-than-productive manner.

The intricacy in terms of institutions and systems is how to foster and support the many types of “medicine” that need to be available so that their myriad students have opportunities to connect with the “medicines” that will work for them. The intricacies in this case include everything from ubiquitous financial constraints to concerns from outside sources (parents, donors, state legislatures) to issues of accountability, which may translate into standardizing everything from curricula to methodology. And these issues, which I will discuss more fully later, in part fuel my concern about the resistance my project will face in terms of its adoption for teacher training and development.

The question “what type of medicine are you?” has further implications. It may be seen as directing one to be introspective, to conduct self-exploration that is meant to yield self-awareness. One may offer medicine into the world—as a child does—without being fully conscious of what she is doing. But the ability to be medicinal may increase as one identifies what she has to offer and is then able to consciously work on developing those skills. In artistic terms, this might be seen as the intersection of talent and craft. Talent is

raw and wonderful, but it is craft that hones the talent to make it most effective. And awareness may be the bridge between the two. One must become aware of oneself—of one's strengths and weaknesses—in order to develop one's talents fully, and the koan seems to call for the type of self-reflection that would yield such self-awareness.

The question also seems to imply that one is consciously choosing how to participate in the world once one has completed the introspection. As one discovers the type of “medicine” she is, it is implied that she will bring that “medicine” into the world. Zen has a longstanding ethic of engagement and participation. John Tarrant, Roshi is fond of reminding his students that Zen was the “warriors’ way,” that the practice of Zen was never limited to monks living in seclusion. Rather, Tarrant suggests, throughout its history Zen has been practiced in the midst of life, by people living fully in the world. Sutherland suggests the same thing. And Zen vows include a commitment to bringing enlightenment into the world and helping to end suffering. Also, as I shall discuss later, interaction is at the heart of koan study. Working a koan is not solely an individual process. As John Daedo Looi suggests, “koan introspection [takes place] within the context of zazen and the teacher-student relationship” (*Sitting* 1). Direct face-to-face contact is a central aspect of Zen. Indeed, the word “koan” may be translated as “public case,” and it is expected the student will encounter the koan publicly as well as privately (Ming-pen 13-15). So, it is expected that the student of Zen will learn about the koan in community with others and will carry her awakenings into her everyday dealings. And in that context, the question—“what type of medicine are you?—implies action on the part

of the practitioner, that she will do something with the “medicine” that is discovered through her introspection.

Because the koan captures many of the themes in this dissertation, it seems an appropriate metaphor to guide this work. I like the koan’s notion that “medicine” may heal the sick, but that it may also strengthen and improve what is already good. I like that the koan suggests there are many types of “medicine” that may work perfectly well in this world. And I like that the koan has a call to be introspective, as well as the implication that I should carry my “medicine” into life. The koan’s notion that “medicine” may take the good and make it better connects with my concern that this dissertation should add to how teachers are trained, without denigrating what is already being done. The notion that there are many valid and useful forms of “medicine” connects with my contention that teacher effectiveness may be supported and developed through the use of contemplative/ mindfulness practices, as well as through the study of theory and pedagogy, that all of these “medicines” are—in fact—needed to support and develop teachers. The koan’s introspective aspect connects with my sense that intrapersonal knowledge and skills are important aspects of teaching. And the notion that “medicine” needs to be consciously shared connects with my concern that the intrapersonal changes teachers experience should transform their interactions with their students. I will consistently use the koan as a metaphor to frame and to explore various aspects of my argument, and I will return to the language of the koan throughout the dissertation.

ANALYSIS:

ZEN EPISTEMOLOGY

The first sections of this chapter deal directly with the argument in this dissertation in that they explain the metaphor I am using to frame and to guide my argument. The next two sections—on Zen’s epistemology and its convergences with postmodernism—are related to the argument, although less directly. These sections troubleshoot some of the concerns readers may have about using Zen and Zen koans as the basis for an academic argument, and they explain why I feel Zen and Zen koans are a reasonable foundation for this work. And I want to reiterate that when I talk about Zen’s notion of an absolute reality freely and unchallenged in this section, I am not trying to support this notion. I am merely trying to articulate it. I will discuss the problems with this notion in the next section on Zen and postmodernism.

It is obvious by now that Zen makes some different assumptions about knowledge and about knowing than are found in most academic institutions in the United States. And since I am using Zen as a foundation for my argument, I want to explore Zen’s epistemological assumptions. I want to show that while Zen does diverge from the philosophical frameworks that guide most academic institutions and most academic thinking, it also converges with these as well. As this section will show, Zen seems to have a strong anti-intellectual thrust. Yet on closer examination, Zen reveals its own intellectual traditions, which in some ways mirror those in the academy. I also want to show that Zen’s basic epistemological assumptions dovetail with the argument I want to make about teacher training and development. Its assumptions about the centrality of

experience connect to the case I am trying to make about how contemplative/mindfulness practices might reshape teachers' interactions in the classroom.

I started the discussion of the koan with John Daedo Looi's pointed comment about the contradiction of talking about something that is meant to be experienced. I also highlighted the comments of Philip Kapleau, John Tarrant, Joan Sutherland, and Chung-fen Ming-pen, all of whom—in typical Zen fashion—focus on the limitations of intellect and language as vehicles for true understanding. And I tried to honor this aspect of the koan tradition as much as I could throughout my discussion. Though I analyzed the koan intellectually, I also tried to speak about it from the point of view of my relationship with the koan and the experiences I had as I danced with it.

Zen's apparent resistance to the intellect and its focus on direct experience are important aspects of its epistemology. But Zen makes other assumptions as well. First, as the koan suggests, Zen assumes that people and the world are basically complete and capable, and as such there is nothing to be attained—including enlightenment—because everything is already whole and present. People may be trusted to *become* enlightened and do not have to struggle to *attain* enlightenment. Related to this, Zen assumes that authority for and responsibility for becoming enlightened rests fully in the individual. Second, Zen assumes that *all* concepts are constructions, which no matter how “good,” eventually become limitations that must be released. *All* ideas/thoughts/notions/logics/narratives/concepts/beliefs are considered incomplete, and to cling to them as if they are complete is considered an impediment to reaching enlightenment. And finally, Zen assumes there are absolute truths, which may be “realized” by breaking through

ideas/thoughts/notions/logics/narratives/concepts/beliefs. Zen epistemology assumes that realization of the absolute needs to be experienced directly and/or transmitted “mind-to-mind.” By “mind-to-mind” transmission, Zen means that realization may come through the experience of direct person-to-person contact (i.e. the Buddha holding up the flower and seeing that his student understood his meaning and had awakened). Again, some postmodern readers may find this last assumption disturbing and problematic. And I want to be clear that I am not arguing for Zen’s notion. I am merely trying to articulate it, recognizing the difficulty it may cause, which I will discuss more thoroughly in the next section about Zen and postmodernism.

It is important to understand that Zen does not reject the intellect, reasoning, or the tools of analysis. It announces their limitations, suggests there are other ways to know and to come to know. But Zen makes a distinction between “knowing” and “realizing,” the former being a narrower function of the intellect, and the latter being a larger experience, which involves the whole person: intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. And in Zen epistemology, the difference between knowledge and realization seems to be tied to a notion of the coexistence of the relative and the absolute. Intellect—and the various ways it constructs information, patterns, hierarchies, knowledge—is linked to relativism, and realization is linked with an absolute, transcendent reality that is woven into all forms and—at the same time—that is beyond, underneath, behind, supporting all forms.

According to Zen, one can use the intellect to examine and maybe even to explode relative concepts—like right or wrong, better or worse, are or are not, have or

have not—that are often considered “reality.” One may even have an intellectual understanding about the transcendent absolute reality. For example, someone may acknowledge the oneness of all or the impermanence of things. However, to move to “realization,” to really know—to the extent it is possible to know—the absolute reality that transcends forms, Zen indicates that one must break through mere intellectual knowledge and have an experience that illuminates absolute truth and makes absolute truth something that is felt. It is the difference between intellectually knowing that, in the end, you are going to die and having a near-death experience, where you realize in every fiber of your being that you are mortal. The words one uses—“I am going to die someday”—might be the same, but the understanding of those words is very different. According to Zen, the true realization of mortality may be unable to be captured in words. Writers have struggled, as long as there has been writing, with the concept of death. John Donne wrestled with it in “Death Be Not Proud,” Keats in “Ode on a Grecian Urn.” Shakespeare entreated, in one of his sonnets, “to love that well which thou must leave ‘ere long.” But words can only partially capture the realization. Ultimately, according to Zen, the intellect gets tangled in and confused by the words it spins. It gets bogged down in patterns of its own invention, and it becomes distracted by the mazes it creates. In Zen, “realization” is considered primary because it is beyond words and concepts. It is the direct—maybe undiluted—experience of the absolute.

John Daido Looi puts it this way: “[Wisdom is] not about information or knowledge. It is not about the words and ideas that describe reality. It is the direct...

realization of reality itself” (*Heart* 53). And Yasutani-roshi, late master of Taihei Temple in Japan, reflected this same epistemological notion when he said:

[Y]ou have to break out of the cul-de-sac of logic and analysis.... [W]hat can be known by philosophers and scientists through reasoning is only a fraction of the universe.... [Y]ou must directly experience yourself and the universe as one. Of course you understand this theoretically, but theoretical understanding is like a picture: it is not the thing itself but only a representation of it. You must let go of logical reasoning and embrace the real thing.... But the average man can't do that. He is constantly weaving ideas and embroidering notions about what he experiences. (qtd. in Kapleau 12-22)

Loori and Yasutani-roshi both articulate the dichotomy between intellectual knowledge and experiential knowledge that is so central to Zen epistemology. And Yasutani-roshi articulates the dual notion that intellectual knowledge (“representation,” the relative) and experiential knowledge (“the real thing,” the absolute) exist in tandem, with the relative as subordinate to the absolute, with the relative a construction, and with the relative an impediment to the experience of knowing the absolute. Like Sutherland, Yasutani-roshi uses a picture metaphor. Intellect, he says, creates mental pictures, which it responds to as real. But these representations are not complete or real, and he admonishes people to transcend them because they obstruct/impede/hinder a true experience of the absolute.

Yasutani-roshi, in language reminiscent of postmodernism, explains relativism—the “weaving of ideas,” the “embroidering of notions”—this way to one of his students:

Your mind, like a mirror, reflects everything: this table, this mat, whatever you see.... Now, everybody's mind is different. How my mind reflects objects differs from the way yours does. Whatever is in your mind is the reflection of your mind, therefore it is you. So when you perceive this mat or this table, you are perceiving yourself.... [A]ll this is merely a picture.
(qtd. in Kapleau 124)

Yasutani-roshi tells his students that any concept they hold is merely a reflection of themselves; that all of their ideas are mirrors, which reveal the self more than they reveal the absolute; that all of their impressions are more autobiographical than factual. And he would probably agree with the postmodern notion that ideas and concepts are cultural artifacts, as well. Yasutani-roshi goes as far as to say: "The opinions you hold and your worldly knowledge are your illusions. Included also are philosophical and moral concepts, no matter how lofty, as well as religious beliefs and dogmas, not to mention innocent, commonplace thoughts. In short, all conceivable ideas are embraced within the term 'illusions' and as such are a hindrance to...realization...so dissolve them" (qtd. in Kapleau 84). According to Yasutani-roshi, nothing that one can think—no concept, no idea, no notion, no hierarchy, no theory, no ideology—is not an "illusion," and a highly "personal" one at that.

In addition to framing the entire thought-life as relative, as illusions, as individual and possibly social constructions, Yasutani-roshi also raises two other epistemological issues: first, that realization of the absolute—i.e. experiential knowledge/enlightenment—is a process of discovery; and second, that individuals have capability and culpability

when it comes to attaining realization, the experiential knowledge of an absolute reality. In terms of the first point, Zen considers realization, true experiential knowledge of the absolute, to be a process of discovery by the individual, not merely a construction of the individual or the community. Where Yasutani-roshi admonishes students to “dissolve” their thoughts/concepts/ideas/notions/narratives/theories/ideologies, which are relative and constructions of the intellect, he encourages them to “embrace” the absolute and to experience it “directly.” To embrace something, to pull it close so that it can be seen and felt, so that it can be experienced, so that it can be discovered, is seen as different from the “embroidering” of concepts/ideas/notions/narratives/theories/ideologies.

In a sense, the Zen notion of realization might be considered akin to Aristotle’s notion of demonstration. Aristotle considered the role of rhetoric to be persuasion. If one were trying to convince another of the worth/appropriateness/correctness/desirability of a relative notion, one employed rhetoric. If one discovered absolute truth, only demonstration was required. Once the absolute was demonstrated, there was nothing to argue. The relative and the absolute fell into different categories, and as such were handled differently. Although the analogy is imperfect, it is meant to show that Zen—like Aristotle—places the absolute in a different category than the relative, and Zen sees two different processes at work in relation to each: the “ah ha,” which is beyond words and concepts, when one experiences the discovery of the absolute firsthand vs. the complex stories that are used in the attempt to come to grips with the world. While Zen accepts and acknowledges the existence of the latter constructions, it suggests that constructed notions—the “worldly knowledge,” “philosophical and moral concepts,” “religious

beliefs and dogmas,” and “commonplace thoughts” Yasutani-roshi mentions—interrupt the ability to know, because even if they point to the truth, they disconnect people from discovering and experiencing the absolute.

This brings us to the second point. From the Zen perspective, it is the individual’s responsibility to connect with true knowledge. When Yasutani-roshi exhorts his students to “dissolve” their illusions so they can realize the absolute, he implies how much control individuals hold when it comes to moving beyond the constructed ideas, which block them from recognizing, discovering, and experiencing the absolute. And when he exhorts them to “embrace” the absolute, he implies the same thing. The absolute is available for everyone to experience, but it is each individual’s responsibility to clarify her connection with it. Yasutani-roshi suggests that most people will not experience the absolute directly because they are caught up in their concepts/ideas/notions/narratives/theories/ideologies. Still, from Zen’s perspective, the responsibility for realizing the absolute rests squarely on the individual, because the ability to see through the limits of constructed knowledge exists solely within the individual and because the individual must make the decision to “embrace” the absolute.

However, I want to reiterate that community plays an important part in the process of discovery and is not excluded from it. In Zen the teacher-student and community-student relationship is considered very important and has been throughout Zen’s history. Embedded in the word “koan” is the expectation that the individual’s relationship with the koan will include encountering it in connection with others. “The word *kung* (*ko*), or ‘public,’” Ming-pen, a thirteenth century Zen master, says, “means

that koans put a stop to private understanding; and the word *an* (*an*), or ‘case records,’ means that they are guaranteed to accord with the buddhas and the ancestors” (*Sitting* 14). Ming-pen explains that the very word “koan” suggests that the encounter with the koan must eventually be public and the individual experience of it must be placed within the context of the entire history of those who have experienced the koan. This serves as a check and balance to individual delusion and illusion, which may cloud the experience of realization after the fact, when one re-engages with the world of thoughts/concepts/ideas/notions/narratives/ theories/ideologies. So, koans are worked in relationship with others, as well as by oneself.

Although Zen appears to devalue intellectual types of knowledge, intellectual ways of knowing, and the language on which these types of knowledge and knowing depend, Zen does have a tradition that is grounded in a respect for intellect and language. And the place of intellect and language are not nearly as clear and clean as they first appear in Zen’s rhetoric about realization. Zen may claim the supremacy of experiential knowledge and of direct “mind-to-mind” transmission of the absolute, but it still relies substantially on language—especially metaphorical and symbolic language which is demanding intellectually and linguistically—as a tool for teaching, as means of demonstrating mastery, and even as a vehicle for “mind-to-mind” transmission (i.e. the direct teaching of the student by the teacher). In fact, language clearly holds a central place in Zen, and the koan tradition itself seems to have grown out of a literary tradition.

G. Victor Sogen Hori—a former Zen monk and a professor of Japanese religion—notes that in Zen:

There are two conceptions of language, one in which language is depicted as imposing conceptual categories that falsify experience and prevent us from seeing things as they are, and one in which language is depicted as the means by which people immediately know each other's mind. They are both at work in the koan. On the one hand, while the rhetoric of Zen constantly emphasizes that Zen is "not founded on words and letter," implying that language is always inadequate, the koan practice [which is based on the use of complex language (me)] promises to transport the practitioner to the enlightened mind. (205)

What Hori points out is that Zen considers language, like other intellectual constructs, to impede the experience of the absolute. However, this is only one thread in Zen discourse. Zen also recognizes that language, especially the symbolic language of koans, holds the possibility of creating openings so that moments of clarity and realization may occur.

Hori also argues that "mind-to-mind transmission transcend[s] language not by rejecting it—this is a crude interpretation—but only by being firmly based in language. Mind-to-mind transmission is the perfection of technique in language, not the rejection of language" (203). Again, "mind-to-mind" transmission is a form of experiential knowledge. The experience springs from the direct person-to-person contact that allows the teacher to communicate and the student to receive clarity. The student experiences a moment of realization as a result of contact with a teacher, and Zen contends this often occurs in silence. However, when Hori considers the Buddha's flower sermon, which is commonly used as the story to explain the "mind-to-mind" transmission of Zen, he says:

The story...is widely thought to imply that Zen experience is quite independent of words and letters, that one must unlearn language to attain it.... But if the story is read against the background of the tradition from which it comes, then the lesson it teaches is that the ability to communicate mind-to-mind without language first depends on the mastery of language. (203)

The background of which Hori speaks is the tradition of the Chinese literati. Hori suggests the koan tradition, which grew up in China, initially had strong ties to a Chinese literati tradition and “that the koan is built on the paradigm of the Chinese literary game” (173). He notes that the Zen koan tradition includes “prose commentaries [that] resemble most scholarly prose commentary in being sober and discursive” and that it includes “jakugo [which] does not comment on the koan dialogue but actually attempts to enter into the rough and tumble of the dialogue” (175). Hori connects the latter to a form of language game based in a Chinese literary tradition.

The game, which predated the koan tradition, involved “capping phrases,” and it embodied many of the qualities that came to be valued in the koan tradition: “perplexing language, competition in repartee, the sense of fun, and wordless communication” (173). The object of the game was simple. The first contestant tossed out lines from Chinese poetry. The second contestant was to reply by adding his insight about the phrase, and he was to do so in the form of poetry, “capping” the original phrase with his own unique one, not with the poet’s next lines. If the second contestant could turn his capping phrase into a barb against the first contestant, this was an added bonus. Then the competition

was back in the domain of the first contestant. These volleys continued until one contestant bested the other. What Hori points out is that this competition relied on the intellectual prowess and the language skills of two equal partners, and that this remains true in the Zen tradition, both in the koan capping phrase books that have been written over the past five hundred years and in the living tradition of teacher-student exchanges in modern times.

All this is to say that Zen comes from and carries within it an intellectual tradition that privileges language skill, while at the same time recognizing the limits of language. “The basic problem of the koan,” as Hori says, “is to ‘realize’ the koan not as a third person description but as a first person performance of the Fundamental” (206). Merely understanding the metaphorical and the symbolic level of a koan, the intellectual level, is not sufficient. Hori agrees with Tarrant, Sutherland, Kapleau, and Yusatani. The center of the koan tradition “is not merely a literary matter of understanding allusion and analogy. It is not merely an epistemological matter of attaining a non-dual state of consciousness. It is not merely a matter of training and drilling oneself to a level of spontaneous improvisation. The koan is both the means for, and the realization of, a religious experience” (206).

Zen epistemology is complex and paradoxical. Zen epistemology announces the limitations of intellect as a way of knowing, favoring direct experience as the way to true realization. Yet it has a rich intellectual tradition and relies on the intellect. Like the academy, Zen places its students and their experience in historical context. The student’s work with a koan is considered, as Ming-pen suggests, in the light of revelations others

have had in the past. The student's realizations are considered in the context of what the masters of the past have said. And the koan is also worked in a public way, with a teacher and with a community, so that the student's experience—as is also true in most academic institutions—may be verified and validated. Zen epistemology also announces the limits of sequential/analytical/systematic types of logic and calls for the individual to transcend such reasoning. Yet, Zen mirrors the academy in analytical/systematic logics through a five-hundred year tradition of written commentaries on the koans, which Hori suggests are used to analyze and systematize responses to the koans.

Zen announces the limitation of language and calls for the individual to transcend the limits of language, a call that is reminiscent of postmodernist notions that one finds in the academy. Yet, the Zen koan tradition may owe its birth to a Chinese literary tradition and relies heavily on the use of metaphorical and symbolic language. Zen epistemology toggles between the relative and the absolute, noting that the relative can obstruct access to the absolute, while at the same time hinting at the absolute. Zen epistemology suggests the relative must be transcended to reach a direct experience of the absolute; and at the same time, it suggests that any distinction between the relative and the absolute is really a matter of perception. And Zen—like many in the academy—struggles with the material consequences of its assumptions and how to engage with the world. Finally, Zen epistemology starts with the assumption of the ontological wholeness of each individual and is founded on the deep and abiding faith that each individual can be trusted to move toward enlightenment. Yet Zen acknowledges human nature and the ease with which

people slip into delusion and illusion, so relationships become viewed as vital to teaching.

I offered this glimpse of Zen's epistemology to give the reader insight into Zen, since it is the contemplative/mindfulness practice with which I am attempting to make my case. And I offered it in order to dispel misconceptions that may have existed about Zen's basic assumptions. However, I hope it also serves to clarify the connection of Zen to the case I will be making about contemplative/mindfulness practices and teacher education. Zen is very experiential in its orientation. The student of Zen is asked to take action. She is told to meditate, to sit with a koan, to experience what happens. And she is asked to take her realizations back into the world and to change how she interacts. My argument is ultimately one that focuses on experience. My contention is that contemplative/mindfulness practices have the ability to train teachers in practices that will enable them to better navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, and that this experience has the potential to transform how teachers interact in the classroom.

I also hoped this section would begin to show that Zen has some points of convergence with the academy, that while its assumptions are in many ways different than the assumptions that guide most educational institutions, there is ground on which a relationship may be built. And in the final section of this chapter, I want to clarify Zen's points of convergence with postmodernism, the most likely lens through which this argument will be viewed, in order to solidify the ground on which the relationship

between Zen and the academy may be built, as well as to further clarify why I selected Zen and Zen koans as a foundation for this work.

CONNECTIONS: ZEN AND POSTMODERNISM

CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES

It would take a book to explore how different iterations of Zen compare and contrast with the many intellectual threads of postmodern philosophy. However, in terms of the work of this dissertation, some potentially useful generalities may be made about each. For instance, both traditions tend to distrust ways of thinking that assume precise and definite correlations between perception and reality. And both traditions hold a central place for radical levels of doubt and skepticism. By exploring some of the convergences and divergences between Zen and postmodernism—admitting from the start that people in each camp will differ in the specifics of their opinions—I want to further clarify Zen and its positions, which are the foundation for this work.

The reason I think it is important to look specifically at postmodernism is that many notions and concepts related to it have become so embedded in current thought that they are invisible assumptions through which we view the world. For example, the notion that perceptions of “reality” are largely constructed is common in our culture. In public schools, my kids were taught from the earliest grades that people from different cultures viewed life differently and that these views needed to be held as equally valid. The notion that points of view are based on narrative modes of thinking is equally ordinary. On the news last night, I heard a political correspondent and a sportscaster both discuss issues in terms of narratives. And the notion that language helps to shape perceptions of reality was discussed offhandedly in almost every language class I took. There are, of course, intellectual traditions in our culture that resist some of these notions—the far religious

right, for instance—but in many ways postmodernism has become entwined in mainstream thought.

Zen and postmodernism share many similarities in their notions about thought. One of the primary points of agreement between the two is that thought is not necessarily a mirror of “reality.” “Both parties,” states Carl Olson, in *Zen and the Art of Postmodern Philosophy: Two Paths of Liberation from the Representational Mode of Thinking*, “perceive shortcomings in the representational mode of thinking, which is a type of thinking that assumes a correspondence between appearance and reality” (22). While postmodern philosophers seize on different aspects of and different problems with perception and reality, most see the world as random and contingent, and they view thought as imposing order on randomness. They view reality as constructed by thought. “Within the world of flux,” Olson says postmodernists tend to see:

No universal and timeless truths to be discovered because everything is relative and indeterminate, which suggests that our knowledge is always incomplete, fragmented, and historically and culturally conditioned.

Therefore, there can be no foundation for philosophy or any theory, and it is wise to be suspicious of any universal claims to validity made by reason. Moreover, there is no center of society, culture, or history.... The postmodern era is characterized by discontinuity, irregularity, rupture, decenteredness, and lack of hope for any type of utopia. (16-17)

Zen would agree with many of these claims. It would accept that knowledge is “incomplete, fragmented, and historically and culturally conditioned.” It would also agree

that it's wise to be suspicious of "claims to validity made by reason" and that societies, cultures, and histories are no more substantial than any other notions and ideas. And as Jin Y. Park points out in *Buddhism and Postmodernity: Zen, Huayan, and the Possibility of Postmodern Ethics*, the Buddha, through his deliberate silence on such matters, "flatly rejected...Cartesian inquiries on the nature of the universe, the afterlife, and the soul as irrelevant" because such questions were unanswerable and thus flawed (17-21). So, according to Zen, intellectual knowledge, reason, society, culture, history, and metaphysics would all fall into the category of conceptual, and as such into the category of "illusion." As I mentioned earlier, Yasutani-roshi noted:

[All] the opinions you hold and your worldly knowledge are your illusions. Included also are philosophical and moral concepts, no matter how lofty, as well as religious beliefs and dogmas, not to mention innocent, commonplace thoughts. In short, all conceivable ideas are embraced within the term 'illusions.' (qtd. in Kapleau 84)

Zen and postmodernism both distrust representational thinking. They both recognize that people construct "reality" through their conceptualization of it. And both postmodernism and Zen are interested in "overcoming representational thinking" (Olson 22).

However, Zen diverges from postmodernism. While many postmodernists see no way to get beyond contingent conceptual thinking, Zen considers realization a means to move through the limits of conceptualization. And discursive/rational/analytical/systematic/linear logic-confounding koans are designed—as Tarrant, Sutherland, and

Loori note—to give a direct experience of realization, which offers access to the “real” and absolute that Zen sees beyond words and concepts.

The notion of an absolute reality may be problematic from the postmodern point of view. Can anyone really “know” something outside of his/her personal, cultural, and historical contexts? Haven’t claims to universal truths been discredited? Hasn’t postmodernism shown that “small discourses”—as Jin Y. Parks terms them—located in specific contexts are most able to be trusted? And as a result, doesn’t Zen’s claim of access to universal truths make it, its epistemology, and maybe even its practices suspect? These are valid concerns, with which I identify.

Physicist and Buddhist Jeremy Hayward—speaking about the problematic of an objective reality—embodies postmodern concerns related to the contingency and locatedness of all knowledge. Although his comments pertain specifically to science, they capture the larger problem of “knowing.” In *Gentle Bridges*, he states, “We cannot absolutely confirm an observation.... All of our observations are in some way filled with previous theory” (17-18). Everything one sees is colored by what she is already trained to believe. Hayward offers this example:

Newton said that light is made up of little particles; he developed a whole theory about light with the idea that it was made up of little particles.

Although there were people who were doing experiments that could be explained more easily on the basis of light being waves these experiments were discounted for more than a hundred years. People said that a mistake must have been made, that light cannot be waves. (21)

Hayward attributes the inability to see the “facts” to the preconceived notions that scientists had about how light worked. This embodies the postmodern concern that one is only able to “know” through the personal, cultural, and historical narratives in which she has been located. Hayward explains this notion in relation to science, noting that:

Selectivity about facts is explained by the kind of training a scientist receives. In order to become a physicist or a biologist or a doctor, one receives a certain kind of training. In receiving this training, one learns to see certain things.... [Thus] observations are theory-dependent.... [We] do not just see the world as it is but see it as affected by [our] belief systems.

(21)

This is the heart of postmodernism. One’s observations and how one processes her observations are “theory-dependent.” One cannot simply be said “to see” or “to know” anything independent of how one has been trained to see or to know, whether this is by one’s professional community, religious community, cultural community, family community, etc. And this calls into question Zen’s notion that one can realize an absolute reality beyond thoughts and words.

There is a tension in Zen and in the conversation between Zen and postmodernism. Even though Zen thoroughly agrees with the postmodern notion that all thoughts and observations are contingent, it holds a place for accessing the absolute. And this causes a philosophical problem. The question, in terms of this work, is what one should do with any tension that Zen’s notion of an accessible, knowable absolute might create. Does one, because of academic training and/or personal ideology, dismiss Zen and

Zen epistemology because of its apparent inconsistency? Does one argue with it? Or does one accept the difference and work with it? And Buddhism, as I am about to show, may have an answer for this dilemma in what it calls “the middle way.”

The “middle way” suggests that one should not attach to any concept, whether it is perceived as positive or negative. Any attachment to any concept traps one in dualities, which ultimately present one with false binaries. The “middle way” is to neither label nor categorize, to neither indulge nor deny. It is to accept the existence of an idea, and the inevitable inconsistencies embedded in it, in an ontological sense, as being, without assigning the idea a value. If one is able to adopt the “middle way,” one may be able to release the philosophical tensions Zen’s notion of an accessible, knowable absolute creates in regards to postmodern notions of contingency, and embrace Zen—on a pragmatic level—as a heuristic for navigating/negotiating/managing the world of contingent ideas.

However, the “middle way” may highlight another difference between Zen and postmodernism, which is related to how thoughts/ideas/concepts are navigated/negotiated/managed, and it may pose its own set of problems. As I just noted, Zen seeks a stance it calls “*non*-thinking,” a position of neutrality and/or acceptance, in which one neither avows nor resists the thoughts/ideas/concepts one encounters. To explain *non*-thinking, which is to be distinguished from *not* thinking, Olson suggests Zen sees thinking as “ordinary mental activity in which one might, for instance, consider one idea against a competing idea or a kind of mental activity that objectifies. The act of thinking is negated by not thinking, which possesses for its intentionality thinking itself; it negates

and objectifies the process of thinking” (66). But in Zen *non*-thinking and *not* thinking are different. “Accepting the presence of ideas,” Olson says, “without either affirming or denying them, non-thinking, [is] a more fundamental mode of consciousness than either thinking or not-thinking, [and it] assumes no intentional attitude” (66-69).

Thinking and not-thinking remain in the realm of categories. In Zen, thinking—whether one is examining a concept or debating it—is understood to pit one idea against another. As such, it is considered to give power, authority, or centrality to representational thinking, and to be trapped in dualism: is/is not, has/has not, should/should not, will/will not. Not-thinking is a refusal, a dismissal. One negates a notion, idea, or concept through the refusal to consider it. So, not-thinking remains locked in the realm of representational thinking too because it still engages with an idea, albeit in a negative way. *Non*-thinking is softer. It is not dialogical in nature. It doesn’t challenge one idea with another. It doesn’t push one idea away in favor of another. The goal in Zen is to note and accept that a thought exists without assigning it any specific value: good/bad, positive/negative, right/wrong, better/worse, correct/incorrect. Through adopting a position of neutrality—meaning that one neither actively defends nor denies the ideas with which one is presented—Zen suggests one becomes freed from the limitations inherent in all thought.

It is back to the Buddha’s silence, through which, Jin Y. Park states, the Buddha suggests that: “the impossibility of complying with [any] dualistic model constitutes the core of his philosophical frame” (19). Neutral silence, Park says, was the Buddha’s way of moving beyond “thesis and antithesis” and “revealing the indescribable nature of the

absolute, the ultimate reality, without being trapped by Reason's tendency toward theorization" (29). And it differs from *not*-thinking in that "the Buddha's silence is not a refusal to discuss the issues...but his way of problematizing the metaphysical mode of narrative" (153). The Buddha, especially in terms the ontological and the metaphysical, was attempting to create a "middle way," a way that did not choose sides, a way that did not identify with one concept over another, a way that did not become bogged down beneath layers of thought, which in the end amounted to elaborately dressed assumptions. He was charting a pragmatic way through contingency and assumption.

When the Buddha did speak about ideas and concepts, especially metaphysical and ontological concepts, he maintained his neutrality. In the famous arrow story, the Buddha's response to one of his student's metaphysical questions, the Buddha says:

If someone was shot with a poisoned arrow, the first thing the person should do is to get rid of the arrow and save his life. If the person insisted that he needed to know, before he removed the arrow, who shot the arrow, what the arrow was made of, and why the person shot him, he would risk his life. Those questions do not help him save his life.... Those who believe that the world is eternal also go through birth, aging, sickness, grief and sadness, worries, [and] agony.... Similarly, those who believe that the world is not eternal go through birth, aging, sickness, grief and sadness, worries, [and] agony. (Park 17-18)

Through his silence and his words, the Buddha refuses to engage with dualistic concepts. Because he neither indulges nor denies any specific thought, he problematizes the

conversation. He does not call into question the thought itself, but the value of the thought, or more accurately what value the thought brings to human experience. And by doing this, he shifts the focus of the conversation. He suggests that one can engage in contemplative/mindfulness practice and life—that one can remove the arrows that are causing pain—without fighting against thought-constructions, which are unable to be confirmed or refuted. And this creates a new option, neither A nor B, but C. The middle way, between dualism, which neither affirms nor resists. And the middle way, the pragmatic way, may be a way for postmodernists who are uncomfortable with Zen's notions of an accessible, knowable absolute to accept Zen, without seeking resolution to the ultimately unanswerable questions: Is there an absolute reality and to what extent is one able to know it?

However, the idea of not resisting may prove problematic in terms of postmodern thought. The goal in many strands of postmodern thought is to resist constructions that are perceived of as “negative” or “limiting” and to promote freedom through resistance. Critical theories and identity politics of all types—focusing on race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation—espouse philosophies of resistance. Within education, Paulo Friere's and Donaldo Macedo's work with Marxist pedagogies opposing oppressive systems provide an example of this. Feminist scholars such as Min Zhan Lu and Joy Ritchie, both of whom I have already mentioned, advocate libratory pedagogies, which employ the notion of resistance. And African-American feminist, bell hooks writes about resisting dominant cultures.

Postmodern theories of resistance tend to focus on issues of power and hegemony, noting that ideas and actions always take place within political and cultural contexts in which issues of power are being negotiated. As such, ideas and actions can never be separated from the power structures in which they exist. Nor can the material results of ideas and actions ever be separated from the consequences they have on power structures, either supporting them or resisting them. And concerns about power, hegemony, and the material consequences of disparities of power lead to philosophical and political stances in which resistance to hegemony is framed as a moral imperative. Consequently, Zen's "middle way" may sound soft, irresponsible, maybe even complicit.

So, another set of possible tensions arises between Zen and postmodernism. Calls to break through limited and limiting social constructions ally postmodernism and Zen, but rhetorical frameworks of resistance are a point of departure for the two. The goal of freedom is the same for both, but resistance—from the Zen point of view—keeps one mired in duality. And the "middle way"—from the postmodern perspective—might make one complicit in perpetuating injustice. Zen agrees with postmodernism that thoughts and actions create material consequences, and that there is a need to work toward social justice. And Zen has a long tradition of working for egalitarianism. Buddhist vows include doing no harm in the world and bringing goodness into it. However, Zen would not frame its efforts in terms of resistance, nor would it want people to respond from internal spaces of resistance, since Zen perceives this as clinging to the world of ideas, which it says ultimately causes suffering.

And again, the dilemma, in terms of this work, may be one of focus. When assessing the value of Zen and Zen koans as a basis for this work, does one choose to focus on the fact that Zen and postmodernism both want people to recognize their representational thinking? Or does one choose to focus on the fact that Zen in articulating this notion relies on the notion of an absolute? Does one choose to focus on the fact that Zen and postmodernism want people to achieve freedom, to break through limiting personal, cultural, and political constructions, and to engage in social justice? Or does one choose to focus on the tension between Buddhism's "middle way" and postmodern theories of resistance? And I would argue, on a very practical level, that focusing on the former is more productive because the material consequences of the two traditions—the challenge to thought-constructions of all kinds and the call for ethical engagement in the world—are very similar.

As I considered Zen and Zen koans as a foundation for this work, I was drawn to Zen's notion that *all* ideas and concepts need to be accepted ontologically (they exist, whether one likes them or not, believes in the or not, agrees with them or not) and released (because they are illusory, whether one considers them positive or not). Zen's ontological notion of acceptance seems a useful basis for a career in teaching. Teachers, especially in public schools and in community colleges, where no one—except someone who is considered a physical threat to others—can legally be excluded, come into contact with a wide range of people, situations, ideas, and ways of being. And my sense was that resistance to "what is"—a lack of ontological acceptance, regardless of how valid the reason for the resistance—may be creating states of suffering for many teachers.

I also felt Zen's notion that people should be willing to release *all* ideas and concepts seemed a useful basis for a career in teaching, for the same reason mentioned above, but also because as teachers develop professionally and age personally, they eventually change and need, at some point, to relinquish some cherished ideas, concepts, or way of beings. Because Zen, through koan work, focuses on the experience of how to accept and how to release, I felt it provided an example of how teachers might be trained in such practices. And since Zen has a tradition of working in the world, has an ethical core that includes the idea of working toward social justice, and is in sync with many postmodern notions about representational thinking, which are embedded in academic discourse, it also seemed a good foundation for this dissertation. It was close enough to, but different enough from the discourse that it might add a new facet to it. And the striking differences, to me, still seemed manageable.

There is one other convergence between Zen and postmodernism, which I would like to discuss, because it has a bearing on why I am using Zen as foundation for this work. As I just discussed, Zen and postmodernism both accept notions, concepts, and ideas as completely contingent and constructed. This leads to an important consequence: both hold a central place for radical amounts of skepticism and doubt, which are central to their philosophies. However, as is true about the contingency of thought, Zen and postmodernism approach skepticism and doubt quite differently. In the postmodern deconstruction of ideas, doubt and skepticism tend to lead to more doubt and more skepticism. In Zen, doubt is seen as a steppingstone to certainty (Olson 75).

In postmodernism skepticism is continual. It does not end. Each question leads to another question. Each statement is open to further review. Central to the postmodern notion of skepticism is deconstruction, whose aim is to disassemble texts so that their assumptions and their inconsistencies may be viewed. At the heart of deconstruction is the notion that all “concepts are cracked and fissured by differences and contradictions” (Olson 81). However—unlike Zen—postmodernism does not see anything beyond the “cracked and fissured” concepts. There is no solid ground. Postmodernism recognizes that “knowledge, and therefore judgment, is bound by ungrounded assumptions” (Park 15). And “deconstruction suggests that conceptual wholes are impossible because conceptual constructs are always falling apart into a multiplicity of parts. [And as a result of this] no stance can become permanent. As philosophical positions are established, they are immediately erased” (Olson 81-82). In the end, in postmodernism, skepticism only leads to more skepticism. And creating any form of coherence becomes complicated, because as Jin Y. Park notes, “postmodernism begs us to examine conditions for the possibility of small discourses without hierarchy. Women will tell their stories alongside the long-reigning meta-narrative of patriarchal tradition. Asians, African descendents, and other ethnic minorities will raise their voices against the centuries-long discrimination of ethnocentrism” (153).

While Zen would agree with postmodernism that “concepts are cracked and fissured” and that “concepts are always falling apart,” Zen’s notion of an absolute reality with which one may connect leads to a different sense about doubt and skepticism. From the Zen point of view, Olson says, “the radical skepticism of postmodern thinkers is not

an improvement over the representational mode of thinking.... Even though postmodern thinkers espouse a radical skepticism that attempts to undermine representational thinking, they merely substitute one mode of thinking for another” (92). From the Zen perspective, postmodernism remains mired in concepts. It pits one idea against another idea. It values one notion over another notion. It never steps back from notions, concepts, and ideas altogether. From the Zen point of view, postmodernism never takes the step off the hundred-foot pole—another koan—into non-thinking and into realization.

Zen agrees with postmodernism that one must doubt everything one thinks. Zen wants the practitioner to doubt every belief he has ever held. Zen wants the practitioner to doubt personal and cultural knowledge, personal and cultural patterns, personal and cultural narratives. Through the use of koans, Zen wants the practitioner to experience intense doubt, existential doubt, doubt about who and what he is, doubt about the world, and doubt about his relationship to it (Olson 75). However, Zen holds a place for certainties, to which one may become anchored. Great doubt, Zen assures its practitioners, precedes great certainty (Olson 75). And whether one considers the experience of certainty as grounded in a connection with an accessible absolute (as Zen does), or whether one considers it an experience that is manufactured from personal expectation and cultural training (as postmodernism might), practitioners of Zen consistently report this experience. And for this dissertation, I hope that is enough to recommend the adoption of the Buddha’s pragmatic “middle way” in regard to how this happens.

What was important—for me—was Zen’s relationship with doubt. Notions of skepticism and doubt are built into academic institutions, from the scientific method to postmodern assumptions embedded in academic discourse. And Zen, like scientific skepticism and postmodernism, calls for the continual questioning of ideas and concepts. In this respect the traditions dovetail nicely. But Zen offers the hope that something solid may be found beneath all of the queries, doubt, and uncertainty. And that seemed important to the work of this dissertation. Since I am suggesting that teachers will need to work with the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, it seemed helpful, even encouraging, to begin from a foundation that suggests one’s introspection—which will be characterized by doubt—may lead to something substantive. I am not trying to suggest that postmodern philosophies and psychologies cannot lead to substantive insights, which might help a person to grow and develop. As Jean-Francois Lyotard, the French postmodern philosopher, points out, the legitimacy of one idea does not necessarily imply a lack of legitimacy of another. Rather, I am saying—for this dissertation—I was drawn to Zen’s positive sense about the end result of the doubt, which is a central aspect of introspection. And again, Zen’s ability to converge with modes of thinking that are common in academia, while at the same time stepping outside those modes of thinking is what made Zen so appealing as a foundation for this work.

CONCLUSIONS

I started this chapter with several purposes. I wanted to offer a foundation for the rest of the dissertation by providing an analysis of Zen, koans, and the specific koan I am using as my lens for the dissertation. I also wanted to offer a foundation for this dissertation by discussing Zen epistemology. Zen makes epistemological assumptions that will be very familiar in academia, and it also makes some assumptions that seem to fly in the face of academia. I wanted to explore Zen's epistemological assumptions in order to dispel misconceptions, to show how Zen's assumptions dovetail with those of the academy, and to clarify why I am using Zen as my lens for making the case about the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and contemplative/mindfulness practice's potential to transform the teacher's experience of the classroom.

Zen epistemology, as I noted, is complex and paradoxical. It announces the limitations of intellectual knowing, yet it has a rich intellectual tradition. And like the academy, Zen insists on placing its students and their experience in historical context. Zen also announces the limits of sequential/analytical/systematic types of logic, yet Zen mirrors analytical/systematic logics through its tradition of written commentaries on the koans. Zen announces the limitation of language, yet the Zen koan tradition may owe its birth to a Chinese literary tradition, and it relies heavily on the use of metaphorical and symbolic language. Zen—like many in the academy—wrestles with the relative and the absolute, and struggles with the material consequences of its assumptions and how to engage with the world.

However, this chapter is meant to show that Zen—by stepping outside many of the forms of logic that dominate thinking in education, that shape discourse in academia, and that influence educational programs—may offer ways to re-envision the classroom and how educators are educated. Zen is very experiential in its orientation. The student of Zen is asked to take action. She is told to meditate, to sit with a koan, to experience what happens. And she is asked to take her realizations back into the world and to change how she interacts. My argument is ultimately one that focuses on experience. My contention is that contemplative/mindfulness practices have the ability to train teachers in practices that will enable them to better navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, and that this experience has the potential to transform how teachers interact in the classroom. And Zen provides a solid foundation for this work.

Finally, because postmodernism is the lens through which many readers will attempt to understand Zen, this chapter is meant to discuss the ways in which Zen and postmodernism converge and diverge. And this discussion is also meant to explain why Zen may provide a good foundation for my work concerning the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and contemplative/mindfulness practice. Zen and postmodernism strongly agree that all ideas and concepts are contingent. Their responses to this is where they diverge, and it is where Zen may provide support for teachers as they navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. Zen's notion that *all* ideas and concepts need to be accepted ontologically (they exist, whether one likes them or not, believes in them or not, agrees with them or not) and released (because they are illusory, whether one considers them positive or not) seems a useful basis for a career in teaching. My sense is that

resistance to “what is”—a lack of ontological acceptance, regardless of how valid the reason for the resistance—may create suffering for many teachers as they attempt to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. And because Zen, through koan work, focuses on the experience of how to accept and how to release, it provides an example of how teachers might be trained in such practices.

One claim of this dissertation is that teaching training and development underserve the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. The thrust of this dissertation is that more time needs to be devoted to training teachers to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal, which shapes the interpersonal, which in turn sets the possibilities for the classroom. The claim I am making is that contemplative/mindfulness practices teach people to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal landscape and thus have the potential to positively shape the interpersonal landscape of the classroom. Since I am using Zen as a specific example of contemplative/mindfulness practice and a Zen koan as a guiding metaphor, it was important to have a basic understanding Zen, koans, and koan practice, as well as a specific understanding of the specific koan that I am using as a metaphor. The next chapter will look more at contemplative/mindfulness practices and education. And it will continue to use the koan “the world is medicine” as its lens to do this work.

CHAPTER 3: THE KOAN AND THE CLASSROOM: WHAT KIND OF MEDICINE ARE WE?

INTRODUCTION

My argument makes four related claims: First, intrapersonal knowledge and skill are important aspects of teaching that may be supported and developed through the use of contemplative/mindfulness practices. Second, as a teacher develops his intrapersonal knowledge and skill, this has the potential to transform the teacher's experience of the classroom and the interactions he has with his students. Third, the intrapersonal aspect of teaching—both the development of intrapersonal knowledge and the management of intrapersonal skills—remains underdeveloped in teacher training and development. And fourth, because much of the research I use to suggest the efficacy of contemplative/mindfulness practices comes from medicine and psychology, more research is needed within the field of education to examine the connections that may exist between a teacher's use of contemplative/ mindfulness practice and a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

In the second chapter, I offered the reader a crash course in Zen. My hope is that this knowledge will serve as a foundation for understanding the metaphor through which I will be making my case about the importance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and about the place contemplative/mindfulness practices might hold in teacher training and development. The third chapter makes two parts of my argument: First, the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant because it shapes the interpersonal aspect of teaching,

which is where the classroom comes to life. Second, I argue that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching has been underserved in teacher training and development, and that its greater inclusion might be beneficial to teachers and their classrooms.

First, I will illustrate that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant to what happens in the classroom. And I suggest that as much as good teaching depends on theory and pedagogy, good teaching also depends on the intrapersonal awareness and skill—the inner resources—of the teacher. I look at research on self-efficacy, on personal characteristics and teacher success, and research on teacher evaluations to suggest various ways navigating/negotiating/managing the intrapersonal aspect of teaching shapes the interactions teachers have in the classroom, which contribute to teacher effectiveness or undermine it.

Next, I will illustrate that the intrapersonal is underserved in pre-service and in-service teacher training. I attempt to show that even though pre-service training often includes a component of self-reflection, teacher training and development—because of powerful rhetorics related to content knowledge and subject-specific pedagogies—tends to focus on content and pedagogy, and that when self-reflection is used, it often skims the surface in relation to issues of identity. I discuss research related to pre-service and in-service training and show how the intrapersonal aspect of teaching may amount to a missed opportunity in teacher development.

Throughout the chapter, I continue to use the koan “the world is medicine” as a guiding metaphor. The term “medicine,” as I am using it, may refer to the beliefs, attitudes, words, and actions of the teacher, which positively influence his students and

classroom. It may also refer to institutional and systemic practices and/or structures that support students. And as I suggested in chapter two, the term “medicine” is not meant to imply sickness.

In the “dharma talk,” which relies on and is written from my experience, I explore different types of “medicine” I have witnessed in my years in education. It is important to note that in the “dharma talk” I am being descriptive rather than normative. The talk encompasses my history. Again, any bad assumptions about which I confess were, in fact, my thoughts at the time. Any strange connections I made were my own understandings (or misunderstandings).

“DHARMA TALK”:

MEDICINE HAPPENS

I started my student teaching when I was twenty-one. I was in charge of my own classes right after I turned twenty-two. My career began in an “inner city” high school in the Washington, D. C. area. The school wallowed at the bottom of a shallow depression at the end of a quiet street that passed through a working class neighborhood of small, neatly kept red brick and wood frame houses. At its inception in the early 60's, the school must have looked like a brass button on a green velvet vest. A school in the glade at the bottom of the hill.

By the mid 1980s, it resembled the plug in the bottom of a sink. The city had grown up over it, trampling any inklings of the country. Only twenty minutes from the Capitol steps—in non rush-hour traffic—its district bordered Washington’s southeast side, at the time, the most prolifically and flagrantly violent section of the city. The drug markets of Southeast were notorious, yielding weekly death tolls that shoved D. C. to the top of the murders-per-capita chart for the nation.

The high school was declared a Milliken II school prior to my tenure. This meant its population, which was predominantly African American with a smattering of Vietnamese, Filipino, and Anglo students, was, because of the demographics of its sending district, impossible to desegregate.

What medicine did I bring? What type of medicine was I?

There are the facts. At different times, I coached volleyball and softball, I ran the student newspaper, and I sponsored the drama club. I taught mainly juniors and seniors,

usually three classes of college-bound students and a couple of basic skills classes. The yearbooks my students signed, the cards and letters I got, the handful of students I am still in contact with over twenty years later seem to indicate I had a positive impact.

But what kind of medicine was I?

My very first day of teaching, I presented my students with a three-to-five page essay to show them I meant business. It was due the next day. The subject did not matter.

“Dag,” one of the girls in my first hour said. “That a lot of work.”

I heard “damn.”

Though I thought she sounded more astonished than anything, I knew I couldn’t ignore her comment. I felt, no matter how mistakenly, that my reputation and my control of the class were already on the line.

“Stand outside,” I told the girl.

“Why?”

“I’m not going to have you swearing in class.”

“I didn’t swear,” she said, and several voices seconded her.

I could have taught a semester in the pause that followed. The girl looked exasperated—as she would so much of that year—as if I were an embarrassing and unreasonable father. She stood by her desk with a hand on her cocked hip and stared at me. I stood firmly by my first hearing of her statement.

“Oh my gawd!” she said as she flounced out the door, slamming it—of course—for emphasis.

“This teacher strict,” a boy muttered loudly enough to be heard.

I assume my students not only thought I was strict. I'm sure "he lunchin'"—then slang for crazy—launched through several minds.

I learned later that day that "dag" was a regionalism. In time, I came to love the versatility of dag as it drawled slowly out into conversation or as it crisply emphasized a point. Dag could be friendly or frustrated, silly or serious, amazed or certain, an introduction or conclusion or both.

The real shock came when I read that first batch of papers.

"Where do you begin?" I asked my colleagues.

In hushed, labored, or martyred tones, I was advised by most colleagues to show my students, as best I could, the right way of speaking and writing, but not to worry too much. There was no way I was going to overcome all the writing and language deficiencies the kids had. The problems were too severe and too much a part of the community. The best I could do was to hold to what was right. Focus on grammar and usage. The students were supposed to have gotten a dose of it every year, but they still needed it.

One colleague, an African American woman, told me it was my responsibility to make sure that I didn't let the kids slide on anything. They were going to have to exist in an unforgiving world, she said. They needed to be trained "right" for their own protection, and because they would be representing their race, whether they wanted to represent it or not. She was tired of society assuming black people were stupid because their dialect differed from that of the white community. Her message: grammar, grammar, and more grammar.

So, I became a guardian—as Mina Shaughnessy says in “Diving In”—defending right language by employing countless drills in nouns, verbs, direct objects, adjectives and adverbs. And I learned much about grammar that I had forgone in my own education, since I edited my own papers by ear. I vigilantly hyper-corrected, and by the end of the year, was exhausted and satisfied only marginally. Being a gatekeeper in the face of constantly changing language is like trying to stop an ocean wave with a colander.

What I came to believe: The issue with which I was grappling was not merely language—if language is ever “merely”—but the peculiar silent intersection of language and culture, and that any attempts to disconnect language from culture were doomed to fail because they are like siblings. A threat to one often rouses the protective instincts of the other, and what starts as a finite confrontation quickly becomes a family fight. And what was left when language and culture were severed? Disembodied voice. The final product? It resembled the desired result only in form.

What I definitely learned: My one-way street was not one-way for others.

I felt that I could not continue the way I was going, but I worried. I could not approach my teaching as a defender of a dying faith. The morose conviction that my students were both deficient and beyond repair chafed at me on too many levels, opposed too many of my observations. But I was still largely directionless. My reading of Mina Shaughnessy suggested to me that my perception of error was largely a factor of my own expectations. And Luis Arena—one of my linguistics professors—informed me that the dialect with which I was contending, and at that point I do mean contending, operated

with a discreet, understandable and even, if I chose to be nonjudgmental, acceptable set of linguistic principles.

Still I was left asking: What did all this mean in terms of my teaching? And although I didn't know I was wondering it at the time, I was wondering, "What type of medicine am I?"

I felt ambiguous. By trying to be supportive of my student writers—I found something to praise even in the worst written calamities—was I coddling when I should have been correcting? Was I neglecting my responsibility? Was I disempowering them by under-developing their critical senses?

Over the course of the next few years, two students, Tara and Gail, gradually and unintentionally became my teachers. Both could "talk street" with their peers, then switch in a twinkling and converse in nearly flawless "Standard English." Both, at least in part because of this, would go on to major universities, Tara to Temple for journalism and Gail to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and then to law school at the University of Virginia.

Through them, I was inadvertently invited into a world I hadn't considered, a world I had not formerly been privy to, a world I had omitted through narrowness of vision. What began to unfold before me, as a byproduct of our conversations, were the complicated set of considerations beneath Tara and Gail's choices, considerations that often carried enormous cultural weight.

As we talked it became clear that for Tara and Gail race was a ubiquitous factor and a permanent consideration. How each girl presented herself—orally and in writing—

not only made a statement about her individually and about her relationship to her own culture, but was inevitably tied to how her race would be perceived by others. Language and culture were inextricably bound.

It was when I was attempting, rather unsuccessfully, to help Tara and Gail navigate the college search process that their concerns first became clear to me. Each list of colleges we generated received, at best, tentative approval. Large schools, small schools, close to home, far from home, predominantly African American, predominantly white, inexpensive state schools, expensive private ones. Hesitation and more hesitation. Not once a clear affirmation.

"I don't get it," I finally said.

The girls looked at each other, at me, at the floor, at the computer screen, at the lists, at the floor again.

"I-don't-want-to-go-to-an-all-black-school-but-I'm-not-sure-I-want-to-go-to-a-white-school-either," Gail blurted out. She looked at me and then back at the floor.

Race hung between us.

"I think I can understand that. When I came here, I didn't know what to expect."

I was groping.

"It's not just that."

"We don't know how we're going to do," Tara said. "We're good here, but what about at an all white school?"

"And what are *people* going to say if we go to an all white school? I know I shouldn't care, but—"

More hesitation.

"And if we get into a white school," Gail said, "we don't know if we were selected because we're black or because we're good. What if we're just a quota and they figure we're going to fail out anyway? You never know."

"I don't want people to think I'm stupid or black people are stupid because of me."

As we sputtered through this and other conversations, I came to recognize that beneath these considerations—the ones most easily verbalized—there were layers of shadowy and cryptically articulated concerns. These girls were governed by rules and principles I only partially understood, and their labyrinths revealed how naive my assumptions about language and culture were. In my decisions, my speech, and my writing, I didn't have to shuttle between or sift through multiple and disparate demands of often clashing cultures. At least not at the same level of intensity.

Observing them move between languages and cultures helped me to solidify my next major goal as a teacher of writing: how to help my other students effortlessly exchange dialects. With hindsight, I realize my desire for my other students to attain Tara and Gail's proficiencies hints both at the core of my transformation and at the heart of my problem. I was—in modern lingo—still approaching my teaching from the point of view of colonialism. I was still, in Shaughnessy's words, trying to "convert the natives" ("Diving In" 96).

My conviction was unequivocal. The students whom I was teaching were, by and large, capable. They were, like Tara and Gail, often quite savvy. I didn't want to deaden their voices. I wanted to urge them to train their voices, like natural sopranos who needed

to learn control. My approach was two pronged and paradoxical: Loose their real voices and then fit those voices into patterns acceptable to academia. Through this I hoped to coax my students to broader and more profitable linguistic alternatives.

Since Peter Elbow's work was what I knew, Elbow was what I used. Freewriting became my sledge hammer, my pipe wrench, my vice grip pliers. I used it constantly in my classroom. But I continued, after the freewriting was done, to have my students mash their ideas into five-paragraph essays—my limited conception of academic style—and I didn't abandon my stilted engagement to grammar either. So, while I became increasingly committed to freeing my students' voices, I indentured them—the students and their voices—to a relatively useless form. In its favor, it provided a framework for students in need of guidance, and it was quite useful on high-stakes tests. But ultimately this method of teaching was not my best or my most powerful medicine. How I was teaching was not true to who I was or to who I was becoming. It was not true to how I was in my best relationships. It served me as I learned my craft, and I don't want to denigrate it, its place in my development, or its place in the pantheon of pedagogy or pedagogical concerns, but it could only serve me for a short time. I was not comfortable with my pedagogy or with the assumptions that informed it.

Over the years, in terms of pedagogy, my work became learning more fully and more deeply about communication, rhetoric, and linguistics. Each has helped me in its own way to become a better teacher and more true to my best medicine. I learned how to organize writing workshops, and my medicine has become facilitating experiences with writing that honor the complexity of language, the complexity of context, the complexity

of communication, and the complexity my students' lives. In terms of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, my work became learning and practicing trust and acceptance, both of my students and myself. I learned to trust that when a student is willing, his teacher will appear; to accept—without renegeing on my responsibilities—that I may not be that teacher; and to trust and accept that we—my students and I—are doing the best we can with the resources we have at hand. And my medicine has become greater patience, while balancing the competing demands of the classroom.

All of these things happened incrementally. Writing, teaching, and contemplative/mindfulness practice take time. Lots of time. And as a result of this hodge-podge of influences, my medicine changed. The young man who was invited to listen to his students' music is gone. As is the young man who spent nights and weekends taking students out on photo shoots for the school newspaper, traveling to softball and volleyball games, and preparing productions with the drama club. I am several iterations down the line from the young teacher on whom students had crushes. I have passed through the stage of trusted uncle, when my students asked me for advice on their personal lives, and the value of my conversation mostly came from letting them know that they were okay and that their lives would be okay too. And I appear to have entered a stage where I am treated like a well-seasoned and respected diplomat, who is valued mainly for his content expertise.

I offered different types of medicine at each stage. No one medicine I offered was necessarily better than another. Each had its place and time, each appealed—and didn't appeal—to different students. And I don't think my medicine was the only appropriate

medicine for the students I taught. The African-American teacher who told me to focus on grammar was one of the most regimented teachers I knew, and she was very successful. It was her medicine. At the same school, there was a man who taught with a style that was nothing short of frenetic. It was his medicine and he was highly successful, too. Both were considered effective teachers.

Each of us may bring medicine in a host of ways to the same situation, some through discipline and some through flexibility, some through logic and some through love. Conversely, I suspect any style of teaching, any specific medicine, has a context in which it works, from the hard-nosed drill sergeant at boot camp who must initiate new soldiers to the nurturing pre-school teacher who must care for those who cannot care for themselves. And finally, I suspect that there are some medicines—like respect, fairness, and acceptance—which will work in most circumstances. Medicine happens. In subtle and magnificent ways. Intentionally and unintentionally. Consistently and inconsistently. Quickly and slowly. Willingly and with resistance. But medicine happens. And the intrapersonal—in my case, the feelings of confusion over my identity/medicine, the attempts to work with my identity/medicine both inwardly and outwardly, the acceptance of and the resistance to changes in my identity/medicine, the slow coming to trust my identity/ medicine—seems to reach its fingers into almost every aspect of this happening.

THE INTRAPERSONAL ASPECT OF TEACHING:

WHAT KINDS OF MEDICINE IS IT?

What I want to argue in the remainder of this chapter is that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is germane to what happens in the classroom, and that allowing processes of self-examination and intrapersonal navigation/negotiation/management to proceed haphazardly when they could be supported and sustained in a consistent way via training and development seems less than responsible, less than practical, and less than efficient. I will also suggest that examining and navigating/negotiating/managing one's thoughts and feelings, in an ongoing manner, takes larger tools than are currently employed in most teacher training and development. And I will suggest that neglecting the intrapersonal amounts to a missed opportunity, which could potentially offer benefits to individual teachers, to individual classrooms, and to education as a whole.

When I reflect on the complex sets of medicine at work in education, it is almost mind-boggling. The range of teaching styles and pedagogies, the range of institutional foci and structures, and the number of forms of support for students is incredible. In Tucson alone—where I live—there is the Kino School, in which education is totally self-directed. The school is set up in centers that students float into and out of freely. There are a number of Montessori schools, in which education is both self-directed and methodical. Montessori teachers, although they will direct group lessons, are not considered the only resource within the classroom setting. Montessori students are trained in the uses of Montessori educational materials, and students direct much of their own education using these materials. Students are also expected to serve as teachers for each

other. And classrooms contain multiple levels of students—first, second, and third graders are lower elementary; fourth, fifth, and sixth graders are upper elementary—to accommodate the different rates at which students learn.

A Waldorf School, whose model started in Europe, Satori, which seeks to apply Howard Gardener’s multiple intelligences, and Highland Free School, which was part of the free school movement, are also part of the Tucson elementary school landscape. There are also a number of religious-based schools, including Catholic schools, Christian schools, the Jewish Community Center, and the Islamic Center. Numerous home school groups also exist, which includes a subset of people participating in unschooling, an approach using no curriculum and no structured learning.

There are also many public elementary school classrooms, which—with varying degrees of regimentation and freedom—serve their students. I have seen classrooms set up in rows and pods. I have even seen a classroom without desks. I have seen teachers inundate students with worksheets, and I have seen teachers engage their students with clever, interesting, and creative assignments. I have seen teachers who lecture, discuss, facilitate, challenge, nurture, and entertain their students. And within these schools, there are programs for students with any number of needs, ranging from “Gifted and Talented” to “Special Education.”

As students get into secondary schools, the range of medicine remains broad. In addition to the normal pallet of English, history, science, and math, most high schools offer classes in art, music, and theater; languages including Spanish, French, German, and Sign; and creative writing. Some have programs in the culinary arts, early childhood

education, automotive technology, and carpentry as well. There are also close to a hundred charter and private schools in Tucson, whose foci include everything from college preparation for motivated students to meeting graduation requirements for at-risk students. Schools like St. Gregory's College Prep Academy, Tucson Country Day School, Basis, Sonoran Science Academy, Paolo Freire Freedom School, Immaculate Heart, and Green Fields work with some of the "best and brightest" in Tucson. And schools like PPEP TEC, Presidio, and Desert Rose offer alternative paths for students that might otherwise disengage entirely from education.

At the post-secondary level, Pima Community College (PCC) and the University of Arizona (UA) offer tandem medicines into the world. At PCC, students can enroll in transfer programs in preparation for study at the university level. They can also choose career-oriented programs like therapeutic massage, hotel and restaurant management, computer aided drafting, nursing, law enforcement, firefighting, and direct care. And they can take courses in dance, physics, poetry, accounting, Russian, and Japanese solely for personal enrichment. They can take courses online, or in traditional classroom formats, or in hybrid formats. And since PCC, like all community colleges, is an open enrollment institution, there are few restrictions on who can enter PCC's classes. The UA offers 150 undergraduate degrees and 200 graduate degrees. Tucson's post-secondary landscape also includes ITT Technical Institute, Tucson Design College, The University of Phoenix, Brown Mackie College, Apollo College, The Art Center Design College, and extension campuses of Northern Arizona University and Prescott College. And less traditional schools include Arizona School of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, the Asian

Institute of Medical Studies, Tucson Touch Therapies, and Cortiva Institute, School of Massage Therapy.

The point of these lists is that the varieties of medicines being offered—in terms of teaching styles and pedagogies, as well as in terms of institutional foci and structures—is staggering, and that this wide a variety of medicines may be found, in spite of the rhetoric about failing schools and education being in shambles, almost everywhere in the United States. Tucson is just one example. I am not contending that the educational landscape and educational institutions are problem free. There are problems with access, quality, variety, and personnel, and I don't think these issues should be ignored or dismissed. However, I am contending that, in spite of the shortcomings, the breadth of the medicine being offered is stunning, and that within the context of each school, many students have received and are receiving the medicine they need.

As my “dharma talk” illustrated, my experience suggests to me the relevance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching in terms of the “medicines” that become manifested in the classroom. As I intimated, each stage of my personal development and each phase of my contemplative/mindfulness practice have modified who I am in the classroom, how I interact with my students, and how I teach. For myself, I see a clear connection between my level of awareness about my thoughts, emotions, narratives, and identities (am I only acting on the basis of them, or am I able to observe and examine them?); how I navigate/negotiate/manage the complexities of these thoughts, emotions, narratives, and identities (am I only responding to them, or am I able to consider my reactions and to make conscious choices?); and how I relate to my students and perform in the classroom (to

what extent are these being negatively or positively influenced by my level of intrapersonal knowledge and skill?). When I am aware of my thoughts, emotions, narratives, and identities, when I am able to examine them, and when I am able to place them in perspective and practice acceptance, I interact better with my students and I perform better. For me, the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, intrapersonal knowledge and skill, and what happens in the classroom unmistakably intersect.

And each time I discuss the central notions of my dissertation with other teachers, they tell me stories about how their intrapersonal lives shape their teaching. Recently, I had a colleague tell me about how letting go of a specific set of expectations—some personal assumptions about how his classes “should be acting”—transformed his feelings about a particular class and consequently his interaction with his students. He had, he said, been acting on the assumption—without really considering it—that his community college students should act more like the students he had taught at the university, and he was disappointed or angry when they did not.

As he became aware of his thinking and how it was influencing both his feelings and his student-teacher relationships, he was able to step back from his assumption and reflect on it. And this internal process led him to the decision to release the expectations that were—according to him—hindering him and his classes. He was elated as he described how shifting his thinking about his situation shifted his feelings about it. He was amazed—in the terms of this argument—about how his intrapersonal shift (i.e. the change in a personal belief about his students) reformed the interpersonal (i.e. his relationship with his students). And he was excited about bringing this realization, this

experience, this knowledge into other classes. However, he also expressed frustration that he had not made the connection between the intrapersonal (his personal beliefs about his students) and the interpersonal (his interactions with his students) sooner, even though in retrospect it seemed completely obvious. It could have, he suggested, saved him a lot of pain. He felt he had wasted a lot of time and energy trying to force his community college students to mirror his former university students, which he came to realize was unimportant in terms of achieving his pedagogical objectives.

Also recently, another colleague revealed an internal dilemma she had in deciding how to deal with some students who were going to miss a quiz because they were engaged in political protests of state budget cuts to education. She felt torn because she wanted to honor the political stand these students were making, and at the same time she wanted to be fair to the other students that had chosen to attend her class. She eventually decided to modify the syllabus of her course, so that every student could drop the lowest quiz grade. My colleague perceived this solution as creating a win-win situation for her students, which allowed her to feel that she had behaved fairly and equitably to everyone. However, the solution created another intrapersonal dilemma for her, in that she had to wrestle with her desire to maintain her academic standards. It took some time, she said, but she was able to reconcile the solution with her desire to maintain standards, and she was able to make the change in the syllabus feeling clear and clean about her actions.

In the former case, my colleague experienced a rather large intrapersonal shift—in relation to his narrative and identity, as well as in terms of his feelings—which has the potential to change how he interacts with all of his classes. The intrapersonal dilemma,

how he felt about his classes when they did not behave in accordance with his expectations, was also a rather large one, extending across the entirety of his teaching. In the latter case, the intrapersonal shift was more limited. But the scope of the intrapersonal dilemma—the confusion and mixed feelings about what constituted fairness in the particular situation—was more limited, too. Still, each example exposes the subtle ways that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, intrapersonal knowledge, and intrapersonal skill are relevant to what happens in the classroom. Although there were pedagogical dimensions to each of their experiences, my colleagues were dealing with more than pedagogy. They were dealing with the complexities of their feelings, their narratives, and their identities, both knowing them and navigating/negotiating/managing them within the context of their teaching.

Teachers navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, whether they frame it as such or not, whether they are doing so methodically or haphazardly, whether they are doing so formally or informally, and whether they are doing so with guidance or without it. And intrapersonal issues, as well as how they are handled, become manifested in the classroom. My experience suggests this. The experiences others relay to me suggest this. And in the remainder of this section, I have one intention: to review educational research, which suggests the relevance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, intrapersonal knowledge, and intrapersonal skill to what happens in the classroom. My argument about contemplative/mindfulness practices and the medicines they may bring to teaching is premised on the claim that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is pertinent to what transpires in education, and that intrapersonal knowledge

and skill—the ability to know oneself and to act in positive ways based on that knowledge—are necessary in order to adequately cope with the intrapersonal issues that arise in teaching. My intention in reviewing this educational research is not to explain each area of research in detail, but to show how each area of research relates to and reveals the significance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and of having adequate intrapersonal knowledge and skill.

Again, when I use the term “the intrapersonal aspect of teaching,” I will be referring to the internal side of teaching. The term will encompass a teacher’s internal responses to situations in which he finds himself. It will also include a teacher’s feelings, beliefs, identities, and narratives. However, the term, as I use it, will not be limited to the feelings, beliefs, identities, and narratives that teachers have. It will also refer to how they navigate/negotiate/manage that internal terrain. For example, when teachers feel fear or anger, what internal resources do they have for dealing with those emotions? Or as their beliefs, identities, and narratives are challenged or changed, what internal processes do they employ for coping with those challenges or changes? I am using the term navigate/negotiate/manage in relation to the internal processes because collectively they seem to capture important facets of those processes. Sometimes moving through internal processes seems like navigating a river, sometimes it seems like negotiating a complex deal, and sometimes it seems like decisive strategy. I am calling the level of awareness that one has about the internal terrain “intrapersonal knowledge.” And I am calling the ability to navigate/negotiate/manage that terrain “intrapersonal skill.”

The research related to effective teaching is revealing when it comes to the role of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. First, the research into teacher self-efficacy—which might be understood as a teacher’s belief in his competence—is disclosing the importance of belief to teacher effectiveness, suggesting that beliefs about self-efficacy may influence everything from the classroom climate a teacher creates to student achievement. Self-belief is—at least in part—an intrapersonal matter. It is navigated/negotiated/managed internally and in conjunction with the outside world, with intrapersonal processes and interaction with the world influencing one another (Kyriakides 298).

Second, the research into personal traits, such as a teacher’s motivation and commitment, suggests the significance of the intrapersonal, since the maintenance of such traits, at least in part, involves the navigation/negotiation/management of feelings and identities. One cannot maintain a sense of motivation or commitment, for example, without dealing with the occasional dark emotion, the occasional negative perception, or the occasional challenge to identity.

And finally, the research into teacher evaluations also highlights the relevance of the intrapersonal, revealing that students value teachers who demonstrate qualities such as fairness and compassion. These qualities obviously have an interpersonal aspect to them. They involve a relationship between student and teacher. Or they involve the student’s perception of the teacher. However, as the example of my colleague who wrestled the issue of the quiz illustrated, they have an intrapersonal aspect to them as well. Fairness, as my colleague’s example showed, often involves navigating/

negotiating/managing internal struggle. Even though the research is in some ways mixed, it still presents a compelling case for the relevance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching.

The work being done with teacher self-efficacy is yielding results that are interesting in terms of what they suggest about the relationship between teacher belief and teacher actions, and the consequences this has for the classroom. The primary notion of teacher self-efficacy is that teachers who have a sense of self-mastery, who have confidence in their ability, and who believe they will be successful generally will be. Kyriakides, Campbell, and Christofidou—in a 2002 study discussing criteria for measuring teacher effectiveness—note that research appears to show that self-efficacy is one of the greatest predictors of behavior to accomplish a task (298-99). In other words, teachers who demonstrate a sense of self-efficacy, the belief that they have the capability of organizing and executing the actions required to attain a specific result, are more likely to take those steps than teachers who are uncertain of their ability. Kyriakides et al. note that students of teachers who have high self-efficacy tend to have higher achievement scores on standardized tests and that self-efficacy beliefs seem to be positive correlated with student achievement in math and language (299). They also note the research has revealed that “low teacher efficacy beliefs have been linked to low expectations of students which is a significant factor in student achievement” (299).

Kyriakides’ latter point about the intersection of self-efficacy and expectations may provide a link between teacher belief and student achievement, whether the achievement is positive or negative. Muijs and Reynolds emphasize that teacher expectations are one of the most important factors in terms of teacher effectiveness. They

state, “From the late sixties onwards research has found that teachers’ expectations for their students become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Students that teachers expect to do well tend to achieve better, while students who are expected to do badly tend to fulfill their teacher’s expectations as well” (27). Muijs and Reynolds admit—in relation to concerns that teacher expectations may simply be perceptual bias—that perception plays a part in teacher expectations. For example, they note that a teacher’s perception of a student as good or bad may bias the teacher’s grading of that student’s work. And they note that teachers may simply be recognizing the best students, not creating them through their expectations. However, they argue that something more significant than perception and perceptual bias is going on (27). According to Muijs and Reynolds, there are strong indications that teacher expectations influence teacher behavior. They point out that teacher expectations have been correlated with the amount and the quality of time a teacher gives to a student, and they suggest that research has demonstrated that teachers give many subtle cues to students about their expectations, to which students respond accordingly (27).

One of the interesting dimensions of this research, from the point of view of this argument, is that the work on self-efficacy and expectations may begin to give us a glimpse of how personal beliefs (the intrapersonal) become manifested in actions (the interpersonal), which shape student-teacher relationships and create limits within the classroom. The research seems to suggest the subtle ways that personal beliefs shape student-teacher relationships (i.e. the amount and the quality of time a student receives from a teacher). And it also seems to suggest that based on personal notions about

competence—their own and their students—teachers enact very different patterns of behavior in their classrooms. Teachers who believe in their own abilities, the research suggests, tend to claim their own agency and to take action toward goals, and teachers who do not believe in their abilities seem less likely to engage in similar goal-oriented behaviors.

Pajares and Bandura—two of the foremost researchers into self-efficacy—also suggest that teacher self-efficacy influences what happens in the classroom. In the lecture “Schooling in America: Myths, Mixed Messages, and Good Intentions,” which Pajares delivered in 2000, he states:

Beliefs of personal competence...are the self-beliefs that are most predictive of [people's] choices, their work habits, their fear and apprehension, and their achievement.... Findings suggest that the efficacy beliefs of teachers are related to their instructional practices and to various student outcomes. For example, unconfident teachers tend to hold a custodial orientation that takes a pessimistic view of students' motivation, emphasizes rigid control of classroom behavior, and relies on extrinsic inducements and negative sanctions to get students to study.... [In contrast] confident teachers create mastery experiences for their students.

Pajares—like Kyriakides, Muijs, and Reynolds—notes that beliefs become manifested in teachers' actions and behaviors in the classroom, in both positive and negative ways.

According to Pajares, teachers who have lower levels of confidence and weaker senses of self-efficacy tend to create classroom environments and student-teacher relationships that

are less inviting and that may be less conducive to student success (i.e. rigid control, extrinsic inducements, and negative sanctions). Whereas teachers who have stronger senses of self-efficacy tend to use “instructional practices” that are more inviting and more conducive to student success. In this manner, Pajares suggests a direct connection between self-efficacy beliefs and the pedagogical approaches (i.e. “instructional practices”), that a teacher’s beliefs about himself affect his style of teaching and have pedagogical implications. He suggests that teachers may need to be confident in their abilities before they will attempt pedagogical approaches that require them to take greater risks (i.e. creating mastery experiences), which may mean they have to—at least to a certain extent—relinquish “control” of their classes.

Pajares also mirrors Kyriakides’ suggestion that a teacher’s self-efficacy beliefs affect how teachers perceive others. In his lecture, Pajares notes that “under-confident teachers are highly skeptical of the abilities of colleagues...[and that] teachers not confident in their ability can be harsh judges of the abilities of others.” And as I have already noted, Pajares suggests that unconfident teachers tend to take a “pessimistic view of students’ motivation.” Pajares’ suggestion that unconfident teachers are harsh judges of others’ abilities and that they tend to be pessimistic about their students may be related to Kyriakides’ suggestion that self-efficacy beliefs and teacher expectations are connected. In fact, Pajares may provide the link between the two. If a teacher is skeptical of his students’ abilities, it is unlikely that he will set high expectations. Again, this has material consequences, because as Muijs and Reynolds suggest, there appears to be a correlation between teacher expectations and student achievement.

Kyriakides and Pajares suggest that teacher self-efficacy beliefs (teachers' beliefs about their own competence) have an influence on their expectations for their students (their beliefs about the competence of their students), which in turn is tangibly manifested in terms of teacher actions, student-teacher relationships, and student success. Pajares also suggests that self-efficacy beliefs have pedagogical implications, influencing a teacher's choice of "instructional practices." This directly connects the intrapersonal and the interpersonal, and—in the metaphor that is guiding this work—suggests that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching (in this case self-belief) influences the types of medicine (the instructional techniques, the behaviors, and personal strategies) a teacher enacts in the classroom.

It seems a case can be made that the research on self-efficacy supports the notion that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is important to what happens in the classroom. The beliefs a teacher holds about his competence seem to set the limits for what he is willing to do in terms of his methodology. The beliefs a teacher holds about himself and his students also appear to become manifested in the teacher's behavior (how he treats his students and what he expects of his students), and this behavior has material consequences in terms of student performance. Specifically, a teacher's beliefs about himself and his abilities appear to become manifested in behaviors and actions that positively or negatively influence student success. The research seems to chart how positive belief and/or positive navigation/negotiation/management of belief becomes positive action, and how negative belief and/or negative navigation/negotiation/management of belief becomes negative action. And this seems to point to the relevance

of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching to what happens in the classroom, as well as to the significance of intrapersonal knowledge and skill to the medicines that teachers are able to offer their students.

Another area of research that seems to illustrate the importance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, intrapersonal knowledge, and intrapersonal skill is the research regarding the link between personal characteristics of teachers and student achievement. Although there has been some contention about the research into teacher characteristics and student achievement, the more recent research seems to establish some connections that are valuable to this argument.

Before I look at the research that supports my case, I want to discuss some apparent discrepancies regarding the existing research into personal characteristics and teacher effectiveness. Early research in the area of personal characteristics looked at factors like permissiveness, dogmatism, motivation, commitment, empathy, years of experience, and teacher effectiveness. And according to Kyriakides, this research proved to be of limited value. “Although this approach produced some consensus on virtues considered desirable in teachers,” he says. “No information on the relation between these psychological factors and student performance was provided” (294). However, more recent research seems to have found connections between personal characteristics and teacher effectiveness. Day, Stobart, Sammons, and Kington—in a 2006 study investigating the connection of teachers’ work lives and personal lives—suggest that teacher traits do influence what happens in the classroom and how it happens. They cite numerous studies (Troman & Woods 2001; Little 2000; Day 2004) in addition to their

own work, which suggest that personal traits such as motivation and commitment are “significant in relation to teachers achieving, maintaining and improving effectiveness” (175). They also cite research of Huberman and Fessler, which suggests age and phase of development might have a significant impact on teacher effectiveness. And they note that a study by Fullan & Hargreaves suggests a teacher’s ability to adapt to change can have an impact on effective teaching.

I can see how the research may yield conflicting results about the influence of personal characteristics. For example, I have known few young teachers who were not motivated and committed, but that did not necessarily translate into effective teaching. When I think about my first few years, I still cringe at some of the mistakes I made. And I know that although my energy level was high, my intentions good, and my results satisfactory, I became much more effective as I learned more about my craft and myself. On the other hand, I see how motivation and commitment are important to “maintaining and improving” a seasoned teacher’s effectiveness. Without them, performance begins to slip, even if the slip may not be easily discernable to anyone but the teacher. I have experienced this at various times in my career as well. And even Kyriakides suggests that while personal factors may not affect student performance overtly, they may have an effect on students’ attitudes and the climate of the classroom (317). So, the notion that research on personal characteristics may yield some conflicting results does not seem surprising to me. Nor does it seem to negate the findings that suggest there are correlations between effective teaching and personal traits. As I mentioned in the last chapter, Jean-Francois Lyotard notes that the legitimacy of one idea does not necessarily

imply another idea's lack of legitimacy. Apparently conflicting notions may coexist. As I try to suggest with the example of my own career, there may be reasonable explanations for conflicting data.

That being said, in terms of exploring the importance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, I found the work by Day et al. of particular interest. Their research suggests:

[1] While many teachers begin their careers 'with a sense that their work is socially meaningful and will yield great satisfactions', this may be lost as...the inevitable difficulties of teaching ... *interact with personal issues and vulnerabilities*.... [2] For many teachers *low self-esteem [and] shame* ...are directly correlated with less variety of teaching approaches and thus less connection with students' learning needs.... [3] That *identity, a key factor in effectiveness*, is affected, positively and negatively, by classroom experiences, organizational culture and situation-specific personal and professional events...[and that] *it is the way that these fluctuations are managed* which is key to teacher resilience and effectiveness. (174-90, numbers and italics added)

I would like to review their observations in order. The fact that many teachers begin their careers with the "sense" that their profession will be "meaningful" and will bring satisfaction suggests that teachers are—from the start—trying to find something of intrinsic value in their career path. The notion that their profession will be "socially meaningful" might be interpreted to imply that teachers want external recognition for their work, but the call to "socially meaningful" work is also recognized as a highly personal aim. One may witness this in the rhetoric regarding other "socially meaningful"

work—i.e. ministry, motherhood, child care, counseling, and other helping professions—in which the work itself is often framed as its own reward. Day et al.’s suggestion that teachers, from the beginning, are seeking intrinsic internal rewards—that their careers should be meaningful and bring satisfaction—suggests that intrapersonal concerns (i.e. self-satisfaction) seem to be interwoven into the average teacher’s intentions.

The finding that a teacher’s “sense” of meaning and purpose may be lost as the “difficulties of teaching” interact with “personal issues and vulnerabilities” also suggests the role the intrapersonal plays in a teacher’s professional experience. The way Day et al. frame the predicament of losing meaning and purpose, it is not just the “difficulties” that arise in the course of a teaching career that become problematic. Difficulties are, in the words of Day, “inevitable.” They are part of the situational and emotional landscape of teaching, just as they are part of the landscape every other career. The real problem, according to Day, involves how the inevitable external difficulties intersect with the “issues and vulnerabilities” of the individual teacher. The problem is how the interpersonal interacts with the intrapersonal, how the individual responds to the situations with which he is presented. And how one responds is based on one’s own “issues and vulnerabilities.”

In this, I read the implication that it is not just the “issues and vulnerabilities” themselves that are the problem, but how the attendant thoughts, feelings, beliefs, narratives, and identities are navigated/negotiated/managed, externally and internally, that creates dilemmas. For instance, a teacher may feel vulnerable because he is not particularly accomplished in some aspect of his teaching. Challenges from students in

this area may make the teacher fearful of being exposed. It is not just the sense of vulnerability or the attendant fear that is problematic. It is how the teacher copes with that vulnerability and fear. One teacher might be consumed by the sense of vulnerability and/or the feeling of fear to the point that they/it becomes unmanageable. This teacher may become angry with students for the challenges they present. Or the teacher may overcompensate, perhaps by spending hours planning to make sure everything goes right. Or maybe the teacher sets up excessive rules and guidelines to gain a sense of control. If the situation persists, the teacher might also become frustrated with the profession and feel the need to leave. On the other hand, another teacher might accept vulnerability and fear as natural. This teacher might be able to laugh with students about his foibles. And he might use his foibles as a way to humanize his classroom. At various points in my career, I have been all these teachers, depending on the “issues and vulnerabilities” that were being exposed and the internal resources I had—at any given time—to cope with my feelings.

Revisiting the research related to self-efficacy may be helpful here, as it suggests that two different teachers may face the same set of circumstances quite differently. The research seems to suggest that the person who believes he is competent faces difficulties with a sense that he can accomplish a task and consequently takes action, and that the one who does not believe in his ability appears less likely to have a sense of possibility and is therefore less likely to take positive action. This seems to reinforce the notion, which I was trying to convey above, that it is not so much the circumstances as the person who is facing the circumstances that is important. And it also seems to reinforce the notion that

the intrapersonal—one’s feelings, beliefs, and identities—create the framework for how the interpersonal is handled.

In relation to Day’s point, what I am trying to say is this: As they imply, wherever external factors (i.e. difficulties) and internal factors (i.e. issues and vulnerabilities) collide to cause a crisis of identity, the intrapersonal (feelings, beliefs, identities; inner resources; and the internal strategies for managing them) is playing a role in the form and the extent of the crisis. And if the crisis has reached the point that one is losing a sense of meaning and purpose, I am—because of the magnitude of the crisis—assuming that one is having difficulty navigating/negotiating/managing the intrapersonal, one’s thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and/or identities in relation to the “difficulties” that one is encountering.

The material consequences of the inability to cope with one’s circumstances—to the point that one has lost a sense of meaning and purpose—may also reveal another way the intrapersonal aspect of teaching becomes manifested in the types of medicine that are found in the classroom. And these consequences may be found in the literature regarding teacher burnout, which I reviewed in the first chapter. This research suggests that burned out teachers—teachers who have lost their sense of meaning and purpose and who feel disconnected from their work—become a liability in the classroom. Haberman suggests that burned out teachers use less task-oriented behaviors, offer less positive feedback, and have a negative effect on student performance. So, the intrapersonal aspect of teaching appears not only to be related to the teacher’s experience (i.e. the sense of meaninglessness), but it again appears to shape the classroom environment and the experiences that students will receive.

The second point from Day et al.'s research that I want to focus on is the suggestion that teachers who experience "low self-esteem and shame" use less variety in terms of their teaching techniques and that they connect less with the needs of their students. This research, of course, appears to be similar to the research of self-efficacy. And it may be that Day et al. are discussing the same phenomena and simply employing different terminology. It may also be that they are discussing similar phenomena from a different perspective. Or it may be that they are discussing different phenomena, which have a similar result. For the purposes of this argument, I do not intend to tease out the differences between low self-efficacy, low self-esteem, and shame. In practical terms, the research of Pajares and Day arrive at the same place. The effect of low self-efficacy, low self-esteem, and shame appear to be the same: teachers with low self-efficacy/low self-esteem/shame tend to limit their pedagogical approaches and tend to be disconnected from their students' needs.

While I do not think it is important within the context of this section to probe all possible distinctions between self-efficacy and shame, because the main thrust of the section is to illustrate that the intrapersonal is relevant to teaching, and because the results of the research appear to be so similar, I think the notion of "shame" adds a new dimension to the discussion of the intrapersonal, so it is useful to look at from the standpoint of rhetoric. Shame is understood to be the perception that one is not—in the ontological sense—enough. One does not feel worthy or worthwhile. One's identity is as "not enough." Margaret Alter, in her essay "The Centrality of Forgiveness," suggests shame is the sense that one's reach will always exceed his grasp, that one can never live

up to who he wants to be, that one can never *be* enough, that one is unworthy. Alter suggests shame is a state of being. It is built into the human condition. There are, of course, other psychologists that perceive shame as learned. They argue that shame is not ontological.

However, from the rhetorical perspective, shame introduces the notion of the ontological into the conversation in a way that low self-efficacy and low self-esteem do not. Low self-efficacy and low self-esteem, in terms of how they are conceptualized, are totally learned thoughts and behaviors. From the rhetorical perspective, the notion of shame seems a deeper, more intractable, more confining concept than low self-efficacy. Shame is an identity as deeply and profoundly flawed. Low self-efficacy is a belief that one is not competent in a particular way. Low self-efficacy is learned. Shame *is*. So, the term “shame” introduces a concept that is larger and more inescapable into the conversation, and consequently, it introduces a different set of intrapersonal problems to deal with.

However, whether shame is a learned belief that may be unlearned (like low self-efficacy), or whether it is ontological in nature and may only be navigated/negotiated/managed through intrapersonal knowledge and skill, Day notes that shame becomes manifested in actions and relationships in the classroom. Like the research related to low self-efficacy, Day suggests that the research related to low self-esteem and shame indicates that teachers suffering from these tend to use less variety in terms of teaching techniques and they seem less connected with their students’ needs. Teachers with low self-esteem and shame—like teachers with low self-efficacy—seem to create less

dynamic classrooms, which feature less connection between teacher and student. And this continues to point to the role the intrapersonal plays in what happens in the classroom. It continues to reveal how internal worlds of belief and identity flow into the external world of relationships and into the medicines that teachers make available to students.

Finally, Day et al. conclude both that identity and how fluctuations in identity are managed are important to teachers and their classrooms. They state: “it is the way that fluctuations [in identity] are managed which *is key* to teacher resilience and effectiveness” (190, italics added). Day et al. suggest that a teacher’s identity may “fluctuate” over the course of time, and they suggest that some aspects of a teacher’s identity may face challenges in relation to external factors. The fluctuations in identity may be minor, and the teacher may basically sustain his personal and professional identity. Or the changes may be major and may require the teacher to re-envision himself.

Day et al. suggest—as Pajares and Kyriakides et al. do about self-belief—that issues of identity are negotiated through interaction with the world. According to Day et al., there are the internal/intrapersonal aspects of identity, which they suggest include “values, beliefs, purpose, [and] ideologies” (185). And there are external factors, including “pupils, policies, practices, culture, [and] leadership” (185), with which they interact. And “interaction” implies, as I noted in relation to Day et al.’s first point, that intrapersonal knowledge and skill may be factors shaping the form and the extent of the crises.

According to Day et al., how teachers respond to their circumstances “will be influenced by the extent to which teachers are able to sustain and/or manage changes in

existing identities” as these internal and external factors collide (186). Minor changes that allow teachers to “sustain” their identities will be easier to handle than more radical fluctuations. However, how teachers “manage” fluctuations in their identities may still allow them to cope with changes, even if the changes are larger. I will explore what Day et al. mean by “manage” in a moment. But the notion that teachers may “manage” these fluctuations is important for two reasons. First, it suggests teachers have some amount of control related to their experiences. And second, Day et al. suggest a teacher’s sense of identity is a key factor in “motivation, job fulfillment, commitment and self-efficacy” (186), which suggests the ability to “manage” fluctuations in positive ways may have important implications for teachers (i.e. job fulfillment) and classrooms (i.e. self-efficacy, commitment, and motivation).

Day et al. never clarify what they mean by “manage changes in existing identities.” Part of the management certainly involves how the teacher interacts with the external factors that seem to be creating the need for change. One may “manage” changes in one’s identity within the context of relationships with administrators and students, for instance, by discussing the changes with others. For example, one of my colleagues, when he was battling cancer, openly discussed his new identity (less energized and more muddled) with his classes, so that they would understand why he was “not himself.” He also talked with colleagues about the physical changes that were forcing him to become a different person and to rethink his identity. So, one may take real steps in the real world to “manage changes in existing identities.”

However, changes in identity necessitate the management of internal factors as well. No change in identity comes without some emotional responses that must be handled. No change in identity comes without some level of internal struggle related to the reforming of beliefs and/or notions about the self. These struggles may be shared to some extent, as my colleague demonstrated. But the process of transition remains highly internalized. William Bridges points this out in *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*, his seminal work on how people navigate processes of change. Bridges suggests that changes in the external environment precipitate internal processes of transition in individuals; that individuals interacting with shifting environments (and all environments are always shifting) do not stay in stasis, that they are always in flux; and that individuals are always managing multiple stages of transition simultaneously. And Bridges suggests that *all* transitions entail internal processes—ways of navigating/negotiating/managing one's feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and identities—which assist or impede the process of transition. Bridges also suggests that the internal processes one uses are often habituated and not consciously considered. In other words, all people have internal habits for coping with change, and these habits either help or hinder the individual in the process of transition.

If Bridges is correct, to “manage changes in existing identities” would not only involve real actions related to external factors, it would also involve the individual's own efforts to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal, the patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior that shape the internal landscape. And the implications for this argument are obvious. It again suggests that the intrapersonal knowledge and skill of the teacher—how

aware he is of his own internal processes and how able he is to act based on that awareness—are pertinent factors in terms of education.

The effectiveness with which teachers manage fluctuations in identity has implications for the classroom. Not only do Day et al. suggest that identity is related to “motivation, job fulfillment, commitment, and self-efficacy,” they also conclude their research by suggesting that the ways in which teachers navigate/negotiate/manage fluctuations in identity are related to both “resilience” and effectiveness. Resilience, as Day et al. are using it, refers to psychological resilience, which is the ability to cope with stress. What Day et al. seem to be suggesting is that it is the effectiveness with which teachers navigate/negotiate/manage fluctuations in identity results in teachers who are better able or less able to cope with the stresses they will inevitably encounter. The implications of this, in terms of burnout and retention, could be very important. Issues of burn-out and retention seem to be related to stress, and the costs each imposes on education is substantial. And although Day et al. do not overtly suggest this, it seems possible—at least intuitively—that the issue of resilience might be related to a teacher’s ability to be effective in the classroom. So again, there is the suggestion that the intrapersonal landscape of the teacher and the ability to navigate it become manifested in the external landscape of the classroom.

The final area of research I want to review in regards to the relevance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is the research regarding teacher evaluations. It is important to note that the research about student evaluations—while contentious—does suggest that student ratings are valid measures, depending on the use of the evaluation

(Olivares 240). Olivares is clear that he does not consider student evaluations “appropriate for drawing inferences regarding teacher effectiveness,” because—he suggests—“there is no empirical evidence to suggest that the widespread implementation of teacher ratings has resulted in more effective teachers or more learned students” (240). However, Olivares does allow that student evaluations are a good measure of students’ satisfaction with a teacher or a course (240). Although the work I will be citing does draw a connection between student evaluations and teacher effectiveness, I will not be focusing on whether or not the qualities listed in the study lead to effective teaching. Rather, I will be using the qualities to explore the role of the intrapersonal in teaching. And the notion that these qualities can be acceptably linked with student satisfaction—regardless of whether they are related to teacher effectiveness—may reveal another way the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant to the classroom experience.

The research regarding teacher evaluations seems to point to the fact that students value particular qualities in their teachers. Susan Thompson, John G. Greer, and Bonnie B. Greer, researchers and professors at the University of Memphis, outlined twelve “characteristics every teacher should possess” (1). Based on longitudinal studies of student surveys and reviews of research related to teacher effectiveness, Thompson and her colleagues concluded the following traits are consistently cited by students as qualities of their best teachers and are consistently found by educational researchers to be effective practices: fairness, positive attitude, preparedness, personal touch (meaning the teacher offers a personal side of himself to the class and invites the students to bring a personal side to the class), sense of humor, creativity, willingness to admit mistakes,

forgiveness, respect, high expectations, compassion, and sense of belonging (meaning that the teacher helped the students to feel they belonged in the class) (3-7).

As I reviewed Thompson et al.'s work on student evaluations, it struck me how many of the medicines on their list (fairness, forgiveness, respect, compassion, and positive attitude, at the very least) might be considered to have intrapersonal aspects in addition to interpersonal ones. Fairness, for example, obviously has an interpersonal element to it. When students say a teacher is fair, it might mean the teacher treats students equitably, or that the grades the teacher gives reflect both the quality and effort of the student work, or that the teacher resolves issues respectfully, without seeming to side with one party or the other. And clearly Thompson et al. are thinking of fairness as an interpersonal quality. They are concerned about how fairness plays out in the transactions between teachers and students, and they talk about the impact of unfairness, how "the memories of unfair teachers are reported by our college students in great detail, even after many years have passed since those negative school experiences" (3-4).

But fairness might also be viewed from an intrapersonal perspective. To be fair, teachers must be aware of, examine, and often reconsider their own assumptions. This might mean assessing their assumptions about a specific course of action in a specific case, or reassessing an entire framework for what constitutes "fair." As I noted earlier, the incident involving one of my colleagues, the woman who had to decide how to handle students who were absent for a specific quiz, is an example of the former intrapersonal struggle with fairness. And the incident involving my other colleague, the one who had the epiphany about how his beliefs were influencing his relationship with his students,

might be considered an example of the latter. He had to change his entire way of looking at his students in order to treat his community college students with greater fairness and respect.

Forgiveness too has an interpersonal aspect to it. One offers forgiveness as a means of soothing the frictions that come with being in relationship. In such instances, forgiveness is a way to demonstrate acceptance of another. One also offers forgiveness to repair relationships that have been damaged by specific events. In these instances, forgiveness is a means of connecting or reconnecting. Forgiveness, as Margaret Alter implied in the title of her article, is central to people and their relationships. And Jim Corder, implores his readers to remember, as they deal with one another personally or through relationships mediated by the written word, that it is only by the tender mercies of each other that we are able to get along (“When Do I” 67). Alter and Corder are in sync with philosophers and theologians throughout the ages. And the evaluations that Thompson and her colleagues reviewed seemed to indicate that students’ favorite teachers demonstrate these types of forgiveness. “Favorite teachers,” Thompson states, “reflected a willingness to forgive students for misbehavior and a habit of starting each day with a clean slate” (6). Students seemed to value teachers who were able to leave enough space in student-teacher relationships for students to be flawed.

However, like fairness, forgiveness has an intrapersonal aspect to it too. One must navigate/negotiate/manage the thoughts and feelings connected to the person and/or the event that needs to be forgiven. As human history will attest, this is not a simple task. The directive to forgive, which can be found in every major world religion, is clear. Yet the

path to forgiveness is not easy. Often, one must work one's way through stages before forgiveness is achieved, even when one is philosophically and emotionally oriented toward forgiveness. One of my failures may illustrate this point best. I caught a girl in one of my high school English classes plagiarizing a paper, which was not problematic in and of itself. As every English teacher knows, plagiarism comes with the territory, and one is constantly trying to create plagiarism-proof assignments, or trying to handle—as gingerly as possible—the delicate discussion surrounding a possible instance of plagiarism.

My discussion with the student began—as other such discussions had—with my “concern” that something might be amiss with the paper. My experience has been that most students, when approached this way, will fess up. And then we can discuss the situation openly. But this conversation did not go well, and it ended with me pointedly stating that I felt the paper was plagiarized and the student denying the allegation. The situation became a difficult and protracted process when the student had her parents protest to the principal that I was treating her unfairly. It took me a couple of weeks, a meeting with the principal, a meeting with the parents, a couple of meetings with the student, and quite a few tense days in class before I located the article she had submitted verbatim as her paper. Long after the logistics of the issue were resolved, I had a burning feeling in my stomach when I had to work with the student. And it was an even longer time until I arrived at a sense of forgiveness, long after—I am afraid—the student had graduated high school. I was not a new teacher, and before the events happened, I was aware of the power of forgiveness and actively oriented my life toward it. But it took

time to navigate/negotiate/manage the mix of emotions I felt toward the girl and the situation. As a result, the student and I lived with a fractured, uncomfortable relationship for the remainder of the year.

Like fairness and forgiveness, respect and compassion also have an interpersonal aspect to them. Outwardly, they are kinds of regard that we offer to one another in the context of our relationships. And they have tangible manifestations. In the evaluations they reviewed, Thompson et al. noted that teachers' respect was evident to students in many ways. "Favorite teachers," they say, "were remembered for keeping grades on papers confidential, for speaking to students privately after misbehavior or when the teacher needed some clarification.... Favorite teachers were remembered for showing sensitivity for feelings and for consistently avoiding situations that would unnecessarily embarrass students" (6). And in the evaluations they reviewed, Thompson et al. also noted that teachers' compassion—their sensitivity, their care, and their support—were remembered by students sometimes for the simplest of things. "Teachers," Thompson says, "were remembered for noticing when children were left out of games on the playground and for taking action to prevent such things from happening" (6). Respect and compassion are clearly enacted within the context of relationships and thus have an interpersonal aspect to them.

But as with fairness and forgiveness, there is an intrapersonal aspect to respect and compassion as well. One often faces internal struggles as one attempts to decide on the most respectful or the most compassionate action. Is it more respectful and/or compassionate to allow a student an extra day to complete an assignment, or is it more

respectful and/or compassionate in the long run to hold to a deadline in order to teach the student to be responsible? Is it more respectful and/or compassionate to promote a borderline student to the higher grade for social reasons, or is it more respectful and/or compassionate in the long run to hold the student back in order to make sure the student has mastered his schoolwork? There are a myriad of situations like this that teachers face; there are a myriad of factors that teachers sort through when making such decisions. And one invariably navigates/negotiates/manages complex sets of feelings and beliefs as one attempts to define what respect and compassion mean in the context of one's teaching, what role they should have in one's teaching, and which actions constitute respect and/or compassion in a given situation.

I see in Thompson's work the implication that teachers with strong intrapersonal knowledge and skill seem better equipped to navigate/negotiate/manage the complexities of issues like fairness, forgiveness, respect, and compassion than teachers without such knowledge and skill. For instance, my colleague who became aware of his thinking about his community college students—that he was frustrated with them because they were not behaving like his former university's students and he was trying to force them to do so—was better able to navigate/negotiate/manage the issues of fairness, forgiveness, respect, and compassion, which were mingled (and maybe mangled) in this situation, after his epiphany than before it. And his belated understanding that his personal thoughts and feelings and how he handled them truly were important to his classroom may hold the promise of allowing him to navigate/negotiate/manage similar situations more efficiently in the future.

In terms of this dissertation, Thompson's work may offer a different glimpse—from the research on self-efficacy and teacher personal traits—on the role the intrapersonal plays in teaching. The issues teachers face related to fairness, forgiveness, respect, and compassion—whether they are shared with others or not—will have to be resolved internally. The teacher will have to decide what seems right to him personally. The teacher will have to employ—at some point—his intrapersonal knowledge and skill to navigate/negotiate/manage thoughts and feelings related to a thorny issue of fairness, forgiveness, respect, or compassion. Thompson's work may also suggest another way that the intrapersonal shapes the interpersonal. Teachers' decisions about what constitutes fairness, forgiveness, respect, or compassion shape the types of relationships they have with their students. And teachers' decisions and the ways they enact them create different limits and possibilities for their classrooms, which may offer very different medicines to students. And finally, simply because so many of the qualities that students identify with “good teachers” seem to be related to the intrapersonal knowledge and skill of the individual, Thompson's work seems to suggest the relevance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching.

The research on self-efficacy seems to indicate the importance of self-belief to a teacher's actions in the classroom, including his pedagogical choices. The research on teachers' personal traits also seems to indicate that the intrapersonal knowledge and skill of teachers—how they navigate/negotiate/mange their emotions, their beliefs, and their identities—shapes the classroom, again including the strategies teachers employ with their students. And the research on student evaluations seems to indicate that several of

the qualities that students value seem to have intrapersonal aspects to them. Collectively, the research seems to indicate that there is an intrapersonal aspect to teaching, and that the inner life of teachers (their emotions, beliefs, narratives, and identities, and how the teachers navigate/negotiate/manage them) is relevant to what happens in the classroom. It may also suggest a case may be made for including contemplative/mindfulness practices—which foster the development of intrapersonal knowledge and skill—within the scope of teacher training. However, my contention is that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is underserved in pre-service and in-service teacher training, and that this represents a missed opportunity. In next chapter, I will argue that training in contemplative/mindfulness practices could be a powerful way to fill the void. However, before I make my case for what contemplative practices may bring to the classroom, I need to illustrate that the intrapersonal is being underserved in most current pre-service and in-service training.

THE INTRAPERSONAL, TEACHER TRAINING,
AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

In the second part of my argument, I am contending that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is underserved in current pre-service and in-service teacher training. When I say “underserved,” I do not mean to imply that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is not being addressed. To a certain extent and in certain ways, it is. For instance, most teacher education programs include elements of self-reflection in them, and as part of these processes, students are often asked to consider their beliefs about teaching and how they are going to enact them in their practices. Rather, I mean to indicate that the intrapersonal is not being addressed as fully as it might be.

As I hope the first part of my argument illustrated, the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is complicated. It involves awareness of one’s thoughts, feelings, beliefs, narratives, and identities, which may be more problematical than it initially sounds; it also involves the complexity of navigating/negotiating/managing them, which is for most people admittedly difficult, at least at times. And this seems to require, if Palmer and Bridges are correct, the development of personal knowledge and skill, including—according to Bridges—the ability to recognize and modify habituated internal coping strategies. The types of personal knowledge and skill that seem to be necessary to effectively navigate/ negotiate/manage the intrapersonal aspect of teaching seem to be greater than what is being offered in current pre-service and in-service teacher training. Throughout their careers, teachers might find or develop many resources to support them as they deal with the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. But I am arguing that it seems less

than efficient—perhaps even less than responsible—to leave the complexities of navigating/negotiating/ managing the intrapersonal aspect of teaching largely to chance. In this part of my argument, I will explore the current trends in pre-service and in-service training, and I will attempt to show how the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is being underserved.

While the conversation related to teacher education can be quite complicated, a survey of education programs across the United States reveals that curricula and courses are very similar. When I reviewed the course offerings of fifty universities—one from each state—I discovered most included courses on human growth and development; educational psychology courses: foundations courses, application courses, and courses focusing on specific issues like gender; educational philosophy courses introducing theories of education; and courses on teaching methods, assessment, research, and technology. There were also courses on dealing with special populations, language and literacy, legal issues, social and historical foundations, diversity, leadership, curriculum, professionalism, and classroom management. The curricula included specific content classes (math, English, history, etc.). There were subject-specific pedagogy courses (teaching math, teaching science, teaching music, etc.). There were, in some institutions, classes on reflective teaching and teacher research.

Course and program descriptions were relatively similar, and I am assuming that most of the content courses (i.e. human growth and development, social and historical foundations, etc.) offered relatively similar content, and that methods courses (i.e. classroom management, assessment, etc.), while perhaps expressing different emphases

depending on the program, offered approaches from within a range of pedagogical alternatives that is recognized as valid and acceptable within the field. However, the similarities and differences in actual content and instruction, in terms of my argument, only matters in relation to how the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is handled. And there does seem to be some consistency on that count. Critical reflection, which may include the exploration of beliefs and identity, two aspects of the intrapersonal, is commonly employed as an instructional technique in pre-service education programs.

“Reflection” seems to have a wide variety of meanings. It might include reflection on one’s beliefs about teaching, teaching theories, and how to implement them. It might indicate that pre-service teachers were being trained to look at how their specific teaching methods influenced their classrooms. And in some instances, reflection includes looking at how personal and cultural narratives shape the pre-service teacher’s views and expectations. I do not doubt that questions regarding the navigation/negotiation/management of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching—especially how to navigate/negotiate/manage conflicting feelings, clashing beliefs, and discordant identities—must arise in these settings. It certainly did in the methods courses I took in conjunction with my practice teaching. Robert Tremmel, in *Zen and the Practice of Teaching English*, affirms that these types of questions still arise with pre-service teachers he oversees as they make their way through their practica. And Joy Ritchie and David Wilson, in *Teacher Narrative as Critical Inquiry: Rewriting the Script*, also confirm that the students in their English education program face questions about beliefs, identity, and how to work with them in the context of their teaching, although Ritchie and Wilson note

that they often have to help students break through highly compartmentalized thinking in order for this to happen.

But the question remains to what extent the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is being addressed in pre-service teacher education. Ritchie and Wilson—who argue that personal identity is inextricably bound to professional identity and that personal identity needs to be attended to in teacher preparation—note that “research on teacher learning and change has, until recently, focused primarily on content knowledge and pedagogy; it has too often excluded personal development in considering professional development” (1). And this focus seems to be reflected in the curricula for pre-service teachers. Len Austin, in *A Constructivist Approach to Facilitating Intrapersonal Change in Pre-service Teachers*, notes that most teachers receive a limited education in relation to the complicated intrapersonal aspects of teaching. Austin contends that:

The need for budding teachers to be psychologically ready to teach is poetically expressed in the words of E. P. Jensen (1988), "Teaching is far more rigorous than it ever has been. It's a front-lines position for courageous and committed learners willing to take risks and make mistakes. It's a dangerous job because teachers must confront whatever ideas, systems or relationships are not working in their personal or professional lives, and change" (p. 16).... It is now 15 years after Jensen's seminal comment, and the need to address the intrapersonal issues of students enrolled in undergraduate teacher education programs remains all but ignored. Experienced college instructors know that many of the

students are not equipped emotionally or cognitively for the rigors of the classroom, and that intrapersonal (and interpersonal) changes are needed if these students are to be effective classroom teachers. (309)

Austin—through Jensen—echoes Parker Palmer’s concerns that teaching in the current political and social environment is very demanding. And through Jensen, he also echoes Palmer’s observation that teachers are constantly confronting “whatever ideas, systems or relationships are not working in their personal or professional lives.” And they are doing this, as Palmer notes, in front of rooms full of people, which adds a layer of complication to the already complicated endeavor of navigating/negotiating/managing ones feelings, beliefs, and identities. Austin suggests that many pre-service teachers are not equipped to handle the “rigors of the classroom,” because they are not, as individuals, emotionally or cognitively prepared for the responsibilities or complications of teaching. He suggests, among other things, that pre-service teachers need to be better prepared in terms of their decision-making and their ability to adapt to change (310). And, he also suggests, teacher education programs are not preparing pre-service teachers emotionally or cognitively for the responsibilities and complications they are going to face in the classroom.

Austin and Palmer suggest there is evidence that it is possible to address the intrapersonal through training and development. “The decision to change intrapersonally is a learned skill (Zunker, 1994),” Austin states, “and one that can be fostered within a teacher preparation curriculum, or as Egan (1994) and Morgan and MacMillan (1999) would say, ‘within a learning process’” (309). And he suggests five ways that teacher educators can help students develop intrapersonally. Palmer, through his work with

Courage to Teach, affirms that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching can be addressed in teacher training. And Ritchie and Wilson also confirm this, although they problematize notions of how to address the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, discussing the complex ways in which identity is formed and negotiated. So, Austin, Palmer, and Ritchie and Wilson, each in their own way, suggest that ability to navigate/negotiate/manage the intrapersonal (i.e. intrapersonal skill) can be learned, and as a result of this, Austin claims “teacher educators can be central figures in facilitating intrapersonal change in undergraduates” (309).

But Austin and Palmer both suggest that most current teacher training does not fully address this intrapersonal aspect of teaching. They suggest that the focus of pre-service teacher training—as my survey of education programs illustrates—tends to remain on content and pedagogy. And even when it is inclusive of self-reflection, it does not tend, as Ritchie and Wilson note (I will expand on this in a moment), to explore the full range of personal identity and how this may influence the classroom (20-1). “Consciously or unconsciously,” Palmer states, “we are wedded to the notion that, while higher education can stock people’s minds with facts and theories, and train them in skillful means, it cannot help them grow larger hearts and souls” (“Heart and Soul” sec. 3). Although his language, as I suggested earlier, may be somewhat outside of the mainstream of academic discourse—referring to growing the hearts and souls—Palmer’s point seems clear: teacher education programs remain uncomfortable with attending to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, or in Palmer’s words, to the “inner lives” of teachers. Palmer bluntly states, “Are we doing enough to help teachers-in-training understand their

inner terrain in ways that will minimize the shadow and maximize the light? Too often, I believe, the answer is no” (“Heart and Soul” sec. 3).

It seems clear that education programs are attempting to prepare students for the basics of teaching. They have courses focusing on methods of teaching, courses on how to teach kids with special needs, courses offering strategies for classroom management, courses on assessment, etc. But it is less clear how they are attending to and/or working with the emotional lives and layered identities of their students. Even though self-reflection is employed as a teaching technique in most programs, it is unclear whether such reflection is really addressing the complexities of the students’ emotional lives and/or identities. Austin and Palmer imply that it is not.

As I have suggested, I believe the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is being addressed—at least in a general way—via critical reflection, which is part of most pre-service teacher training. However, as I have also suggested, what constitutes “critical reflection” is uneven. This type of reflection may be limited to the technical aspects of teaching, how one’s practices work or do not work in the classroom. As part of such critical reflection, teachers may be asked to analyze their practices, to prioritize their goals, and to develop plans of action to achieve their aims. On the other hand, critical reflection may go beyond the merely technical to the ethical, the social, and even the political dimensions of teaching. This type of critical reflection may include the examination of the assumptions underlying one’s pedagogy, as well as the material consequences of one’s pedagogical choices. Still, the scope of critical reflection remains narrower than I believe is necessary to fully attend to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching.

Most notions of and practices of critical reflection still do not seem to attend to the complex identities and emotional lives of pre-service teachers.

Ritchie and Wilson, who seem to be pushing the boundaries in terms of the teacher education program they have developed, illustrate my point. They state:

We argue that the development of a professional identity is inextricable from personal identity and that when personal and professional development are brought into dialogue, when teachers are given the opportunity to compose and reflect on their own stories of learning and of selfhood within a supportive and challenging community, then teachers can begin to resist and revise the scripting narratives of the culture and begin to compose new narratives of identity and practice. They can begin to author their own development. (1)

In their program, they now have students composing and critiquing their learning and literacy stories, so that they may uncover the tacit assumptions that are informing their teaching practice. Ritchie and Wilson say it was their own autobiographical work—and eventually their work with their students' autobiographies—which convinced them that it was impossible to live “outside ideologies of culture, gender, and literacy” (6). They came to realize—over the course of time—that “the narratives of teaching in our culture are embedded within much more powerful ideologies of identity” (12), and that notions about teaching and the role of teachers do not exist apart from identities of gender, race, class, and ethnicity.

But this is not where they started, and their initial problem, they think, is one they see in most pre-service teacher education programs: that these programs do not really delve deeply into issues of personal identity. Ritchie and Wilson state that “several factors in preservice education [seem to] account for the difficulty new teachers [have] in facing the challenges of new classrooms and institutions... [and one of the factors is] the invisibility of students’ identities and experiences from preservice education” (55). While they admit that critical reflection has become a standard practice in education, they argue the scope of the reflection is too limited, that it does not take into account the complex identities that are being navigated/negotiated/managed in the act of teaching, and this, in essence, allows the identities of pre-service teachers to remain invisible in spite of their self-reflection.

Ritchie and Wilson note that narrative and self-reflection have become accepted and acceptable techniques to use in pre-service and in-service teacher training, and that teachers in both settings are often encouraged “to tell, reflect on, and dialogue about stories from their teaching lives” (20-1). However, they suggest two things. Like Parker Palmer, they note that academia favors theory over experience, so the use of narrative and self-reflection may seem convenient tools for generating discussion, but soft in terms of its “critical rigor” (14-5). And second, Ritchie and Wilson note that too often the use of narrative and self-reflection fall short of their potential because students are not asked to take what Ritchie and Wilson consider “the next crucial step: critique or problematizing” (20-1). In order for a narrative and self-reflection to be of value in terms of locating the

individual and exposing the assumptions that are informing his teaching practice, Ritchie and Wilson state:

Those of us who use narrative in teacher education must ask: What is the context in which the story is told? Where are the gaps, the silences, the tensions, the omissions? What narratives from other lives might contradict or complicate our own? Who is privileged by these narratives? What positions and relationships do they reinforce? (20-1)

In most education programs, Ritchie and Wilson suggest, this step is not being taken in regards to critical reflection.

Their experience, Ritchie and Wilson say, is that pre-service teachers bring many unexamined notions about themselves and about teaching into education programs and into classrooms, many of which they have gleaned from media and from their “accidental apprenticeships” over the course of twelve years of schooling, where they have picked up many of their beliefs about teaching from experiencing their own teacher’s methods. And these unexamined notions become their de facto theories about education, affecting everything in the teacher’s sphere of influence, from their interactions with and expectations for their students to the courses they design and implement. Reflecting on these beliefs in order to become aware of them or how they affect one’s practice is not enough according to Ritchie and Wilson. Pre-service teachers, they argue, must “gain critical perspective on how their identities have been constructed by/in the culture and how cultural narratives of teaching have shaped their personal and professional

subjectivities” (180). And they must do so in order to make informed choices about their pedagogies.

However, the difficulties of engaging in this type of critical reflection may be substantial. Ritchie and Wilson suggest that their students’ reflections tend to be “compartmentalized and depersonalized.” And as a result, their students are, at least at first, “unable to recognize how many of their beliefs [are] in tension” (55). Ritchie and Wilson, in relation to the students in their practica, state that:

[the students] had not had opportunities [prior to practica] to recognize and articulate the conflicts [in their beliefs and identities], much less the conflicting theories that created them. No one had asked them: “What assumptions about learning, about language, reading, or writing, are at play in a given practice?” “Why did your teacher teach as she did?” “How might others in your school or class have experienced that same learning environment differently?” (17)

Because the students had not had opportunities to engage in the type of critical reflection that challenges one’s personal assumptions, the students were unable to see the conflicts in their own perspectives. And as a result of being unable to see the conflicts in their own perspectives, their students either adopted what Ritchie and Wilson called an “additive approach” to their theory and practice, simply adding tools to their tool boxes, without considering how these meshed with already existing notions, ideas, and identities. Or their students resisted new theories and pedagogies outright, again without consideration.

And Ritchie and Wilson admit the difficulties of nudging students out of their patterns of thought and behavior.

The work Ritchie and Wilson are asking of their students seems more reminiscent of the work I was asked to do in my graduate program than my undergraduate program, and their example illustrates my point that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is being served—but underserved—in teacher education. First, their program illustrates that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is being addressed to a certain extent in pre-service teacher training. They, within the context of their practica, are obviously attending to the intrapersonal as they work with their students' beliefs and personal identities. However, their example also illustrates how the intrapersonal is being addressed in a limited way. Ritchie and Wilson note that in their own program, which seems to exhibit a high degree of awareness about the complex identities that must be navigated/negotiated/managed in teaching, most of their students had not had opportunities prior to their practica to really explore the tensions in their own beliefs. They also note, as part of their argument, that most pre-service teacher education programs tend to separate issues of personal identity and professional identity, and that when personal identity is raised in other programs, it is often not examined in the complex contexts of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and/or class.

Second, while Ritchie and Wilson seem to attend quite well to the complexity of personal identities and how their students navigate/negotiate/manage these in relation to their beliefs about teaching, they seem to be missing other aspects of the intrapersonal—for example, the navigation/negotiation/management of the emotional life—which may

be quite relevant to what happens in the classroom. Austin and Palmer, in their critiques, seem as interested in the emotional aspect of the intrapersonal as in the identity aspect of it. And they seem to fault teacher education for not attending more thoroughly to the emotional readiness of pre-service teachers. What I want to suggest is that Ritchie and Wilson's example—which is a good one in terms of the extent to which the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is being attended—illustrates how complex attending to the intrapersonal can be, and that it reveals how, even in a good program, more could be done in pre-service teacher training to attend to it.

One may wonder to what extent attending to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching would work in pre-service teacher training, and I believe that is a legitimate concern. Perhaps the typical pre-service teacher is too young to really have a grasp of the complexities of his identity and/or emotions. Perhaps the typical pre-service teacher is best served by learning concrete methods and techniques, by learning how to assess and to modify his practices, and by learning how to troubleshoot common issues and problems. However, Ritchie and Wilson suggest that their students, as a result of the intrapersonal work they did:

were then able to begin to critique and revise their assumptions about...
their earlier learnings, and continually reflect, reinterpret, and reevaluate
their experiences and understandings. They recognized, often for the first
time, resisted, and at times broke the hold of the narratives murmured and
shouted to them across their long apprenticeships in English and

education. They were able to examine and at times revise the identities they had claimed or that had claimed them. (75)

While Ritchie and Wilson do not claim earth-shattering results, their students were able with varying degrees of success to gain awareness of their identities (i.e. intrapersonal knowledge) and to learn to examine and revise their identities (i.e. gain different kinds of intrapersonal skills). Some students experienced significant transformations. Others did not. But they were not too young to in some way “get it,” even if their transformations were not always to the extent that Ritchie and Wilson would have liked to see. And this seems in line with what one would expect when it comes to the development of intrapersonal knowledge and skill, which are life-long endeavors. It is certainly what I have experienced and witnessed in relation to Zen, and it is in sync with what is reported by many practitioners of Zen and other meditation practices.

Palmer also suggests that he is frequently asked questions about the viability of attending to the intrapersonal when he talks about “educating the soul” (“Heart and Soul” sec. 3). And his response is that these types of questions come from real concerns: that educators often feel ill-equipped to handle the complex issues that can arise when they begin to explore intrapersonal spaces with their students, and that prohibitions exist in the larger culture and in education related to exploring the intrapersonal (“Heart and Soul” sec. 3). But Palmer insists such concerns are not reasons to defer exploration of the intrapersonal. Concerns about whether a student—in this case pre-service teachers—will gain a lot or a little from intrapersonal exploration need to be laid aside, because these concerns—as Palmer hints—may say more about the discomfort of the teacher than the

readiness of the student. And in terms of teacher education, Ritchie and Wilson argue that we need to explore the intrapersonal because “change is made possible and becomes sustainable when teachers gain critical perspective on how their identities have been constructed by/in the culture and how cultural narratives of teaching have shaped their personal and professional subjectivities” (180).

Next I want to look at in-service training and development. As with pre-service training, I want to establish the general trends one finds in teacher professional development. And I want to note from the start that the conversation related to teacher professional development is more complicated than the one slice of it I will be investigating. To what extent should it be interactive? To what extent should it be collaborative, including teachers in planning and delivery? To what extent should it be a seamless part of a teacher’s normal workday? And if one should decide that active, collaborative, and seamless are best approaches, how should they be implemented? The conversations, the research, and the rhetoric related to all of these questions are extensive and mixed. However, the question that I want to consider is: What seems to be the focus of teacher training and development? And as with pre-service training, I want to consider to what extent the intrapersonal aspect of teaching seems to be addressed in it. When I discuss in-service training and development I am confining my comments to on-site and online workshops, which schools offer to their faculty. And when I discuss “courses and workshops,” I am referring to condensed courses that are taken for continuing education credit (CEU), not three-credit courses offered through a college or university.

As I did with pre-service teacher training, I want to begin by looking at what seems to be available in the realm of in-service training and development. And again my observations are based on a review of approximately fifty programs. Content courses and workshops are readily available in almost every discipline, including math, history, languages, and science. Content courses and workshops in English often include specific topics in literacy, writing, and/or literature. There are courses and workshops related to pedagogy and the classroom. Subjects like effective discipline, working students with disabilities, diversity training, cultural awareness, classroom management, preparing for high-stakes tests, best practices, communication, and assessment are common types of topics related to pedagogy and the classroom. There are also a host of courses and workshops related to employing technology in the classroom. And there are courses and workshops dealing with school-wide concerns such as leadership and building school communities. And as I noted in my observations about pre-service programs, in terms of this argument, the similarities and differences in the content and instruction of these courses and workshops is only important as they relate to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. And again, as I hope to illustrate, the intrapersonal seems to be underserved.

In-service training, Gabriel Diaz-Maggioli points out in *Teacher-Centered Professional Development*, tends to be geared toward giving teachers techniques they can use in their classrooms, and it is often prescriptive, being premised on assumptions that specific techniques, methods, or ideologies may be standardized and will work across the boards with all students (2-4). According to Diaz-Maggioli, professional development tends to be very pragmatic in the sense that teachers are expected and expecting to get

ideas and practices that they can take back to their classrooms and use. This, of course, does not seem to orient in-service training toward the intrapersonal.

Diaz-Maggioli suggests that most professional development is also lacking in terms of modes of delivery. “Once a decision is made to invest in professional development,” Diaz-Maggioli states, “the cheapest format is often chosen for the purpose—usually a lecture, workshop, or seminar” (3). The lectures, workshops, and seminars are often conducted with a sage-on-the-stage format, with teachers receiving information from a consultant lecturer. Although this is not necessarily negative or inefficient, and although active participation has been shown to increase teacher knowledge or skill minimally (Steiner 4), Diaz-Maggioli says that he finds it “ironic that so much has been written about the importance of differentiated instruction in the classroom; when it comes to instruction for teachers, undifferentiated approaches usually prevail” (3). Unfortunately, Diaz-Maggioli notes, as a result of how in-services tend to be conducted, “in the collective imagination, the term ‘professional development day’ conjures only images of coffee breaks, consultants in elegant outfits, and schools barren of kids” (1).

The intrapersonal aspect of teaching may be addressed to a certain extent within the context of professional development, as Ritchie and Wilson point out, through the use of reflection as an instructional technique. However, as they also note, while efforts to have teachers reflect on their experience are now frequently part of in-service training, those efforts remain inadequate. Teachers are asked to tell their stories and to reflect on their experiences, but they are not frequently asked to take the critical step of

“problematizing” their reflection (20-1). And, as I already mentioned, Ritchie and Wilson do not feel that the full value of critical reflection can be realized without that final step.

The rhetoric related to teacher professional development may help to explain the focus on content and technique. First, the rhetoric seems to specifically reinforce the importance of content knowledge and subject-specific pedagogical knowledge as primary. Other factors related to teacher effectiveness seem to be minimized in current discourse about professional development. Second, there is an emphasis on updating skills and keeping current with practices. And third, there is a general distrust of teachers’ knowledge and ability. All of these rhetorics seem to ignore the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, and they also seem to leave little or no space for the inclusion of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching in training and development.

In relation to the first point, the rhetoric related to the importance of content knowledge and subject-specific pedagogy may be found coming from research groups, teacher organizations, and government institutions. For example, in 2005, the American Education Research Association (AERA) suggested that policy-makers should make sure that “professional development improves teachers’ knowledge of the subject matter that they are teaching...[because] extended opportunities to understand student learning, curriculum materials and instruction, and subject matter content can boost the performance of both teachers and students” (“Research Points” 4). AERA suggests that research shows extremely strong correlations between a teacher’s content knowledge and his performance. They suggest other aspects of teaching, for instance “‘generic’ teaching skills, such as allocating class time,” showed small to moderate increase in student

learning outcomes, although they note that learning certain “generic” teaching skills—for example “guided practice”—have larger payoffs in terms of learning outcomes (1). The argument they create is for very subject-specific knowledge and skills. And they suggest that in-service professional development can enhance teacher performance and student achievement when it focuses on “(1) how students learn particular subject matter; (2) instructional practices that are specifically related to the subject matter and how students understand it; and (3) strengthening teachers’ knowledge of specific subject-matter content” (2).

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)—an organization created over twenty years ago by the U.S. Department of Education to provide states with research-based information, best practices, and the assistance states may need to bridge the gap between education research and education practice—makes similar observations to AERA. In a 2002 report, *Designing Effective Professional Development Experiences: What Do We Know?*, NCREL suggests that “the most consistent finding [related to teacher professional development] is the importance of subject matter focus” (Steiner 5). NCREL also suggests that “coherence”—linking “professional development activities coherently with other reform efforts”—seems to be important for teacher professional development to be successful (Steiner 5). AERA concurs with this. It suggests that coherence, which it define as “building on what teachers already have learned, aligning professional development with state and district standards and assessment, and encouraging communication between teachers who are striving to reform their instruction in similar ways,” is strongly correlated with successful outcomes from professional

development (“Research Points” 3). However, NCREL is a little more cautious about the connections of content knowledge and coherence, suggesting that the research while consistent is “by no means robust” (Steiner 5).

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), one of the two major teacher unions in the United States, suggests similar guidelines for in-service teacher training. Mirroring both AERA and NCREL, it states—among other things—that:

Professional development should deepen and broaden knowledge of content...should provide a strong foundation in the pedagogy of particular disciplines...should provide knowledge about the teaching and learning processes...should be aligned with the standards and curriculum teachers use. (sec. 1)

The AFT, like the AERA and NCREL, suggests that content knowledge and instructional practices related to specific subject areas are important to teacher performance. And like the AERA and NCREL, the AFT also suggests that in-service teacher training should be aligned with curricula and standards.

And No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the federal government’s program for improving the nation’s schools, has focused attention on “highly-qualified teachers,” which includes the notion that teachers need strong content knowledge in order to be effective. NCLB supports pre-service and in-service training and development that is aimed at improving teachers’ content knowledge. NCLB is also concerned with coherence in that it promotes the notion of standardizing and aligning educational outcomes at the national level, as well as ensuring that teachers are held accountable for

reaching local, state, and federal standards. These notions are threaded through the rhetoric of the Department of Education, as well as through state-level departments of education.

On the points of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, much of the current rhetoric related to teacher professional development seems fairly consistent. It suggests that content knowledge and aligning with curricular aims should be central to in-service training and development. And it seems to suggest that the pedagogical approaches teachers learn should be related to the content they are teaching. This rhetoric seems to be embodied in many of the types of courses and workshops that are available for training and development.

The fact that courses and workshops dealing with general issues, such as effective discipline and classroom management, appear to be prevalent may suggest the second and third points I made related to the current rhetoric about professional development. On the one hand, there is the general notion in the rhetoric related to training and development that all teachers—that all employees really—need to have their skills updated because of the fast-paced and ever-changing world that we live in. This rhetoric suggests that teachers should be kept abreast of the latest trends. This is especially true related to technology. Students, the world, and technologies are new and different, this rhetoric suggests, so teachers are constantly in the position of needing to catch up. On the other hand, an older conversation often lurks within the newer one. And John Trimbur outlines it in “Literacy and the Discourse of Crisis.” In this article, he charts the century-plus history of the Johnny-can’t-read claim, which includes the notion that teachers are

inept and/or lazy. The notion that teachers are inept or lazy is threaded through much of the rhetoric about education and seems to influence many decisions related to teaching, from high-stakes accountability testing to what should be offered in training and development. And it is present in the rhetorical focus on knowledge of content and pedagogy, which are often framed as woefully lacking in current teachers.

These rhetorics do not seem to allow much space for addressing the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. There are, of course, discussions that frame the intrapersonal aspect of teaching as one of the things that needs to be addressed in training and development. For example, in relation to critical self-reflection, I noted that Ritchie and Wilson make a case about why exploration of personal identity is a valid and relevant focus for teacher training and development efforts. Palmer and Austin both make the argument that the intrapersonal needs to be attended to in pre-service and in-service training. And NCREL makes the argument that definitions of professional development should include the whole experience of the teacher, formal and informal, from pre-service to retirement. But the rhetoric that seems to influence the bulk of the training and development opportunities that are available to teachers seems to remain fairly focused on content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (including a major emphasis on the inclusion of technology in the classroom, which I have not discussed thoroughly, but with which most teachers are quite familiar).

In addition to the ways rhetoric may shape the offerings in teacher training and development, some assumptions underlying the delivery of training and development may also influence the scope of it. Diaz-Maggioli points out that teacher training and

development efforts often assume that teachers can/should simply carry techniques back to their classrooms. “More often than not,” he says, “teachers in professional development programs are taught techniques that they are expected to replicate in the classroom” (2). And he believes the assumption that techniques may be easily replicated, which he calls the “technocratic nature” of professional development, is erroneous. He suggests that teachers must always modify techniques to fit their particular students, and that they often have to expend a great deal of time and energy to do so (2).

A second assumption is that professional development strategies may be applied universally, regardless of the subject being taught or the ages of the students being taught. “It is not uncommon,” Diaz-Maggioli suggests, “to hear of school districts that run the same professional development programs for all grade levels” (3). While he admits that this may work for some things, he suggests the main impetus for such an approach is economic, and that it is not the best way to implement training that will be truly effective. And finally, he says that professional development efforts often assume a static audience—that all the teachers in the workshop are similar—and as a result often employ standardized approaches. Diaz-Maggioli suggests that “the standardized nature of traditional professional development programs assumes that all teachers should perform at the same level, regardless of their particular experience and needs” (4). Yet the research, he says, shows that teachers perform quite differently and face quite different crises at different points in their careers.

These assumptions—that teachers should be able to replicate techniques and that standardized practices may be universally applied, regardless of the teachers themselves

or the students they teach—may shape the types and the scope of training and development, in that these assumptions may suggest that types of training that are complicated or that do not have an easily definable “takeaway” are not appropriate or feasible. If the expectation for training and development is that a single serving—the most common form of professional development—will yield a tangible result, then this may preclude the inclusion of more complicated ideas and practices. Would/could a program like the one Ritchie and Wilson have developed, which seems to take some time to enact, translate into good in-service training? Would/could it be considered valid and valuable within the current rhetoric about professional development? Dealing with the intrapersonal takes time. Intrapersonal transitions, as Bridges notes, are a process. And it does not seem time is built into current assumptions of professional development. So, like the rhetoric related to content and pedagogical knowledge, these assumptions, which Diaz-Maggioli suggests are embedded in teacher training, may limit what appears within the palette of professional development opportunities. And it may work against the notion of attending to the intrapersonal in professional development.

Diaz-Maggioli argues for a more complex view of professional development than the ones that currently seem to dominate the field. He argues that teaching styles—which he considers the totality of the teacher’s performance in the classroom—are “the result of interacting personal, professional, knowledge, career, institutional, and curriculum factors” (6), all of which may be addressed through training and development. And within his categories of personal, professional, and career factors lay the connections with my argument. Diaz-Maggioli notes that issues of personal and professional identity have

a bearing on what happens in the classroom, as well as issues related to the stage of one's career. He suggests the issues that teachers navigate/negotiate/manage, personally and professionally, at the beginning of their careers are significantly different than the ones they navigate/negotiate/manage at the end of their careers. Where teachers in the beginnings of their careers are "learning to perceive the messages that the teaching and learning environments send" and trying to figure out their personal and professional identities, teachers later in their careers may be struggling with personal and professional identity crises as they attempt to reconcile their aspirations with their circumstances (8).

And he implies that how they resolve these issues in relation to their identities will determine what types of teachers they become. If teachers successfully navigate/negotiate/manage and resolve challenges to their identities, then—Diaz-Maggioli implies—they have the ability to be relatively well-adjusted and satisfied in their careers. If they do not navigate/negotiate/mange the challenges and changes to their identities well, then a host of potential issues and problems may arise if they remain in their career. And the issue of identity, as Diaz-Maggioli suggests, has material consequences. For example, in terms of professional identity, Diaz-Maggioli states:

Teaching styles are greatly influenced by the teachers' own idealization of themselves as teaching professionals. Those who equate professionalism with adherence to external norms will tend toward relatively directive and ethnocentric teaching styles; on the other hand, those who perceive themselves as existing in a dialectical relationship with other

professionals, working collectively to build their professional identities, will necessarily have more constructivist styles. (12)

The long and the short of Diaz-Maggioli's observations is that he believes that "in order to ensure that professional development is congruent with these facts, educators need an organizational framework based on the unique characteristics and contributions of teachers" (14). The complexities of identity, he suggests, need to be attended to in training and development. Although Diaz-Maggioli takes his argument in a different direction than my own—laying out a specific collaborative framework for conducting training and development—he recognizes the importance of addressing the intrapersonal aspect of teaching, including "personal awareness" as one of the categories on which training and development should focus.

Ritchie and Wilson suggest that personal identity is inextricably intertwined with professional identity, and—like Diaz-Maggioli—they suggest that these must be attended to in complex ways during pre-service and in-service professional development. They indicate that they see an opportunity to do this in teacher training, because—as they note—narrative has become an acceptable technique to use in in-service teacher training. However, they also suggest that the ways in which narrative is normally engaged in in-service training usually falls short of the type of critical reflection they feel is necessary to truly explore issues of identity.

In the end, Palmer, Austin, Ritchie and Wilson, and Diaz-Maggioli all touch on the reasons the intrapersonal aspect of teaching needs to be addressed more thoroughly within the context of training and development. Throughout their careers, teachers must

confront the complex intersections of their personal and their professional identities, and they must navigate/negotiate/manage shifts in their identities publicly, in front of thirty, or fifty, or a hundred, or two hundred people. And this makes a teacher's life both a terribly intimate and a terribly public affair. So, as Palmer, Austin, Ritchie and Wilson, and Diaz-Maggioli note in their own ways, it is vital that teachers know how to navigate/negotiate/ manage the intrapersonal. And this, as Austin, Palmer, Ritchie and Wilson also point out in their own ways, is a learned skill, one which can be developed and nurtured through teacher training. However, the intrapersonal is—for a variety of reasons—underserved in teacher pre-service and in-service training and development.

In essence, we are leaving teachers to their own devices when it comes to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. They may talk with each other, or they may go outside the educational setting and find support. But these are hit and miss propositions. Most of us in education would consider it irresponsible to send teachers into classrooms without training in theory and pedagogy, expecting them to learn everything on the fly, hoping that they will find good colleagues and mentors, with whom they will feel comfortable sharing their mistakes, so that they can get coached. Most of us in education would consider it irresponsible to send teachers into classrooms knowing nothing about the course content, hoping they will get it as they go along. And most of us would consider it irresponsible to send teachers into the classroom without some training in how to deal with student-teacher relationships, hoping that the interpersonal skills the teachers bring with them are enough. Yet this is what we seem to do when it comes to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. We allow teachers to enter classrooms and hope that they can manage

all the internal dilemmas, the shifts in identity, and emotional ups and downs with which they will be presented.

I do not mean to imply that content and pedagogy are not important. My argument is that content and pedagogy are largely addressed in pre-service and in-service training, and that allowing processes of self-exploration to proceed haphazardly when they could be supported and sustained seems less than responsible, less than practical, and less than efficient. I am suggesting that because thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and identities have an influence on the classroom, examining them and reexamining them, in ongoing processes, is relevant, and that it takes larger tools to do this than are currently employed in most educational environments. I am also suggesting that more fully attending to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching holds the promise of opening powerful medicines into our classrooms.

And this brings me back to the questions at the heart of this dissertation: Can contemplative/mindfulness practices support self-examination and transformation in educational settings? Can contemplative/mindfulness practices help connect the powerful medicine of the intrapersonal to the interpersonal world of education? Obviously, I believe the answer is yes. In the next chapter, I will explore how contemplative/mindfulness practices might connect the intrapersonal and the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I discussed various kinds of medicine that are available in our schools, and I tried to show that “the world is medicine,” that many things—from content knowledge to personal identity—go into effective teaching. Within that context, I tried to illustrate that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is central to what happens in the classroom and to suggest that it is a medicine that needs to be attended to more thoroughly in pre-service and in-service training and development.

To support my claim about the relevance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching to what happens in the classroom, I reviewed research regarding teacher self-efficacy, teacher traits, and student evaluations. The first two categories of research seem to indicate that the intrapersonal—the teacher’s thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and identities, as well as how those thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and identities are navigated/negotiated/managed—has material consequences in the classroom. The self-efficacy research suggests that a teacher’s belief about his own competence is one of the strongest predictors of success. It also seems to be correlated to the pedagogical choices the teacher makes. Similarly, the research on teacher traits seems to suggest that how teachers navigate/negotiate/manage their inner lives may be linked to performance in the classroom. Teachers who are experiencing low self-esteem or shame seem to use fewer and more punitive instructional techniques. And how teachers manage “fluctuations” in their identities seems to be related to both resilience and effectiveness. Although the final category of research—on student evaluations—does not speak to effectiveness, it does speak about student experiences; and in the qualities students value, ranging from

fairness to compassion, one may witness the relevance of the intrapersonal and see the medicine it may bring to the classroom.

Next, I tried to illustrate that the intrapersonal is underserved in pre-service and in-service teacher training. I attempted to show that pre-service and in-service training tends to focus on content and pedagogy. And I attempted to illustrate that even though most teacher education programs and many in-service workshops employ self-reflection as an instructional device, the reflection often does not seem to critically engage issues of identity. Using Joy Ritchie and David Wilson's English education practicum as a model, I tried to illustrate the complexity of dealing with identity. And I attempted to show that even in very good programs—like Ritchie and Wilson's—often aspects of the intrapersonal are underserved.

The reasons that we forgo the opportunity to address the intrapersonal are complicated. Dealing with intrapersonal issues may place institutions, programs, teachers, colleagues, and supervisors on touchy ground. It is difficult. It seems that content and pedagogy are so much more important to what happens in the classroom. Yet, as Palmer notes, we teach through our identities and “techniques are what teachers use until the real teacher arrives, and we need to find as many ways as possible to help that teacher show up. But if we want to develop the identity and integrity that good teaching requires, we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives—risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, and the abstract” (“Heart of” sec. 6). However, if

navigating the intrapersonal domain is relevant to the classroom, we must find ways to address it in order to bring this medicine more fully and consciously into the classroom.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEMPLATIVE/MINDFULNESS PRACTICES AND THE CLASSROOM: WHAT TYPES OF MEDICINE ARE THEY?

INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter, I attempted to illustrate that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant to the classroom. I suggested that the research regarding personal characteristics, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher evaluations all point in the direction that intrapersonal skills are needed to effectively navigate the classroom. And my review of pre-service and in-service professional development suggested that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is underserved in teacher training. Even though reflection is commonly used as an instructional technique in teacher education programs and in professional development, it often does not ask pre-service or in-service teachers to delve deeply enough into matters of belief or identity. And emotional matters are often side stepped. In this chapter, I will argue that contemplative/mindfulness practices have much to offer to teachers, to their classrooms, and possibly to education as a whole, and that they might be an effective way to fill some of the gaps in teacher training.

Contemplative/mindfulness practices—through their focus on staying aware in the present moment—tend to quiet the mind, cultivate a capacity for concentration, and allow space for deep personal insight. They teach practitioners to become aware of complicated intrapersonal landscapes and they teach practitioners how to navigate them, encouraging practitioners to release complex and subtle forms of inner resistance, and inviting them to orientations of radical acceptance and openness. And I hope to show that contemplative/

mindfulness practices are a way to attend to the intrapersonal so that the medicines it has to offer may be more fully uncovered and more fully manifested in the classroom. I hope to show that they would work well with—and might even support and/or enhance—the efforts at self-reflection that are already being made in teacher training and development.

Obviously, there are other ways than contemplative/mindfulness practice to explore and to support the intrapersonal. But contemplative/mindfulness practices are, in the metaphor that controls this dissertation, potent medicine. And this medicine may be very important for teachers who are struggling with their beliefs, their identities, and their emotions. As I will try to illustrate more fully, contemplative/mindfulness practices may be—as experiential evidence and current brain research show—transformational in terms of the intrapersonal. They may also be—as experience and research illustrate—transformational in terms of the interpersonal, helping people to learn to navigate/negotiate/manage their relationships more effectively. And because of this, contemplative/mindfulness practices—whether these are secular and scientific, like John Kabat-Zinn’s Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), or more spiritual in nature, like Zen—may have the capacity to alter the dynamics of the classroom.

In this chapter, I will look at the research on contemplative/mindfulness practices and what it suggests about the medicines it offers to individuals. Then I will consider the medicines that these practices may bring to the classroom. The term contemplative/mindfulness practices, as I use it, may refer to a range of activities from meditation (Zen and other) and contemplative prayer to Mindful Based Stress Reduction, although my interest in this argument is in secular contemplative/mindfulness practices, since they

may be the most likely to be adopted for use by educational institutions. In the dharma talk, I will consider my experience related to contemplative/mindfulness practice and teaching. And again, any understanding (or misunderstandings) that I confess to in this section are purely my own.

“DHARMA TALK”:

THE MEDICINE OF STILLNESS

January marked my twenty-sixth year of teaching. It snuck up on me. I entered my career largely by default. When it came time to declare a major in college, I could not think of any other option. Secretly, I believed I would teach for a few years until I could decide what I really wanted to do. Throughout the years, I have attempted to leave teaching on a couple of occasions, first to pursue a career in counseling and then to attend seminary. I worked for a couple of years as an administrator at a community college, overseeing the school-to-work program. But I kept gravitating back to the classroom. I kept teaching, even if it was only as an adjunct. During my career, I switched schools five times and areas of the country a couple of times. At first I transferred schools because I believed changing my circumstances would change the way I experienced teaching, and later—after teaching at high schools, community colleges, and a university—I switched because I had discovered which teaching venue I found most satisfying. And during this time, almost nineteen years ago now, I began contemplative/mindfulness practice.

Staying still—in my profession and my practice—has challenged me in ways all my movement did not. It has eventually and sometimes painfully unmasked me. Long term relationships—whether these are with others, institutions, or practices—can be exacting mirrors, because inevitably, no matter how hard we may try to submerge them, the foibles in our beliefs, identities, and emotions leak out. A quarter century of teaching and almost two decades of contemplative/ mindfulness practice have exposed—with the accuracy of a scalpel and the indelicacy of a chainsaw—the worst aspects of my ego, the

ubiquity of my fears, and the weight of my self-pity. But my contemplative/mindfulness practice and my observation of others' practices have also convinced me of the transformative power of mindfulness, how it can revise an entire life.

As a new teacher in an "inner city" school, my life was founded on a series of paradoxical tensions. At the same time I cultivated and enjoyed the image of a rebel, I was resentful my administration did not recognize me more fully for my contributions to the school. At the same time that I pictured myself as a dynamic and powerful teacher, I was fearful that I would be exposed as a fraud. At the same time that I claimed I wanted to be recognized and respected, I was in a hundred ways hindering—often deliberately—the possibility that I might become known. To ease these tensions, I wanted/needed constant certification that I was good, which became another source of tension when such validation did not occur. And, for better or worse, these patterns of behavior, thought, and feeling lasted for quite a while into my teaching career.

I have no Road-to-Damascus story, no specific moment in my career, when I suddenly recognized these and all the other confining patterns I was enacting. I came to my understandings slowly. I can say with certainty that I managed—despite rising costs—to maintain my behaviors and to rely on my beliefs for far longer than they actually served me well; that eventually they became too much of a strain and began to collapse under the weight of their own absurdity; and that it was only after my beliefs and identities began to crumble and I found myself in a great deal of emotional pain that I discovered the contemplative/mindfulness practices, which helped me—over the course

of time—to release the patterns and ideas that were limiting me. So, my story is not one of virtue. It begins with failure.

Staying still—in my profession and my contemplative/mindfulness practices—seems to have gradually forced me out of the roles I had adopted. It brought me slowly—and often unintentionally and unwillingly—to awareness, to acceptance, and to transformation. It took time before I came to realize that moving from school to school and from place to place did not change what I wanted it to change. It took time to realize the novelty of my moves faded, and I was left with the same sorts of discomforts I felt in previous schools and places. It took time to become clear that I was the common thread in all my discomfort, and I had to look inward for the answers to this discomfort.

There were many smaller moments of realization along the way to larger understandings of my particular patterns of thought and emotion. I remember a day, several years after I had begun my contemplative/mindfulness practice, when I realized that the problems I was having with an administrator at my second high school mirrored the problems I had with an administrator at my first high school. I saw that I had placed these two very different individuals into roles in a narrative I carried about authority, and I was responding to them based on this. I recognized patterns of thought and patterns of emotion in the two situations, and I understood that what I had interpreted as an interpersonal problem was—to a great extent—an intrapersonal one. The problems I was having with these two individuals were not so much related to their actions, which were for the most part within the range of reasonable. Rather, my problems stemmed from complex sets of beliefs and identities, which I accepted and responded to as facts. But it

took much time before I learned to reframe the bulk of my guiding narratives from the category of “fact” to stories that shape my perceptions.

As I have continued my contemplative/mindfulness practices and many of my beliefs have been exposed to Yasutani-roshi’s “fireball of Mu,” I have discovered another pattern. It is when my stories become exhausted, when they no longer carry me and my perceptions become a significant burden, that I begin to transform. And staying still in my profession through the guidance of my contemplative/mindfulness practice—regardless how falteringly I participated in it—also yielded intimacy. It taught me the significance of forgiveness, without which no long-term relationship can endure and thrive. I have learned to appreciate what it means to feel confined, as well as to understand what it means to pass through that powerful illusion. And I have learned to recognize that it’s not so much the events in my life as the quality of my own thought, which creates the vessel for my days. All of these realizations have changed my intrapersonal landscape and my relationships with teaching, my students, and my classroom.

I know these realizations could have come other ways. However, I have come to believe that contemplative/mindfulness practices are useful and powerful medicines for stimulating realization and navigating transformation. In my own circles of friends and acquaintances, I have witnessed others come to realizations and undergo transformations through their contemplative/mindfulness practices. The dozen or so books about Zen that I read in preparation to write this dissertation also discussed transformations practitioners can expect to experience through mindful attention. And history is replete with anecdotal

evidence of the power of contemplative/mindfulness practices. The story of transformation through prayer and meditation is an old one. It crosses cultures and time.

In twenty-six years of teaching, I have yet to encounter a year when I haven't, at some point, struggled with my emotions, beliefs, and identities related to my profession and my contemplative/mindfulness practice. And each time, it is difficult to stay still—to still the intrapersonal waters until I can see undisturbed—so that I may come again to the place where I may know and may trust that the intrapersonal lenses through which I view the details of my circumstances are more critical than the circumstances in which I find myself. Circumstances pass. But the stories I carry with me, until they are fully examined and released, ensnare me. The medicine of sitting still and the tools of reflexivity, which are found in contemplative/mindfulness practices, have allowed me—and many others—this release. And my experience has convinced me that contemplative/mindfulness practices are medicine. As the koan suggests, the only question is: What types of medicine are they?

WHAT TYPES OF MEDICINE ARE CONTEMPLATIVE/MINDFULNESS PRACTICES?

In this part of my argument, I want to illustrate that contemplative/mindfulness practices may function in several ways to enhance the intrapersonal and interpersonal lives of people. Among other things, they seem to help reduce stress. They also seem to support people as they attempt to change patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior. And they seem to work in a wide variety of settings with many different types of people. Unfortunately, in education there is not a lot of research related to contemplative/mindfulness practice and the ways it might influence the performance of teachers, so I will discuss the research from medicine and psychology in order to explore the efficacy of contemplative/mindfulness practices and to suggest ways these practices may help teachers in their classrooms. And based on the dearth of research in education related to teachers and contemplative/mindfulness practices, I will call for additional educational research along these lines.

The medical and psychological communities are somewhat ahead of the educational community when it comes to exploring the potential of contemplative/mindfulness practices. And Daniel Siegel, head of UCLA's Mindful Awareness Research Center, presents an interesting case for what he calls Mindful-Awareness Practices (MAPS). For all practical purposes, Siegel's use of the term "MAPS" and my use of the term "contemplative/mindfulness practices" are synonymous, especially when it comes to the observational quality that is implied by the term "mindfulness." We both understand mindfulness to imply that people may become aware of their thoughts and feelings in a

number of ways. One may not recognize one's thoughts or feelings, but only react to them. A young child, for example, may act out of anger or fear without being able to identify the emotion he is experiencing. One may recognize that one is angry or fearful, but remain locked in the emotion. Teenagers are notorious—whether this depiction is fair or not—for their inability to control their emotions. They may recognize that they are angry or afraid, but they may not be able to “do” anything about it but react. Next, one may also recognize one's thoughts and feelings and—using the imperfect analogy of film—may be able to observe those thoughts and feelings from a place of relative detachment. And finally, one may become aware of one's own awareness. Siegel refers to the latter as meta-awareness, which can be likened to meta-cognition, the ability to think about one's own thinking.

Siegel, in *The Mindful Brain*, outlines the range of studies that have looked at MAPS. What I am offering is by no means a complete account of these. Rather, I am presenting an overview to demonstrate the variety of research that has taken place and that is taking place in the fields of medicine and psychology in relation to what I am calling contemplative/mindfulness practices. I am relying on Siegel's review of the literature for two reasons: first, because as an MD and a researcher, his understanding of the content makes him far better than I at explaining and categorizing medical and psychological research; and second, because reviews of his work done by other professionals in the fields of medicine and psychology remarked on the clarity and the quality of the research (Reebye; Chessick; Callen). Finally, it is not my intent to delve into the intricacies of the medical or psychological research. I simply want to show that

there is solid research in the fields of medicine and psychology that supports historical and anecdotal evidence that contemplative/mindfulness practices are efficacious ways to deal with intrapersonal issues. And I want to use the existence of that research as the basis of a call to researchers in the field of education to begin examining the intrapersonal aspect of teaching in a more rigorous way.

I want to work my way through Siegel's observations in a specific way. First, I want to look at how MAPS have been applied in clinical settings and what this research reveals. And second, I want to look at the research related to MAPS and their impact on the structure of the brain. Siegel begins by noting that "studies across a range of clinical situations, from medical illness with chronic pain to psychiatric populations with disturbances of mood or anxiety, have shown that effective application of secular mindfulness meditation skills can be taught outside of any particular religious practice or group membership" (9). This is important to the work of this argument. In order to make a case for the inclusion of contemplative/mindfulness practices in teacher training, it has to be established that they can be taught and learned in a variety of ways and in a variety of settings, and not just in religious/spiritual settings like sanghas and monasteries. And it also has to be established that these practices are efficacious. Siegel seems to indicate both things. He suggests MAPS have been shown to be teachable and learnable skills in secular settings, and as I shall explain more fully in just a moment, he seems to indicate that they may be efficacious in a variety of settings.

In terms of their clinical applications, medical and psychological communities have studied the efficacy of contemplative/mindfulness practices in a variety of ways,

linking them to positive changes in emotions, behavior, and relationships. I will speak of this category of research as “functional,” since these studies tend to focus on how MAPS may boost the individual’s ability to function physically, emotionally, behaviorally, and relationally. As an example of functional research, Siegel discusses the secular MAPS practice of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), which has demonstrated some promising results. Siegel states:

Jon Kabat-Zinn, in the late 1970s, began a project to apply these ancient ideas in a modern medical setting.... The MBSR program brought the ancient practice of mindfulness to individuals with a wide range of chronic medical conditions from back pain to psoriasis. Kabat-Zinn and colleagues, including his collaborator Richard Davidson at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, were ultimately able to demonstrate that MBSR training could help reduce subjective states of suffering and improve immune function, accelerate rates of healing, and nurture interpersonal relationships and an overall sense of well-being (Davidson, et al., 2003).
(17)

The research into MBSR seems to suggest that contemplative/mindfulness practice may have an effect on perception, the degree to which one believes he is suffering or the extent to which one has a sense of well-being. However, it also seems to suggest that measurable physical results have been correlated with the use of contemplative/mindfulness practice, which may be a more compelling argument for MAPS than results that may be dismissed as subjective.

In addition to MBSR's efficacy, which is based on thirty years of research, Siegel notes that the efficacy of MAPS has been explored more recently in a variety of clinical settings. Clinical applications of MAPS have also demonstrated MAPS to have positive influences on the functioning of particularly difficult or problematic populations, including groups such as recovering addicts, those with eating disorders, and those with chronic depression. Siegel notes that:

Mindfulness has influenced a wide range of approaches to psychotherapy with new research revealing significant improvements in various disorders with reduction in symptoms and prevention of relapse (Hayes, Follette, & Linehan, 2004; Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999; Linehan, 1993; Marlatt & Gordon, 1985; Parks, Anderson, & Marlatt, 2001). Mindfulness can also prevent relapse in cases of chronic depression via cognitive therapy (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002). Similarly, mindfulness has been used as an essential part of the treatment of borderline personality disorder in dialogical behavioral therapy (DBT, Linehan, 1993)... [And] several books have now been published that review the use of mindfulness and acceptance in the psychotherapy of a wide range of conditions from eating disorders to anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorders (Hayes, Folette, & Linehan, 2004; Germer, Siegel, & Fulton, 2005; Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002). (18-19)

Siegel's presentation of this portion of the research illustrates that the skills engendered by contemplative/mindfulness practices are showing efficacy in an array of environments

for the treatment of an assortment of problems. And amongst the research there seems to be some hard data that is encouraging. For example, the findings related to the prevention of relapse seem promising. And these findings are encouraging to this argument because they intimate that contemplative/mindfulness practices may have the very real possibility of supporting teachers. If MAPS show efficacy improving the functioning of people with addictions, posttraumatic stress disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and eating disorders—all of which are stubborn and persistent conditions—there is hope that they can positively affect how teachers function in their classrooms.

Phillipe Goldin, head of Stanford University's Clinically Applied Affective Neuroscience Group, concurs with Siegel. He suggests that MAPS have been shown in numerous studies to be correlated with stress reduction, including studies of pre-med and med students, adolescent boys in juvenile detention, college students, cancer patients, and outpatients with anxiety disorders. One of the results that I found most interesting was related to the pre-med and med students. In this study, Goldin suggests MAPS not only effectively reduced the levels of self-reported anxiety, as well as overall levels of psychological distress in these groups, but also increased indicators of empathy. The other results I found particularly interesting dealt with the adolescent boys. In that study, both a decrease in stress and an increase in impulse control were correlated with MAPS. These findings were interesting because they suggest that MAPS may offer multiple benefits to practitioners. The benefits of empathy and self-control, in addition to reduced stress, also seem to suggest that these practices could potentially have an effect on interpersonal relationships. Goldin also suggests that MAPS have demonstrated efficacy

in relation to relapse prevention for depression, smoking, and binge eating, although in relation to smoking cessation, the efficacy of MAPS and cognitive-behavioral interventions were equivalent.

If MAPS are showing such promise and they can be taught in secular settings, one may reasonably ask why the use of MAPS is not more widespread and/or why MAPS are not more widely proclaimed. There may be a couple of possible reasons for this. First, there is a pragmatic reason. While MAPS may be taught and while they may be demonstrating efficacy, they require discipline to maintain. Finding the discipline to maintain contemplative/mindfulness practice may be problematic for many people, which is a concern for me and for my argument. The problem of maintaining discipline is certainly a frequent topic of discussion in the sanghas I attend, and it has been a frequent topic in every contemplative/mindfulness community to which I have belonged. And this may speak to the importance of community in regards to contemplative/mindfulness practice. Community seems to be a significant support in terms of maintaining one's contemplative/mindfulness practice. And this in turn, may speak to the need to place MAPS within ongoing consistent efforts at teacher training and development (if they are going to be included at all). Without continued support, training and development in contemplative/mindfulness practice may be wasted.

Second, there are still questions within the scientific community about the efficacy of MAPS. There are suggestions in some studies—the smoking cessation one that Goldin mentions, for example—that indicate other types of interventions demonstrate equal efficacy to MAPS. In a review of the research published in *Clinical*

Psychology Review, M. M. Delmonte argues that MAPS do not appear to be more effective than other intervention strategies in reducing anxiety. And Judith Lepuschitz and Valerie Hartman report, in *Current Psychology*, that there appear to be no differences between meditators and non-meditators in terms of their levels of psychosocial adaptation (i.e. the ability to cope with change). However, there did appear to be differences in terms of some of the patterns in their relationships. The first type of research does not seem to deny the efficacy of MAPS. Rather, it suggests that MAPS are no more efficacious than other interventions. The latter type of research suggests that MAPS do not demonstrate improvements in performance, although even the latter type of research seems to indicate that MAPS are doing something. For example, in Lepuschitz and Hartman's work, there are indications that some differences exist between meditators and nonmeditators, and the authors of the study call for further exploration of those differences.

Since the research appears mixed, this may suggest the need for caution in relation to claims that can be made about contemplative/mindfulness practices. And it may also suggest the need for caution in terms of how to employ the use of contemplative/mindfulness practices. It is certainly reasonable and warranted, from the point of view of scientific skepticism to form opinions slowly, especially when there is mixed data. However, from the rhetorical perspective, the case against MAPS may simply seem more appealing than the case for them, and it is possible that rhetoric, more than results, is working against the acceptance of MAPS. For much of its history in the West, meditation has existed on the margins of acceptability, and it has often been viewed with some suspicion. Christianity has had a tenuous relationship with Eastern

forms of meditation. And Jin Y. Parks discusses the varied misinterpretations of Buddhism and its practices by some of the most enlightened minds of their times, including Hegel, Cousin, and Muller. Other forms of meditation have suffered similar cultural misinterpretations, including popular cultural images depicting meditators as long-bearded people with turbaned heads. Meditation was branded as “out there” in mid to late twentieth century America, becoming associated with hippies and the drug culture.

And even though it has gained a level of acceptance currently, meditation still struggles to gain full credibility, including in the realms of Western medicine and social science, where it still falls more into the category of “alternative” medicine than standard practice, and where it still falls into the category of softer social science (like transpersonal psychology, which trumpets meditation) than harder social science (like clinical psychology, which is still debating the value of it). So, even though Siegel, Goldin, Kabat-Zinn and other researchers are working within credible institutions (UCLA, Stanford, and U Mass respectively), and even though their work is showing some credible results, it seems possible that it is hard for these results to be heard over the rhetorical noise that comes with the concept of meditation.

A third possible reason that MAPS are not more widespread and/or more widely proclaimed is that there are real alternatives to them. There are other practices, which may lead to similar results, and these practices may be perceived as more accessible or more preferable for any number of reasons. For example, cognitive therapy, which teaches clients that it is not their circumstances, but their thinking that is the real issue (the same basic message one finds in many contemplative/mindfulness practices) may

feel more comfortable because it is perceived of as a form of therapy. Similarly, one may take any number of prescription drugs to calm down and relieve stress. These drugs are prescribed by doctors, who oversee the treatment of the individual, which may seem to legitimize them as a choice. As I have noted throughout, there are other possible ways to attain the results one finds through contemplative/mindfulness practice. It is also true, as I have noted—that the legitimacy of one idea does not necessarily preclude the legitimacy of another idea. There is room in the world—and in the world of training and development—for many medicines that work and that are efficacious. And these different medicines may be “right” for different individuals, in different circumstances, for different reasons.

The question then becomes: why choose contemplative/mindfulness practices? And the answer to that question—whether it is from an individual or an organization—is going to require the consideration of any number of factors, including how well the idea of contemplative/mindfulness practices mesh with the existing beliefs and identities of the individual or group. In this argument, I am trying to suggest that contemplative/mindfulness practices are efficacious, which makes them a viable choice for professional development, and that they should be considered within the range of options which is offered in training and development. I am not trying to claim that contemplative/mindfulness practices are an only choice. I am trying to suggest that they are a good choice, one that deserves consideration alongside other viable choices. And I am trying to discuss some of the particular benefits of contemplative/mindfulness practices, so that

their efficacy may be better understood. Individuals and organizations will have to sort out the benefits-cost analysis based on their specific needs.

The last category of research related to MAPS might be termed as “structural.” As a brain researcher, this is Siegel’s primary interest. He wants to know if/how MAPS may restructure the hardwiring of the brain. And in his review of the research, as well as his own research, he hints that contemplative/mindfulness practices may demonstrate the ability to literally reconstruct the brain.

What I find interesting and compelling about the structural brain research is that it seems to tie everything together: the intrapersonal experiences of MAPS that are reported by practitioners and the interpersonal manifestations of MAPS (i.e. better functioning in terms of behavior and relationships), which are also reported by practitioners and now observed in research. It laces them together at a physical level, which seems to suggest the power and the possibility of these practices. Siegel explains that:

Structural scans of the brain of mindfulness meditators...revealed thicker middle prefrontal areas and the right insula (Lazar et al., 2005). It could be that the practice of mindfulness meditation activated those regions and made their anatomical bulk larger; or it could also be that individuals with larger regions in those areas are more likely to meditate. [However] thickness did correlate with years of practice, supporting the possibility that this indeed is a result of the practice of mindfulness meditation, not just an associational finding. (120)

While Siegel by no means calls these findings conclusive, he does consider them important. He limits the scope of his claim to “possibility,” although it is clear he believes the possibility may be strong, since Lazar’s findings—although based on a limited sample—are in sync with other work in the area of brain plasticity and revealed statistically significant differences between the brain structure of non-practitioners and practitioners, which correlated with years of practice.

The possibility that the prefrontal cortex might be structurally altered by contemplative/mindfulness practices is intriguing because of the function of this region of the brain. “The middle prefrontal region [of the brain],” Siegel explains, “is profoundly integrative of body, brainstem, limbic areas, cortex, and the social world of others’ minds.... It is the development of these areas that seems crucial for emotional and social functioning, as they form a central node in the ways in which self-regulatory aspects of the mind correlate with structures and functions in the brain” (117-119). In other words, the prefrontal areas of the brain integrate internal functions and they help to integrate the individual with the world, both through recognition of what others might be experiencing and through the function of self-regulation. The prefrontal region of the brain is the point where the intrapersonal and interpersonal meet.

Siegel discusses specific ways in which the “structural” impacts the “functional,” and these may provide some clues about how the intrapersonal shapes the interpersonal. Since this dissertation is attempting to show that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant to the interpersonal aspect of teaching, which is at the heart of every classroom experience, this connection is important. And I want to look more closely at awareness

and self-regulation—two specific areas of research that Siegel targets—and how they might intersect with the intrapersonal and interpersonal.

First, according to Siegel, the thickening of the prefrontal cortex corresponds to “the fundamental processes of interoception” (103), which he defines as the ability to respond to data originating in the body. This ability could be said to correspond to the activities of awareness and reflexivity, which—in turn—may be seen as manifesting in intrapersonal experience as self-awareness and in interpersonal experience as empathy for or understanding of others. “Given that these structures enable us to have mindsight—the capacity for seeing the mind in ourselves and in others,” Siegel says, “Lazar’s research suggests that mindfulness meditation might alter the very structures of our brains responsible for empathy and for self-observation. This may be the link between the practice of looking inward and reported enhancement of the ability to connect with others” (103-4).

The notion that the same area of the brain is responsible for both intrapersonal and interpersonal awareness and that this area of the brain might be developed through contemplative/mindfulness practices is interesting to this argument. One of the findings related to low teacher self-efficacy/self-esteem/shame and high teacher stress/burnout is that these teachers disconnect from their students and their needs. MAPS seem to be efficacious in terms of reducing stress and in terms of improving other functions, such as self-control and empathy, which suggests that MAPS may be able to help recreate both the intrapersonal environment of the teacher and the interpersonal environment of the classroom. And Lazar’s research—if it holds up under scrutiny—may suggest a link

between “structure” and “function” that supports the anecdotal evidence of practitioners and the functional research, both of which illustrate a connection between contemplative/mindfulness practices, intrapersonal growth, and improved interpersonal relationships. This may not only suggest that there is the possibility that contemplative/mindfulness practices could have an effect on what happens in the classroom, but because there is a measurable structural change in an area of the brain whose function is understood, it may provide hard evidence supporting the efficacy of contemplative/mindfulness practice.

From Siegel’s perspective the “structural” connection of the intrapersonal and the interpersonal should not be surprising. “Long before we spent time cultivating our minds with reflection,” Siegel says, “we evolved as social creatures. A great deal of the process of our brains at rest, in default mode, appears to be neural circuitry correlated with understanding others (Gusnard & Raichle, 2001). It is the social circuitry of the brain that we first used to understand the mind, the feelings and intentions and attentions of others” (25-6). And if the same neural circuitry jointly governs the processing of information about the self and others, it is possible that “as we become aware of our own intentions and attentional focus [activities related to MAPS], we may be utilizing the very circuits of the brain that first created maps of the intentions and attention of others” (26).

The notion that we may be able to strengthen interpersonal relationships by developing the intrapersonal insight—because the hardwiring that governs each kind of awareness is the same—could have powerful implications for teachers, for the classroom, for school districts, and potentially for education as a whole. Since the structural research seems to validate experiential evidence and the functional research, it alone may provide

an argument for shifts in the arenas of pre-service and in-service teacher training, or at the very least for supporting research into how MAPS may influence teacher performance in the classroom.

Siegel's work suggests that developing the prefrontal cortex through MAPS may shape awareness in another way, which might also have an effect on teachers and their performance in their classrooms. This type of awareness has to do with how people process, categorize, and experience incoming information, and the research related to it seems to suggest that contemplative/mindfulness practices may help practitioners to step outside patterned thoughts, which Siegel refers to as "top-down processes." The research also seems to suggest that contemplative/mindfulness practices enhance practitioners' ability to regulate their attentional focus, which may have an impact on both perception and behavior. And this may suggest that contemplative/mindfulness practices could be effective tools for helping teachers to navigate/negotiate/manage and/or revise habituated thoughts and emotions that may be causing them pain and/or other difficulties.

First, quoting Engel, Fries, and Singer (2001), Siegel contends that the brain is not a "passive, stimulus-driven device" (134). Rather, Siegel contends the brain plays a "constructive" role in perception, via highly active processes of information selection. The brain doesn't just see and respond. It sees, selects information it thinks is important, fits the information into pre-existing frameworks, and then it responds. In essence, through selective attention and awareness, our brains construct the realities they respond to. Siegel refers to this process as "top-down," by which he means, "engrained brain states" that "shape our awareness of ongoing experience" (135).

Siegel does not assign specific value to this function. Rather he views it as having both positive and negative implications. “These top-down influences have had huge survival value in our evolutionary history,” he says:

In that they enable the brain to make rapid assessments and carry out efficient information processing to then initiate behaviors that enable the organism to survive.... Our personal history also may reinforce top-down processes. If every moment of our lives we approached experience as if it were a baby’s first step, we would never learn to walk.... Our learning brains seek to find the similarities and differences, draw conclusions, and act.” (135)

People need to categorize for survival and efficiency. But beyond that, Siegel suggests categorizing may simply be built into the architecture of our brains. Our brains are pattern-making, pattern-detecting, and pattern-recognizing, including narrative patterns, logical patterns, language patterns, and linear patterns. This may help to explain why, after the initial realization that all thoughts are constructions, that practitioners of Zen must continue to use “the fireball of Mu” to release individual constructions that quietly inform their perceptions of the world; or why, after one reaches meta-awareness, the ability to be aware of one’s own thinking and the patterns in it, one still continually finds new patterns to deconstruct. The brain, regardless of one’s level of personal awareness and meta-awareness, is constantly constructing and reconstructing the patterns it sees in the world. So, Siegel says, by function and by design, “perception at its most fundamental level is an assembled process” (143). And the “reality” that gets assembled is dependent

on the focus of the individual, on what he selects to pay attention to. And what the individual pays attention to is often a matter of habit, of what the brain has been trained to look for.

The notion that perceptions are constructed is one of the threads in postmodern thinking, so it should not sound unfamiliar. The notion of constructed perception is also part of Zen and other contemplative/mindfulness practices. What is important in Siegel's review of the research is that it suggests that contemplative/mindfulness practices may have the ability to help people to disengage from their habituated perceptions, and this could have implications for teachers trying to navigate/negotiate/manage the complicated internal and external terrain of teaching. Siegel suggests that brain research may support the conclusion that we can, to a certain extent, step outside our own patterns of thought (a long-standing claim of contemplative/mindfulness practices. "The findings that the left prefrontal cortex seems to be activated with mindfulness practice," Siegel says, "is an important data set in our exploration of the dissolution of top-down processes (Davidson, 2004; Davidson et al., 2003)... When awareness, involving the side prefrontal region, is coupled with the metacognitive flexibility, self-observation, and bodily regulation of the middle prefrontal regions, then we have the opportunity to actually disengage automatic clusters of firing patterns" (142-44). And since Lazar's findings—though still limited—suggest that the prefrontal cortex may be enlarged by MAPS, it seems possible that practitioners of contemplative/mindfulness practices may have enhanced the equipment that enables people to step outside the preconceptions that shape—and limit—perception.

Siegel offers more evidence that top-down processes and perceptions may be modified by attentional focus, and that attentional focus may be positively affected by MAPS. “Over and over again,” Siegel says, “this practice of returning the attention to the target of focus [a practice found consistently in mindfulness, in Zen to the koan] seems to develop the ‘aim and sustain’ capacity of the mind’s attention” (112). Siegel cites some of his own research to demonstrate that “attentional networks can be modified” (111). He says, “Our Mindful Awareness Research Center’s pilot study was able to show that mindful awareness training over an eight-week period could significantly improve the executive functions of attention in adults and adolescents with genetically loaded forms of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (Zylowska, Ackerman, Futrell, Horton, Hale, Pataki, et al., submitted)” (111). The executive functions, which MAPS seem to influence positively, correlate with the ability to regulate the focus of the attention. And it appears, from Siegel’s research, that relatively minimal training can augment the ability to regulate attentional focus.

Related to the research regarding attentional focus, there is research regarding the “executive functions” of the brain, which seems to suggest that people can intentionally regulate their reactions, and that such self-regulation is learnable through practice, all of which have also been long-standing claims in contemplative/mindfulness traditions. Again, Siegel notes that the behavioral research and the research on brain structure seem to support each other. Rothbart and Rueda observe that:

Systems of effortful control may contribute to [the development of self-regulative behavior] by providing the attentional flexibility required to

manage negative affect, consider potential action in light of moral principles, and coordinate reactions that are under voluntary control. (qtd. in Siegel 575)

Siegel indicates that Rothbart and Rueda suggest:

In examining the neural structures involved in such self-regulation, the ACC [a part of the prefrontal cortex] as we've seen plays a major role: "The main node of the executive attention [selective, supervisory, focused attention] network, the ACC, is part of the limbic system and is strongly connected to structures involved in processing emotions." (qtd. in Siegel 116)

Rothbart and Rueda suggest that "systems of effortful control"—which include MAPS—can contribute to the development of self-regulation, which enables people to manage negative emotions and make conscious choices. And they link self-regulation with the structure of the prefrontal cortex, which may be developed through MAPS. The notion that "systems of effortful control," such as MAPS, may give people greater control over their emotions and their choices seems to suggest another benefit they may have to offer to teachers and subsequently to their classrooms. It may be important to reiterate—since Rothbart and Rueda's work does not specifically single out MAPS as a preferred way to develop effortful control—that my argument is not that contemplative/mindfulness practices are the only ways to attend to the intrapersonal, but that they are viable options, which deserve serious consideration among the range of available choices for training and development.

Beyond helping people to manage negative emotions and conscious choices, research also notes that self-regulation learned through MAPS can have an influence on behavior. Siegel states:

The authors [Rothbart and Rueda] go on to discuss the use of Attentional Process Training that can lead to improvements in executive attention (Sohlberg, McLaughlin, Pavese, Heidrich, & Posner, 2000), and posit that preliminary findings “suggest that the brain mechanisms associated with attentional control can be improved by training, and that this improvement produces a benefit in behavioral measures of competence.” (116)

Rothbart and Rueda’s work supports three important ideas. First, attention can become more focused and refined. Second, training and practice can play a role in that process. And third, intrapersonal shifts have material consequences in terms of emotions, choices, and behaviors. Again, all of these are long-standing claims made about the efficacy of contemplative/mindfulness practices.

Taken as a whole, the research seems to suggest five things, all of which correlate with the reported experience of practitioners of contemplative/mindfulness practices, and all of which suggest that contemplative/mindfulness practices may make viable additions to pre-service and in-service teacher training: 1) that contemplative/mindfulness practices are learnable; 2) that contemplative/mindfulness practices have an effect on behavior and relationships; 3) that there is a link—Siegel would claim a structural link based on Lazar’s work—between self-awareness and awareness of others, which contemplative/mindfulness practices strengthen; 4) that contemplative/mindfulness practices enhance

meta-awareness, which allows practitioners to step outside patterned thoughts, which Siegel refers to as “top-down processes”; and 5) that contemplative/mindfulness practices enhance the practitioners’ ability to regulate their attentional focus, which has an impact on both perception and behavior. And all of these things seem to suggest that contemplative/mindfulness practices could help teachers to better navigate/negotiate/manage the complexities of their classrooms.

I want to reiterate that I do not mean to present Siegel’s work or the research Siegel cites as conclusive. Pratibha Reebye, who reviewed *The Mindful Brain* for a Canadian journal of child and adolescent psychology, notes that there are times when Siegel’s work seems to rely on inference. For example, “the concepts of executive function [and] self regulation,” Reebye states, “are explained...in an inferential manner” (167). However, Siegel is careful not to overstate his case. He is obviously aware of the limits of the science that he is using to support his claims, and he is careful to qualify those limits. At the same time, he is able—as Reebye says—to create “an elegant description of how mind can govern the executive functions and self regulation” (167). And Siegel’s care and thoroughness convince Reebye “that mindfulness has a place in the personal and professional domains” (168). Like Siegel, I do not want to overstate my case based on an admittedly limited understanding of the science of neurology.

The importance of the research I have reviewed in this section is that it correlates with the anecdotal and experiential evidence of practitioners, and it seems to substantiate what practitioners have long claimed about the ability of contemplative/mindfulness practices to positively affect both the intrapersonal aspects of self-awareness and self-

regulation and the interpersonal ability to connect with others. And it suggests contemplative/mindfulness practices can be learned through secular training, which could have implications for pre-service and in-service training. Second, because the research frames contemplative/mindfulness practices and the intrapersonal in a secular, clinical manner, it may also create openings to discuss the intrapersonal aspect of teaching in educational settings. And finally, it may suggest that exploring the intrapersonal aspect of teaching and specifically how contemplative/mindfulness practices may affect teachers may be a valuable use of research time and money. In the next section, I want to talk about the medicines contemplative/mindfulness practices may bring to the classroom.

CONTEMPLATIVE/MINDFULNESS PRACTICES ARE MEDICINE.

WHAT TYPES OF MEDICINE MIGHT THEY BRING TO THE CLASSROOM?

When I was taking my methods-of-teaching class during my undergraduate education, my professor told us in no uncertain terms that if she asked us how we were going to teach something, our first response was to be: “In which class?” Her point was that each class is different, even if you are teaching the same content in them. Every teacher knows this from experience. Your first period American Lit class is different from your third period American Lit class. Your Monday-Wednesday ENG 101 class is different from your Tuesday-Thursday ENG 101 class. The chemistry in each class is different, and teachers constantly negotiate the limits, demands, and opportunities of each class.

Edward Pauly, an educational researcher, discusses through statistics what teachers know through experience, and he makes the argument that educational policies as they are currently enacted continually fall short of their expressed goals because they do not take the classroom into account. Essentially, Pauly argues that research from the Coleman Report—the first study commissioned by Congress related to equality of educational opportunity—forward has indicated several things:

That something was happening inside of schools that was causing some students to have different educational experiences than others in the same school.... That there were substantial differences in how much students learned in different classrooms. This was true even for students of the same age, race, family background, and economic status.... That teachers

who are successful with one classroom may not be successful with another, even if the students in the classroom are similar.... [That] virtually all of the efforts to improve education through generalized, schoolwide prescription were beside the point.... [And that] a clear and consistent finding of education policy research is that policies and reforms often fall apart when they encounter the realities of daily life in the classroom. (23-31, 115)

Pauly concludes that classrooms are complicated spaces. Like improvisational jazz or improvisational dance, they may be constructed of certain themes, but they are being created in endless variations, often take tangents, and they require mutual understanding on the parts of the participants. And he suggests the failure of so many policies in education occurs because they ignore, neglect, exclude, minimize, or attempt to restrain the influence of the classroom.

Given the constant swirl that is a classroom, it is easy to understand why cultivating a more conscious connection between the intrapersonal and the interpersonal is so important. The continual construction and reconstruction of the classroom takes place in the present moment. It calls teachers to be intensely aware of themselves and of others. Parker Palmer explains the classroom and the connection of the intrapersonal and interpersonal this way:

In every class I teach, my ability to connect with my students, and to connect them with the subject, depends less on the methods I use than on the degree to which I know and trust my selfhood.... After three decades

of trying to learn my craft, every class comes down to this: my students and I, face to face, engaged in an ancient and exacting exchange called education. The techniques I have mastered do not disappear, but neither do they suffice. Face to face with my students, only one resource is at my immediate command: my identity, my selfhood, my sense of this "I" who teaches—without which I have no sense of the "Thou" who learns. ("Heart of" sec. 2)

As Palmer notes, with a nod to Buber, intrapersonal awareness is significant to interpersonal connection. Teaching is an intensely personal enterprise, whether or not the specific subject taught is intensely personal. Every teacher consciously or unconsciously, willingly or not brings the self to the classroom. It is inevitable. One cannot communicate without showing the self and without looking for others. People still seek to know each other, in words and actions, however imperfectly this may happen, and however much each may construct the other. This imperfect search for the other and this imperfect revelation of self are at the heart of communication. The self—whether one perceives this as absolute being, constructed entity, or complete illusion—is tangled up in every layered, nuanced, intricate act of communication, both as the sender and the receiver of the message. And much like Zen, where mastery of language is needed before the koan can take the practitioner beyond the limits of language, Palmer suggests mastery of technique is necessary before self-awareness may obtain its full impact. However, self-awareness, as Palmer and Zen note, is a powerful medicine in and of itself, and one that ultimately becomes more important than technique.

Currently, principles found in contemplative/mindfulness practice are being employed in classrooms in relation to students. Transformational learning is akin to the work that I am doing and to critical reflection, and Mezirow, the “father” of transformational learning, suggests: “meaning structures are transformed through reflection, defined here as attending to the grounds (justifications) of one’s beliefs.... Reflection involves a critique of assumptions to determine whether the belief, often acquired through cultural assimilation in childhood, remains functional... [and] we do this by critically examining its origin, nature, and consequences” (“Understanding” 223). Research into transformational learning suggests that students—especially adult, college level, and high school level students—enter into classes with academic histories and life experiences that they have incorporated into larger belief systems about themselves and the world. And it suggests that for optimal learning to occur, students have to be aware of their current perspectives and of the limitations of these perspectives. Teachers cannot simply unload knowledge on students and expect them to integrate it, because students—like all people—resist or dismiss notions that do not fit into their belief systems, whether their belief systems are accurate or not. And research into transformational learning has also raised questions about whether people can become more adept at transformational learning over time (Erikson 2007).

Dialogical learning—based on the work of Friere and Habermas, and similar to the research on transformational learning and critical reflection—suggests that through egalitarian dialogue people can exchange, explore, create, and recreate meaning. The research into dialogical learning suggests that it is an effective way to unpack personal

and cultural notions, which is a central theme in contemplative/mindfulness practice, as well as transformational learning and critical reflection. Research into dialogical learning also suggests that it is an effective tool in the classroom and that it may be useful for pre-service and in-service professional development.

Ellen Langer, in her concept of mindful learning, has directly employed a notion from contemplative/mindfulness practices, even though she has not directly utilized any strategies from them. The notion Langer employs is that people reap many benefits by keeping their attention focused on the present moment. This premise, as it is enacted in mindful learning, is that if students are mindful during the process of learning, they will absorb more than if they are mindless. Langer suggests that being mindful is being alert, aware, and inquisitive in the moment of learning. And she suggests mindlessness is the quality of approaching learning by rote without making connections or considering contexts. Langer discusses myths we hold about education and learning that work counter to mindfulness. She also discusses ways that our approaches to learning foster mindlessness, and considers ways to make learning more engaging, so that mindfulness occurs naturally. And her research into mindful learning suggests that the approach benefits students in terms of memory, performance, and engagement.

Siegel too suggests that reflection and mindfulness should be a central part of the classroom experience. “What would happen,” Siegel asks, “if teachers were aware of the scientific finding that how a person reflects internally will shape how he treats both himself and others? If teachers became aware that attuning to the self—being mindful—can alter the brain’s ability to create flexibility and self-observation, empathy, and

morality, wouldn't it be worth the time to teach such reflective skills?" (260). Siegel suggests that self-reflection may increase students' abilities to be in harmonious and empathetic relationship, and based on this, Siegel makes his case for the "fourth R," reflection, as part of the curriculum. "In neural terms," he says, "the fourth 'R' of reflection would essentially be an education that develops the prefrontal cortex" (261). And he discusses the success of programs that use mindfulness techniques effectively, including InnerKids and UCLA's Mindfulness Research Center, of which he is a member.

Even pop culture may have suggestions about how mindfulness may be incorporated into education. In *Dancing with Your Books: the Zen Way of Studying*, J.J. Gibbs suggests how Zen may easily be applied to any modern educational setting. Gibbs suggests, "The first and most important step in learning to dance with your books is to get out of your own way" (4). "Many of us," Gibbs says, "are at the mercy of feelings and thoughts. They control our lives.... The Zen approach to unproductive thoughts and disquieting emotions is simply to recognize them for what they are [relative, provisional, contingent] and not let the mind abide in them. If you do not attach to them, they will pass naturally, without great disturbance to your concentration" (20-21). Gibbs proceeds to tell students how to get out of the stories that interrupt their ability to know. And the rhetoric Gibbs employs is pragmatic: that applying the principles of Zen will help a student to pass the test. Gibbs assumptions are simplistic. But Gibbs' book is not a tome aimed at an audience of educators. Its aim is to reach the average student who seems to be having trouble studying. And its aim is to reach out to this audience in language and in

concepts that are accessible. However, in doing this, Gibbs demonstrates, in a general way, how principles of contemplative/mindfulness practice may be employed in modern educational settings.

However, these theories, this research, and these recommendations focus on students and pedagogy. And the point of my argument is to focus on how changes in teachers' intrapersonal knowledge and skills may transform what happens in the classroom. But while there is abundant research on contemplative/mindfulness practices in clinical settings, and while there is abundant research in education about instructional techniques that are similar to mindfulness/contemplative practices, there is little research related to teachers and contemplative/mindfulness practices, and how incorporating these into personal practice might influence their teaching. There is anecdotal evidence, and there is some tangential evidence. But at this point, arguments for what contemplative/mindfulness practices may bring to the classroom rely primarily on inference.

The dances in any classroom are complicated, in any school, at any time. They require teachers to be intensely aware of themselves and others. And they require teachers to have this awareness in the real time of the present moment. The dances also require teachers to navigate/negotiate/manage their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and identities in real time in the present moment. And this is what contemplative/mindfulness practices train practitioners to attend to. Contemplative/mindfulness practices teach practitioners to be mindful of both the intrapersonal and the interpersonal in the present moment. And if Siegel is correct about the research into the behavioral, functional, and structural implications of MAPS—that they seem to offer practitioners the attentional

control and the self-control to navigate/negotiate/manage their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and identities—and if the anecdotal and experiential evidence of practitioners of contemplative/mindfulness practices is accurate, the skills learned through MAPS may translate into many medicines for teachers and the classroom, for dilemmas as complex as the ones outlined by Palmer, or for difficulties as commonplace as how to deal with classroom stress.

Robert Tremmel, in his book *Zen and the Practice of Teaching English*, offers anecdotal evidence about how contemplative/mindfulness practices may influence teachers and their classrooms. Citing Howard Tinberg—editor of the NCTE journal *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* (TETYC)—Tremmel says, “neither the issues of theory and practice nor the other problems of teaching will ever be resolved until we teachers move beyond our distractions and take charge of our *attention* [italics added] in the classroom” (75). As Tremmel develops his argument, it becomes clear that Tremmel is not only talking about paying attention to students, although this is obviously important and included in paying attention. Tremmel is talking about teachers paying attention to themselves as they are teaching. He wants teachers to watch themselves—their thoughts and feelings—as well as the scenes unfolding around them, and he suggests that attention to the intrapersonal is a key component of creating a powerful classroom.

Tremmel illustrates the power of paying attention to oneself with this story, which was related to him by a ninth grade teacher with whom he worked. The teacher states:

Right now I have a very troubled student in my at-risk class, who has been coming to class daily and sleeping. She’s depressed, she doesn’t make eye

contact, she puts her head down on the desk as soon as she gets there. She's aware of what's going on and isn't actually sleeping, but she appears to be, and she doesn't participate at all. The other teachers who talk about her complain about this. Apparently she has a troubled household and she's absent—emotionally absent—most of the time. One day recently I decided that I would put myself in her shoes, and what I observed was her body language. I decided to just approach her physically, so I put my hand on her shoulder and leaned over and said, “Do you feel alright? Would you like to go to the nurse?” And her response was to sort of brighten up, a real change in the pattern of behavior that had been common to her.... For me, in that moment, there was suddenly a change in the way I was able to see, a focusing of attention that I associate with the rhythms of [mindful] practice. Suddenly, it was possible for me to do what I had not been able to do before—to read her body language, read her need. It wasn't what I ended up doing that struck me the most, but the kind of attention I was paying to the moment, the way I was taking the situation in. It wasn't just, “Well, I should be nice and go over and see if she wants to go to the nurse.” It went beyond that in my feeling toward her, and I think that she picked up on that. I think there was a different moment between us because I could forget everything else going on in the classroom—just for five seconds or ten seconds—and be fully present for that one student.... You know, this is hard to do if you

have thirty kids in the class, to do one thing at a time...but it's been through my Zen practice that, first of all, I was introduced to, and then came to see the value of, doing mindfully one thing at a time. And that's what I was very aware of doing with this one particular student in the one particular moment to which I'm referring. (80-81)

The teacher's story relates how mindfulness transformed a negative and distracting situation into a potentially positive one, and it illustrates many of the aspects of the research to which I have been referring. The student is a distraction to the teacher's attention. A head down on a desk is a magnet to most teachers, and a student with her head down daily is usually considered an annoyance, a concern, or both. As the teacher's story unfolds, it reveals that the student is considered problematic by most of her teachers. Instead of feeling or indicating compassion because of a possibly difficult home life, they appear to use this information to further marginalize the student, apparently using it to imply that little or nothing can be done with the student.

When the teacher telling the story changes the quality of her attention, she is able to change the situation. What she reports is that she had a moment when she was aware that she had stepped outside of the cultural stories about the student (she's just a troubled kid, there's nothing you can do about her) and outside of the cultural stories that she, as the teacher, should do something (send her to the nurse), and she was able to recognize that internally she was in the place of calm detachment, which she associated with her contemplative/mindfulness practice of Zen. From this internal place and from the awareness that she was in this internal place, she was able to feel empathy and to offer an

act of compassion, asking a simple question about how the student was feeling, which apparently indicated respect to the student and forged a sense of connection with her.

This teacher's story may illustrate how personal awareness and attention to self may manifest in the interpersonal relationship of student and teacher. It may also illustrate how attention may be the antidote for distraction. In education, the distractions that can derail teachers from mindful attention to themselves and their classrooms can range from teaching loads of 150-200 students, state mandated tests, tenure concerns, and publication deadlines to pep assemblies, parent conferences, constricting budgets, and department politics. But Tremmel argues—from the contemplative/mindfulness perspective—eliminating external distractions is less important than stilling the internal waters when they are whipped up by passing thoughts and feelings. Attention is at the heart of contemplative/mindfulness practice. And in contemplative/mindfulness practices, intentionally focusing one's attention—not removing diversions—is framed as the answer to the issue of distraction. As a piece of anecdotal evidence, the teacher's story seems to support this. Her story also seems to reinforce the research regarding the correlation between empathy and contemplative/ mindfulness practice, and it seems to reveal the intrapersonal aspect of two of the qualities that Thompson et al.'s research identified as valued by students: compassion and respect.

I suspect most educators have a story about a time when mindful attention—whether it was intentional or not, and if intentional, whether the intentionality stemmed from contemplative/mindfulness practice or some other source—changed the course of a relationship with a student. I also suspect most educators understand how difficult it is to

practice mindfulness in a classroom of thirty students. And I don't think that contemplative/mindfulness practice is the only way to arrive at the action the teacher took. What the teacher's story demonstrates is that there is anecdotal evidence about how teachers' contemplative/mindfulness practices influence their teaching practices. However, since it is narrative-based and is clearly open to a wide range of interpretation, it may be of limited value, both in terms of establishing how contemplative/mindfulness practices may influence what happens in the classroom, and in terms of supporting a case for the inclusion of contemplative/mindfulness practices within the scope of teacher training.

Siegel, amongst his other arguments for including MAPS in education, offers an inferential argument about how the contemplative/mindfulness practices of teachers may influence what happens in the classroom. In it, he slips in the point I am trying to make: it is essential to consider the teacher's intrapersonal skill as a powerful force in shaping the classroom, and it is essential for teachers to attend to developing their intrapersonal skill. Siegel states:

Our study of the mirror properties in the brain [the ability to sense the intentions of others and to get in sync with them] suggests that how we arrive as teachers ourselves with this sense of engagement, emergence, and focus will directly activate those states in the students. An initial approach to consider as an educator is how you experience these processes [MAPS]. To develop reflection and internal attunement in our students, we need ourselves to be familiar, personally, with the way of being that is

mindful awareness...and so, being mindfully present yourself is an important start. (262-63)

Siegel suggests that students mirror their teachers and that how teachers “arrive” in their classrooms—in terms of their attitudes, their dispositions, their focus—becomes reflected in their students. If teachers want their students to be mindful and reflective, Siegel suggests teachers must be mindful and reflective. This seems to correlate with the research on teacher self-efficacy and teacher expectations of students, which both suggest that positive, engaged teachers become reflected in positive, engaged students, and that negative, disengaged teachers become reflected in negative, disengaged students. However, the connection between “mirror properties” and mindfulness remains inferential. It may be implied by the research that is being done, but it has not been established.

And it seems possible to make other inferential cases about other medicines that contemplative/mindfulness practices could add to the classroom. It is possible to suggest programs like Mindful Based Stress Reduction—a successful and highly accepted eight-week course in Mindful Awareness Practices, whose results are cited by both Siegel and Goldin—could help teachers negotiate classroom stress. Logic would seem to suggest that since stress has been correlated with teacher burnout, and teacher burnout has been correlated with low self-efficacy and negative expectation, and the negative effects of low self-efficacy and negative expectation have been correlated with decreases in teacher effectiveness, that programs like MBSR—which have been shown to be efficacious in terms of helping people to manage stress—should decrease burnout and increase teacher

effectiveness. Based on the same line of reasoning, it is possible to make the case that MBSR might also influence teacher retention, which seems to be related to the same types of stress and frustration that lead to teacher burnout.

Contemplative/mindfulness practices may—through enhancing the ability to self-regulate—help teachers develop stronger psychological resilience. They may—through increased empathy and awareness—help teachers to create better student-teacher relationships. They may—through enhanced ability to practice meta-awareness—create and sustain qualities like fairness, respect, compassion, and forgiveness, which Thompson’s research reports is important to students. For the same reason—enhanced meta-awareness—contemplative/mindfulness practices may enable teachers to keep a positive attitude and self-image, which the research on self-efficacy and teacher expectations show are central to teacher effectiveness. And perhaps in answer to Palmer’s concern that there are “no techniques for reclaiming our hearts,” MAPS may have the ability to take teachers’ thought lives and emotional lives off autopilot and return a sense of heartfelt living to them. All of these medicines—which MAPS have demonstrated both experientially over time and in research in the areas of medicine and psychology—have the potential to re-shape the teacher’s experience of the classroom and even the classroom itself.

The issue in education is that we do not have the necessary research to support these assertions. The research in psychology and medicine is not specific enough to the needs of education to make a research-based case about how contemplative/mindfulness practices influence what happens in the classroom. Research can show that the

intrapersonal aspect of teaching is important. Research can show that the intrapersonal is underserved in teacher training and development. Research can show that contemplative/mindfulness practices are efficacious in many ways for attending to the intrapersonal. But from there, the argument relies on inference, and inference is not enough to assert what benefits contemplative mindfulness practices may offer to teachers and the classroom (or my ultimate goal to suggest the inclusion of contemplative/mindfulness in professional development). And this leads me to the final thread in my argument, a call for more research directly related to contemplative/mindfulness practices and how their use by teachers might influence what happens in the classroom.

Contemplative/mindfulness practice taught me to see how much of my own pain was—and is—self-created. One of my first mentors repeatedly told me, “It’s not what is happening in your life that’s the problem. It’s what you think about it that’s the problem.” Later, in what I eventually realized was a wonderful pun, a Zen master—not the one I sit with the most—said, “Do you want to know the secret of my happiness? I don’t mind what happens.” And that simple notion—that I don’t have to mind what happens; that I do not have to apply my “mind” to what happens; that I can change my mind about what happens—was transformational for me. The realization that I had been bound to and bound by the tiny stories I was telling myself, and that this did not necessarily have to be so, was liberating. But the practice of stepping out of well-worn, well-trusted stories—those engrained neural pathways, those cultural constructions—took time and energy. The “fireball of Mu,” which burns up everything, takes diligence, even when the practice becomes habitual. Even now, with the practice established, I notice that my most intense

pain comes when I am resisting the complexity and expansiveness of the moment by trying to straightjacket it in one my stories.

Through this intrapersonal practice, although I am nowhere near the place of the Zen masters or some long-time practitioners that I know, I have been able to find a level of awareness, a level of acceptance, and a level of trust that has translated into greater regard for my students and my profession, which in turn has translated into better, more respectful relationships with both.

Eventually, as Mina Shaughnessy points out in “Diving In,” teachers come to the conclusion that they need to know more. All constructions eventually fail, as my Zen master likes to say. Shaughnessy, in good academic tradition, turns to craft and content knowledge as the response to this awareness. While craft and content are a must, they were not enough, in my experience, to sustain a thriving teaching practice. They are one of the boats—as in the Zen story—that carried me across the river. But when craft and content no longer suffice, a larger boat is needed for the larger river to be crossed. We must eventually—and very consciously—learn to explore and to navigate the intrapersonal, because it spills ceaselessly into the interpersonal, because it manifests in the worlds we co-create. And contemplative/mindfulness practices—time honored and more recently research tested—are a larger boat.

The medicines that contemplative practices have to offer in the classroom seem to be rich and diverse. They are skills that we can teach to our students, but more importantly—perhaps primarily—they are skills that we can teach to teachers. They are transformative practices that reorient lives, both internally and externally. They are potent

instructors in awareness, self-regulation, and acceptance. They are points of connection for the personal and the professional. They are bridges between the intrapersonal and the interpersonal. And if attended to consistently, they may become ways of being that are literally embedded in the very structures of our bodies and our lives.

MINDFULNESS IS MEDICINE.

CAN WE BRING IT TO TEACHER TRAINING?

CONCLUSIONS AND A CALL FOR MORE RESEARCH

In this dissertation, I have attempted to make a logical case for attending to the intrapersonal aspect of teaching in pre-service and in-service training and development. Specifically, I have tried to make a case for the inclusion of contemplative/mindfulness practices in that training. I argue: 1) that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant to what happens in the classroom; 2) that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is not attended to in most pre-service and in-service training; 3) that contemplative/mindfulness practices are being demonstrated to be efficacious ways to attend to both the intrapersonal and the interpersonal; and 4) based on that, that contemplative/mindfulness practices should be part of teacher training and development. I began the dissertation with the koan: “The world is medicine. What kind of medicine are you?” And I used that koan as a metaphor throughout the dissertation.

In presenting my case, I began with an exploration of Zen, which I used throughout the dissertation as an example of contemplative/mindfulness practice. I discussed Zen to illustrate that contemplative/mindfulness practices are based in logics that fall outside the traditional linear, discursive, rational, analytical, systematic logics that dominate academic thinking, that shape academic discourse, and that influence educational programs. And I suggested that because they function outside the dominant modes of thinking, contemplative/mindfulness practices may offer opportunities to re-envision the classroom and how we educate educators.

To make my case, I illustrated that many types of “medicine” are at work and working in education, but that we tend to focus on content, pedagogy, and interpersonal skills when we train teachers. I suggested that research regarding teacher self-efficacy, teacher traits, and teacher evaluations all produce some evidence that points in the direction that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant to what happens in the classroom and that intrapersonal knowledge and skill are needed to effectively navigate/negotiate/manage the classroom. The research on self-efficacy reveals that teachers’ beliefs about their own competence were one of the primary indicators of teacher success. The research reveals that teachers’ pedagogical choices are related to their sense of self-efficacy. The research reveals that teachers with high self-efficacy tended to have higher expectations of their students, and teachers with low self-efficacy tended to have lower expectations for their students. And the research on expectations suggests that expectations are a contributing factor to student success. Self-beliefs—such as in one’s own competence—have an intrapersonal component to them, even if they are negotiated in relation to the world, and this points to the possible relevance of the intrapersonal to teaching.

The research on teacher traits, while in some ways mixed, also suggests the relevance of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. The research suggests that the interaction of the intrapersonal (a teacher’s “issues and vulnerabilities”) and the interpersonal (a teacher’s circumstances) combine to help or hinder teacher effectiveness. This research also seems to confirm the research on teacher self-efficacy, suggesting that low self-esteem and shame are also correlated with teacher effectiveness and the types of

pedagogies teachers adopt. The research also seems to indicate that how teachers manage fluctuations in their identities is correlated with psychological resilience and effectiveness. And all of these findings suggest the relevance of the intrapersonal to what happens in the classroom.

The research that links self-efficacy, self-esteem, and shame with pedagogical choices raises some interesting questions when juxtaposed with the current focus in professional development on knowledge of subject-specific pedagogies. In terms of the pedagogies related to the teaching of writing, for instance, how does sense of self-efficacy, self-esteem, or shame influence the writing teacher's choices? Are writing teachers with low senses of self-efficacy more likely to gravitate toward instructional techniques and teaching practices that frame writing as a step-by-step, controllable process? In their comments on their student papers, would they be more likely to focus on grammatical and mechanical issues, which have firm rules? Would they be less likely to engage in methods that involve collaborative learning or challenge students with critical theories? This facet of the research into the intrapersonal aspect of teaching seems to pull back the curtain on our pedagogies and seems to ask us to look behind our assumptions about what shapes them.

And finally, the research related to teacher evaluations suggests that many of the qualities that students associate with their best teachers are ones that have an intrapersonal aspect to them. I looked at how fairness, forgiveness, respect, compassion, and positive attitude are all linked to intrapersonal knowledge and skill. Combined, the pieces of evidence suggest that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching may have a greater

influence on the classroom than we are currently giving it credit for. And I noted that even though some of the research correlating intrapersonal aspects of teaching and teacher effectiveness is contentious, even the most skeptical researchers admit that intrapersonal aspects of teaching have an influence on classroom climate and student-teacher relationships.

Next, I argued that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching has been underserved in teacher training and development, in spite of the fact that critical reflection is used as an instructional technique in pre-service and in-service training. I reviewed current trends in pre-service and in-service training. I discussed limitations in terms of offerings. And I explored the ways in which critical reflection is serving well as a tool for intrapersonal exploration and the ways that it is not being fully utilized to explore the intrapersonal. My research seems to indicate that critical reflection is being used to uncover pre-service teachers' beliefs and identities, but that the step of contextualizing and problematizing those identities is generally not being taken. Also affective issues seem to be absent from discussions of critical reflection, and navigation/negotiation/management of feelings is an important part of the intrapersonal aspect of teaching. I also discussed rhetorics related to pre-service and in-service training that might limit the scope of what is included in them. I suggested that current rhetoric tends to focus on the importance of content knowledge and subject-specific pedagogy, and that this rhetoric does not leave much space for the intrapersonal.

Continuing my case, I focused specifically on contemplative/mindfulness practices and the types of "medicine" they are for both the intrapersonal and the

interpersonal. I attempted to show that the current research into mindfulness is supporting what practitioners of contemplative/mindfulness practices have long claimed about the efficacy of these practices. I contended that current research into contemplative/mindfulness practices seems to suggest five things, all of which demonstrate the efficacy of contemplative/mindfulness practices, and all of which would lend contemplative/ mindfulness practice to training and development: 1) that these practices can be taught and learned in secular settings; 2) that contemplative/mindfulness practices have a positive effect on behavior and relationships; 3) that there is a link between self-awareness and awareness of others, which contemplative/mindfulness practices strengthen; 4) that contemplative/mindfulness practices enhance meta-awareness, allowing practitioners to step outside patterned thoughts and stories; and 5) that contemplative/mindfulness practices enhance the practitioner's ability to regulate her attentional focus and self-control, which has an effect on both perception and behavior. And I suggest that the research into brain structure and function may be particularly important, since it seems to demonstrate physical changes in key areas of the brain may result from contemplative/mindfulness practices.

Finally, I suggested that anecdotal evidence and inferential evidence suggests that contemplative/mindfulness practices may be beneficial to teachers and may help teachers in their interactions in the classroom. And I argued, based on all the information—that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is relevant to what happens in the classroom; that the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is not attended to in most teacher training; that contemplative/mindfulness practices are being demonstrated to be efficacious ways to

attend to both the intrapersonal and the interpersonal—that contemplative/mindfulness practices should be part of teacher training and development.

However, anecdotal evidence and inference do not make a strong case for the adoption of contemplative/mindfulness practices into the scope of teacher training and development. Nor do they suggest ways that contemplative/mindfulness practices might be included in professional development. Schools are driven by research-based findings, and large-scale research is going to be needed to truly persuade educational institutions of the value that contemplative/mindfulness practices may hold for teacher training, and to discover the most effective ways of delivering such training. The results from research from the fields of medicine and psychology, while encouraging, are still not specific enough to education.

I am calling for more research from within the various disciplines that make up the field of education into the contemplative/mindfulness practices and how their personal use by teachers might influence what happens in the classroom. How might contemplative/mindfulness practices affect self-efficacy beliefs and teacher expectations? How might contemplative/mindfulness practices affect teacher stress? How might they affect a teacher's ability to cope with fluctuations in identity? How might they enable teachers to better navigate/negotiate/manage the internal issues related to fairness, forgiveness, compassion, respect, and positive attitude? How might they influence teachers' pedagogies? What effect might they have on teacher burnout and teacher retention? What kinds of secular contemplative/mindfulness practices might be most efficacious for teachers, and what delivery methods most conducive to learning them?

Contemplative/mindfulness practices seem to offer the promise of solid returns in terms of what happens in the classroom. But research that specifically explores them in relation to teachers and how teachers interact in their classrooms is needed.

However, even if they are shown through research to be efficacious for teachers and their teaching practices, there are some possible obstacles contemplative/mindfulness practices may face in terms of becoming incorporated into the scope of pre-service and in-service training, and all of them are rhetorical in nature. The first obstacle may be related to language. The second may be related to cultural perceptions. And the third may be a discomfort with specific ideas and notions that are found in contemplative practice.

I have noted throughout my argument that within the educational communities where the intrapersonal aspect of teaching is being discussed much of the language being used has strong spiritual/religious overtones. And these types of rhetorical choices may present an impediment to the inclusion of contemplative/mindfulness practices in public school settings. I will not belabor the point, since I have mentioned it throughout the argument, but I will offer one more example from Parker Palmer, who consistently addresses the intrapersonal in his work, to illustrate how spiritual/religious rhetoric may preclude the intrapersonal from school-based training and development. Palmer says:

I am passionate about not violating the deepest needs of the *human soul*, which education does with some regularity. I have seen the price we pay for a system of education so fearful of *soulful* things that it fails to address the real issues of our lives, dispensing data at the expense of meaning, facts at the expense of wisdom. The price is a schooling that alienates and

dulls us, that graduates people who have had no mentoring in the questions that both vex and enliven the *human spirit*, people who are *spiritually empty* at best and *spiritually toxic* at worst. (“Heart and Soul” sec. 3, italics added)

It is apparent how Palmer’s language—unlike Siegel’s—crosses from the more secular “inner terrain” to the more spiritually charged “soulful” and “spiritually toxic.” While one may agree with Palmer about the shortcomings he notices in education, the language in which he makes his case presents numerous challenges to public educational institutions. Much of his language lands him outside the domain of traditional academic discourse, and it would raise alarm bells in public institutions, which are rightfully wary about issues that could be construed as matters of church and state. Palmer’s language also sets him outside the scope of professional development in most institutions. It is hard to imagine, for instance, most human resources departments in public schools paying for employees to attend workshops in “soulfulness” in order to avoid their teachers becoming “spiritually toxic.”

Palmer’s spiritual/religious language makes clear the advantage that Siegel’s clinical language may have in terms of allowing the possibility of contemplative/mindfulness practices to enter into professional development. Language like Siegel’s, which frames MAPS in clinical terms and the “conditions” they may address in behavioral or psychological terms may be better suited for allowing discussions about the intrapersonal aspect of teaching to enter discourses in educational research and in teacher training and development. Spiritual/religious language, although powerful and

compelling in many ways and to many communities, often becomes a limitation within public educational institutions, and it may need to be relinquished in order for secular contemplative/mindfulness practices to be included within the scope of professional development.

Another obstacle to the inclusion of contemplative/mindfulness practices is how they have been perceived in our culture. Again, I have already discussed this in this chapter, so I will not belabor this point either. The bottom line is that even if MAPS prove to be efficacious, there may still be resistance to their inclusion in training and development based on cultural stereotypes and cultural stigmas. While meditation is more widely accepted today than it was a hundred years ago, there are still powerful limiting images of what meditation is that may need to be overcome.

Finally, other obstacles may lie in the philosophies of contemplative/mindfulness practices themselves. And Zen may provide an example of this. I want to revisit Zen's notion of relativism to illustrate the types of philosophical arguments that might arise in relation to the inclusion of contemplative/mindfulness practices in teacher training. Zen and other contemplative/mindfulness practices, which promote stances of "non-thinking"—neutrality towards all thought—as part of their notions of relativity, that *all* thoughts and *all* ideas are contingent, may find themselves in apparent conflict with constituents at both ends of the philosophical spectrum in education: those with the intention of socialization at the one end and those with the intention of enacting liberatory pedagogies at the other. In the former case, inculcating specific sets of beliefs is a goal, and in the latter case resisting specific sets of beliefs is the aim. Zen and similar contemplative/

mindfulness traditions lie outside both ways of thinking and run the risk of being labeled too political by the one camp and not political enough by the other.

One of the longest running debates in education is to what extent schools are and should be agents of socialization. From Plato to Dewey to recent debates about the pledge of allegiance, the role of socialization in schools has been central to discussions about education. In current rhetoric, the term “socialization” has taken on two distinct meanings. “Socialization” is used to refer to the introduction of children to social systems (manners, sharing, etc.). And “socialization” is discussed in relation to political systems, teaching students about their political heritages and inculcating a preference for the political systems in which the students find themselves. Zen and other similar contemplative/mindfulness practices’ rhetorics about the neutrality of ideas and concepts (such as morality and patriotism) may make them suspect in the eyes of individuals or institutions that are committed to such ideological or political agendas.

From this perspective, Zen and similar contemplative/mindfulness practices do not seem to support—and they may be perceived to undercut—social and political agendas. For institutions or individuals operating from this mindset, Zen and similar contemplative/mindfulness practices may seem far too relative, and this may place them into a category of ideas that should not be included in teacher training in any way. At the same time, it is possible that individuals and institutions that might shy away from Zen and similar contemplative/mindfulness practices, might also be drawn to the spiritual language of Palmer and others, who might introduce the same basic principles through vehicles like contemplative prayer, which is part of Western religious traditions.

On the other end of the spectrum, individuals and institutions practicing libratory pedagogies may also find Zen and similar contemplative/mindfulness traditions anathema to their ideological aims and may resist their inclusion in teacher training on that basis. In spite of Zen's tradition of working toward social justice, its stance on not resisting any notions, ideas, or concepts may make it seem too naïve or too apolitical for individuals and institutions whose foundations lie in various forms of critical theory. Zen's notion that resistance keeps people caught in cycles of thought and that true liberation comes from detaching value from any idea may sound irresponsible from the point of view of ideologies that promote social action. Zen's call for universal acceptance of what is may sound like an invitation to inaction that will allow injustices to persist. So, the inclusion of contemplative/mindfulness practices in teacher training may meet resistance from left-leaning ideologies as well as from right-leaning ones.

And, of course, there are rhetorics that frame content knowledge and subject-specific pedagogies as of primary importance in training and development. So, even if contemplative/mindfulness practices clear the research hurdle, there may still be a host of rhetorical issues with which they have to contend before they may be fully integrated into the slate of professional development offerings.

However, I am hopeful. A study looking specifically at what I have discussed in this dissertation—how contemplative/mindfulness practices might affect teachers—is being conducted through the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The pilot study combines the work of Parker Palmer's *Courage to Teach* (CTT) and Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). In this pilot study, teachers at a

Massachusetts high school are learning the narrative techniques from CTT and the secular meditation techniques of MBSR to see how these augment their experience of, perception of, and performance in the classroom. As of now, according to the people I spoke with at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, the preliminary data is being assessed and nothing will be published until 2010. It is a beginning, but more will need to be done.

Throughout the dissertation, I have used the koan “the world is medicine...” as a controlling metaphor. I like the idea of the medicine metaphor. It does not have to imply that our students or we are sick and need curing. It does not have to imply that teachers or their methods or the systems in which they operate are sick and need curing. It can be seen in a more gentle light. In the case of this dissertation, I am arguing contemplative/mindfulness practices can add to the many medicines that are already bringing health and wellbeing to education. And in the larger sense, I am contending that, as teachers and as human beings, we have something to contribute to the goodness and the health of the world. What a pretty focus for a moment, for a day, for a lifetime. The question really is: How will we bring these medicines to our lives and to the lives of others? Looking inside has always been considered a place to start. The world is medicine. What type of medicine are you?

WORKS CITED

- Alter, Margaret. "The Centrality of Forgiveness." *Resurrection Psychology: An Understanding of Human Personality Based on the Life and Teachings of Jesus*. Chicago: Loyola University, 1994.
- American Educational Research Association. *Research Points* 3.1 (2005): 1-4. 30 July 2009 <www.aera.net/publications/?id=314>.
- American Federation of Teachers. "Professional Development for Teachers." 30 July 2009 <<http://www.aft.org/topics/teacher-quality/prodev.htm>>.
- Aristotle. *The Art of Rhetoric*. Trans. H. C. Lawson-Tancred. New York: Penguin, 1991.
- Austin, Len. "A Constructivist Approach to Facilitating Intrapersonal Change in Preservice Teachers." *College Student Journal*. 38.2 (2004): 309-14.
- Baumlin, James S. and Tita French Baumlin. "Rogerian and Platonic Dialogue in—and Beyond—the Writing Classroom." *Rogerian perspectives: collaborative rhetoric for oral and written Communication*. Ed. Nathaniel Teich. Norwood, NJ: Alex, 1992. 123-140.
- . and Jim W. Corder. "Jackleg Carpentry and the fall from Freedom to Authority in Writing." *Freshmen English News*. 18 (1990): 18-25.
- Bridges, William. *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*. Cambridge, Mass: De Capo, 2004.
- Chessick, Cheryl. "The Mindful Brain: Reflection and Attunement in the Cultivation of Wellbeing." *The American Journal of Psychiatry*. 164.10 (2007): 1617.
- Combes, Jeff. "Ethical Dilemmas." *Combes Daily Emails*. 13 March 2008. 31 July 2009

<<http://combesdailyemails.blogspot.com/2008/03/ethical-dilemmas-in-classroom.html>>.

Corder, Jim W. "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love." *Professing the New Rhetorics: A Sourcebook*. Ed. Theresa Enos and Stuart C. Brown. Boston: Prentice Hall, 1994. 412-428.

—. "Outhouses, Weather Changes, and the Return to Basics in English Education." *College English*. 38.5 (1977): 474-482.

—. "When (Do I/Shall I/May I/Must I/Is it Appropriate for me to) (Say No to/Deny/ Resist/Repudiate/Attack/Alter) Any (Poem/Poet/Other/Piece of the World) for My Sake?" *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. 18.1 (1988): 49-68.

—. "What I Learned at School." *Practice*. 26 (1975): 330-334.

Day, Christopher, Gordon Stobart, Pam Sammons, and Alison Kington. "Variations in the Work and Lives of Teachers: Relative and Relational Effectiveness." *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*. 12.2 (2006): 169-192.

Delmonte, M. M. "Meditation and Anxiety Reduction: A Literature Review." *Clinical Psychology Review*. 5.2 (1985): 91-102.

Diaz-Maggioli, Gabriel. *Teacher-Centered Professional Development*. Alexandria VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2004.

Elbow, Peter. *Everyone Can Write: Essays toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing*. New York: Oxford, 2000.

—. "Writing Assessment: Do It Better, Do It Less." *Assessment of Writing: Politics, Policies, Practices*. Ed. Edward M. White, William D. Lutz, & Sandra

- Kamusikiri. New York: MLA, 1996. 120-134.
- . *Writing without Teachers*. New York: Oxford University, 1973.
- Fisher, Walter. "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The case of Public Moral Argument." *Professing the New Rhetorics: A Sourcebook*. Ed. Theresa Enos and Stuart C. Brown. Boston: Prentice Hall, 1994. 374-396.
- Gardner, Howard. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books, 1993.
- Gibbs, J. J. *Dancing with Your Books: The Zen Way of Studying*. New York: Plume, 1990.
- Giovannelli, Marietta. "Relationship between Reflective Disposition toward Teaching and Effective Teaching." *The Journal of Educational Research*. 96.5 (2003): 293-309.
- Goldin, Philippe. "Mindfulness Meditation Research Findings." 2001. 31 July 2009 <http://74.125.155.132/search?q=cache:_QK84h5PoKEJ:www-psych.stanford.edu/~pgoldin/Buddhism/MindfulnessMeditationSummary.doc+transpersonal+psychology+meditation+efficacy&cd=14&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>.
- Haberman, Martin. *Teacher Burnout in Black and White*. Wisconsin: The Haberman Educational Foundation, 2004. 24 March 2008 <www.habermanfoundation.org/.../Teacher%20Burnout%20in%20Black%20and%20White.pdf>.
- Harris, Alma. "Effective Teaching: A Review of the Literature." *School Leadership and Management*. 18.2 (1998): 169-183.

- Hayward, Jeremy. *Gentle Bridges: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on the Science of the Mind*. Ed. By Jeremy H. Hayward and Francisco J. Varela. Boston: Shambala, 1992.
- hooks, bell. "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness." *Yearning: Race Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Toronto, Canada: Between-the-Lines, 1990.
- Hori, Victor Sogen. "The Nature of the Rinzai (Linji) Koan Practice." *Sitting with Koans: Essential Writings on the Practice of Zen Koan Introspection*. Ed. John Daido Looi. Boston: Charles E. Tuttle, 2006. 117-130.
- . "The Steps of Koan Practice." *Sitting with Koans: Essential Writings on the Practice of Zen Koan Introspection*. Ed. John Daido Looi. Boston: Charles E. Tuttle, 2006. 131-150.
- . "Zen Koan Capping Phrase Books: Literary Study and the Insight 'Not Founded on Words or Letters.'" *Zen Classics: Formative Texts in the History of Zen Buddhism*. Ed. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright. New York: Oxford University, 2006. 171-214.
- Ingersoll, Richard. *Teacher Turnover, Teacher Shortages, and the Organization of Schools*. Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, 2001. 30 June 2009 <depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/Turnover-Ing-01-2001.pdf>.
- Kapleau, Phillip. *The Three Pillars of Zen*. New York: Anchor Books Doubleday: 1980.
- Kyriakides, L., R. J. Campbell, and E. Christofidou. "Generating Criteria for Measuring Teacher Effectiveness through a Self-Evaluation Approach: A Complementary Way of Measuring Teacher Effectiveness." *School Effectiveness and School*

Improvement. 13.3 (2002): 291-325.

Langer, Ellen. *The Power of Mindful Learning*. Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1997.

Lindemann, Erika and Daniel Anderson. *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*. New York: Oxford University, 2001.

Loori, John Daido. *The Heart of Being: Moral and Ethical Teachings of Zen Buddhism*. Boston: Charles E. Tuttle, 1996.

—. *Sitting with Koans: Essential Writings on the Practice of Zen Koan Introspection*. Boston: Wisdom, 2006.

Lu, Min-Zhan. "Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone." *CCC*. 45.4 (1994): 442-458.

—. "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy: A Critique of the Politics of Linguistic Innocence." *Journal of Basic Writing*. 10.1 (1991): 152-161.

—. and Bruce Horner. "The Problematic of Experience: Redefining Critical Work in Ethnography and Pedagogy." *College English*. 60 (1998): 257-77.

Lunsford, Andrea A. and Karen J. Lunsford. "Mistakes Are a Fact of Life: A National Comparative Study." *CCC*. 59.4 (2008): 781-806.

Lepuschitz, Judith and Valerie Hartman. "Meditation and Psychosocial Adaptation." *Current Psychological Research and Reviews*. 15.3 (1996): 215-222.

Maezumi, Hakuyu Taizan and Bernie Glassman. *The Hazy Moon of Enlightenment*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom, 2007.

McPhail, Mark Lawrence. *Zen in the Art of Rhetoric: An Inquiry into Coherence*. Albany: The State University of New York, 1996.

- Mezirow, Jack. "Understanding Transformation Theory." *Adult Education Quarterly*. 44.4 (1994): 222-232.
- Ming-pen, Chung-fen. "The Definition of a Koan." *Sitting with Koans: Essential Writings on the Practice of Zen Koan Introspection*. Ed. John Daido Looi. Boston: Charles E. Tuttle, 2006. 13-15.
- Moffet, James. *Harmonic Learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1992.
- . *The Universal Schoolhouse: Spiritual Awakening through Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.
- Muijs, Daniel. "Measuring Teacher Effectiveness: Some Methodological Reflections." *Educational Research and Evaluation*. 12.1 (2006): 53-74.
- . and Reynolds. "Effective Teaching: A Review of the Literature." 1999. 31 May 2009 <www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/.../Review%20of%20the%20Literature%20-%20Reynolds.pdf>.
- Murray, Donald. *Crafting a Life in Essay, Story, Poem*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1996.
- Nieto, Somia. "From Surviving to Thriving." *Educational Leadership*. 66.5 (2009): 8-13.
- Olivares, Orlando J. "A Conceptual and Analytic Critique of Student Ratings of Teachers in the USA with Implications for Teacher Effectiveness and Student Learning." *Teaching in Higher Education*. 8.2 (2003): 233-245.
- Olson, Carl. *Zen and the Art of Postmodern Philosophy*. Albany: State University of New York, 2000.
- Palmer, Parker. *Courage to Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

- . “The Heart of a Teacher: Identity and Integrity in Teaching.” *Change Magazine*.
Nov/Dec 1997: 14-21. 15 August 2008 <<http://www.couragerenewal.org/parker/writings/heart-of-a-teacher>>.
- . “Teaching with Heart and Soul: Reflections on Spirituality in Teacher Education.”
Journal of Teacher Education. 54.5 (2003): 376-85. 15 August 2008
<<http://www.couragerenewal.org/parker/writings/heart-and-soul>>.
- Park, Jin Y. *Buddhism and Postmodernity: Zen, Huayan, and the Possibility of Postmodern Ethics*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008.
- Pauly, Edward. *The Classroom Crucible: What Works, What Doesn't, and Why*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.
- Perry, Patricia H. *A Composition of Consciousness: Roads of Reflection from Friere and Elbow*. New York: P. Lang, 2000.
- Reebye, Pratibha. “The Mindful Brain: Reflection and Attunement in the Cultivation of Wellbeing.” *Journal of Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. 17.3 (2008): 166-68.
- Ritchie, Joy S. “Confronting the Essential Problem: Reconnecting Feminist Theory and Pedagogy.” *Journal of Advanced Composition*. 10 (1990): 249-73.
- . and David E. Wilson. *Teacher Narrative as Critical Inquiry: Rewriting the Script*. New York: Teachers College, 2000.
- Shaku, Soyen. *Zen for Americans*. Trans. D. T. Suzuki. New York: Dorset, 1906.
- Shaughnessy, Mina. *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing*. New York: Oxford University, 1977.

- . "Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing." *College Composition and Communication*. 27 (1976): 234-39.
- Siegel, Daniel J. *The Mindful Brain: Reflection and Attunement in the Cultivation of Well-Being*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007.
- Steiner, Lucy. *Designing Effective Professional Development Experiences: What Do We Know?* Naperville, Illinois: John Edward Porter Professional Development Center, 2002. 30 June 2009 <www.tqsource.org/issueforums/.../4.../DesigningEffectivePD.pdf>.
- Sutherland, Joan. "Koans and Peace." Mountain Cloud Zen Center, Santa Fe, NM. 25 January 2007.
- Tarrant, John. "The Power of Koan Practice." *Shambala Sun*. May 2003: 46-51.
- Thompson, Susan, John G. Greer, and Bonnie B. Greer. "Highly Qualified for Successful Teaching: Characteristics Every Teacher Should Possess." 2004. 24 March 2008 <<http://www.usca.edu/essays/vol102004/thompson.pdf>>.
- Tobin, Lad. *Writing Relationships: What Really Happens in the Composition Class*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann, 1993.
- Tremmel, Robert. *Zen and the Practice of Teaching English*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999.
- Trimbur, John. "Literacy and the Discourse of Crisis." *The Politics of Writing Instruction: Postsecondary*. Ed. Richard Bullock and John Trimbur. Portsmouth: Boynton, 1996. 277-296.
- . "Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning." *College English*. 51.6 (1989):

602-16.

Young, Richard E. "Rogerian Argument and the Context of Situation: Taking a Closer Look." *Rogerian perspectives: collaborative rhetoric for oral and written Communication*. Ed. Nathaniel Teich. Norwood, NJ: Alex, 1992. 109-121.

Zen Classics: Formative Texts in the History of Zen Buddhism. Ed. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright. New York: Oxford University, 2006.