

FINDING THE SAGE WITHIN: TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES USING MEDITATION
AND MOVEMENT PRACTICES

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Abstract

The life of a teacher is complex, demanding, rewarding and at times, heart breaking. The role of a teacher extends far beyond instructional responsibilities, and enters the realm of nurse, counselor and surrogate parent. Teachers rely on various knowledge sources, personal values and belief systems to guide them through the myriad of decisions they are required to make each day. These decisions may conflict with student or parental values and beliefs, education reform efforts, or the school administrator's agenda. Little attention is paid to how these external events impact the emotional, mental, physical and spiritual life of a teacher.

The premise of this dissertation is that humans are energetic beings whose lives are influenced by the "qi" energy that flows within and around them. An individual's qi energy can be increased or decreased according to how a person lives their life. The profession of teaching is all-consuming. Little time is provided to attend to the holistic self. To maintain strong qi, individuals must attend to the whole self, to their mind, body and spirit. Stress depletes a teacher's mind, body, and spirit of energy. To further complicate these matters, teachers are not aware of self-healing practices that are known to increase energy, decrease stress and tension, and balance the mind, body and spirit.

This qualitative phenomenological study examined the professional and personal experiences of 7 rural and urban public school educators. These teachers were instructed in a variety of mind/body/spirit techniques and exercises for a total of six bi-weekly, 2 ½ hour sessions. They learned self-healing techniques such as acupuncture, deep breathing, visualization and practices such as meditation, intent, Tai Ji Quan, and Qi Gong. The educators included 20 minutes of meditation practice and 20 minutes of movement exercises in their daily routine for two months. Data was gathered from pre and post study interviews, field notes and participant journals.

This study identified three domains of knowing that influenced this group of teachers' beliefs and values- Folkway, Formal and Multi-Dimensional Knowing. Mind/body/spirit practices helped this group of teachers become Multi-Dimensional Knowers and understand their emotional, contemplative, artistic/creative and spiritual selves more deeply. The study also found that the regular use of mind/body/spirit techniques and exercises provided teachers with the ability to transform destructive emotions into energy that was less destructive on the mind/body/spirit and to become more effective at managing stress in their lives.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom, who always believed in me and taught me to believe in myself and to my dad, whose deep philosophical wisdom and gentle way continues to influence and shape who I am and who I want to become. When I am on shaky ground, they stabilize me. When I test boundaries, they hold the safety rope. When I am left bruised by life, they comfort me. They celebrate my small accomplishments and have given me confidence to attempt more difficult ones. They are my roots and source of strength. They know how to live life according to their hearts and convictions and taught me this lesson well. Through their guidance, wisdom, trust, acceptance and unfaltering love they have taught me to be content with myself and my life. They continue to work hard, live honestly and celebrate living. They are everything I aspire to be. I completed this dissertation just in time for my father's birthday. Happy Birthday Dad!

Acknowledgements

Throughout this academic period of my life, I often wondered how or why I came to this point. My life has never been well laid out and neatly planned, but more like a rambling network of paths that have presented me with many options and opportunities. The paths on my life's journey have been slow and meandering as well as steep and jarring. I stumbled and soared and lost and reclaimed myself along the way, but I never felt alone. Trust was always with me. I trusted my heart, my head, myself and humanity. This trust in humanity developed as a result of all the wonderful people I have met along my life's journey who were kind and trustworthy. I would like to thank the people who have traveled on this dissertation path with me and, once again, affirmed my faith in humanity.

First I would like to thank Dr. Wang JueFei, the Director of the UVM Asian Studies Outreach program, for taking a chance to hire someone who had the desire to learn about Asia but little firsthand knowledge of this part of the world. Through my work, I was introduced to eastern philosophy, religion, and traditional Chinese medicine. This career has offered me different ways of seeing, knowing, and experiencing the world.

The teachers who devoted their time and energy to this study receive a BIG thank you. Without them and their willingness to openly share their experiences, this study wouldn't have been possible. I enjoyed every meeting session because of the wonderful energy each of these teachers brought to the group. I will miss our time together.

I am grateful to both Jeanette Moy and James Lovejoy who unselfishly donated their time and expertise to introduce mind/body/spirit practices to the group. They helped us all become more aware of our own qi or energetic life force and learn ways to correct imbalances within our systems. Their clear instructions and gentle, patient manner made learning mind/body/spirit practices and exercises fun and relaxing. They are true healers!

To my son Jeremiah, I give a big bear hug for all the great dialogues we had about mind/body/spirit practices. He always had just the right book or article ready to share with me when it was needed and pulled me through writer's block by listening.

To my son Jesse, I give another big bear hug for dutifully reading and editing my first dissertation draft, critiquing my diagrams, and donating his artistic and computer technology skills to the cause. My husband Gary, who never complained about being left alone many evenings while his wife spent hours in classes, doing coursework, or writing this dissertation also receives a thank you. His donation of several years of cooking meals and cleaning the house to this effort has not gone unnoticed or unappreciated.

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Lastly, thanks to my committee members for their assistance and flexibility and my advisor, Dr. Jill Tarule, who always seemed to know when to ask the right questions to refocus my research. She always made me think more deeply about the data and its meaning. The endurance and patience she demonstrated while I struggled to get my arms around this topic was admirable. Most importantly, I appreciate her constant, gentle reminders to continue to honor and include my voice in academic writing.

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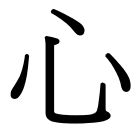
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CHAPTER I: WHEN OUR HEART'S BREAK, OUR SOULS BREAK

Educators' knowledge, perceptions, responses, and way of being is shaped by culture. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule explain in *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986) how cultural lenses or filters limit how we see and know the world.

Our basic assumptions about the nature of truth and reality and the origins of knowledge shape the way we see the world and ourselves as participants in it. They affect our definitions of ourselves, the way in which we interact with others, our public, and private personae, our sense of control over life events, our view of teaching and learning and our conceptions of morality. (p. 3)

In a pilot study I conducted of Vermont educators who had returned from an overseas study experience in Thailand, the data clearly showed that these educators learned a great deal about themselves while meditating in a retreat center and interacting in a society where 96% of the people are influenced by Buddhist beliefs. These educators were inspired by the gentle and generous nature of the Thai people. One participant captured the thoughts and feelings expressed by others in the group when she said, "*I would like to see the peacefulness of Thai society in America. The generosity, the calmness, the pace was wonderful*" (interview #2, 10/10/2001). As a result of this experience, Vermont educators reported that they felt something was amiss in their lives. These educators were able to experience a culture that values an individual's state of inner being and the cultivation of intuition and other sources of internal knowledge as much as externally

acquired knowledge. The training of the mind, body and spirit is considered a worthy life-long endeavor in Thai society.

O'Sullivan (1999) believes western educators live in a society that requires them and their students to live in a manner that sacrifices full, embodied knowing. Full embodied knowing is the full integration of logic, rational knowledge with intuition and spiritual knowledge (Hart, 2000; O'Sullivan, 1999). In the face of the recent technological tidal wave, "teachers are groping, searching for ways to give students the technical knowledge and skills they will need" (Mulvaney, 1994, p. 2). In the United States, time devoted to inner exploration and personal reflection is rarely considered to be an effective or good use of time. Thomas Merton and Parker Palmer (Quinn, 2001) feel silence and attention are modes of learning. Without silence, there is no attention, and if the art of attending is not taken up, neither can learning occur (Quinn, 2001). Western education places an emphasis on logic and rational ways of knowing while internal sources of wisdom and knowledge are neglected and remain uncultivated. This imbalance limits the way we know and understand ourselves and our world (O'Sullivan, 1999).

Imbued with western education and culture, much of it influenced by out-dated Newtonian mechanistic thinking, educators fail to and are not encouraged to develop a deep understanding of and connection to themselves, their life, and the universe (Carraciolo, 2000; Eisler, 2000; Fadiman, 1976; Hart, 2000; O'Sullivan, 1999). Although the human mind is capable of other kinds of knowledge and other modes of consciousness (Capra, 2000; Hayward, 1984; Fadiman, 1976; Noddings & Shore, 1984), Newtonian mechanistic theory has shaped an American view of knowledge into one that

primarily only acknowledges and nurtures the rational, objective mind and disregards the intuitive (Capra, 2000; Hart, 2001; O'Sullivan, 1999). We have learned to understand the world through detachment and fragmentation (Capra, 2000; Gerber, 2001; Marion, 1997)

Meanwhile, the role of the contemporary educator has become much more complex and demanding. Newtonian thinking only makes the job more difficult and energy intensive. "To care for each person is a Herculean endeavor if we educators think in fragmented, reductionist terms" (Mulvaney, 1994, p. 5).

Krishnamurti, a great spiritual leader born in India in 1895, saw education as focused almost solely on the intellect and said "we are all brains and no heart" (cited in Miller, 2000, p. 37). Educators work with students with many needs and often with serious emotional issues. For many reasons, more students are coming to schools filled with anger and resentment (Phillips & Raman, undated publication). The best and the brightest teachers feel entrapped, frustrated and marginalized (Shea, 2000) in a system that educates the head but ignores the heart and spirit. If the needs of the heart and spirit are neglected, how can educators work through the range of emotional feelings they experience on a daily basis as a result of closely interacting with children who have many needs, interests and abilities? These daily interactions can leave educators scarred. "When our hearts break, our souls break" (Fox & Sheldrake, 1996, p.86). How can teachers help heal the emotional wounds of their students if the healers (teachers) are not taking care of themselves (Shea, 2000)?

Teacher preparation programs do not teach strategies for coping with the daily mental and emotional challenges of teaching. According to Krishnamurti, the whole life of the

teacher must be addressed (Miller, 2000). The task of the teacher is to first wake up and be aware of his or her own thoughts and feelings (Miller, 2000, p.40). Eastern practices such as meditation, breathing and movement exercises have been used since ancient times as a way to access thoughts and emotions that one may not be aware of, yet influence and shape each person's life. Used regularly, these methods serve as a way for the physical body to communicate with the mental and spiritual self (Anderson, 1996; Fadiman, 1976; Kabat-Zinn, 1991; Mulvaney, 1994; Purcell, 1998; Solloway, 2000). How can educators create a calm, relaxed, peaceful learning environment if they are not familiar with ways to calm themselves and access their own internal sources of knowledge and wisdom to help them feel at peace with themselves? Meditation and mindful practices are becoming more popular among educators interested in establishing a sense of harmony, balance, and feeling of wholeness in their lives (Anderson, 1996; Dailey, 2000; Fadiman, 1976; Grow, 1996; Langer, 1997; Mulvaney, 1994). Meditation helps individuals become more aware of their thoughts and how these thoughts affect their emotional and physical state (Wilber, 1998). Becoming aware of how our own mental thoughts shape and influence our physical and emotional state is a necessary first step in reducing educator stress.

It is common for educators to feel exhausted and their energy depleted at the end of the teaching day, yet very few educators know how to replenish and maintain their "Qi" or life energy force. Educators can not teach well if their energy is blocked (Grow, 1996). Eastern cultures have refined mind/body/spirit training practices over thousands of years and use meditation, Qi Gong (chi kung), and Tai Ji Quan to increase their energy and decrease feelings of stress and anxiety. These energy practices prevent disease, improve

healing and promote harmony and wellness in the body, mind and spirit (Achterberg, 1985; Alder, Felten & Cohen, 1991; Anderson, 1996; Brown & Robinson, 1993; Cane, 2000; Dailey, 2,000; Engelhardt, 1980; Fadiman, 1976; Fincher, 1991; Gardner, 1997; Gaynor, 2002; Grow, 2002; Kabat-Zinn, 1991; Mulvaney, 1994; Orme-Johnson, 1987; Pert, 1999; Purcell, 1998; Scelba, 1998).

The contemporary educator would benefit from understanding how his or her mental, physical and spiritual being is influenced by the dynamic interaction of energy and learn ways to replenish or balance his or her energetic state. To do this, educators need to work on their own energy and find a healing method that enables them to keep energy flowing freely (Grow, 1996). Developing the ability to identify tension, to feel and work with the energy of others, to work with energy of a group will help move the Newtonian educator into what Shea (2000) calls quantum modes of thinking and relating to the world.

A new breed of physician/healer/educator is seeking to understand the functioning of human beings from the revolutionary view of matter as energy. Quantum healers can shift their thinking and initiate their own recovery, replenishing and maintaining free flowing energy in their system (Shea, 2000). They know how to “avoid getting caught in our own little whirlpool of existence and can live in the whole river of life. As we shift from a materialist, mechanist, Newtonian worldview to the Einsteinium, quantum holism, the educator’s practice will also change” (Gerber, 2001, p.69). Teachers will “attend more fully...to their own lives and its requirements; they have to break with the mechanical life, to overcome their own submergence in the habitual” (Greene, 1978, p. 46). Just as the world is changing at a rapid pace, so too is the role of educator. Educators need to learn new ways of working with energy so they can be the “divine spark that lives within

each human being and become the principal source for healing the planet and educating our children” (Miller, 2000, p.43).

Background and Questions Addressed in This Study

Pilot Study

Since 1999 I have been working with a university outreach program that provides study abroad opportunities for Vermont classroom teachers in the summer months. Each year returning educators enthusiastically claim that this experience creates powerful and meaningful learning. Their comments lead me to conduct my fall 2001 pilot study. I was interested in learning how educators construct meaning from an overseas study experience and how they assimilate this new knowledge into their personal and professional lives. Four study participants were selected from a group of 20 educators who studied in Thailand for 3 weeks in the summer of 2001. The selected participants consisted of one K-8 male art teacher, one female guidance counselor, one female second grade elementary educator, and one female first grade elementary educator.

While in Thailand, the group attended university classroom lectures, field lectures, visited K-12 schools, spent 7 days in a meditation retreat center studying Buddhist practices, visited historical sites, attended various social and cultural events, spent one night with a host family and had a little time on their own to explore Thailand.

Data were gathered 2 months after these educators returned from Thailand. Participant observation, in-depth tape recorded interviews, and participant selection of photographs capturing events that they considered most meaningful to them while visiting Thailand were the methods used to collect data for this qualitative study.

The results of this pilot study identified specific elements in various activities that seem to nourish the whole mind/body and spirit and were seen as most relevant and meaningful to study participants. *Being there*, able to fully experience events through the mind/body/spirit connection took learning to a much deeper level. As one participant eloquently stated, “*You have to experience it by doing it, not by reading about it in a book...It is like looking at the Grand Canyon in a picture or experiencing it. Have you ever been to the Grand Canyon? Do you know what I mean?*” (interview #4, 11/26/2001).

These educators expressed a yearning to live more simply themselves and slow down their pace. Returning educators were drawn to the peaceful, kind, and less harried pace they experienced in Thai society influenced by a Buddhist belief system. “*So many Thai people we got to know were real strong Buddhists, very strong meditators, who had that peaceful aura about them.*” (interview #3, 10/26/2001).

All four educators felt there were practices, beliefs, or ideas in Buddhism they learned at the retreat and witnessed in the every day life of Thai culture that strongly resonated with them and would be remembered for a long time. The seven days spent with Buddhist monks in a meditation retreat center was mentioned by all four participants as being the highlight of their experience in Thailand. All participants were working on ways to regularly integrate meditation into their busy schedules. Two were successful and two weren't, but all felt a strong calling or desire to meditate. “*It was a pain in the ass to sit for hours in meditation...I was physically hurting. I stuck it through. It [meditation] is no longer a struggle, it is part of my life. I come to school a little later and do it [meditate] first thing in the morning. I think that it is one of the factors why I am having such a good*

year [and I] am more patient with a student's irrational rudeness...I sleep better"
 (interview #4, 11/26/2001).

All of them felt the idea of being centered and focused was something they would use in their daily lives. One person, claiming not to be successful in establishing a regular sitting meditation practice since her return from Thailand, said she was able work on centering herself several times during the day and used self talk to relax her entire body.

I haven't been good about meditating...Even though I am not formally meditating there are some really good pieces that I use [for example to] bring your mind to the center of your body. I use that when I am teaching and I begin to tense up when things aren't going the way you [I] want it to go. I just say to myself, 'focus, relax, is this important in the scheme of things?' The important thing is for these kids to be in a relaxed learning environment with a relaxed person, not to be with a stressed teacher. (interview #3, 10/26/2001).

Participants all felt they were more attuned to their body needs, recognizing when they were tense and needed to relax.

It [meditating] doesn't always make the tension go away, but makes me think of how I need to act, it changes my behavior. I go to the center where my emotions are. When you feel tense it is in the center of your stomach, so I just go there and realize how silly it is to get so stressed out over such simple things in the whole scheme of things, just let it go. (interview #3, 10/26/2001).

"I now realize, boy, am I really tense, I need to relax, and talk myself through it. I think it has helped me" (interview #2, 10/10/2001).

Three of the participants implemented several minutes of “quiet sitting” or “not thinking” or guided relaxation and visual imagery with their students and are finding students very responsive to these activities. *“I am doing it [meditation] with my first graders. It is an expectation....We only do it for a minute. I call it a time of not thinking. [After they sit quietly], we talk about it and then move on”* (interview #4, 11/26/2001).

Another participant said, *“I used the relaxation tape once and the kids keep asking when we will do it again”* (interview #2, 10/10/2001).

This pilot study piqued my own interest and started me on a new journey exploring eastern holistic energy practices that provide access to inner knowledge and practices believed to promote a healthy and harmonious life style. I have begun to integrate holistic or mind/body/soul practices in workshops designed to enhance educator’s knowledge about Asia that are offered periodically during the school year. Meditation, Tai Ji Quan, song, dance, art, music and cultural celebrations and rituals are integrated into the content of workshops. Teachers comment they feel refreshed at the end of the day and leave with an interest to integrate more of the arts, movement or creative expressive learning modalities into their classroom.

Feedback from a recent 4 day course on China that incorporated mind/body/spirit practices received the following comments from educators. The sessions “opened my eyes-exposed my heart and mind” and were “good for the soul”. “I loved the movement.” One educator commented, “I’ve wanted to do this myself for many years and I think it would be good to offer this to my students.” A mind/body/spirit approach to learning appears to benefit educators in many ways and as a result of their learning in this manner they want to replicate that kind of learning in their classroom.

Research Topic

My dissertation project built on what I learned from this pilot study and previous teacher workshops. My pilot study involved an inquiry into the types of learning considered meaningful to teachers who participated in a study abroad experience in Thailand. My dissertation study selected one aspect from the pilot study - the personal changes teachers experienced after practicing mind/body/spirit exercises during a week long retreat in Thailand, and examined in greater depth how meditation and energy movement practice practiced on a regular basis within their own culture would influence them personally and professionally. To determine the type of change this group of teacher's experienced, I explored these teachers' ways of knowing their world before the study period and then examined the changes that resulted in themselves and their teaching after actively engaging in mind/body/spirit practices. Finally, since the life of a teacher is busy and demanding, I identified the barriers and challenges teachers faced while trying to integrate these practices in their daily lives to determine if mind/body/spirit practices were an effective use of teachers' limited personal time.

Most western educational experiences cultivate one mode of consciousness - the verbal and rational (Capra, 2000; Hayward, 1984; Fadiman, 1976; Nodding & Shore, 1984). Educators following this model learn to value and teach in this mode (Nodding & Shore, 1984; O'Sullivan, 1999; Shea, 2000). By helping educators get in touch with other modes of consciousness and sources of internal knowledge through meditation and mind/body/spirit movement exercises such as Tai Ji Quan, Qi Gong, breathing and acupressure techniques, I believe educators can become more aware of their physical, mental and spiritual needs as they arise and learn to respond to these needs in a proactive,

positive manner, preventing or lessening the effects of stress in their lives, thus experiencing a greater sense of calmness within themselves.

Questions Addressed in This Study

This study focused on how mind/body/spirit practices influenced the personal and professional lives of educators. More specifically, this study addressed teachers' views of themselves as individuals and educators, as well as how they view knowledge. This research examined how these educators take care of their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual selves and how they dealt with stressful relationships, situations and/or events. Throughout the duration of the study, educators discussed the challenges they faced as they integrated mind/body/spirit practices into their lives and what benefits, if any, they received from including these practices into their daily lives.



CHAPTER TWO: LEARNING FROM THE LITERATURE

In order to understand why this study is needed, it is first important to realize what other research in the field has to offer. This literature review includes the latest research that has been completed on stress as it relates to the teaching profession. It also points to the limited amount of research done in this area and the need to know and understand how stress impacts teachers and teaching in a more holistic manner.

Current research in the field describes the conditions that create stress in teachers' lives but fails to include information on what teachers can do to decrease or more effectively cope with the stress they experience in their lives. Although many teachers report feeling "drained" at the end of the day, current research does not consider teachers' as energetic beings or how stress impacts their "qi" or energy level and their whole way of being. Eastern mind/body/spirit practices that are known to increase or decrease qi in individuals for thousands of years offer the western world a new way to think about and study stress as it relates to the mental, physical and spiritual aspects of the teacher and teaching

This literature review reports about what contemporary research has to say about stress and teaching as it relates to this study. It examines the factors that are viewed as stressful to teachers and how stress impacts the lives of teachers. Areas identified as creating stress for teachers include classroom discipline and management, work overload, emotional exhaustion, and a lack of support from parents and policy makers. The second part of this review discusses the types of mind/body spirit practices that could prove to be

beneficial to educators within the context of the philosophy used in traditional Chinese medicine. Unfortunately, literature that addresses the use of mind/body/spirit practices in educators' lives is quite limited. Finally, the last section examines the current challenges or barriers that exist for educators interested in including mind/body/spirit practices in their lives.

Teaching and Stress

The United States is facing teaching shortages and a large percentage of new educators leave the field within the first five years in the profession (Jarvis, 2002). Jarvis (2002) identifies stress as a significant factor of teacher retention (Jarvis, 2002). A study of 1000 student teachers in 1997 (Morton, Vesco, Williams, & Awender) identified classroom management as their second greatest source of anxiety, the first being evaluation apprehension. A study conducted for the Times Educational Supplement in 1997 (cited in Jarvis, 2002) found that 37% of secondary vacancies and 19% of elementary vacancies were due to ill-health, as compared to 9% of nursing vacancies and 5% in banking and the pharmaceutical industry. A poll of 2017 adults conducted in April 2001 (Jarvis, 2002) perceived teaching as hard, poorly paid and held in low esteem. Young educators know their content but quickly burn out with the demands of the job (Jarvis, 2002).

Teaching has been identified as one of the top three most stressful professions (Truch, 1980). A Rand corporation report (cited in Farber, 1991) indicated only "30% of males and 50% of females" (p.111) were still teaching 6 years after they began their teaching careers. A study done in 2000 by the National Association of Head Teachers in

England (Jarvis, 2002) showed 40% of the teachers reported visiting a doctor with a stress-related problem the previous year, 20% considered they drank too much, 15% believed they were alcoholics, 25% reported suffering from a serious stress related problem including hypertension, insomnia, depression and gastrointestinal disorders. Work overload, emotional exhaustion, lack of parental support, low social status and classroom discipline are causal factors for teacher stress (Travers & Cooper, 1997).

Evaluation anxiety is an issue that is increasingly being reported by educators (Jarvis, 2002). Educators feel pressured to produce high test scores (Greene, 1997). This inhibits the work that they feel is central to their purpose – the developing of caring and competent people (Greene, 1997). Quality assurance procedures increasingly demand more frequent evaluations of teacher performance by school administrators (Jarvis, 2002) in both England and the United States. This creates anxiety among teachers. In Travers & Cooper's study (1997), teachers listed the lack of government support, lack of information about changes, constant change and demands of the curriculum as their greatest sources of stress.

Research by neuroscientists, psychologists and educators are beginning to pay more attention to the role of emotions in learning and health. "Good moods, while they last, enhance the ability to think flexibly and with more complexity, thus making it easier to find solutions to problems, whether intellectual or interpersonal" (Goleman, 1995, p.85). Anxiety undermines the intellect and sabotages academic performance of all kinds (Goleman, 1995, p.83). Over 126 different studies of more than 36,000 people found the more a person worries, the poorer their work and academic performance (Goleman, 1995, p.83). Physical and symbolic perceptions of endangerment such as a threat to self-esteem,

being treated unjustly or being frustrated in pursuing an important goal sends the body into a fight or flight response (Cohen, 1997; Coleman, 1995; Pert, 1999). These perceptions trigger a limbic surge which releases catecholamines and sends a rush of energy to the brain, putting the brain in a state of readiness (Pert, 1999). “The amygdala, or emotional brain, can remain in a state of readiness for days and subsequent reactions can be triggered quickly, making it easier to respond in anger if the person has already been provoked” (Goleman, 1995, p.60).

Teacher isolation and lack of social support are additional factors shown to positively correlate with teacher stress. A study of 780 primary and secondary school teachers (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999), showed teachers who exhibited high levels of stress did not receive much social support or had minimal contact and interaction with their peers. A large study of 1110 Canadian teachers (Dussault, Deaudelin, Royer & Loiselle, 1999), revealed educators who socialized with their colleagues were healthier and experienced less stress on the job (Van Dick, Wagner, Petzel, Lenke & Sommer, 1999).

Health problems are often attributed to stress. According to Fishel’s study, (2001) an individual’s coping strategies or way of dealing with stress is what creates a health problem. Teachers who blame themselves for difficulties are more vulnerable to stress (Bibou-Nakou, Stogiannidou, & Kiosseoglou, 1999). Trying to please others, setting unreachable goals, worrying, having too many “should’s” in our lives, fears that we are not smart enough, have enough time, or won’t be liked by others, all creates stress. Based on this information, stressors associated with teaching may not be inherent with the profession but with the coping style of the individual (Jarvis, 2002).

If human behavior is influenced by our internal states and these states can be controlled voluntarily (Fadiman, 1976), then one way to address job related stress is to help educators learn deep relaxation techniques. According to Pert's (1999) research, neuropeptides and their receptors are substrates of the emotions and are in constant communication with the immune system (Cohen, 1997; Pert, 1999, p. 191) and our thoughts and emotions affect our immune system. Studies show the immune system can be conditioned at the subconscious and conscious level (Cohen, 1997; Pert, 1999). The use of deep relaxation techniques is known to reduce stress (Benson, 1975; Engelhardt, 1980; Fishel, 2001; Grow, 1996; Mulvaney, 1994; Orme-Johnson, 1987; Pert, 1999; Purcell, 1998). Treatment techniques such as relaxation, guided imagery, self-hypnosis, biofeedback training showed conscious intervention directly affects cellular function in the immune system (Pert, 1999, p.191). Coaches have found stress based management techniques allow athletes to conserve energy and consciously direct their own levels of activity by selecting the right amount of energy for the task at hand (Fadiman, 1976). It is also believed that the body can revitalize itself in brief periods of time (Fadiman, 1976). Helping educators learn how to conserve and direct their energy could prove to be extremely helpful to them in their work and daily lives.

Patricia Mathes Cane (2000), Founder and Executive Director of Capacitar, an international project of empowerment and solidarity, has taught over 600 workshops to over 12,000 participants in body/mind/spirit practices locally and internationally. Her research with grassroots leaders who have experienced deep trauma from the effects of violence, natural disasters, and war shows participants positively responded to a wide variety of mind/body/spirit practices that were used to treat their traumatic stress

symptoms. Group preferences for practices varied but all groups showed significant decreases in the physical symptoms of stress. Participants of her workshops recommended that a wide variety of approaches be used to meet individual and cultural differences (Cane, 2000).

Phillips and Raman (undated publication) speak more directly about educator stress.

...stress on caregivers is increasing exponentially as we tackle society's increasing challenges of chaotic homes, peer and gang influences, media impact, etc. all resulting in needier clients in schools. Our stress is sometimes expressed outwardly in the form of faculty lounge whining, tears, anger in the classroom, or even violence. Often, stress is less visible while being focused inside resulting in depression, irritability, alcohol abuse, or subtle damage to physical health as in heightened blood pressure. (p.iv)

As a result of these studies, one can safely conclude that teaching is a stressful profession and it appears that recent educational reforms and social changes have only added to the stress load teachers experience on a daily basis. Most contemporary educators have not been taught techniques or methods to relieve stress and anxiety in their lives. These techniques and methods are important to maintain or improve their emotional and physical health and to remain calm while interacting with students in their classrooms. They provide educators with a different type of knowledge, one that encourages them to know themselves more deeply, connect with their peers in meaningful ways, and learn practices that energize their mind/body/spirit are sorely lacking. Orr proposes a new perspective and purpose for education, "The plain fact is that the planet does not need more successful people...it does desperately need more

peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind. It needs people who live well in their places” (cited in Caracciolo, 2000, p.16). It is in the spirit of Orr’s purpose for education that I suggest teachers learn meditation and energy movement methods that will benefit their mind, body and spirit so both they and their students can become peacemakers, healers, restorers and storytellers and lovers who ‘live well in their places’ (cited in Carraciolo, 2000, p.16).

The Types of Mind/Body/Spirit Practices that Could Benefit Educators

The Chinese believe that balance is maintained by eating properly, exercising daily, getting the appropriate amount of rest, and minimizing stress via meditation and other mind discipline techniques. The belief that health and vitality depends on behavior and thought is an important principle in traditional Chinese philosophy and medicine, a philosophy that is over 3,000 years old (Eisenberg, 1995). Understanding and manipulation of qi energy is intimately linked to Chinese history, medicine and culture. All of Chinese famous philosophers and scholars including Confucius, Lao Ze, and Mencius were students of Qi theory (Eisenberg, 1995). Through the study and manipulation of qi energy, scholars created qi exercises such as Tai Ji Quan and Qi Gong (Yang, 1998). Today, millions of Chinese take part in these daily exercises that are designed to enhance the flow of qi energy through the meridian points in their body.

Traditional Chinese medicine and philosophy accepts qi energy as a physical reality. From a Western scientific point of view, qi energy is an unproven form of energy (Eisenberg, 1995). This may explain why so few studies were found on how mind/body/spirit practices can benefit educators. Some research involving educators engaged in regular meditation (Anderson, 1996; Mulvaney, 1994; Solloway, 2000) or Qi

Gong practice (Purcell, 1998) demonstrates that both practices appear to benefit educators. However, no research on educator programs or practices that combined several stress relieving techniques such as the use of intent, meditation, Qi Gong, Tai Ji Quan, visualization, breathing exercises and acupuncture techniques into one program was found.

Anderson's (1996) study assessed the effects of meditation on reducing teacher stress and anxiety. Ninety-one volunteer elementary, middle, and high school teachers from 8 school districts in Pennsylvania, Missouri and Illinois were randomly assigned to an experimental meditation group or a waitlist control group. Transcendental meditation techniques were taught to the meditation group during a 5 week period consisting of 1 ½ hour weekly sessions. Both groups were assessed using a pre-test/post-test/and 9 week follow up study design. Teacher perceived occupational stress was measured by the Teacher Stress Inventory, anxiety by the State-Trait Anxiety Scale and teacher burnout by the Maslack Burnout Inventory-Educators Version. The results showed teacher's perception of stress on the job altered, exhaustion was reduced, responses to students were less unfeeling and impersonal and teacher's anxiety levels decreased. Those who continued to meditate after the initial 5 week program were able to maintain a lower level of anxiety when they were retested 9 weeks after the study ended (Anderson, 1996). This study suggests that when educators engage in regular meditation practice for 5 weeks they feel a greater sense of control of their emotions, are able to deal with problems more calmly, and their perception about stress on the job decreases.

Qi Gong instructor Sue Weston (Purcell, 1998) found that as teacher's breathing improves so does their relationships with students. "Teaching is a very physical act, and

by becoming easier with their breathing, calmer in their mind, and confident in their own body, teacher's attitudes in their class change...at a subtle level they become more grounded and relaxed" (pp. 12, 13).

Literature on broader populations shows that the regular practice of meditation decreases stress and anxiety (Anderson, 1996; Brown & Robinson, 1993; Kabat-Zinn, 1990), decreases pain (Kabat-Zinn, 1990), initiates physical healing (Campbell, 1991; Gaynor, 2002; Mulvaney, 1994), increases feelings of relaxation (Greenspan, 1995), brings about feelings of being in balance or in harmony with the natural world (Hayward, 1984; Mulvaney, 1994) and opens the mind to other ways of knowing the world or higher states of consciousness (Achterberg, 1985; Englehardt, 1980; Fadiman, 1976; Gerber, 2001; Wilber, 1998).

The more we learn physiologically about the body-mind connection through disciplines such as psychoneuroimmunology, the more we understand how meditation or prayer [intent] can create healing (Northrup, 1994). Some western psychologists and medical doctors are using meditation to enhance traditional medical treatment (Gaynor, 2002; Kabat-Zinn, 1991). Visualization is often used along with meditation, imagery, and music as healing practices for diseases such as cancer and to treat emotional disorders (Achterberg 1984; Cane 2001; Kabat-Zinn, 1991). Clinics for chronic pain and cancer patients are teaching patients how to self regulate their bodies (Kabat-Zinn, 1991; Gaynor, 2002) by controlling their thoughts and attitudes that regulate the interactions and reactions of the physical body (Englehardt, 1980).

A review by Benor in 1990 of over 3,000 studies concluded that intention affects all living systems (Zahourek, 2002). A person's intent (Hunt, 1989) can affect another

person's energy field. Neurophysical research (Ader, Felten & Cohen, 1991) suggests when we communicate with another person, submicroscopic matter passes from our minds to the mind of the person with whom we are relating. When we interact with people of similar frequencies, we feel good in their presence and uncomfortable with other individuals who have different frequencies (Scelba, 1998). These studies have important implications for educators who often find themselves engaged in negative energy exchanges with students, peers, administrators, and community members. In seeking balance and a natural resonance, our body finds the sound, notes, and vibration that it needs (Hunt, 1972; Scelba, 1998). According to medical cancer specialist, Dr. Mitchell Gaynor, the use of chanting, listening to music, playing bells, hand cymbals, wind gongs, drums, whistles and toning (vocalizing vowel sounds to change the vibrations in the body) can positively affect our minds as well as our physiology. Sound vibrations are able to touch every part of our physical being and are "heard" through every cell in our body (Gaynor, 2002; Gardner, 1997). Medical studies show music can reduce anxiety, heart and respiratory rate, reduce cardiac complications and lower blood pressure (Gaynor, 2002; Gardner, 1997).

Tai Ji Quan and Yoga are reported to help the mind function with greater awareness, clarity and concentration (Cane, 2000). These energy exercises are known to increase blood circulation, strengthen muscles, stimulate the nervous system and glandular activity, and improve joint movement (Cane, 2000). Breath-work releases and energizes the whole system. Deep flowing breath is a sign of health, balance, and fullness of spirit (Cane, 2000). Breathing patterns shift when different emotions are present in the body/mind/spirit (Cane, 2000). Through conscious breath we can become aware of the

flow of these emotions. By changing the way we breathe, we can change emotional and physical states (Cane, 2000). Taiji, Qi Gong and Yoga use breath work and energy movements to build, release and balance life energy through gentle movements and prescribed posture.

Mandalas or circular drawings have been used since ancient times as a way for individuals or groups to create a spiritual connection between the inner-self and the spiraling outer cosmos (Fincher, 1991). Mandala therapy is beginning to receive attention in the medical field but, as yet, has not been integrated into the professional training of educators. In mandala therapy sessions, patients are guided through relaxation exercises and then asked to use color to express how they feel. In some sessions, patients are asked to explain their mandala drawings to the group. The theory is that mandala drawings provide another modality to express feelings without the use of language, one that encourages the release of emotions and feelings using creative expression and symbolism. Judith Cornell uses mandala art therapy to heal the body, mind, and spirit in her practice (Horvath, 2001). Using mandala art therapy with children with attention deficit disorder produced a reduction in impulsivity behavior and increase in their concentration (Horvath, 2001). Horvath found mandala art therapy produced a rise in energy and seemed to stimulate chakra points. Chakra points are seven designated points in the human body that enable the body to absorb and emit energy from and into the universe. The creation of mandalas helped patients release creative energies and reduce symptoms of depression - especially anxiety and fatigue (Horvath, 2001).

Based on these studies, it appears reasonable to expect educators would receive benefits from using the same holistic energy practices that have been identified by

medical and mind/body/spirit practitioners, researchers and scientists as beneficial to the general population. Although educators may not be showing signs of imbalance or disease, the levels of stress and anxiety they experience suggests it would be wise for educators to be trained in the use of holistic energy practices to create balance and harmony as a disease preventative.

Challenges or Barriers Educators Face

While some existing research is available describing how educators develop and use intuition (Atkinson and Claxton, 2000; Noddings & Shore, 1984; Torff and Sternberg, 2001) and meditation in their professional lives (Anderson, 1996; Fadiman, 1976; Mulvaney, 1994), no literature was found showing programs or practices created to reduce educator stress or anxiety that uses meditation or inner knowledge in combination with other movement energy practices. There does not appear to be research on programs that incorporate multiple mind/body/spirit practices that are known to be self-healing and re-energizing such as the use of mandala art, intent, visualization, Qi Gong, Taiji, and acupressure. Only the Cane (2000) study used multiple modalities to heal post traumatic stress in grassroots leaders study. This gap in the research shows that little attention has been paid to educator stress. Teachers interested in learning more about how to integrate beneficial mind/body/spirit exercises, or ways other teachers have managed to find time to include these practices into their already full and busy lives, are unable to acquire this knowledge because information on holistic programs designed to alleviate educator stress is not available.

Summary of the Literature

The literature clearly shows the demands that contemporary society (Goleman, 1995) and education make on teachers are creating an increase in educator's stress levels and a more stressful work environment for educators (Greene, 1997; Jarvis, 2002). How teachers perceive and relate to their environment correlates with their levels of anxiety and stress (Jarvis, 2002), yet few programs have been developed to help reduce teacher stress or improve their coping mechanisms (Fishel, 2001; Jarvis, 2002). I find it quite amazing that professional athletes are trained in stress based management techniques to conserve their energy (Fadiman, 1976) because coaches are aware of the benefits of this type of training to achieve top performance, yet our nation's professional mental athletes, our teachers, are not given similar treatment.

People regardless of age, culture, economic status, race, or religion are able to learn meditation and energy healing exercises (Cane, 2000; Zahourek, 2002) and generally appreciate a tool or approach to help relieve themselves of anxiety and life's daily pressures (Greenspan, 1995). Choosing the right healing approach for a condition is essential and based on the problem presented (Cane, 2000; Scelba, 1998). Previous meditation or energy movement research studied the effects of one particular style of meditation practice or type of movement exercise on educators. Those studies did not use a holistic approach that integrated the teaching of multiple mind/body/spirit practices to educators to accommodate individual personal needs and preferences. This study followed a similar approach to reducing stress as Patricia Cane (2000) used in her training sessions with grassroots leaders. Educators involved in this research study were instructed in a variety of meditation and energy exercises or energy tools so they could

choose the one most appropriate for their conditions and problems. The study instructed educators in meditation, Qi Gong, and Tai Ji Quan practice, as well as guided visualization, deep breathing, and acupuncture techniques. The intent of this project was to provide educators with a teacher tool box of meditation and energy healing exercises that would be useful in their personal and professional lives to reduce stress.

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CHAPTER THREE: PLANNING THE JOURNEY

Rationale

To explore the full dimensions of human awareness and experience today's epistemologies and methods must be vigorous and dynamic. (Braud & Anderson, 1998 p.70)

The purpose of this study is to understand how meditation and other mind/body/spirit practices such as Qi Gong, Tai Ji Quan, acupuncture, breathing and relaxation exercises influence how educators teach and live their lives. Research on mind/body/spirit training programs designed for educators that include various types of mind/body/spirit exercises was not available. This study is an exploratory inquiry aimed at capturing the widest range of information, from the subtle to the profound, about how mind/body/spirit practices influence or shape the lives of educators and document what teachers experience while engaging in these practices. The findings from this study can then be used to generate more research in this area.

Two types of qualitative inquiry approaches were emphasized in this study, phenomenological and intuitive inquiry. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), a phenomenological study should describe "the meanings of a lived experience" (p.36). Particular emphasis in this study was placed on the meaning educators made from engaging in mind/body/spirit experiences. I enhanced the phenomenological approach by including intuitive inquiry. Braud and Anderson (1998) describe intuitive inquiry as research that is done while being aware of the intuitive process. The essential feature of

intuitive inquiry focuses on “bringing compassionate heart to scientific inquiry in the way researchers ask questions, devise instruments, conduct investigations, analyze data, construct theories and speak to readers” (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p.71). The intuitive inquiry method was selected because participants, along with the researcher, can be fully engaged in examining themselves. Study participants and the researcher used meditative and various other forms of mind/body/spirit exercises to explore the inner self. As a result of these “lived experiences,” each participant could reflect on any personal insight or wisdom that emerged, look for changes in the way they view and relate to the mind/body/spirit selves, and more intentionally think about how they relate to people and situations that are a part of their professional and personal lives.

It is my hope that this study points to new information about how mind/body/spirit practices can help teachers deal with stress in their personal and professional lives and contribute to, and generate, future research in this area.

Methods

Site Selection

Location is a significant factor to consider in this study. The certified instructor who volunteered to work with the study participants had a practice in St. Albans, Vermont, a city located in the northwest corner of the state. Since the number of practitioners certified to practice and teach Tai Ji Quan and acupuncture are limited in Vermont and work with a certified instructor was important to the success of this study, study participants needed to live within an easy commuting distance to St. Albans, Vermont.

Participant Selection

This type of study required multi-method data collection strategies and prolonged data collection in the field with each study participant. For this reason, this study was limited to 7 educators.

Public elementary school teachers were initially chosen as the target population for this study because they are currently facing many demands with the new educational reform efforts. Unlike teachers at higher levels, elementary teachers are responsible to teach content in several different subject areas and work with the same group of students for large portions of the day. Current curriculum reform in the core subject areas, changes in education policy that relates student scores on standardized tests to teacher performance, and the increase in the number of students entering schools with emotional and behavioral disorders seems to be causing elementary teachers more stress and fatigue.

Because all of the teachers who traveled overseas as a University of Vermont Asian Studies Outreach program participant had been introduced to some of the traditional Asian mind/body/spirit practices that were used in this study, the study participants were drawn from this group. The study population was further narrowed according to their residential location and expressed interest in mind/body/spirit practices.

Teachers who have demonstrated an interest in mind/body/spirit practices through any of the sources below were identified as potential study participants.

- statements in writing in ASOP participant reflection papers
- transcriptions of teacher interviews completed during a pilot study I conducted on this topic

- informal conversations with teachers in their schools

Every effort was made to include teachers from rural and urban schools and both male and female teachers. From the population identified, 7 candidates were contacted by telephone or in person to set up a formal meeting time to discuss the study. Additional contacts were made until 7 teachers agreed to participate in the study. The one male on the list who fit the above criteria was not interested in participating in the study. Email communication was used to address any other questions that these study participants had.

At the beginning of the study, several changes were made to the original sample population. Just prior to the first weekly session, one elementary educator was unable to participate due to health reasons. A retired middle/high school multi-media specialist who had worked in the same town as the teacher who left the study was accepted as a replacement for the original participant. She had traveled to both China and Thailand as an ASOP participant and had expressed interest in mind/body/spirit practices. Participants attending the first session consisted of six female elementary teachers and one recently retired middle/high school multi-media specialist. The sample population represented both urban and rural schools.

Two additional teachers left the study after the first meeting because their school scheduled them to teach in an after school math tutorial program that was being held on the same dates and times as our meeting sessions. This created a problem since they represented the urban school composite of this sample population. I felt a study sample of 5 educators would not be sufficient because it wouldn't provide the breadth of perspective needed for this study. I could not locate additional study participants who met all of the original criteria. Two other educators who had expressed interest in

participating in the study and lived within easy commuting distance of St. Albans were accepted into the study for the second session. One educator fit all of the listed requirements and taught in an urban school except she was a counselor who worked in classrooms at the 5th through 8th grade levels. The other was an elementary special educator who fit all but one of the criteria - she had not traveled overseas as a UVM Asian Studies Outreach participant. Both of these educators were interested in learning more about mind/body/spirit practices. I chose to include them in this study in order to achieve a larger number of participants and have a teacher from an urban school represented in the sample.

Pre-study interviews were held during the first week of October and the biweekly meeting sessions began the following week. During our first whole group meeting session the study's purpose, methods, and each person's role and responsibilities were restated. The group discussed their concerns and posed questions. Each study participant signed the consent form. Each group member was asked to choose a pseudonym to protect each person's confidentiality. All but two of the participants asked me to select a pseudonym for them, which I did.

Data Collection

The study began at the beginning of October and ended the first week of January. Data was collected through the use of audio taped in-depth pre and post session interviews, field notes of bi-weekly sessions, participant journals and an end of the study participant journal summary. The data from these sources were used to describe how meditation and mind/body/spirit practices did or did not influence each person's teaching and other aspects of these educator's lives.

According to Glesne (1999), “extended time in the field” enables the researcher to “develop trust...and check out your hunches” (p.32). The pre and post-study interview used a standardized open-ended interview format with each interview averaging approximately 1 ½ hours in length. These interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Participant observations during biweekly sessions and information from informal conversations with teachers during whole group meetings were recorded in my field notes. Photocopied pages from participant journals were collected at each biweekly session. Mandala art was introduced and used as a tool to collect feelings and images that arose while the mind was in a meditative state that was difficult to express in words. Participants interpreted their drawings and related them to their feelings and meditation experiences. At the end of the study, participants reviewed their journal entries and completed a journal summary to ensure participants were able to give their own meanings to their experience.

Data from the pre and post study interviews, daily journals, and participant observer field notes were reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the study. Time was devoted during biweekly sessions to discuss participants’ thoughts, feelings and experiences. These sessions served as a way of member checking. Participants were asked to clarify, expand or confirm findings either in the whole group or during individual conversations. When the data were analyzed and written, each group member was sent a draft of the chapter and given an opportunity to correct any data or analysis they felt inaccurately represented them or their experience.

These methods - prolonged engagement along with the use of multiple data-collection methods, member checking, and elaborate description of the phenomena being studied -

were used to increase trustworthiness and validity in this study (Glesne, 1999).

Interviews

Two interviews were conducted with each of the 7 participants during the study. A pre-study interview was completed prior to the first mind/body/spirit bi-weekly training session. A post-study interview was conducted 2 weeks after the last mind/body/spirit bi-weekly training sessions to explore the same issues and determine any changes in their thinking.

Journals

Participants recorded their meditation experiences in journals. They were encouraged to include both text and images to communicate their thoughts and feelings. The specific interview and journal questions are listed in the appendix.

The Learning Sessions

The 7 study participants participated in biweekly instruction, practice and discussion sessions from 4:00 – 6:30 p.m. in a community room in a church central to all participants. The study was to begin in October and end in mid December but several winter snow storms caused the last December session to be postponed until the first week in January.

Participants were instructed in meditation, visualization, breathing techniques, Tai Ji Quan and Qi Gong exercises. They learned acupressure techniques that are used to relieve headaches and tension in various parts of the body. A holistic practitioner, trained in acupuncture, Tai Ji Quan, and Qi Gong instructed the group during the biweekly sessions. I have been taught by Buddhist monks in meditation, visualization, and breathing techniques and guided the group in these practices. Study participants were

asked to meditate for 20 minutes and complete one energy movement exercise (Qi Gong or Tai Ji Quan) each day and use acupressure when appropriate.

I was an active participant in this study, exploring the effects of body/mind/spirit exercises on my life as well. As an engaged participant in these practices, I was able to listen to and understand the types of internal and external challenges that arise through regular mind/body/spirit practice.

During these bi weekly sessions, participants discussed their personal and professional challenges and successes and shared anecdotal stories and insights. It was essential that a culture of caring and compassion develop as quickly as possible so that participants could feel comfortable talking to the group. This need was discussed at the first meeting and restated at the second but wasn't necessary after that.

The intent of these regular meetings was to go beyond the learning and practicing of new skills. They provided a place for teachers to learn new skills, and perhaps to re-energize themselves, receive support and encouragement for their work, and to connect with others through the sharing of stories, experiences, and needs. Glesne (1999) writes about the process of compassionate inquiry, "...as researcher you want to learn the respondents' beliefs, experiences, and views rather than to persuade them of your perspective. This 'need to learn from the other' guides the researcher's behavior into a nondirective and somewhat therapeutic role" (p.85). Data that is collected, constructed, and clarified during group discussions with research participants can serve as an indicator, a validation, that the experience has been accurately described (Braud & Anderson, 1998). Glesne (1999) emphasizes, "The idea is to make clear that you did hear what your respondents said, and that you do grasp their feelings" (p.85).

Field notes were used to capture information about the following areas that related to this study:

- the types of mind/body/spirit exercises used by teachers on a regular basis
- the challenges or barriers teachers experienced while integrating mind/body/spirit exercises into their daily routine
- the ways educators report they take care of their mind/body/spirit self
- other information that arose from informal group conversations that were relevant to the study but that study interview questions or journals did not address

Analysis

Analysis was ongoing and inductive, occurring during the entire process of data collection (Glesne, 1999). All documents were reviewed and coded at the time of collection. The audio taped pre and post study interviews were transcribed and photocopied pages of participant journals were collected for review. Data from the transcribed interviews were combined with field notes and participant journal entries during the coding and analysis process.

During the preliminary analysis stage, I looked for emerging major themes and developed a crude coding scheme. As more data were compiled during the study, emerging patterns and subcategories were identified, and coding was further refined. Eventually three types or domains of knowing emerged from the data that appeared to influence these study participants' thoughts, beliefs and action patterns. These were categorized as Folkway, Formal and Multi-Dimensional ways of knowing. Each way of knowing had its own sources of knowledge or wisdom and set of values, so subcategories were created to further define these accordingly.

Folkway Knowing is the social and cultural knowledge participants acquired from their families, colleagues, community members and the local physical environment in which they live. Formal Knowing is professional knowledge that directly relates to formal academic learning. This study group acquired Formal knowledge from professional role models, content taught in school, professional readings and overseas study experiences. Multi-Dimensional Knowing consists of four internal ways of knowing the self. These are emotional, contemplative, artistic/creative and spiritual. During the coding and analysis process, I also discovered that when this group of teachers entered the study, Folkway and Formal Knowing were their dominant sources of knowledge. After using mind/body/spirit practices, this group of teachers' gained new insights, knowledge, skills or wisdom from accessing internal knowledge sources. This new way of knowing themselves gave them another way of viewing their world and influenced their Folkway and Formal Knowing values and beliefs.

Seven individual portrait snapshots were created to introduce each of the study participants and provide basic background information about the teacher to the reader. Each snapshot contains a quote or motto the teacher used that appears to capture the spirit of that person. When participants reviewed the drafts of this dissertation, they were able to identify and correct any data inaccuracies. This member check procedure was another way to validate the data used in this study.

Since this is a phenomenological study, a cross-case analysis was used to describe the influences of mind/body/spirit techniques and exercises on the personal and professional lives of teachers. All exercises that were viewed as beneficial by the study participants to

be used as a “teacher tool box” are included in this dissertation, along with study findings and suggestions for future research.

The Subjective “I”

Quantitative research requires that the method and tools used eliminate “bias”. Qualitative research does not try to eliminate bias but instead attempts to manage it by identifying the types and ways these biases can surface and influence the study. Qualitative researchers spend time identifying their personal biases, beliefs and assumptions related to the topic under study before the study begins. The information listed in this section under the subjective ‘I’ is a result of a reflective process that I, as researcher, have engaged in around my research topic to help me identify and examine my personal beliefs, assumptions and biases related to this study that are the driving forces behind this study.

This “Subjective I” (Glesne, 1999) approach can be compared to a preventative wellness practice. Individuals who identify causes of health problems and take preventative action, are often healthier individuals. Researchers who identify biases as potential problems for the study and take action to prevent these biases from weakening the study, design stronger studies by examining what makes them “tick” and what is driving his or her interest in the study on a personal level. Biases are generally stated up front in a study for two reasons. One is to aid the researcher in recognizing when his or her own biases might be causing the data to be misrepresented or misinterpreted and take appropriate action to prevent this. The second is to alert readers to the researcher’s biases so the reader approaches the study with a clear understanding of the lens the researcher

used in the study. The driving forces that surfaced during this reflective “Subjective I” process are described below.

The Idealist “I”

One of the core reasons I left my position as a grade 5/6 multiage classroom educator was because of the pain I experienced when trying to heal my student’s emotional wounds. As a result of their pain, I experienced many sleepless nights and a heavy heart. Even though I had attained a master’s degree in education, at no time in my education program was I taught techniques or strategies that prevent teacher burnout or to better cope with stressful teaching situations. At no time was I taught how to bring balance and harmony back into my personal and professional life. I was an idealist, feeling that I could help all troubled students and change their world. I did not understand the only thing within my control is the power to change myself and how I perceive events. This realization came when I traveled to Thailand and studied with Buddhist monks. Although I still care deeply about others and the state of the world, I no longer feel the tremendous burden of trying to change the world. I do believe that if each person begins to care about him or herself and strives to establish a state of inner balance and harmony, the potential for powerful, synchronous change exists within every individual. I believe educators who are calm and at peace with themselves create authentic, caring environments for students.

The Realist “I”

Meditation and energy practices have benefited me. Although I have taken many precautions to prevent my personal assumptions and beliefs from biasing this study, I feel it is important to openly state to the readers of this study that I entered into this study believing that mind/body/spirit techniques would benefit many educators. I meditate on a

regular basis and believe meditation is an effective method to learn more about the internal self and decrease mental and physical body stress. I know several people who have benefited from acupuncture and acupressure for relief from muscle strains, tension, headaches, arthritis and other physical problems. My brief exposure to Tai Ji Quan during my visits to China along with conversations with elderly Chinese adults who practice Taiji regularly and exhibit steadiness and balance in their movement, affirmed my belief that Tai Ji Quan connects the mind, body, and spirit.

Holistic educational practices encourage students be exposed to broad and varied learning opportunities so that each individual will develop a wide variety of skills and talents. These practices are not a value that has ever been fully embraced by American culture. Chinese culture has come to know a well educated individual as one who cultivates his or her many talents. According to Kongfuzi, better known in the west as Confucius, a person should engage in cultivating the internal self when not involved in social endeavors to improve the lives of others. Moral and character education remains at the vital core of the Chinese education system. Cultivating the self involves engaging in contemplative practices such as writing poetry, calligraphy, painting, and playing music. American culture has never appreciated the arts or self-cultivation as a form of vital knowledge and skills. Schools are decreasing or eliminating artistic, creative expression in favor of developing skills for the work place. I am greatly concerned about the current direction in education with its emphasis on measuring student knowledge and skills in a narrow, limited area and using standardized assessments as THE means to measure success. Neglecting the internal and creative self creates a void within, resulting in a discontented individual and society.

Throughout this study I had to remain vigilant about how my own assumptions, beliefs and understandings could cloud the findings of this study. I was forced to continually remind myself that each participant's assumptions, beliefs and knowledge structures were different than mine. Several times during the analysis period, I caught myself unconsciously or consciously trying to dismiss statements that ran contrary to my beliefs or experience. My biggest challenge was to remain alert about how my own experiences, bias and perceptions were influencing how the data was coded and shaped.

Referring back to the primary sources I collected with a critical eye and asking myself if I had captured the appropriate meaning or voice from all the statements or comments gathered provided me with the means to address my biases and assumptions through out the study period. Verbatim transcriptions of audio taped interviews, photocopied pages of participant journals, and my field notes were revisited frequently to examine how my initial and final coding of material might have been influenced by my beliefs. Finally, participant feedback about the accuracy of the experience described in the analysis was another lens I used to identify other unrecognized assumptions or biases. Participants reviewed the data analysis chapter to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations in the way their experience was described. This combination, the use of multiple data collection sources, periodic and frequent reviews of primary data sources using a critical eye, and member checking during the biweekly sessions, provided what I believe is an accurate description of how meditation and mind/body/spirit practices influence teaching and teacher's lives. I do believe that messages that didn't match my understanding and meditation experiences, as well as those that did, had their voice fairly represented in this study.

Concluding Remarks

This research project was an attempt to understand how mind/body/spirit practices influenced the lives of educators. Educators were instructed in techniques that encouraged inner knowledge exploration and were known to connect the mind/body/spirit self. These exercises and practices are not taught in most formal educational settings but have been used to broaden and deepen understanding of the mind, body, emotional and spiritual self in Asian countries for centuries. It is well documented that how we think and feel affects our mental, physical and spiritual health.

Through description, analysis and interpretation of these 7 educators' phenomenological experiences, this study looked at how these practices influenced their teaching and the way they lived their lives. Professional athletic trainers and coaches train athletes to use mind/body/spirit practices such as visualization, relaxation and breathing exercises because they know these practices improve an athlete's mental and physical performance and help to reduce anxiety. It is time that educators learned how to improve their mental and physical stamina, and reduce stress and anxiety using similar processes.

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CHAPTER FOUR: TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL

The breadth of this study combined with vast amounts of data acquired from a multiplicity of sources, presented quite a challenge during the initial stages of coding and categorizing. The data appeared to develop a life and mind of its own. It was unruly and unmanageable and wasn't going to be easily tamed or herded into some neat categorical box. After spending many hours coding and recoding the data, trying to make some sense of it all, I finally recognized I was dealing with a three headed beast that did have a connection to its body. These three segments of the data are described and analyzed in chapters four and five. Chapter six describes the various changes the teachers in this study experienced as a result of participating in this study.

Part of the data from this study spoke to the ways the teachers in this study have come to know their world through Folkway and Formal Knowing. Folkway and Formal Knowing shaped these teachers' values, beliefs, and teaching practices. These domains of knowing were the two primary knowledge sources being used by this group of teachers when the study began before they included mind/body/spirit practices in their daily routine. The second part of the data pointed to how teachers came to know themselves differently with the regular use of mind/body/spirit practices. These new ways of knowing were categorized as Multi-Dimensional Knowing. The last segment of the data showed how mind/body/spirit practices influenced teacher's Formal and Folkway values and beliefs.

Chapter four describes how teachers came to know their world through Folkway and Formal Knowing. It provides a brief "snapshot" of each of the study participants and

descriptive data that reveals how these teachers viewed themselves as teachers, how they viewed teaching and what they valued when they entered the study. Folkway and Formal Knowing shaped these teacher's identities and influenced what events, situations or types of relationships they perceived as stressful. This data can be viewed as baseline data for this study. It provides background knowledge that is necessary if the reader is to understand the sources of, reasons for and impact of stress in these teachers' lives before practicing mind/body/spirit practices. Although these ways of knowing benefited this group of teachers it also limited their understanding of themselves. The data shows Folkway and Formal Knowing did not help these teachers understand their internal selves or teach them the necessary skills or knowledge needed to balance or harmonize their mind/body/spirit energy and more effectively manage stress in their lives.

Chapter five addresses the second head of the data beast, pointing to new ways teachers came to know and understand themselves after engaging in regular mind/body/spirit practices. It introduces a third way of knowing, Multi-Dimensional Knowing, emerged as a result of the study groups' daily use of mind/body/spirit practices. The various internal sources of knowledge and the core beliefs associated with Multi-Dimensional Knowing are described. It also introduces the concept of teachers as energetic beings and explains how different events altered this group of teacher's energy level or "qi" and the effect of these energetic changes on their teaching. Chapter five analyzes how becoming a Multi-Dimensional Knower impacted these teachers' thinking, feelings, and ways of responding to themselves and others.

Finally, chapter six examines how becoming a Multi-Dimensional Knower influenced this group of teacher's initial Folkway and Formal values and beliefs and

altered their teaching practices. This chapter also describes the effectiveness of each of the mind/body/spirit exercises used in this study (Tai Ji Quan, Qi Gong, meditation, intent, acupuncture, deep breathing and guided imagery) and which exercises and techniques this group of teachers believed would benefit others in this profession.

Personal Snapshots

Alicia

Signature: *I want to die with a smile even if it kills me.*

Occupation: K-8 special educator, rural school

Experience: 27 years of continuous teaching

Interests: crafts, dancing, cooking, cross-country skiing, walking, nature

Chris

Signature: *I am working on opening up to other possibilities.*

Occupation: retired high school library media specialist, rural school

Experience: 20 years

Interests: art, photography, yoga, Tai Ji Quan, meditation, spiritual development

Kristen

Signature: *I am a teacher. That is my identity.*

Occupation: Second grade teacher, rural school

Experience: 27 years

Interests: biking, walking, swimming, cross-country skiing, nature

Elizabeth

Signature: *I enjoyed being a mom.*

Occupation: First grade teacher, rural school

Experience: 28 + years

Interests: knitting, music, playing piano, swimming, kayaking, cross-country skiing, walking, nature

Naomi

Signature: *I have to learn something new every year for myself. I can't repeat the same show as last year. It has to have a spark to it.*

Occupation: multiage grade 4/5 teacher, rural school

Experience: 32 + years

Interests: gardening, swimming, canoeing, cross-country skiing, walking, Tai Ji Quan, nature.

Melanie

Signature: *I am not afraid to go to higher places. I am a spiritual seeker.*

Occupation: counselor for grades 5-8, urban school

Experience: 30 + years teaching in different capacities

Interests: travel, art, spiritual development

Sally

Signature: *The beginning of the school year is a time to enter into a love relationship with these kids, but like any love relationship, it has its ups and downs.*

Occupation: fourth grade teacher, rural school

Experience: 31 years teaching

Interests: art, crafts, travel, music

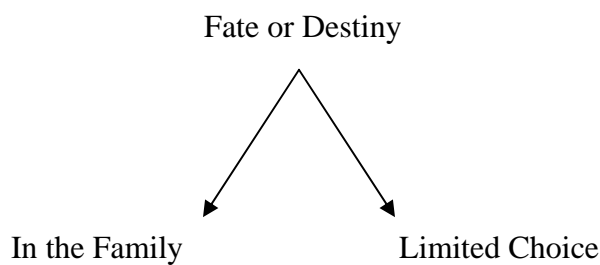
Teaching is a Way of Being

All of these educators were veteran teachers with well over 20 years of teaching experience. These teachers brought decades of knowledge about teaching, instruction, content and education philosophy into this study. They brought a great deal of historical understanding of the field of education with them. They knew what it was like to teach in a classroom in the mid 1970's and what it is like in 2004. They have embraced and endured many changes in schools, society, and their own personal lives. All still viewed

teaching as a profession that makes a difference in the lives of children. Their stories revealed the joy, sorrow, pain and pleasures that represent teaching in the 21st century.

The educators in this study were strongly committed to teaching, yet none of them made an intentional decision to enter into the education profession. According to all the study participants, becoming a teacher was their fate because of one of two reasons. Teaching was “in the family” or they felt limited in the career choices available to them either because of their gender or choice of college.

Figure 1. Decision to Teach



Alicia, Elizabeth, Kristen and Melanie attributed their entrance into the profession to their families. Alicia’s two siblings with disabilities benefited greatly from attending a school for the deaf. This led to Alicia’s interest in special education. Elizabeth, the oldest of 8 children and an experienced family babysitter, felt comfortable and familiar working with children. Melanie’s mom loved teaching and her enthusiasm “paved the way” for Melanie to eventually enter the profession. Kristen couldn’t avoid teaching because she came from a line of family educators.

My mother was a teacher, my aunt was a teacher, a couple of my brothers started out as teachers. I started out as a special ed teacher because my brother was working for the state department in Montpelier and he over saw a lot of the special ed programs around the state. He got me a job as a counselor at one of the special ed camps and

that got me into special ed.

According to 6 of the 7 teachers in this study, their career choices were limited by gender and the college they attended. Alicia's career choices were confined to teaching or nursing. The sight of blood "*didn't set well*" with her so she decided on teaching as a career. Naomi knew of only four acceptable career paths for women; business, flight attendant, nurse, or teacher. She selected the education profession through a process of elimination.

Elizabeth's dream to become a singer dissipated once she registered at Johnson State College because "*when you are at Johnson you become a teacher.*" Sally's college choice determined her teaching career path as well. Chris' art interest funneled her into a teacher licensure track in college even though she did not want to teach. Melanie, now a middle school guidance counselor, entered the profession as a home economics teacher. According to Melanie, it was an acceptable profession for woman and a comfortable choice for her to make at that time.

The responses of the teachers in this study point to the type of social messages these women received while attending high school and college in the United States in the 1960s and early 1970s. Acceptable career choices for women were still extremely limited although, due to the women's liberation movement, a new awareness or consciousness was developing that would later recognize the expanding roles women could play in the workforce. Because the ages of the teachers in this study group were within a 15 year span, they experienced the same social conditioning and limitations as most women did at that time in our nation's history. A broader range of career options are open and available to women now. Women now work in what was once considered "non traditional" jobs. It

may very well be that young college age women are choosing to enter the teaching profession for different reasons than those who entered the profession before them. It is beyond the scope of this study to gather data in this area but certainly research worthy of pursuing in greater depth.

Teacher as My Personal Identity

According to the educators interviewed in this study, the act of teaching is deeply personal and closely linked to their personal life. The persona of teacher transforms the view of teacher as professional to teaching as a way of being. All of the educators in this study shared this opinion. Kristen summarized their views well,

I am a teacher, that is my identity... Yeah, there is definitely an interest to have more time to yourself - that sure sounds great- but then, would I be lost? Would I know what to do with myself? It is what I do, who I am, and, I think most of the time, is what I like.

Teacher as Compassionate Caregiver

The elements of care and compassion are an integral part of the teaching profession, according to these study participants. This view blurs and further erodes the boundaries that define and separate the individual's profession from their personal life. Participants perceived the institution of school as an extension of the institution of family. Alicia feels "*...the job of a special educator is part educator, part guidance counselor, part mom. I am the mom at school.*"

Melanie compared the student/teacher relationship to a marriage relationship.

Sometimes I think I care more than the student cares and I have to be careful about that. Sylvia Ashton Warner, a New Zealand educator, talks about the teaching

relationship being like a marriage. I could really identify with that because it was a commitment that we made to one another to do the best we can.

These teachers were intricately connected to and concerned about the social and emotional development of the children in their classrooms. The working environment and human characteristics Kristen appreciated in her personal life were the same ones she worked to replicate in her classroom with her students. *“I am really trying to focus on the whole idea of setting kindness, the way I talk to students, the way they treat each other is a huge part of what goes on in here. I want the atmosphere to be calm. I want it to be pleasant, to be caring.”*

The need to develop emotional bonds and build strong, trusting relationships with and between their students in order to provide a stable classroom environment for learning was expressed by many of the teachers in this group.

Kristen took a few minutes every day to spotlight a few students.

I really enjoy getting the morning started with a focus on specific kids...Each child has a particular day that they can be a sharer and it is just teaching them listening skills and manners.... They are very cute about it. I love it. It is only three or four kids that are in the limelight for 3 minutes for the entire week, but we can all turn and look at them, focus on them and ask questions to them. There is no rush because that is what that time is allotted for.

Because of a grade configuration change in the school, Kristen taught some of her students for 3 years in a row. *“You get to know them and really care about them, especially these past couple of years... I enjoy the long term relationships.”*

Elizabeth enjoyed taking time to get to know her students outside of the classroom because it is important to *“just get to know them...like today, going on a class trip... you see a whole other side to them.”*

Sally also worked on creating an atmosphere of trust in her classroom so that the *“...the child who never seems to open up can share something with you....”* Sally knows that once you have the trust of your students, quality learning experiences occur in the classroom .

Melanie’s commitment to develop strong relationships with her students began early in her career when she taught adults in a college setting. *“I started working on my masters in counseling because I was always working with groups and that started me thinking that any program like that could help me in my teaching and my work.”*

All of the teachers in the study talked about the nurturing aspect of teaching as important but there were different perspectives on what this meant. Some of the teachers believed it was important to be both physically and emotionally nurturing. They readily gave and received hugs from students. Naomi initially described herself as not being a very nurturing teacher but then corrected and clarified what she meant. *“I am not a physically nurturing teacher, but I feel I really do want them to be emotionally balanced and stand up for themselves and their own rights. I want them to be a healthy person socially and emotionally. I don’t ignore their needs and I figure that is nurturing in that sense.”*

Melanie felt her instructional methods were nurturing. *“I think I am a nurturing teacher and use the Socratic method of teaching. I question and try to pull out and affirm people to come to their own awareness about something.”*

The teachers in this study were emotionally engaged with their students. All the joys and sorrows of life entered into their classrooms. Teachers who care grieve with their students over lost pets, relatives, and sometimes, even parents. They celebrate the arrival of new births, birthdays, and personal successes. But where does a caring teacher draw the line? When were they caring enough and when were they caring too much?

These teachers walked an emotional tightrope as they balanced their own needs with the needs of their students. It would be much easier to be a teacher if, as some people insist, teachers could just teach and leave the social/emotional issues for families to deal with. This was not how these professionals viewed their profession. For them, the role of teacher was to guide, counsel, and show students ways to care for themselves and others. At times it may be difficult to understand why, with all the negative attention education receives and all the pressures for educational reforms, teachers return to the classroom each fall. Sally's words captured what teachers feel in their heart each year on those first days of school. *"It is the freshness of starting again in the fall -it is like you are entering in a love relationship with these kids and like any love relationships it has its ups and downs, but it's is pretty nice."*

Teacher as Life Shaper

The rewards of teaching were perceived differently by each of the study participants. Each of them identified a rewarding aspect of teaching according to their own personal values. Teaching beginning reading was *"incredibly exciting"* to one of the teachers in the group. Elizabeth's love for teaching reading came from the joy she experienced as she watched her own daughter learn to read over 20 years ago. Another teacher is rewarded when a former student returns to thank her for *"sticking"* by him. This is the teacher who

saw herself as the “*mom at school.*” A teacher who values people who are sensitive to the needs of others was rewarded when a student thanked her for having faith in her writing. A participant who saw her professional role as a “*giver of knowledge,*” and one who “*builds the foundation*” felt deep satisfaction hearing a former student is now an architect in New York City. She was convinced the book she read to him on structures led to his interest in design. These moments make teachers feel that “*maybe it is all worth it.*”

It appears that the teachers in this study know the role of teacher as one that shapes lives. These responses support the view that their professional life is closely linked to a very personal aspect of a teacher’s life, their values. These caring teachers often found themselves awake at night worrying about what to do, what to say or not to say. A great deal of responsibility is attached to being a life shaper.

Teacher Autonomy and Empowerment

The teachers in this study believed in teacher autonomy and empowerment when it came to making instructional decisions. Naomi reminisced about her first few years of teaching that significantly impacted her philosophy and way of teaching. “*The state came out with a program called Self Discovery or the Discovery Child. It was a little booklet of ways to be in the classroom and I thought, ‘Oh, my God! This is a license to be who ever I want.’*” Naomi recalled the whole teaching philosophy as “*beautiful.*”

The document Naomi was referring to is called the Vermont Design for Education published by the Vermont Department of Education in 1969. This document stated the Vermont Department of Education’s position on education with an outline of how these ideas could be turned into practice. Harvey B. Scribner, the Education Commissioner in 1969, decided that this reform effort would need to be a grassroots effort that involved

professionals and citizens rather than a state mandated reform movement. Although the principles in this booklet represented the position of the State Department of Education, this position was developed “in cooperation with lay and professional groups” (Vermont Department of Education, 1968, p. ii). These ideas were rooted in the educational philosophies and writings of Plato, Aristotle, Dewey and Piaget (Vermont Department of Education, 1968, p.25). This document outlined 17 concepts and supported the “Seven Cardinal Principles of Education stated in 1918-Health, Command of Fundamental Processes, Worthy Home Membership, Vocation, Civic Education, Worthy Use of Leisure, and Ethical Character” (Vermont Department of Education, 1968, p.ii). It appears that the educators in this study were lamenting the new reform initiatives because they do not reflect the educational philosophies or beliefs they cherished.

The education concepts woven into the Vermont Design for Education (Vermont Department of Education, 1968) emphasized the “teacher’s role must be that of a partner and guide in the learning process (p.11). The document recommended individualizing “the learning experiences of each person” (p.14), recognizing the student as a unique individual and encouraged educators to respond to the “originality of the learner” (p.6). A discovery and exploration style of learning was recommended (p.7).

One of the 17 concepts stated “The school should provide a structure in which students can learn from each other” (p.16). This is what Naomi believed in her heart but this document gave Naomi permission and the incentive to rearrange the space in her class during her second year of teaching. She pulled out the iron rods used to anchor student desks together in a straight line and grouped these cumbersome desks in circles.

“I did this cooperative stuff without knowing it was cooperative and we did all kinds of different activities.”

Kristen talked about a new reading program she implemented as a result of taking a course and talking with teachers in another school using this program. She persuaded her grade level team members to implement this program and feels it has really improved their students’ ability to read. The Vermont Design for Education (Vermont Department of Education, 1968) encouraged schools to create a climate to nurture collegueship and encourage this type of curriculum change. “Communication can lead to a sharing and strengthening of ideas and a comparison of techniques, according to their strengths and weaknesses. Cooperation is vital in allowing teachers maximum flexibility through sharing duties and responsibilities” (p.23).

Self-initiated changes in content, instruction or educational programs were viewed as creative, expressive acts of teaching that prevented boredom from setting in. Melanie would not be able to maintain her excitement for teaching if she did not have this creative license.

I like my creativity. I would never be the teacher that taught the same thing for 20 years with the same mimeographs. I would teach it maybe three times. The first time I am a wreck, the second time I feel more comfortable, and third time I get bored and I am ready to change it because I have to keep myself interested.

Alicia enjoyed her job as a special educator because “... it is always different...there is never a dull moment, except when I am doing paperwork.” These teachers were fully aware that new initiatives demand additional time and effort, but self-initiated change was seen as exciting, rewarding, and rejuvenating.

Sally was frustrated by recent educational reform efforts. Her classroom instruction was being changed by “*things that happen outside of the classroom,*” and that were “*imposed by administration.*”

Elizabeth added,

[Now there are] *so many decisions that are not made by teachers of things that have to be done. When I first started teaching we were allowed to do almost anything we wanted. Teachers could do what they were really good at. I used to make those decisions for myself as to what I was going to do. ...when you make your own decisions you are willing to put in the work- this is what I am going to do and I am willing to put out the effort to do that. Now with No Child Left Behind [education law], administrators feel they need to be making decisions about what meets the criteria to get the testing scores right or what to do to get the scores up [and tell you] this is what you are going to do. They don't leave that decision to teachers anymore. It is just is a lot of work.*

Change driven by administrators or sources other than teachers was resented and viewed as “*oppressive.*” All 7 of the teachers in this study felt the new reforms decreased their classroom decision making power. All study participants felt a loss in this area.

Elizabeth and the other teachers in this study resented these new educational reform efforts. They were being forced to spend time working on initiatives that ran contrary to their educational beliefs. It appears that the No Child Left Behind Act fails to recognize or address the needs of these Vermont educators. These teachers were being required to embrace standardization of instruction and assessment after spending 20 plus years learning how to individualize classroom instruction, assessment and encourage student

creativity. They had acquired decades of experience about teaching and learning. They adopted and adapted new methods of teaching according to the needs of their students and communities. They recognized these new initiatives as fatally flawed and yet were required to drastically alter their classroom instruction and assessment to accommodate these reforms efforts.

Naomi was concerned about the new federal law requiring each state to review the records of licensed, practicing teachers to ensure they are “highly qualified”.

There is a letter coming out from the state department saying some teachers are not properly licensed to teach. The PR on that is going to be terrible for education. It is pretty strange that we [teachers] have managed to get this far in our life without getting some of that knowledge. Knowledge is knowledge, but you know, there is a piece of it that is called living, exploring, investigating and finding our own path. But [it has to be related to] what we want to explore instead of having it chucked down our throats and tested beyond all tests and then not remembering any of it over time anyway.

“Differences between teachers’ beliefs and values and those held by the people controlling the school environment produce a lot of discontent” (Yero, 2002, p.8).

Administrators who honored teacher autonomy were recognized as supporters of the professional growth and development of teachers. Naomi had a great deal of respect for the principal she worked with during her first few years of teaching. After making the decision to use cooperative learning methods in her classroom, she rearranged the desks in her room.

The janitor complained to the principal and the principal said, ‘You know what, she

can do whatever she wants to do!’ I would say a principal who allows you to be a free spirit in the classroom is something that really helps [a teacher] think about their own professional development. [You are doing the] things you want to do because you are excited and motivated to do them, as opposed to top down [decisions that make you] jump through the hoops.

She and three other participants described an empowering principal they worked with many years ago.

He was extremely supportive... I remember saying, ‘you know I need a slide projector,’ and within two weeks a slide projector was purchased. ...having that kind of principal in a school, who supports your work where you are free to do things [is an important leadership quality].

The policy makers at the Federal level believe these new mandated educational reforms will create educational change. This method of policy implementation stands in sharp contrast with the long-held Vermont tradition of local control of community schools. The Vermont Design for Education honored this Vermont cultural folkway. The State Board of Education recognized “that acceptance of this philosophy and its implementation must be voluntary if there are to be improved learning opportunities in schools. No amount of legislation or administrative mandate will provide beneficial and permanent educational changes for students” (p. 25). Current reform initiatives are gradually resulting in these teachers relinquishing their autonomy and decision-making powers to the administrators and policy makers. All of these teachers were being forced to abandon their beliefs, “no exceptions, no excuses”. This was creating a great deal of stress in the lives of these teachers.

Teaching is a Demanding Occupation

Balancing breadth and depth of content has historically been a challenge for teachers, but the demands of a society undergoing rapid transition and the recent changes in education policy, is creating unrealistic demands and expectations on teachers. These teachers agreed,

Changes in the family dynamics have definitely been noticeable over the years...there is just too many kids that are coming to school that don't have the family support for being here. It isn't their fault. They are not ready for you to do what you want them to do. They have too many emotional issues and baggage that is preventing them from getting the most out of their school experience. For a lot of kids...we really can't do anything about it. We just make their day as good as we can when they are here.

New educational reform initiatives demand an increase in the amount of content taught, the level of student performance, and teacher accountability. These demands were overloading and overwhelming this group of teachers.

We have upped the ante and I think that is fine. I have no problem with that. ...There are expectations that kids will have a certain amount of information through the standards. It has been all laid out for them in what they need to know. They [the standards] are not limiting but, it is an impossible task! What you can really get done in a day and what is in those standards...I don't see how it can be accomplished -but we try!

Naomi knows the number of standards students are required to know is an impossible task given the current school calendar. Research supports what Naomi's teaching experience tells her. An important McRel study completed in 1999 (Marzano, Kendall, &

Gaddy, 1999) has been ignored by policy makers and educators. According to that study, “Even the brightest students would need nine additional years of schooling to master the nearly 4,000 benchmarks experts have set in 14 subject areas (Marzano, Kendall, & Gaddy, 1999, p.226).

Special educators are not unscathed by these reforms either.

The paper work is definitely a challenge and, with the state, it changes more every year-they add more on! The forms come in and they don't work on the computers... it is dealing with [things like] how to fix the software that isn't quite right. The laws are changing. One year they are this and one year they are that.

This group of teachers appeared to be confused by the intent of these reform initiatives. Messages they received from their heart were in conflict with their rational, logical intelligence. Their educational philosophies and beliefs were being challenged. Naomi eliminated classroom jobs and classroom community meetings because of time constraints. She used these activities to teach her students social responsibility and to develop a strong sense of community within her classroom. Naomi knows most of what students remember from school is not content matter but how they felt while they were there. She knows it is the emotional experiences that impact and shape student's lives. Naomi's heavy sigh revealed a heavy heart. “*It is sad what is happening to our kids.*”

Kristen tried to make sense of all the changes she had experienced as a teacher.

I have changed a lot and I am not necessarily sure all the changes have been for the good, some are. I think back to all of the things I used to do 10 or 15 years ago. I really felt that when we had our own classes, I did a lot more of a total integration of things and a lot more projects.

Now we have a really strong reading program and a really strong math program where we are sharing kids with other teachers and a much more developed writing program and spelling program. The day is being divided up into these specific programs more than the, I guess, looser, but more creative atmosphere than I had before. I feel the constraints of time, move kids in, move kids out, focus on specific skills for different subject areas. I just don't find myself getting to the social studies and science kinds of things that I would like to. I think it is a trade off, I don't know that one is better than the other but there has definitely been a change.

Kristen was torn. Her heart and passion lay in holistic teaching methods. She wanted to use themes and projects that actively engage students in the learning process. Her head told her content specific, highly structured, sequenced programs, were helping her students learn more efficiently. Listening to Kristen makes me wonder if learning more efficiently is important to the students and their parents or just the politicians and policy makers? By eliminating science and social studies, are students learning more or gaining more depth in fewer subjects? Will this develop students with broad open minds or narrowly focused ones? What will the students remember from their early years in school? Is what they are learning increasing their appetite to know or do they just want to know what they need to learn to pass the test? Are students' ways of knowing limited by the text book companies and corporations producing the tests? If Kristen is feeling her role as teacher is to "move kids in, move kids out" it appears to me these 'new' reforms are preparing students to work in the obsolete factories of the past. Kristen's heart was pulling on her mind. Goleman, (1995) who has done extensive work on emotions, speaks of emotions as having intelligence. One must ask- at what point will we learn to trust our

heart intelligence as well as our logical mind to guide our decisions? Have we learned how to listen to the internal wisdom that lies within? Kristen continued,

I realize that some of my stronger students could probably do a lot more on their own, have a lot more opportunities to discover things on their own rather than to stick to the confines of our 45 minute math lessons everyday, but we do the best we can. Lots of time I look at the home school situation and I think a motivated parent with children with normal signs of curiosity can just let them direct the way your [their] learning is going to go and focus on whatever interests or path they want to take and work your skills into that. It is much harder to do that kind of thing into a classroom.... we definitely do have limitations on what we can do.

School counselors are not exempt from this dilemma. Melanie is struggling with the measurements she needs to use to determine the success of her program and instruction.

It is like everything has to be data driven and it is all about numbers. I like to do things with kids that I know will be meaningful to them for the rest of their life but I can't prove it through numbers. This year I am working with kids less than ever. We have someone else going in to do alcohol & drug education. It seems like we each have to do something very specific that we can use for data collection.

Increased academic expectations in all content areas along with more classroom time spent preparing students for additional assessments caused these teachers to feel constrained by the amount of time in the day they had to get everything done. Demands to teach more content in the same amount of time created tension and stress in this group of teachers. Naomi struggled to include all the new additions into an already jam packed school day.

The GLE's [Grade Level Expectations] are being passed out everywhere. It is coming from No Child Left Behind [federal education law]. There are GLE's for every standard out there. That is another thing-the filing system that you need to micro-manage is phenomenal...Everything has to be more integrated in order to accomplish this. I need more time to think and plan. It isn't that the pieces are new but there is more focus on these pieces now. We now have assessments in technology and they need to be integrated into the content. ...We have practice tests now to do to get ready for the NSRE's [New Standards Reference Exam]. Well, if I do a practice test that is [taking] time away from trying to teach the things I need to do. It has gotten a little overwhelming!

“Subject-matter specialists and policymakers who have sought to clarify what students should learn have not considered the curriculum as a whole. The net result is a curriculum that is overwhelming to teachers and students” (Yero, 2002, p.226). All of the teachers in this study reported feeling overwhelmed. Kristen felt that *“pretty much everyday it really has become structured to the point where they really don't have that much free time at all.”*

Most of these teachers (who have been in the field of education for over 20 years) are feeling incompetent or under valued because of these new expectations. Mid-way through the year, Naomi questioned her own teaching performance,

I don't feel proficient in reading anymore. Everything is upped- totally upped the ante on this stuff. There are so many gaps in what I need to learn in order to teach well and so then trying to find the time to do my own little teaching of myself at home on this.... It is hard, so you can't pound up on yourself that you are going backwards

instead of forwards. You have to be excellent in everything.

Kristen echoed the same mentality, *“There is always more to do, you never feel like you have done the greatest job.”*

In the early history of formal education it may well have been possible to identify a body of knowledge that every “educated person” should possess. Today, even specialists within a discipline can’t keep up with new information coming out just in that specialty, even if they spend their entire time reading. (Yero, 2002, p.223)

All of the teachers in this study struggled with giving themselves time to rejuvenate their personal selves. Comments such as *“between school and family commitments, there isn’t much time left for me to relax.”* Maintaining friendships was a *“chore”* for one of the study group members because she didn’t have the *“time or energy to call people up or spend time with friends”*. She said she was too *“exhausted”* to maintain those types of relationships.

The amount of unfinished work at the end of the school day- such as correcting papers, scoring portfolios or planning and organizing materials for the next day, required the teachers in the study to work at home in the evening. These additional hours of work caused exhaustion to set in. *“After a certain hour at night I just can’t function any more and, um, I don’t really think I should have to work a lot on the weekend either.”*

Weekends were consumed with professional duties.

[On weekends] I end up doing too much for school and don’t give my self time for doing things I want to do. Sometimes I will sit with a book or go for a walk... but then on the other hand it is stressful when I don’t have my week planned out in the classroom and I start having problems in the classroom because I don’t know where

we are going next. So it is tough to have it both ways, trying to put in the time on the weekend so I can have a good week. I need to plan during the day at home when my head is clear.

It was difficult for these teachers to limit the extent of their non-teaching duties.

Finding the balance between their personal and professional life was a major challenge for these teachers. Chris, a high school media specialist, retired because

There were two main things that made it [the job] difficult consistently throughout my career - not having enough time to do anything, and not having enough technical support....Teaching consumes large amounts of personal time and energy. There were so many requirements other than teaching that it was impossible to do everything, but certain things just had to be done...I don't regret leaving [teaching], there were too many things in my life that I had put on the back shelf.

All teachers were aware of the never ending demands of the job and some were intentionally trying to decrease their after hour workload.

I am trying to be better at that now than I was in the past. I had always started the school year joining committees and being leaders of committees for the last ten years. I have decided I am not going to jump on every train that comes through... Teaching is the type of job that is challenging to your health and being able to stay healthy. For example, I would have loved to have stayed home this week but the thought of writing all those sub plans so that I could take the time off made me just go in sick.

Teaching is a lifestyle, a way of being, who you are and what you do. I left my own classroom 10 years ago, and I still feel I am a teacher at heart. Listening to these teachers'

stories was a déjà vu experience. I was a product of the same social conditioning. I was steered into business courses in high school to be trained in secretarial skills.

Disillusioned by the business world, I knew my new career must have meaning. I wanted to improve and shape lives. I became a teacher. I understood the love, pain, exhaustion and exasperation these teachers experienced. Their minds spoke to my mind, their hearts spoke to my heart, and their spirits spoke to my spirit.

Knowing is a Way of Being

The way we know affects both what we know and ultimately who we are, our state of being and well being. Our style of knowing may invite us to meet the world as a problem to be solved, as beauty to behold, or as a concept to categorize. (Hart, 2001, p.65)

Elementary teachers are not content specialists, they need to have breadth and depth to their knowledge and be renaissance learners. These teachers considered themselves life long learners, but they didn't feel they knew enough. According to them, a knowledgeable person needs to be experienced in many areas, areas that go beyond the realm of academic knowledge. After coding the data, I discovered three different ways of knowing were influencing all of these teachers' lives. I categorized these ways of knowing as Folkway, Formal and Multi-Dimensional. These ways of knowing influenced how these teachers perceived situations and events and how they responded to them. Initially, Folkway and Formal ways of knowing were the dominant knowledge sources these teachers used to guide all of their daily decisions and shape their reality. After they learned methods to access their inner self and internal sources, they learned a different or

Multi-Dimensional way, to experience or know their world. This third way of knowing will be described in chapter five.

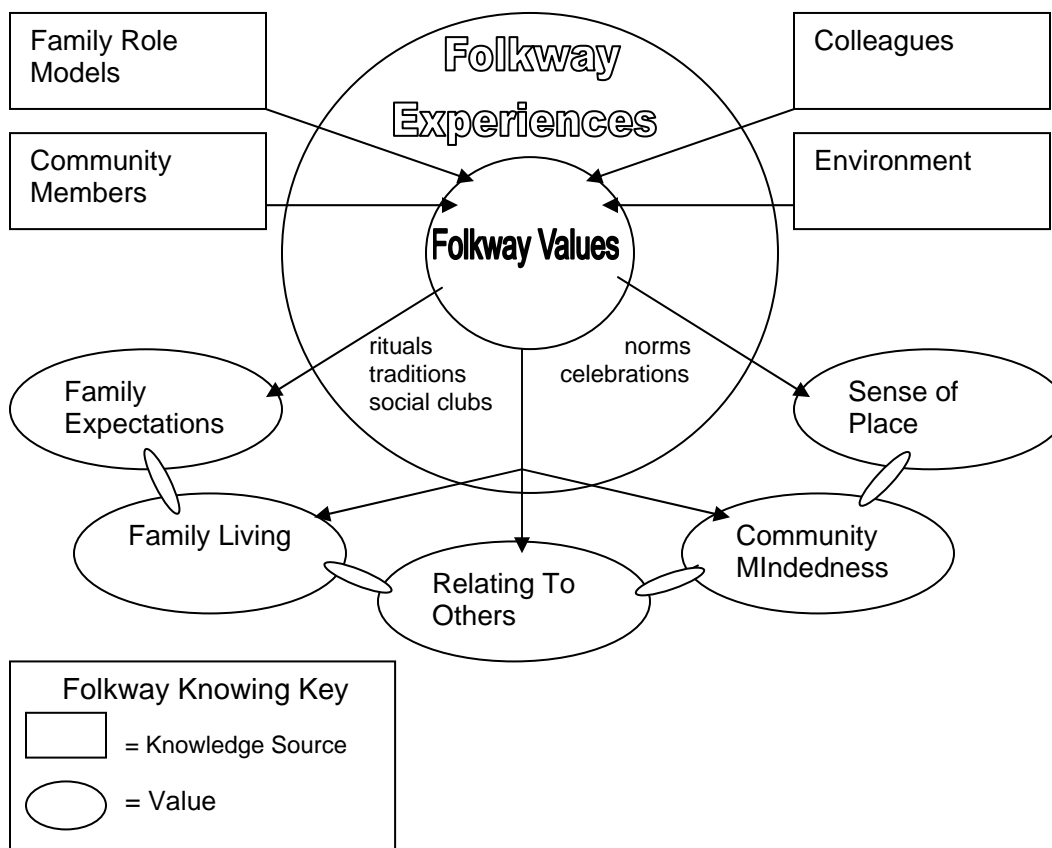
Folkway Knowing

Folkway Knowing is the social and cultural knowledge participants acquired from different sources. Participants learned local folkways while growing up in their ‘family of orientation’ (Lindsey, 1997, p.248) and through social interactions with people and places in their immediate surroundings. Folkway values, beliefs, knowledge and wisdom were acquired from close and frequent interactions with the “keepers” of this knowledge. The sources that emerged in the process of coding the data were family role models, community members, colleagues and knowledge found within the local natural and man-made environment. These are the “keepers” or wisdom sources of Folkway knowledge.

Folkway knowledge has a set of values that are shared and taught to others through folkway experiences. These teachers identified Folkway beliefs and values that were associated with family expectations, ways of being in a family, ways of relating to others, community-mindedness, and sense of belonging to their local place. Interviews with participants revealed these folkways are expressed through rituals, traditions, celebrations, social clubs and folkway norms (See Figure 2, p.75).

Folkways taught these teachers how to mentally, socially, physically and emotionally connect with others and the natural environment. This way of knowing the world was comfortable and deeply personal. It provided a sense of order and stability in their lives, a sense of belonging and served as a blueprint for how they lived in their place. These folkways established and maintained social cohesion and harmony within the community.

Figure 2. Folkway Knowing



Family Expectations

Expectations are value laden. Family expectations are the keepers of intergenerational assumptions and beliefs. Family members are duty bound to these expectations. The families of all 7 of the teachers in this study expected them to do well in school and attend college. This value for education was unrelated to the level of education the parent received.

Elizabeth's mother passed down the inspirational story and legacy of her grandmother while Elizabeth was still a young impressionable child. Economic conditions forced her grandmother to leave school in the fifth grade. She vowed she would not allow her own children to suffer the same fate. Her grandmother's husband died at an early age, leaving

her alone to manage the family farm and raise five children. This set back did not change her plans for her children or weaken her determination. All of her children were able to graduate from college. Elizabeth's grandmother set the course for the next generation. With a guilt ridden voice, Elizabeth admitted she had no desire to go to college when she was in high school, but she knew her senior year decision was not if she would go to college, but which college to attend.

Kristen learned her value for books and reading at an early age. Both of her parents were avid readers. Her father regularly stopped by the library after work and brought books home for her and her siblings to read. Being literate was clearly a value in her home along with the belief that Kristen and her siblings would receive a college degree. She grew up knowing she would attend college.

All of the participants' children who were of college age or older were attending college or had earned their college degree. Those who were married with children of their own are the new keepers of these family values.

Family Life

Clan or family life is part of our ancestral roots, and family living has proved to benefit the survival of human beings. Family members and family living was clearly appreciated and valued by all of the teachers in this study. Of the 6 participants who had married, 5 were still with their original marriage partner. They understood strong, loving relationships with siblings, spouses, children or relative's children required attention and maintenance. They knew family life involved a certain level of self-sacrifice. Daily interactions, special holiday gatherings, family rituals, and shared vacations strengthened

and nourished their family relationships. These experiences and events taught them how to relate to family. These life lessons are ongoing as relationships grow and change.

Kristen's dad was a "loving disciplinarian." He taught her about family rules and consequences. He commanded respect, but was not unruly or abusive. Kristen learned self-sacrifice from her father. She learned about commitment to family life.

My father was just so totally committed to family. You know, he had 7 kids and he had opportunities for career advances, but he never wanted to take them because he wanted to have hours that would have him home [with his family]. He just self-sacrificed everything for his family. I really appreciate those qualities.

Kristen has intentionally sown the seeds of commitment she inherited and cultivated those seeds in her own family. Married for over 30 years, often placing the needs of her daughters above her own, Kristen taught her children how to build and maintain family relationships.

Family celebrations and rituals were important to Elizabeth's family.

My mother is just amazing...She just keeps going and going...My father calls her 'the Energizer Bunny'. She is 80 years old, is going to have a heart operation next week, and she is planning on having another huge Christmas [at her house]. She does all the preparation of the food every year. She is the main cook."

Many cultures believe breaking bread or eating together is what bonds families together in heart and spirit. Elizabeth's mom's determination at age 80 to continue organizing and making the holiday meal shows her deep commitment to family and family life. This act of generosity and love is a way to teach her children and

grandchildren the importance of the whole multigenerational family clan gathering together around the table to weave new stories and events into their family's story cloth.

Redefining Family Roles and Relationships

Spread your wings and fly
Soar high on the winds of life
And when you grow weary of flight
Return to the place of your might

That short verse represents the thoughts that flowed through my mind while transcribing one section of Elizabeth's interview. Its seed of inspiration came from the "empty nest" metaphor Elizabeth used to describe her house. A melancholy tone entered her voice as she described her life now. Her two daughters took wing over 10 years ago. Emptiness fills the space her children once occupied. She misses being a soccer mom, being needed, being a mom. She wonders if she will ever be a grandma. She looks forward to her daughters visits, but longs to live closer, to be closer, to them. Career paths pulled them to the west coast. Elizabeth's mom's children set down their roots before American society became mobile. Elizabeth's folkway knowledge had not prepared her for this new social dilemma. Her ancestor's matriarchal wisdom can not be called on for strength and vision. How do you remain connected to children when 3,000 miles comes between you? Modern technology helps Elizabeth communicate with her daughters regularly through phone and email. Jet flights make visits to each coast quick and manageable. She remains committed to her daughters and looks forward to retirement, to a time when she can live closer to them. She is ready for the next phase in their relationship.

Change remains the only constant in life. Dependent children grow into independent adults and independent adults become dependent seniors. Some of the teachers in this study were redefining and realigning their family roles, but all had some experience in this area. Folkways of the past taught children to follow and obey parental rules and decisions until the parent died. A rapidly changing society displaced those values. Chris, and some of the other study participants, continually renegotiated their new roles and relationships with their adult children and grandchildren to maintain family ties. *“It is very exciting to have grandkids that I can watch grow up. I am involved in their lives somewhat, but it is hard to be involved because everyone is so busy. I would like to strengthen some of my family relationships. We are working on it.”*

During her pre-study interview, Chris mentioned her desire to have a closer relationship with her daughter and grandchildren. She felt they had drifted apart. During the final interview, Chris talked about the activities she and her daughter had been doing together.

I have been doing a lot more exercise and walking with my daughter and snowshoeing. She is really into it [exercise]....We are getting better at doing more things together because of her strong desire to do the walking thing....So my daughter and I have gotten a little closer because of wanting to walk together. It isn't like we are 'close, close', but having more time together, walking together, is helping. We have more to talk about now that we see each other more and we are trading work with one and other. I helped her stack wood yesterday and she helped me install my printer. It [spending more time together] is partly because I have more time now that I am not working.

Mutually enjoyable recreation activities and joint purposeful work was the mortar that cemented their relationship together and was the right mixture of personal interest and need. Chris and her daughter were in the process of re-defining their mother-daughter relationship into one that reflected a more equal partnership. Regular meetings re-established meaningful communication. Chris found her daughter's observations, insights, values and perceptions helpful to her own personal growth.

Kristen became a friend of her adult daughters when they realigned their relationship. *The quality that I see in my adult daughters that are really important and I enjoy so much is total open communication. They tell me everything and we have this nice friendship. They have turned into a couple of really great adults and I am very proud of them. I really like being with them and hearing what is going on in their lives.*

Changing relationships provided fertile learning grounds for these mothers. The relationships with their daughters evolved into a more mature state.

Kristen's relationship with her young teenage daughter was at a very different place. Her daughter's mood swings and periods of silence, so common to many teenage girls, has altered their relationship. Kristen's experience navigating through the muddy waters of her two older daughter's teen years, gave her the wisdom to know this is "just a stage" her daughter will out grow.

Chris', Elizabeth's and Kristen's parents have entered a phase in their life when they are becoming more dependent on their children. During this research study, Elizabeth stayed in her mother's home while her mother was recuperating from a heart surgery. Kristen's mom entered the hospital after falling and breaking her hip. All 3 participants worked with family members to ensure their parent's medical, physical and emotional

needs were met. Physical distance from their parent's home combined with inflexible teaching careers, further complicated the issue. The siblings who lived closer to their parent's home provided the daily care. Elizabeth and Kristen provided care for their aging parents as often as their schedule allowed. Both Naomi's and Melanie's parents have been dead for several years but they also shared in caring for their sick and aging parents.

It appears that realigning and redefining family roles and responsibilities involves a willingness to remove the hierarchal relationships that exist between parent and child in the traditional family model. In contemporary life, when children become adults, the parent relinquishes control and the relationship is one of equality. Contemporary society demands a new way of relating to family. Parents can no longer expect to remain in power or at the head of the chain of command once their children grow into adults.

How to Relate to Others

Family role models and community leaders gained recognition because they related to others effectively. The teachers in this study identified these wise leaders as people who possessed traits or abilities they admired. It appears these study participants internalized their ways and replicated them in diverse settings. Alicia described some of the traits she admired and acquired from her father.

My dad worked as a security guard in a prison. When problems came up, he usually didn't judge but would ask questions. He did a lot of things with a lot of different kinds of people. After he left that job he worked as a hall monitor in a high school. He had other odd jobs working with people going on welfare. He had great people skills and he told good stories. He was a good role model...My dad had a lot of compassion and understanding for people.

Alicia cultivated and transmitted those traits. Her two daughters share the same values as both she and her husband do. Alicia described her daughters as compassionate, respectful, caring “committed to what they are doing in school and not self-centered.” It appears Alicia’s father and Alicia successfully transmitted these valued ways.

Sally’s husband Peter “often plays the role of parent” in their relationship. He is three years older than she and he “provided a sense of maturity” in the early years of their relationship. Peter remained “solid as a rock” while Sally was dealing with a life threatening disease. Sally seeks his advice when she is unsure of a situation or is upset by someone’s behavior. Peter’s wisdom frequently guides her actions and decisions.

A parent played the double role of mother and community leader for one of the teachers in this study. Naomi’s mom was a Girl Scout leader and taught Naomi and her fellow scout members to set goals and embrace challenges. These young scouts learned how to raise money for social outings by fundraising. They received lessons about the responsibility of being a good citizen to the community and learned to interact with parents and business organizations in the local community. This mother’s service to these young children guided these scouts through the intimidating process of learning to interact with business and community members at an early age.

Community Mindedness

Social interactions within the community are “classrooms” where folkway knowledge is dispensed. Participants in this study learned to be community minded from regular interactions with their peers. These teachers described a common like-mindedness that developed in their workplace environment and also in the study group sessions.

The 4 teachers in the study who worked in the same school enjoyed being around their colleagues. *“People here are all good friends. They are supportive, like minded. We have a lot in common- it is comfortable, easy.”* These teachers were connected by a set of commonly held beliefs, values and perceptions.

Melanie enjoyed participating in the study because what she learned supported her philosophy about teaching and learning, something she didn't experience in her school work setting. The members in this professional community supported and enforced her personal values and beliefs. Melanie experienced a sense of community in this setting.

The things that I learned in the program reinforced [how I think about knowledge] and that felt good...and made me feel more connected. I value my belief system more, and the way I work with kids. ... I feel that I need to associate more with people who are in education who value those things and I feel I got a taste of that in the group.

Melanie's interactions with the teachers and administrator in her own school left her feeling drained of energy. She enjoyed spending time with the study group because they were “like minded.” The spirit and energy of the group was closely aligned with her own. Gary Zuvak (1990) explains the energy exchange that occurs between emotions and the physical body and why our mind/body/spirit experiences high energy or low energy states.

Emotions are currents of energy with different frequencies. Emotions that we think of as negative, such as hatred, envy, disdain and fear have a lower frequency and less energy than emotions that we think of as positive, such as affection, joy, love, and compassion....When you choose to allow higher frequency currents of energy to run through your system, you experience more energy. When a person is despairing, for

example, or anxious, he or she feels physically depleted because he or she has merged with an energy current of low frequency. A person in this situation becomes heavy and dull. A person who merges with a higher frequency current feels buoyant and joyous. (Zukav, 1990, p. 94)

Melanie had a difficult time working with the administrators in her school because they did not share a common purpose for coming together and had conflicting education goals. Her interactions with these administrators were not enjoyable and left her in a “low frequency” state.

In sharp contrast to Melanie’s work situation, Elizabeth’s colleagues invigorated her. *The people who work here are really wonderful. It is just an amazing collection of people. There is not one in the whole school that is backstabbing or gossiping and it just is an amazing collection of people that keeps you coming back amid all the other stuff. Meeting those people who work here every morning is wonderful!*

This school culture valued cooperation. Gossiping or backstabbing deterred collaborative efforts and the school faculty had a low level of tolerance for “gossipers.” Newly hired staff members learned to abide by this norm or had a difficult time settling in and feeling comfortable in the school.

We have this new tech guy, one of the first things he did was bad mouth [name of female person] and [name of male person]. I got a little cranky about that. I liked [female name]. She did a wonderful job and so does [male name]. Don’t come in here and backstab them!... you know? You don’t know them. Just be careful! Basically, people here aren’t like that.

The way the technology teacher worked and related to others did not fit the norms and culture of the school. Gossiping and backstabbing was considered “taboo” in this school.

Kristen and Elizabeth work in adjoining classrooms and plan curriculum projects together. They share students and often combine their classes into one. According to Kristen, Elizabeth has influenced how she interacts with students. *“Elizabeth and I have done a lot together over the years. I have always felt she had a good way with kids and you know, I think that probably some of that has rubbed off on me.”*

All of the teachers were attracted to people with like minded characteristics. Melanie mentioned a special friendship she has with her niece. *“We have a lot in common. We are both introverted, sensitive, we both like adventure, we take vacations together...she is like the daughter I never had.”*

Alicia prided herself in being able to get along with all types of people, a trait she learned from her dad. She sought similar traits in her friends. *“I think I can get long with just about everyone in the school. I think of everyone as a friend even though we might have our differences....My friends are accepting. We get along after all these years. My best friend is not judgmental and takes me for what I am.”*

Maintaining long term relationships with friends who shared similar values, didn’t appear to require much effort for Melanie. *“We get together infrequently but the instant we get together, it is like we have never been apart.”*

This data about relationships is quite ordinary and doesn’t reveal much that hasn’t already been said before. But deeper study is needed to understand the exchange of emotional energy and how this exchange affects interactions and relationships. Since

teaching is deeply personal and negative interactions result in relationships with students or parents built on distrust and deceit that create stress on a teacher's mind/body/spirit, it appears there is a need to gain more knowledge in this area.

Knowing Your Place

America is commonly referred to as a restless and mobile society. Teachers lament each generation of students knowing less about its roots. Students are unaware of who they are or where they came from. This generation of students has not been taught the way of the land or the lay of the land and they get lost easily. Naomi and Elizabeth have seen many changes in students over the last few decades. Naomi and Elizabeth believe knowledge of local resources, history, and folklore is an important way of knowing. From their personal descriptions, this type of knowledge is significant because it connects people to their place. They themselves learned this knowledge by participating in family rituals, celebrations and by spending time in their local environment. This knowledge is narrow in focus but deep in personal meaning. Its wisdom does not extend too far beyond our immediate family or community. If these roots of knowledge are given enough time to spread and penetrate into the cracks and depths of our community spaces, we are strengthened, nourished and made resilient to the changing winds of life because we know we belong to this place. This knowledge is rarely taught in school but was once the most important knowledge to have.

Sometimes, being a native Vermonter, you can be looked down upon.... A lot of kids know a lot about animals and the woods and that information is under valued by many other kids in the school. My father and brothers are hunters. They are very knowledgeable about woods and trees. This isn't the kind of knowledge that is

valued today, but it has a rich history and I still want to learn more about it even though it isn't the kind of knowledge that you will get rich on.

This past summer Elizabeth's father learned more about a local spot she had passed by many times as a child growing up that gave the area new meaning for her.

I was riding around with my father last summer. We came down this hill from where they live now and he said, 'Oh, used to be a good spring right up there. They piped it down and had a drinking place for the horses when they came down the hill.' That is cool! It is historically important.

Naomi's school neglected to teach her about the natural resources that were located in the immediate area.

There was no focus on the river that ran through the town, no focus on the quarry right across from the high school. I never knew what it was or what they did there.

We had two college towns 6 miles away and those resources were never tapped [by the school]. I grew up in a void, living in a place but not knowing my place.

Elizabeth grew up in a hunting family and every Thanksgiving the men in the family came together to hunt and then join the family for their Thanksgiving meal. These rituals were filled with significance for both the men and women in the family.

Thanksgiving was a huge hunting holiday when I was growing up. Everybody went to Thanksgiving in their hunting greens and reds. The men got up early in the morning, went hunting and came back smelling like wet wool...this was a huge family thing...everybody got together to go hunting. It was very, very rich and not to be denied.

During my years teaching, it was evident that the tradition of hunting was coming to an end because of modern lifestyle changes. Each year fewer and fewer boys shared hunting stories with the class. In years past, the ability to hunt with the men of the family was viewed as a boy's rite of passage into manhood. Boys learned about life and death, reproduction, animal tracking and habitat, edible plants and the lay of the land and ways of its inhabitants from their fathers. Hunting connected boys to their families and local cultural heritage. There is a need to create a new tradition or ritual that fits our modern lifestyle and fills the social and knowledge voids that are created when older traditions and rituals are eliminated.

According to Elizabeth and Naomi, schools have a responsibility to teach students about the local environment and community. Elizabeth was an advocate for authentic learning. She tries *"to give kids information- take them out in the woods so they can begin to know things like what a pine tree is."*

Naomi's class was involved in a school forest project.

They have been mapping the forest with GPS's (global positioning system). I have had four kids in here get trained on a computer program that downloads the GPS points onto a topographical map so they will be presenting some mapping that they have learned. They are learning about the natural resources at the same time.

Both Elizabeth and Naomi found ways to integrate this component of folkway knowledge into the school curriculum. Their goal was for students to connect with their local community environment and know about their place.

Folkways teach social cohesion and unity. This knowledge provides in-depth learning about family ways and local heritage. This way of knowing the world is intimately

connected to these teachers' personal belief systems. "Beliefs come from all the experiences in a person's life, particularly those from childhood" (Yero, 2002, p22).

Limitations of Folkway Knowing

Folkway knowledge is a rich way to know the world but is only one of the knowledge lenses for viewing the world. This monocular lens provides a deep understanding of the individual's cultural heritage, but is also a narrow perspective. Knowledge of other people, places, and ways of relating to other cultures is not learned well from living in one community. Folkway knowledge often leads to conflict when these beliefs are challenged by others. Different folkway beliefs presented the greatest challenge to the teachers in this study and also created stressful relationships between these teachers and those who hold different folkway beliefs and values.

Conflict emerges when family or individual norms and values differ from the dominant culture's norms and values. This type of conflict often leads to feelings of anger and distrust, disrupting the harmony and cohesiveness of the group and classroom. The teachers in this study talked about situations that were stressful in their lives. Alicia is stressed by "*parents that say one thing and mean something else. They don't do what you ask them to-like helping their kids with their homework or reading to them.*" Alicia wants her students to do well in school and it is frustrating for her when parents don't support her value for education. Parents, who help students with homework and read to children at home, share Alicia's value for education. Those with different values, or were unable to help their children with their homework, developed distrustful relationships with these teachers. Parents use passive aggressive resistance strategies when their norms are out of sync with the norms of the dominant culture. It is much easier to avoid direct

confrontation by agreeing with teachers and then continue to act on their own set of beliefs and habits in their own home. When values and norms collide, teachers should not be surprised by deceitful behaviors or, as one teacher described, *“fake people who are sweet to your face and talk behind your back.”*

An issue of great concern to these educators is that American families are spending less leisure time reading and more leisure time watching TV.

There definitely is a lack of literacy in the home. There is a lot less reading going on, a lot less familiarity with stories and that is sad. I have recognized this over the years [I have been teaching]. The most challenging part is changes in the family dynamics that have definitely been noticeable over the years. There are just too many kids coming to school who don't have the family support for being here. It isn't their fault. They are not ready for you to do what you want them to do.

Kristen's observation revealed the conflict that her school and most schools in the United States are experiencing. Kristen values reading. Schools see reading as a necessary tool for learning. Several of Kristen's students come from homes that do not value literacy. The norms in the school community for reading readiness and readiness to learn are being challenged because many students entering school haven't been regularly read to by their parents. These students lack the experiences that would contribute to a greater desire to learn to read. They have not learned to value the skill of reading.

Elizabeth's father did not share her mother's value for education. He taught Elizabeth to appreciate other types of knowledge and ways of learning about the world. He knew about local history, folklore, and resources. He could repair household items and design complete home heating systems, but he did not learn these things from attending school.

Elizabeth lived in a family that did not hold a unified view about the value for education. She approached this issue with a different level of understanding and sensitivity.

Education was very important to my mother. For a lot of kids that is not true. You have to remember that and try to find a way that makes a kid without a parent's support feel that what they are doing here is important. It is very hard. You have to honor how they feel about their parents and what is true for them.

Elizabeth understood there were other ways to know the world and those ways held different values and truths. She was taught to appreciate other ways of learning. Kristen struggled with the behaviors some of her student's exhibited.

The behavior problems at [such] a young age are just unbelievable-things that I never had thought would be possible with 6, 7, or 8 year olds, you know? They are kind of shocking in some ways, but when you find out what the kids have been through and the exposure they have had, it is understandable.

Kristen had to move beyond her own family norms and values to "understand" that these children were in a family environment that was very different than the one she grew up in.

In summary, it appears that our rapidly changing society is resulting in educators witnessing a wider range of family norms, values and beliefs than they had when they first began teaching several decades ago. This presented a challenge to the teachers in this study because Folkway Knowing is deeply personal in how it is learned and shared. When individuals are involved in relationships with conflicting Folkway Knowing systems, it is not unusual for these relationships to become highly emotionally charged if their deeply embedded knowledge, beliefs or values are challenged. Each person

consciously or unconsciously attempts to protect what they perceive as a threat to their own Folkway Knowing system. It is quite natural for individuals to want to preserve or conserve the Folkways they have come to know as an integral part to their way of being. It is the way they have come to know their world from birth and has its own set of rituals and routines. Often the initial response to a situation that involves different sets of Folkway Knowing beliefs is anger, but anger is rooted in fear. All of the teachers in this study identified an increase in the number of conflicts that arose between their students and parents each year. They were involved in coming face to face with students and parents that held a different set of Folkway beliefs and values. These factors contributed to a more stressful learning and working environment for both the students and teachers.

Some of the teachers in this study were concerned that the number of students knowing about their ancestral roots, cultural heritage, and local environment was decreasing over time. It appears the parents are no longer passing along this set of knowledge, beliefs and values. These teachers were always looking for new skills or methods that would bridge the widening gap between family norms, values, and beliefs and create a more unified or harmonious situation in the class. Folkway Knowing beliefs and values that once served to unite members in the community now appear to be creating a greater divide and stress in the lives of these teachers.

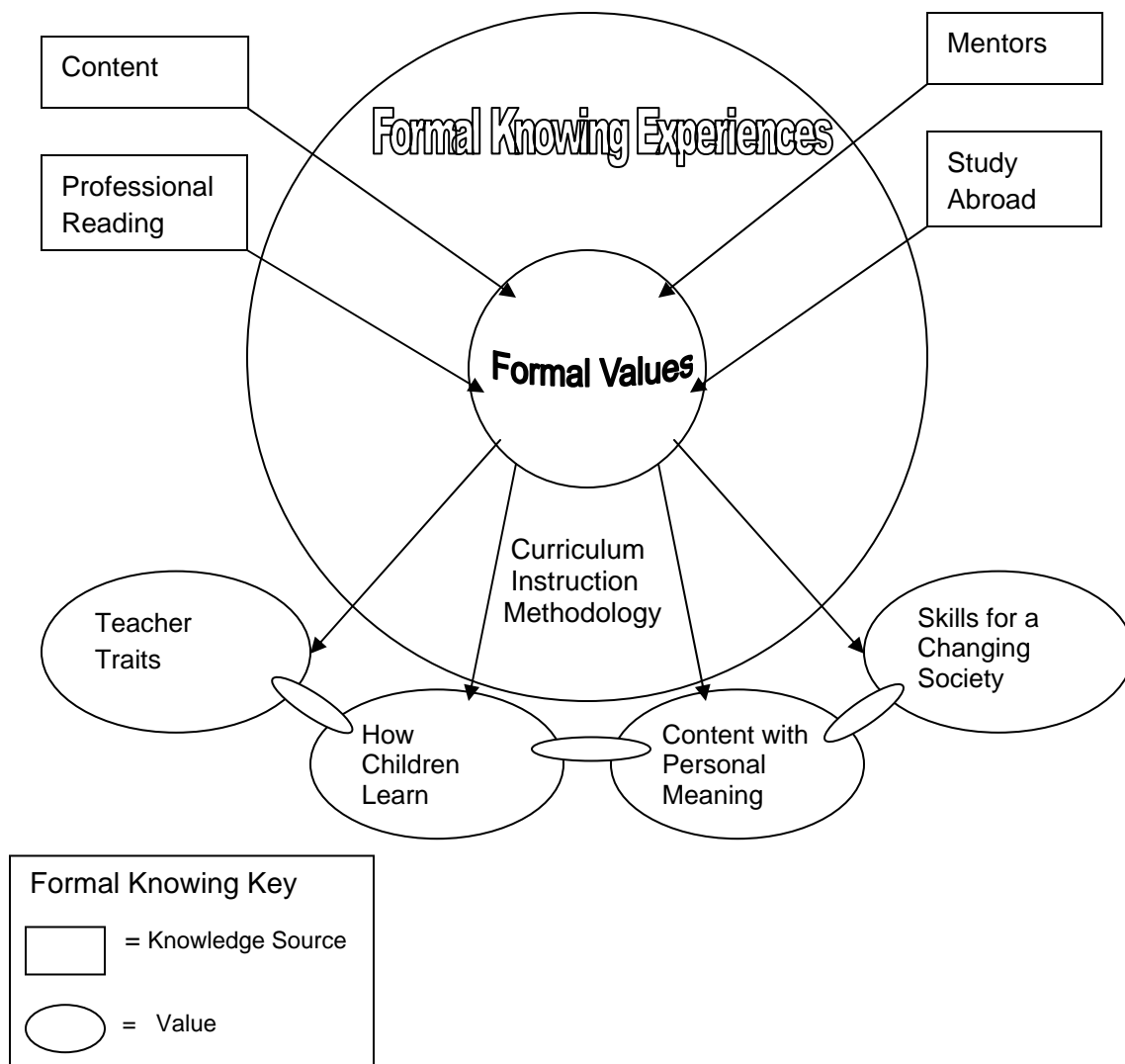
Formal Knowing

Formal Knowing is professional knowledge that directly relates to formal academic learning. This knowledge is delivered in a planned, systematic manner and is connected with a formal institution of learning. The participants in this study acquired Formal Knowing from several sources. These were professional role models, study abroad

experiences, content taught in school, and professional readings. These sources significantly shaped this group of teachers' views and beliefs about teaching and learning. Several commonly shared values were identified by these teachers that relate to the teaching profession and were associated with this way of knowing. These values were a particular set of teaching skills and traits, knowledge about how children learn, the ability to teach content that has personal meaning and skills children need to adapt to a changing world. (See Figure 3, p. 94).

Throughout this study these participants' stories showed how their lives were intricately connected with this way of knowing the world. All seven teachers used formal knowledge extensively in their personal and professional lives. Teachers used this knowledge professionally, while planning curriculum and instruction, and in their teaching methods. Formal Knowing provided these teachers with an academic or occupation centered way of viewing the world and valuable professional knowledge. It offered them another way of knowing their world and extended their individual thinking beyond the local community. This knowledge linked them with professionals in their field into a larger and more loosely knit 'community' of professionals. Formal Knowing did not provide these teachers with the knowledge or skills to manage the emotional energy teachers face on a daily basis or learn how to more effectively deal with events and situations that created imbalance or stress in teacher's lives.

Figure 3. Formal Knowing



Teacher Traits

Data from pre and post study interviews revealed teachers with different grade level and teaching assignments identified a different set of skills and traits that they believed successful teachers needed to possess. Through member checking, I found all teachers in the study agreed all the skills and traits identified were important to all teachers.

According to this group, teachers need a wide and deep repertoire of knowledge and should be flexible and sensitive to student needs.

Alicia teaches different content to students in several grade levels.

Being a special educator, you are not limited to knowing the content for third grade.

You need to know the content for the Kindergarten through fourth grades or the fourth through eighth grades and, in some cases, knowing the curriculum content for nine grades when you are the only one [special educator teacher] there.

A special educator needs to be “*broad in their knowledge base and well rounded.*”

Multiage and single grade level teachers in this study needed to draw from a broad and deep pool of knowledge too. Their classrooms contained students who were performing at many different ability levels. These teachers often needed to adjust the grade level content according to the level of each individual student. Often this was done as they circulated around the room while students were engaged in a learning activity.

The ability to remain flexible was another valued trait. Alicia’s job required her to be “*flexible enough to be able to jump from one field to the other.*” According to Melanie, a good teacher should be able to relate to the subject matter in several different ways so that “*anyone can understand what they are talking about.*” For the other teachers in the group, being able to “*go with the flow*” and handle the many sudden interruptions and changes in the school day was an important trait. Flexibility appears to be a highly desired or needed trait in this profession according to these teachers.

Sensitivity to the needs of others was considered an important teaching trait. Melanie knew some very knowledgeable people who were unable to relate well to others because “*they don’t have the element of sensitivity.*” She believed teachers must help students

relate comfortably to new knowledge. Callous, insensitive teachers don't do this well. Other participants mentioned teacher sensitivity as a trait important to students' academic, social and emotional needs.

Under the current educational reforms, Naomi struggled to find time during the school day to address her students' social learning needs.

The external sources are driving me.... I feel really guilty that the day is so academically driven and I am the power house behind it but I have a powerhouse behind me too...I haven't had time to do community things. I have eliminated classroom jobs. There is no time for them to recycle. I feel bad about it because it is important to me but the only time they could do these jobs now is recess time and this conflicts with their time to be social.

The metaphors this teacher used to describe teaching in her classroom demonstrates the powerlessness and exhaustion she was experiencing. She was being fueled or driven by external sources and was pushing her students along. Being "driven" consumes a great deal of a teacher's energy and spirit. If this teacher believed these changes in education benefited students, the metaphors she used would be very different. She, like the rest of the teachers in this study, struggled to find the balance between their students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

Knowing How Children Learn

Understanding how children learn moves us to the heart and soul of teaching. The mind of a child is mystical and magical and humbling, even to the most seasoned, wise teacher. Each child constructs knowledge and makes meaning in a very personal way. Learning how children learn is a life long endeavor. The teachers in this study tried to

connect the known to the unknown by helping students link new information to their prior knowledge and experiences. This is an easy concept to grasp, but difficult to put into practice. Elizabeth shared an example showing how she connected learning in the classroom to a student's folkway knowledge.

Yesterday a little boy was sitting at the reading table, staring off into space. I said, 'T__, what are you doing? What are you thinking about?' He said, 'I am going to go for a ride with my dad on his motorcycle when I get home.' I used that [experience and interest with motorcycles] for math- like 10 [wheels] is two cars and a motorcycle. And they [students] listen!

Most of the teachers in this study felt teaching students to know and recognize their own learning style were important aspects of learning. Naomi was "...really into brain based learning where they [students] have to figure out what is going on in there [brain] and get to know themselves..." She wanted the students in her classroom to "...ask questions and seek out information because that is how you become knowledgeable. Without that sense of inquiry... you are just trying to fill someone's brain and they don't care." Naomi included inquiry based instruction in her class because it helps her students learn and know how to learn.

Elizabeth enjoyed teaching reading and learning about how children learn to read. According to her, reading can't be taught using only one approach. She taught her students metacognitive strategies along with the more conventional reading strategies.

They have to know phonics, they have to know beginning sounds and some letters go in combination....but some kids can't deal with phonics. It is really hard for them to learn this way. We talk about looking inside their brain to know what it looks like,

reading has to make sense.

She encouraged her students to get in the habit of “*thinking about what they are thinking about.*” She modeled this process for her students by thinking out loud so students could follow the process. She taught them how to make connections and associate new learning with past experiences using this talk aloud strategy,

This reminds me of another book I read, or this reminds me of what I did last night at home.... [I want] to get them to make any of those connections and getting them to start listening or watching what their brain is really doing behind their reading.

The teachers in this study learned about children’s learning processes by taking college education courses and accessing information from professional readings. The Vermont Design for Education was published by the State Department of Education about discovery learning profoundly impacted Naomi during her first year of teaching. “*It was a little booklet of ways to be in the classroom ...it was a great concept...something about discovering the child.*” That same year, she participated in a graduate level elementary science course that focused on discovery learning. She rearranged her classroom and began teaching differently. “*I try to get them to be in charge of their own learning - be able to make a product or presentation.*” Naomi was definitely very comfortable with this philosophy of how children learn.

Content with Personal Meaning

This group of teachers attached academic value to knowledge or content that held personal meaning for them and they usually found ways to include this knowledge and/or content in their classroom instruction. According to Yero (2002),

Teachers have personal beliefs about the importance of various parts of the official curriculum. Given that they don't have time to "cover" everything, they automatically choose those concepts they consider are important or with which they feel more comfortable. Often teachers choose topics simply because they find them more enjoyable or believe that the students will find them interesting. (p.212)

Elizabeth entered teaching with a love for books and reading. In her eyes, people who read a lot are very knowledgeable. She spent many hours reading to her daughters and watching them learn to read. *"It was just like this opening, this magical thing that happened. I didn't even have to give her many of the pieces- it was just such a natural progression of what we had done together. It just happened!"* Elizabeth's interest in teaching beginning readers may very well be attributed to the positive emotional memories she experienced while watching her daughter learn to read.

Kristen was raised with many books around her and opportunities to read. Her parents were role models because of their personal love for reading. At 90 years of age, Kristen's mom is suffering from macular degeneration in both of her eyes and is no longer able to read. Her world is closing in on her since she has been shut out from the world of text. The one thing Kristin wants to preserve in her own life is the ability to read. *"I don't ever want to lose that desire to read."*

Reading is an important subject in Kristen's classroom. She designed a reading program that she and her team-mates use and *"is very successful."* This program was initiated by Kristen but developed after she took a graduate level course. During this study period, Kristen and Elizabeth were taking another course to increase their knowledge about new ways of teaching reading and writing to their students. They were

implementing some of these new strategies into their reading and writing program.

Kristen's and Elizabeth's emotional connection to reading developed from their folkway experiences with family members. Their value for reading and desire to teach reading well is deeply personal.

Naomi loves teaching social studies, geology and math. Her desire to teach social studies was inspired by her high school history teacher. "*My high school social studies teacher was a woman and I remember liking what she taught.*" A graduate level geology course for educators ignited her passion to teach geology to elementary students. "*It was wonderful-it was hands on.*"

Naomi developed a strong interest in teaching mathematics after taking a math course that focused on developing mathematical concepts and using manipulatives in the classroom. According to Naomi, a new math program recently adopted by her school is weak in developing some mathematical concepts. She ordered new books and materials as supplemental instruction materials. She realized the new materials presented mathematical concepts in a different manner and she would have to address gaps in her own mathematical understanding before she could use these lessons with students. "*I got a great book on [teaching] algebra and another on fractions. Now I need to sit down and teach myself how to teach these new lessons. I am willing to sit and spend time reading professional books.*"

Most of the teachers in the group studied in China, Japan or Thailand for a few weeks. They believed this experience broadened their cultural knowledge of Asian countries. Of the 6 study participants who studied abroad, all found ways to teach about the country they visited when they returned.

Melanie visited both Japan and Thailand. She was drawn to the respectfulness and generosity of these cultures and this was an aspect of the culture she wanted to share with her students. She integrated lessons in traditional Japanese art and Thai cultural celebrations into her counseling program for middle level students and in her college classes.

Chris studied in China and in Thailand. Part of the course in Thailand included several days studying about Buddhism and meditation in a retreat center. Chris believes schools should teach students about cultural literacy and “...*include the spiritual component...* [to teach students ways of] *coping and dealing with life, enjoying life, along with skills and content knowledge. Some types of knowledge lead to behavior [changes].*” Chris believes this kind of knowledge shapes lives and helps connect students to others ways of knowing themselves and their world.

Sally participated in one course in China, one in Thailand, and several in Japan. She “*is really interested and excited about teaching social studies and science*” and likes “*teaching in the content areas rather than the skill areas.*” Sally enjoys teaching about all Asian countries but is passionate about Japan. Her personal love for Japanese culture is transmitted into the classroom through quality learning experiences for her students. In the spring of 2004, Sally received a national award for excellence in teaching about Japan from a prestigious foundation.

Studying about cultures that are not part of our local folkway knowledge expanded how these teachers’ perceive and know the world. According to Kristen and Elizabeth, stepping outside their own culture and entering into another, provided lessons on how other people live their lives and created a heightened awareness for “*what is important*”

in their own lives. The experience of “...*seeing the Asian cultures, seeing the generosity and kindness*” showed Kristen another way of being. Travel has made a big difference in the way Elizabeth looked at things and she wanted to share this with her students. She brought in “*big bags full of Thailand books*” and used these books in her reading program. Elizabeth integrated the two areas she valued dearly, reading and international studies.

Study participants learned that people in other cultures see and relate to people, situations, and events differently. Most Americans think of America as a kind and generous society. These 6 teachers were overwhelmed by the kind and gentle nature of Chinese, Japanese and Thai societies. They appreciated the slower pace, the low crime rates, the calm and gentle interactions between parents and children, regular community gatherings in parks and on streets, and the attention to aesthetics. They yearned for these qualities in American culture.

Yero (2002) warns her readers that education “indoctrinates people” into its own worldview and it “is unlikely teachers are even aware of the worldview they hold because it is the only one to which they’ve been exposed” (p.213). Teachers who participated in these courses learned about different educational systems, cultural norms and values. These overseas courses provided opportunities for Vermont teachers to visit classrooms and talk with Asian teachers. No longer were their views of education and society predetermined by how their home, school, state or nation defined these ways of knowing the world.

Although content from course work influenced what teachers taught in their classrooms, role models also contributed to shaping teaching practice. University

professors and practicing teachers served as both positive and negative role models for 4 of the 7 participants in this study. The content and skills study participants chose to include in their classroom instruction and their teaching style and methods were shaped by how their past learning experiences were perceived and internalized along with the type of relationship they had with their instructors.

Naomi and Sally were inspired by their high school teachers. Naomi liked her high school history teacher and planned to become a high school social studies teacher. Her first student teaching placement with a 7th grade social studies teacher was very unpleasant so Naomi shifted her career plans and decided to teach at the elementary level.

Sally fondly remembers BJ, her junior and senior high school English teacher as “*an off the wall kind of teacher*” and she “*loved him and wanted to be like him.*” He was the kind of teacher who “*stood on a chair to make a point, he was very dramatic.*” Sally says she is dramatic too when she wants to make a point.

Some of the professors and classroom teachers Alicia and Melanie worked with during their undergraduate teacher training were their role models. “*My undergraduate work at the University of Vermont was in clothing and textiles. I had wonderful teachers. There were three women, two were relatively young and the other was older. They were phenomenal and taught me how to teach.*”

Alicia learned from both the positive and negative role models in her teacher preparation program.

I had some good teachers. Some shaped how I deal with students, others how I don't deal with students. I had positive and negative role models at all levels. I had a really good person who worked with me through my student teaching

practicum and had some pretty good placements as well.

Melanie “*had a wonderful experience student teaching.*” and has “*a great deal of regard*” for that practicing teacher. She had “*... wonderful mentors and role models*” who helped her become a life long learner.

Based on these responses, it is clear that professors and mentor teachers impacted the teachers in this study in both positive and negative ways. Professors and mentor teachers can benefit or hurt new, inexperienced educators who are highly impressionable and easily influenced.

It appears that high school and college level courses, professional reading, overseas study and professional role models are sources of formal ways of knowing for the participants in this study. Teachers’ emotional feelings and their relationships with these sources plays a significant role in determining what happens in schools, what is taught in the curriculum, the type of instruction that is given and methods used.

For all these teachers, integrating content with personal meaning into their instruction made teaching come alive. Personal experiences were skillfully woven into learning activities for students. Content with intrinsic value, excited and energized these teachers. Even though integrating new content into the curriculum created additional demands on their workload, they embraced this work with enthusiasm and gusto IF the decision to add this content was self initiated. The thoughts and feelings associated with change shapes how that change will be experienced.

Skills for Living in a Changing Society

It is difficult for teachers to teach students all they need to know according to current social needs and predict what their students will need to know about the world in which

they will live. Conscientious teachers try to find a balance. All 7 teachers felt it was important to teach students the skills for living in a changing world.

I think teachers will be replaced with computers. Teachers will be around but they will be facilitators. In the world we are headed, you will sit with your computer and pose questions or they will pose questions to you....People are going to have to know about themselves and how the brain works and how to learn as an individual person.

According to Naomi, the classroom of the future will place different demands on students. They will need to be self-disciplined and self-motivated. Because inquiry instruction teaches students to pose and seek answers to their questions, Naomi provides opportunities for students in her classroom to engage in this type of learning. Brain based research is providing teachers with a deeper understanding of how the brain works and how humans learn. When Naomi stumbled upon brain based research findings that directly applied to how children learn, she experimented with those new ideas in her classroom.

Sally's goals for her students were for them to have "*enough experience and education in certain areas to make good decisions....know how to use their skills, which skill to use and know when you don't have the skill. Knowing what you don't know is important too.*"

Chris believed there should be more of an emphasis of skills and less on knowledge acquisition.

You should teach skills more than knowledge because knowledge is changing so fast. The ability to problem-solve, what is true and what is not, what is important and what is not. I think basically all those skills are more important than the other content

knowledge that can be learned.

Elizabeth felt, “*the best knowledge to have is knowing where to find knowledge....You have to be able to learn what it is you need to learn.*”

In Kristen’s view, preparing students for the future meant they will “*have all the tools... to be able to find information- the desire, motivation, curiosity to seek things out and want to do well and become a life-long learner.*”

Classroom units of study were designed to include these goals. Chris described a unit she co-designed and taught that provided students with the type of thinking skills and attitudes she believed these students needed. She felt students living in a global society needed to become culturally literate and develop strong critical thinking skills. She initiated an exchange with students in Thailand so the students in this remote rural high school could better understand cultural diversity and increase their cultural literacy.

[the learning activities] *made them think about their attitudes, what determines what they can become or how they live. It is important to have them open up to think about other options and possibilities [in their lives]. Having them begin to question why things are the way they are, instead of just accepting them... [helping them to] become more tolerant of differences.*

Standardized instruction or specific content found in state and national standards were not identified by these teachers as necessary knowledge for students to know. These teachers did not agree with the educational goals that policy makers have outlined and administrators are trying to implement in their schools. There appears to be a very fundamental difference in the knowledge and skills that the teachers in this study believe are needed to adequately prepare students for their future and what policy makers are

demanding they teach. A third grade teacher in this study was told by her administrator to focus on teaching reading and math and eliminate social studies and science instruction until student reading and math test scores rose. She was uncomfortable with this decision because she felt she was not providing her students with knowledge they needed to know about their world. This philosophical difference or clash in values has made teaching more stressful for these educators. Increased pressure for improved performance in specific subjects and content has resulted in teachers eliminating activities that do not directly relate to what they feel is meaningful and important learning.

Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, recently made the following comments.

Paradoxically, we're embracing standardized tests just when the new economy is eliminating standardized jobs. If there's one certainty about what today's school children will be doing a decade or two from now, it's that they won't be all doing the same things, and they certainly won't be drawing on the same body of knowledge.

(Reich, 2001, p.41)

Reich (2001) points to an entirely different set of skills students will need. These are the skills the schools these teachers were working in were ignoring- creativity, listening and discerning what other people are feeling or needing. The teachers in this study were concerned about eliminating social learning and the creative activities they used to include in their classroom. They believed they were neglecting vital social skills that students need to learn to be emotionally healthy and lead productive lives. It was interesting to find these teachers shared a similar view for their student's future needs as the former Secretary of Labor.

All teachers in this study concluded that becoming a life long learner is an important trait for students to develop. Sally loved learning for learning sake. These teachers enjoyed teaching because it required them to continually learn, grow, and evolve. Helping students to become life long learners was a high priority for this group. Their perceptions of the future shaped what and how they taught their students. They developed classroom curriculum (lesson plans and units of study) based on their own interests, values and experiences. Teachers in this study believed they had less autonomy to make curriculum decisions than they had in the past and were forced to eliminate learning experiences they believed were important to the development of the whole child.

Limitations of Formal Knowing

According to the teachers in this study the knowledge taught in school is narrowing. Shifting social emphasis and values have changed education courses. “Earlier values of religion, democracy, and ‘opportunity for all’ have all but disappeared in favor of economic utility and consumerism” (Yero, 2002, p29). Courses such as home-economics have no “economic” value to our society. Melanie was a home economics teacher in the 1970s. According to Melanie, home-economic courses were perceived as “*basket weaving courses*” or easy courses and became the dumping ground for unmotivated or special needs students. Students were not placed in her class because of their interest to learn about cooking, textiles, and home-making skills. They were assigned to her class because teachers and administration believed those students would not be able to learn the content material in the other “*academic*” classes. Melanie viewed home economics as a “*creative outlet, not as a place to pigeon-hole kids.*” Schools tend to emphasize and value certain types of knowledge over others. Courses that appear to have little economic value

such as home-economics or family life skills, music and the arts, do not command the same respect as the “core courses” of language arts, math, social studies and science that are seen as providing workplace or occupational skills and knowledge. Unfortunately the courses that offer the students an outlet to creatively express and explore themselves are often the first to be cut out of the budget. This lack of respect for the course and content created stressful teaching and working conditions for the teachers in this study who worked in the ‘non-core’ subject areas. These teachers’ values and beliefs towards the content they taught were in direct contradiction to their school community’s values.

Past experiences from learning in formal education institutions shapes how we perceive ourselves as learners and effects what we feel we are capable of learning. Teachers frequently rank and group students by achievement and behavior. Once a student has been labeled, “the chances of that student changing the teacher’s mind are greatly reduced. The teacher’s expectations and beliefs about that student become a self-fulfilling prophecy, limiting the teacher to perceptions that support those preconceptions” (Yero, 2002, p.218). This belief system is internalized by the student, who goes through school behaving in the manner that he or she believes is expected of him or her. Students perceived as “good” or “smart” experience positive relationships with their peers and teachers while students perceived as “bad” or “dumb” continually experience negative relationships and beliefs about themselves as learners. Negative and positive experiences and beliefs create thought patterns that shape future learning experiences and shape teachers’ personal and professional lives.

Melanie’s school years were a painful period in her life and definitely impact her teaching.

I think of my own education as a little kid. I never felt very validated as a smart person. One year I would be in the smart group and the next year in the dumb group. I always questioned who I was as a student and I think that had a tremendous impact in me not wanting my students to feel stupid....I work hard at making sure all students get what I am saying and if I can't do that, I will encourage someone in the class to explain it so they have a different way of hearing it....It doesn't mean a lower level.

Melanie's school experience continues to create negative emotions and thought patterns into her adult life. Melanie described an example of how her feelings of being "dumb" in school have left her wounded.

I am not just an intellectual theory kind of person and it is usually those people who frighten me with their knowledge....I can still move into those feelings of inadequacy around certain people. I feel littler and littler. If I start feeling inadequate, I hook onto that earlier experience.

The Tai Ji Quan movement exercises that were part of the bi-weekly meeting sessions were difficult for Melanie. The experience triggered negative thought patterns that formed during her years in public school.

I learned how awful it was....I just didn't get it and the more I didn't get it ...I began to dread it....I got frustrated with the language, the new terminology...those words didn't connect with me. ...And so it reinforced what it is like for a student who struggles...It was a reminder about how quickly a student can go into negativity about themselves. It brought me back to feelings of being incompetent....I started thinking, 'I am the only one that is not enjoying this' and my body would stiffen. [I

was thinking,], *'Oh look, they got this more' and then all my energy was wasted on other things... I wanted to do the meditation but not the Taiji.*

It appears Melanie's discomfort with Tai Ji Quan was related to negative feelings she had towards any type of movement exercise. In her final interview she expressed an intense dislike for school sports and thought those emotions interfered with her ability to enjoy Tai Ji Quan.

I think my dislike for exercise goes back to when I was a child and all the sports were so competitive. I hated doing sports. Whatever I do, I don't want it to be competitive. I even made the Taiji into something competitive and felt others were better at it than me.

Melanie recognized her intense dislike for competitive sports prevented her from enjoying any type of exercise. Competition among students or groups of students is an accepted and often encouraged method for learning in schools. Negative competitive experiences continue to shape how Melanie relates to similar activities and generalizes to others throughout her life.

Formal ways of knowing often emphasize and teach content and logic at the expense of emotion and creativity. Finding a balance between these two modalities in Melanie's professional environment was always a challenge for her. The current focus on a standards-based education system only values quantifiable assessments to measure student and school performance and progress. Melanie believed, *"a knowledgeable person needs to have some kind of balance between logic and feeling."* She described her experience working on a school committee highlighted this imbalance.

It is like there are two camps- the feeling and the logical camp. The feeling camp is

silenced and that stresses me. Everything has to be data driven and it is all about numbers. I like to do things with kids that I know will be meaningful to them for the rest of their life but I can't prove it through numbers. This year I am working with kids less than ever. We have someone going in to do alcohol and drug education. It seems like we each have to do something very specific that we can use for data collection.

Chris believed schools should honor and include spiritual learning in the curriculum. Other teachers in the study discussed the spiritual void in our society but weren't sure if schools should or could address spiritual issues. According to Chris, spiritual knowledge is life shaping. Encouraging students to access their spiritual side opens their mind to other ways to "*cope and deal with life.*" All of the teachers in the study agreed that spiritual health is something "*we are missing and our kids are missing.*" Public school systems avoid any form of spiritual dialogue because of the confusion that exists between religion and spirituality. Although spirituality does not need to include religious teachings, just mentioning the need for schools to support student's spiritual development seems to trigger all kinds of emotions in American communities. Students yearn to talk about ethics, morality and the greater meaning and purpose to their lives. Sadly, formal knowing does not seem to be able to address the spiritual aspect of the self very well and formal institutions are unable to meet the spiritual needs of our students.

Emotional outbursts are becoming more of a problem in schools and limits student achievement. Naomi talked about the stress she experienced from working with "*emotionally charged kids.*" who have no self control and "*are not in sync with everybody else.*" When the students lost control of their emotions, Naomi had difficulty

controlling her own. *“An angry student or student with emotional problems won’t succeed no matter what you do. They are just swimming and drowning themselves.”*

Naomi’s example clearly shows emotional energy flows from person to person. Anger is transmitted, transferred and easily absorbed by other people who come in contact with that person’s energy. Not only is the student’s ability to learn being constricted but so is the teacher’s ability to teach.

Formal knowing can help to open the mind or close it, based on past learning experiences with learning in this environment. Teachers were impacted both positively and negatively by this way of knowing their world. The educators in this study gained a lot of their profession knowledge in formal learning environments. Their values for what they taught were influenced by the content and role models they were exposed to in the K-16 schools they attended. This group of educators was able to broaden their understanding of teaching and education systems by study abroad and visiting the classrooms and talking with teachers from other countries. They filled in their knowledge gaps or updated their teaching knowledge by taking graduate level education courses and reading books and articles related to the teaching profession. This type of knowledge and way of knowing shaped their attitudes, beliefs and values. They identified common teaching traits that were seen as necessary to develop to become a successful teacher. These educators believed it was important for teachers to know how children learn and to stay informed about new research available on the inner workings and interrelationship between the brain, emotions and cognitive learning. Teaching content with relevance and meaning in their lives resulted in excellent classroom instruction. These teachers expressed the need to teach skills as well as knowledge, especially skills that will be

needed for a changing society. All of these elements shaped the type of curriculum, instruction and methods they designed and implemented in their classrooms.

Formal ways of knowing also appeared to discourage or prevent teachers from stepping outside of the “box”. The structure and culture of the institution, its rules, regulations, and policies combined with the teacher’s perception of how to teach in this current setting, appeared to create a type of acceptance for schools the way they are or confusion as to what they should be. The educator who said teachers are “*doing the best they can*” under the circumstances, touched on the challenges and limitations these teachers are experiencing. In the depths of their hearts, these teachers want it to be different. Some of the teachers in this study were frustrated by parents who don’t value education, the number of students entering schools with emotional and behavior issues, and/or the current policies and the constraints they place on learning. These teachers were facing increasing demands and pressures and feeling more stressed as the gap between their ideal classroom and the reality they faced each day was becoming more polarized. They often felt their voice was not heard or was ignored. As long as teachers perceive the job as frustrating, disempowering, and one filled with conflict, their mind/body/spirits will continue to experience stress and eventually might even become ill. The student/teacher relationship is interdependent. When one person in the relationship suffers, so does the other. The implication of these studies for learning and health affects students as much as it does teachers.

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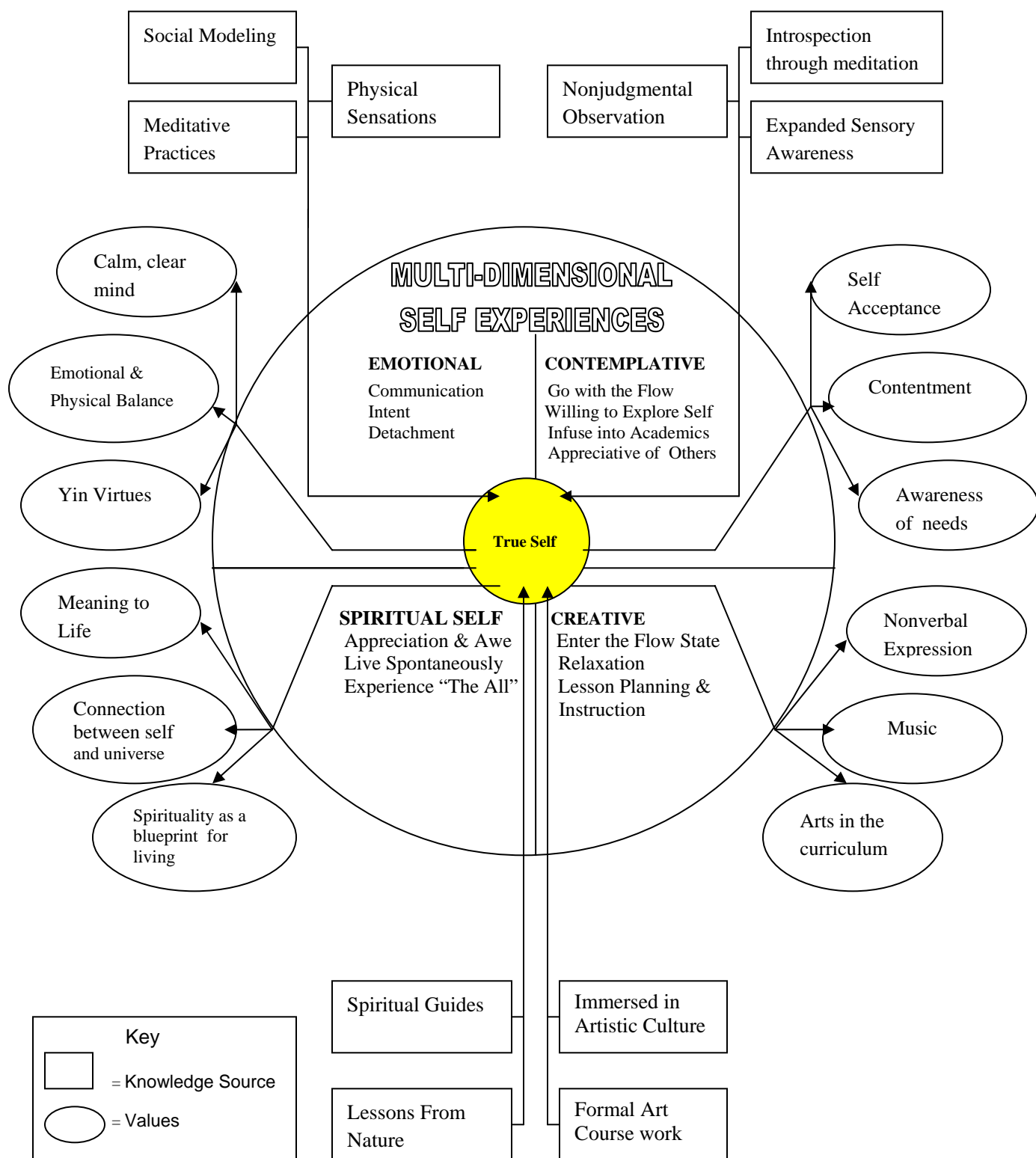
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDING YOURSELF

Teachers sacrifice a large portion of their personal time to fulfill professional responsibilities and obligations. It is quite easy for a teacher to lose sight of him or herself, the true self, after several years of teaching. At the beginning of this study, several seasoned teachers were asking, ‘when I am not a teacher, who am I anyway?’ The true self needed reclaiming. This chapter introduces a new domain of knowing that emerged as these teachers engaged in mind/body/spirit practices and learned to understand the connections that exist between their emotional, contemplative, artistic/creative and spiritual selves. It describes how Multi-Dimensional Knowing influenced teaching practice and created more balance in these teachers’ lives.

Multi-Dimensional Knowing

Multi-Dimensional Knowing comes from knowledge sources that exist primarily within the individual. In this study, four different dimensions are connected with the Multi-Dimensional self: emotional, contemplative, artistic/creative, and spiritual. Each dimension has a specific set of beliefs and practices and sources of knowledge (see Figure 4, p.116). These dimensions were revealed through different types of experiences which will be described in greater detail in this chapter. Internal knowledge sources were once revered by ancient civilizations but are now viewed as an unscientific and unreliable form of knowledge. Individuals living in western societies have ignored and lost touch with this way of knowing their world. This knowledge gap creates feelings of restlessness, discontentment, and disconnection between our self and our world (Goleman, 1995; Grow, 1996; Hart, 2001; O’Sullivan, 1999).

Figure 4. Multi-Dimensional Knowing



Emotional Knowing

Social modeling, meditative practices and physical sensations received from their bodies were ways the teachers in this study acquired Emotional Knowing. They valued a calm, clear mind, physical and emotional strength and balance, and yin characteristics. These teachers applied these values in their daily interactions through the methods they chose to communicate with others, the intent they brought to the situation, the type of dialogues they engaged in with their internal self, and by choosing to detach from certain emotions.

Participants cultivated Emotional Knowing by looking within themselves and from individuals who practiced this way of knowing. Although these teachers were instructed to use various forms of sitting and moving meditation methods (including Tai Ji Quan and Qi Gong) and taught to recognize what body energy feels like, it was the practice and the opportunity to be enculturated with this way of knowing, that allowed them to explore their internal emotions and gain new insights. The instruction alone could not give them emotional knowledge or teach them what their internal self knew.

External knowledge, such as instructions being delivered and processed, does not provide the opportunity for the true inner voice and internal self knowledge to surface and be examined. The brain is too busy processing, absorbing, filing and connecting new information to be able to attend to internal sources of knowledge. Instruction did give these teachers various tools that would help them more consciously access the internal knowledge they possess and become more familiar or aware of this dimension of themselves. This examination process improved their understanding of the emotions that drove their actions.

Emotional energy travels through the mind and body and transmits messages to the mind/body/spirit (Goldman, 2000). These messages are consciously or unconsciously processed and transformed into thoughts and feelings that inform and influence human action. Emotional knowing involves an awareness of the energy that is moving through the body and the thoughts, feelings, and sensations that arise as a result of this process. Most of the teachers in this study broadened their emotional knowledge by engaging in regular meditation practice, attending to their own physical body sensations and interacting with people who used this way of knowing in their daily lives. Participants who experienced life crises' had spent time reflecting on their lives and accessing their emotions prior to entering this study. They seemed to possess what I refer to as "emotional wisdom." This wisdom developed through the process of confronting a life threatening disease and working through the intense emotional upheaval that resulted from receiving such jarring news. These participants gained an appreciation for what is important in life and this influenced how they chose to respond to stressful events.

Physical health is integrally linked to emotional health. The problems these teachers experienced with their physical health directly related to emotional knowing. When teachers used strategies that benefited their emotions, they often received physical benefits as well. Teachers who became skilled Emotional Knowers learned to detach from or let go of selected emotional thoughts and feelings and intentionally cultivate desired verbal and non-verbal communication methods that matched the yin characteristics they aspired to attain.

Mental and Physical Strength and Balance

All of the participants in this study valued being physically and mentally healthy. Kristen's comment echoed what all members of the group expressed in different ways. "*I just want to be healthy on the inside and out.*" Staying healthy can be a challenge for classroom teachers. All of the teachers in this study experienced emotional stress differently but six teachers reported an increase in their level of emotional stress over the past few years. The only participant experiencing less emotional stress was the teacher who retired from teaching last year because of the demands of the job. These teachers identified emotional stress as the most significant health hazard for teachers.

Several participants in the study explained it was easier to go to work sick than plan for a substitute teacher. Being unhealthy is a huge inconvenience for anyone, but even more so for teachers who must plan learning activities and write up detailed lesson plans for substitute teachers to follow while they are sick.

It is not surprising to learn that all of the teachers in this study were interested in learning preventative measures to stay healthy or improve their health. Four of the 7 teachers in this study used walking or swimming as a form of regular exercise. All tried to eat healthy foods. At the beginning of the study, none of the participants were using methods to calm and relax their mind and body or monitor their body's energy level on a regular basis. Methods to relieve or work through emotional stress and relax their mind and body were of interest to all of these teachers.

At the end of the study, Tai Ji Quan was identified as helping two teachers in the study gain physical balance and stability, strengthen their leg muscles and improve their ability to focus their mind. Chris "*had positive experiences from Taiji.... [I have] better*

[physical] *balance and feel that I can focus my energy better.*” Naomi attributed increased physical balance, stronger leg muscles, and an improved ability to focus to regular Tai Ji Quan “*meditation*” practice. The other 5 participants did not receive any benefits from Tai Ji Quan. Tai Ji Quan requires a long learning curve and a long term time commitment to learn the complete set. These teachers believed in order to learn Tai Ji Quan and benefit from its effects, individuals would need to attend training sessions at least twice each week. They didn’t feel this was a realistic time commitment for busy teachers and therefore would not recommend Tai Ji Quan as a mind/body/spirit practice for most teachers to learn.

Participants learned how to apply acupressure techniques to several key acupuncture points known to benefit common ailments and tension. Six of the 7 teachers in this study benefited from using the acupressure techniques they learned. Acupressure relieved sinus congestion in one participant and nausea in two participants. Another teacher thought acupressure decreased premenstrual cramping. Most of the teachers in the group enjoyed learning about acupressure from the licensed acupuncturist. They found the techniques easy to learn, were seen as effective for the conditions listed above and required minimal time commitment to use. Some teachers applied pressure to the various points as a preventive health measure to stimulate the vital organs. Two teachers used acupressure when they felt a tension headache coming on. The tension was relieved and the headache did not surface. Six of the 7 teachers felt other teachers would benefit from learning acupressure techniques as a preventative health measure.

Participants were taught methods to quickly check for signs of physical stress. The acupuncturist who worked with the group reminded them to periodically monitor their

body language for stress, especially while they were walking. An off centered person will walk with their head jutting forward, ahead of the body. Once aware of this, teachers could easily and quickly correct their walk and become centered by focusing on breathing from their dantian and moving from the center of their body.

Participants reported breathing from the dantian relieved anxiety, nausea, and dizziness. Since deep breathing can be done while on the go, at any place, and time, this form of mind/body/spirit practice was popular and highly recommended by all of the teachers in this group.

Deep breathing techniques have entered mainstream America. Western health practitioners are recommending the use of deep cleansing breathes to calm and restore the body's energy (Gaynor, 2002; Kabat-Zinn, 1991). Deep breathing techniques are being used in natural childbirth classes, anger control classes and as method to de-stress after a busy work day. According to scientific studies, when we are experiencing stress, our mind and body becomes frozen in a chronic state of fight or flight (Gaynor 2002; Pert, 1999). The human sympathetic nervous system goes into overdrive; adrenal glands pump out stress hormones; the musculoskeletal system goes into a state of readiness as the heart rate and blood pressure become elevated (Gaynor, 2002; Pert, 1991; Selye's,1956). Once we shift from shallow breathing to deep abdominal breathing, our bodies receive a signal that the danger has passed (Gaynor, 2002; Pert, 1999). Instruments such as the biofeedback machine measure physiological changes that result from the use of deep breathing techniques and have shown deep breathing is effective for returning the body to a relaxed state.

The teachers in this study described an emotionally healthy individual in the following ways. An emotionally healthy person “...*doesn't lose their cool-at least in a way that would hurt somebody,*” “...*has a naturally positive attitude,*” or “...*has the ability or power to relax.*” Being centered and balanced was considered an indicator of emotional health. Melanie knew when she felt “*off center*” she was unable to deal with events or people that she perceived as stressful.

Clear Mind

The teachers in this study always had a lot on their minds. Western minds are trained to think constantly. Managing a classroom and teaching students is a large responsibility. Difficult decisions have to be made and the consequences of these decisions can weigh heavily on a teacher's mind. Alicia noticed approaching difficult situations was easier when her mind was clear and her body was calm. Elizabeth's mind “*argues with her a lot*” but when her mind was clear, decisions were easier to make. Mind chatter kept the teachers in this study awake at night or preoccupied during the day. These teachers wanted to at least periodically be able to clear this chatter from their minds. They believed achieving a healthy emotional state involved being able to clear or calm their mind.

Meditation helped these teachers silence their mind chatter and calm their bodies. During meditation, Elizabeth could “*sift through things...Meditation helps me keep things in perspective, organize me. It is organizing the clutter in my mind.*” Deep breathing helped five of the participants focus their mind when they felt emotional stress. It appears that by using these techniques, participants learned to relax their bodies and clear their minds. They were also more aware of what was on their minds. Elizabeth was able to

prioritize and not feel so overwhelmed by the many duties and responsibilities of the teaching profession as a result of meditating

Yin Virtues

In this study virtues that are soft in nature such as patience, unconditional love, compassion, sensitivity, acceptance, generosity, kindness, gentleness, humbleness and being non judgmental are defined as “yin” and were viewed by these teacher as worthy of cultivation. Several teachers in the study connected with their gentle or yin nature during meditation sessions. Kristen was filled with “a sense of contentment.” during meditation. One of Kristen’s goals was to be content with life. The Ton Glen meditation technique includes a practice of sending and receiving compassion. Chris used this method frequently.

It starts turning your mind around and making you more compassionate on the spot in daily life. It just comes up without effort because it is practiced...Meditation helps me be more compassionate-it depends which type of meditation I am doing, but all of them help some.

Meditation seemed to have heightened Sally’s ability to feel or receive love. Sally’s husband entered the room immediately after she finished meditating.

I felt as if a rush of love came in with him, although it wasn't anything unusual or dramatic.

For Sally, patience has come with age and has resulted in her feeling emotionally healthier. Chris and Melanie were cultivating compassion in their lives. Melanie views compassion and sensitivity to others as a worthy personal strength. The generosity and kindness Kristen experienced in Asian cultures served to inspire her. This experience

helped her prioritize what was important in her life. Elizabeth was “*trying to be calmer*” as a teacher. Chris and Alicia appreciated accepting and non-judgmental people. They looked for these same qualities in their friends. These characteristics or virtues are in opposition to the competitive, aggressive qualities that are often encouraged and permeate much of American society.

Social Modeling

Kristen learned a different way of responding to troubled students after working alongside a visiting teacher from Thailand who co-taught in Kristen’s classroom for a few months. Kristen received a valuable lesson from this teacher.

She [the visiting teacher from Thailand] really did make a difference in here. I had a difficult group and she actually took one boy in particular under her wing and just showered this little boy with kindness.... I realized by watching her that the way I had been treating him was probably too harsh. You know? He didn’t need that. He needed what she had to offer him. It was very good for him. She just had such a kind way about her.

Kristen, already inspired by the generosity and kindness of Thai people because of her visit to Thailand two years earlier, was intrigued by this different social model. She was now able to witness the first steps of how to begin cultivating a kinder society within her own classroom. Working alongside a person who consistently responded to students in a kind, gentle manner, showed Kristen another way of being in her classroom.

Kristen had been using the behavior management practices she was taught in her education courses. These behavior modification strategies were known to be appropriate and effective. The classroom rules and consequences for breaking those rules were made

clear. Kristen consistently applied those rules in her classroom. The Thai teacher's modeling opened Kristen's eyes, mind, and heart to a different way of responding to students who are emotionally wounded. She recognized their need to be surrounded by love and kindness rather than discipline and punishment. Kristen was trying to integrate this kinder and gentler way of responding to troubled students into her classroom and into the behavior modification system she used in her classroom.

Alicia was a social model for a kindergarten student. After being taught deep breathing techniques during the group's biweekly meeting sessions and experiencing the calming benefits of deep breathing for herself, Alicia showed a kindergarten student how and when to use this same technique.

I tried to get a kindergarten student to relax when she was having a particularly bad day and was quite upset. I said you have to calm down, take a deep breath, I am going to count and I want you to take deep breaths as I count. It seemed to help calm her. I wouldn't have used that before... I have found that taking deep breaths has helped me.

By encouraging this student to use deep breathing techniques when she felt upset, Alicia exposed this student to a different way to respond to her emotions. Alicia lent credibility to the process by acknowledging that she found deep breathing techniques beneficial in her own life. This may have been the first time this student was given a technique that she could implement on her own to calm her emotional state. If this student sees Alicia consistently calm and relaxed, she might be motivated to apply deep breathing techniques more often.

Meditative Practices

Regular meditation practice was one of the tools that helped the teachers in this study access their emotions. Meditative practices used in this study included sitting meditation, standing meditation, walking meditation, and guided visualization. Tai Ji Quan and Qi Gong exercises were included in this section because the participants referred to them as a form of moving meditation. Qi Gong and Tai Ji Quan can be considered a form of meditation because during instruction students are taught to focus their mind on the slow, intentional, fluid body movements while breathing deeply from the triple burner or dantian. The dantian refers to the region of the body just below the navel. Most of the meditation techniques used in this study were Taoist in origin and recommended by Qi Gong and Tai Ji Quan masters.

Eastern culture recognizes the breath as the source of life and vital to a healthy mental and physical state of being (Chia & Chia, 1993; Cohen, 1997; Liang, Wu & Wu, 1997). Qi Gong and other meditation practices require students to learn to breathe deeply, focus on the breath and use the breath in different ways to achieve a calm, clear state of mind. All 7 of the study participants were able to periodically experience a sense of calmness throughout their bodies after spending several minutes sitting quietly and breathing deeply from the dantian. As with any new skill, regular practice is needed to become proficient or highly skilled in this area. Qi Gong masters spend their entire lifetime learning and practicing different forms of meditation and breathing methods to promote a healthy flow of energy throughout the body. In contrast, these teachers were novice practitioners. The benefits gained from meditation appeared to be incremental and subtle.

Qi Gong meditation exercises were used to teach individuals how to feel energy moving throughout the body. Not all of the participants were able to feel energy moving through their body, but 4 of the 7 did sense energy flowing within their body while practicing different meditation methods. At the end of the study, Chris was just beginning to learn how to feel this internal energy source while she was doing things throughout the day. *“I don’t really have a distinct feeling about the dantian energy but I feel that sometimes I am doing things from that strength.”* These teachers did not reveal any direct influence of Qi Gong exercises on their teaching practice. They were just beginning to sense what energy moving within the body feels like when they were able to focus and concentrate in a quiet space. Classrooms are not quiet spaces and teachers are usually so engaged with instruction and interactions with students, it would be extremely difficult for a novice practitioner to be attuned to energy moving within the body in such a demanding setting.

Tai Ji Quan helped Naomi and Chris connect with their body energy. According to Naomi, *“When I can do Taiji outdoors I focus on [the color] green. I can feel energy, but I can’t say I do every time. There is a deeper sense that this body is being spoken to in other ways.”* Naomi studied Tai Chi Chih, a modified form of Tai Ji Quan, several years ago. She was partnered with another person for one lesson and remembered the energy they generated together. *“I was absolutely amazed when we mirrored movements-the heat and the energy that I would feel when we mirrored the movements.”*

Chris sensed energy move through her fingertips when she practiced Tai Ji Quan. *I could really feel the warmth in my fingertips in a different way.... I could feel the pull of energy between my hands as I moved them across one another and maybe a*

warmth...Afterwards it occurred to me that being able to feel the tingling and warmth in my fingers while doing Taiji is really very reassuring for me because I have for a long time been discouraged by not feeling anything or realizing any results from various practices that I've tried over the years. As I mentioned before I seem to not believe anything unless I experience it, so having this actual personal experience with Taiji helps me actually 'believe in' the whole subtle energy/chi concept and want to practice more to see what might result.

Elizabeth learned to do things in a “*more relaxed way.*” The slow moving Qi Gong warm up exercises were “*centering and relaxing*” because “*you are only thinking about those movements, putting everything else aside, just thinking about yourself moving.*” All 7 participants unanimously agreed Qi Gong exercises were much easier to learn than Tai Ji Quan.

Based on the responses of the teachers in this study, it appears meditation helped them connect to their “true” energetic selves. Most of the teachers understood internal energy differently because they were able to concretely feel and experience qi flowing through their body. This helped them to understand energy differently and certainly in a more meaningful way than reading about qi in a book or being instructed on exercises that enable individuals to access internal sources of qi. For some teachers, feeling qi move within their body resulted in them believing mind/body/spirit practices was beneficial to them rather than hoping these practices would work.

These exercises helped some participants gain physical strength and balance, feel emotionally or mentally centered and relaxed, and content. It appeared to increase their attention and sensitivity to their yin characteristics such as compassion. Meditative

practices seemed to influence their way of being which in turn influenced their teaching practice. This will be discussed in more depth at a later point.

Listening to Body Sensations

Participants in this study gained emotional wisdom by attending to the physical sensations they felt within their body. These subtle sensations revealed emotional messages or codes that gave them information about their physical and emotional state. Examples of some of the subtle internal messages these teachers experienced were a tightening in the throat, knot in the pit of the stomach, pressing sensation on the chest, or rise in blood pressure. The teachers in this group believed that physical disease and illness such as tension headaches, disturbed patterns of sleep, anxiety attacks, even a flare up from Crohn's disease could be prevented if they followed their subtle body sensations more closely and took corrective action. One participant wondered if her on-going struggle with various forms of cancer throughout her life was related to an unresolved childhood trauma.

Kristen described changes she experienced in her external and internal states when her emotions ran astray.

I become quiet when I am stressed. Internally I just get a knot right in the pit of my stomach. It affects my sleep. When I feel totally overwhelmed and stressed by everything, I can usually fall asleep but I wake up after 3 or 4 hours and falling back asleep is difficult.... Meditation helps me get de-stressed.

During the study Kristen's mom suffered a fall and broke her hip, forcing her to enter a nursing home. This was very difficult for the family and a stressful time for Kristen.

I was feeling really helpless in terms of what I could do personally for her or for the situation. I felt like I needed to take time off and that was stressful getting sub [substitute teacher] plans ready. I could feel myself getting that knot inside that just gets there [in the stomach]. I do feel like I can get rid of that now. I just go downstairs in my basement, turn on the music and get myself in that nice floaty space [meditative state]. It is fleeting, it doesn't last, but I can get rid of that tightness. I am more aware of that tightness now when it happens.

Kristen learned to pay more attention to her body after participating in the study and also how to return her body to a more balanced state.

Elizabeth was filled with anxiety when she went for her first mammogram. Her fear sent uneasy thoughts and messages through her body. She used relaxation techniques to calm her mind and release the stress from her body.

I was sending thoughts to my body to be good. The whole breathing and getting down in the dantian makes sense to me. I find that relaxing. That was so scary - waiting for that mammogram. At first I was just thinking, 'Oh, I am just going to go get it done.' But sitting there, realizing this has a message at the end and this message could not be good, I was suddenly afraid. Then they had to take two more [mammogram x-rays] on my right side. They went away, developed them, and read them. I was sitting there and thinking, 'Ooh.' I did meditate in the room while I was waiting which kind of helped focus things. I had this vision of getting stress out my fingers and out my toes. Breathing it in and getting rid of it. I pull stress up and get it out my finger tips and my toes. It works, it feels good to do it, and I can really feel it [stress] moving through me.

Melanie is so sensitive to emotional energy that, at times, when she walks into a room, she can feel her chest expand or contract depending on the type of energy in the environment.

The last class was totally lethargic...I was pulling everything out of them...I hadn't felt that pressure in my chest in awhile....I felt their lethargic attitude pressing in on me and no matter what, I couldn't up it, I couldn't up that energy. And then it took me, and it drained me.

Melanie described a situation many teachers experience on a daily basis -students who are not motivated by the lesson being presented. Melanie began this class in a very positive emotional state because she had just taught this lesson to two other classes and they thought it was “phenomenal.” Her emotional high plummeted to an emotional low after spending just a few minutes with this new group of students. She picked up on her body's messages, honored them and acted accordingly.

I could feel it, and when I felt it in my body, that was a sign to me. I think it just shifted the energy a little bit and that is what I am glad about. I didn't keep going down the same road that wasn't working. I had to do something and at that moment that [response to her intuitive feeling] was what I could use.

The students' negative energy drained her of her emotional energy. Her own emotional energy was not strong enough to “up” the powerful negative force that was overtaking her. Instead Melanie used the remaining energy she had left from the initial positive emotional state she was in at the start of the class to intervene in a new manner.

I went with my intuition and said to the kids, 'I feel like I am doing all the work and I don't like doing all the work. I don't mind doing my share of the work,

but I ...expect receiving something back. What we are doing is talking about you and I can't do that work for you...My hope is that at the end of the class you'll recognize your lethargic attitude today...You are making decisions not to participate and not to put even a little bit of energy in.' ...When I said, 'I am doing all the work', five or six kids rallied [around me].

I did what I did because I felt pretty solid [emotionally]. The other classes went fine and one was exceptional. I was able to take that pain, process it, and act, all in the same time. Another time I might have kept going down the same path, finish the class, and then cry. All the while I was using my intuition. I think that came from acknowledging at some level what was going on in my body.

Melanie was not feeling the energy moving within her body but she was aware of the energy shift that occurred between classes. Her ability to consciously listen to her body's messages and trust her intuition provided her with the ability to respond to the situation in a clear, intentional manner and "shift" the emotional energy in the classroom. Melanie believed this new awareness and different response method to the negative energy she received from students in the last class of the day was the result of her participation in the study and work with mind/body/spirit practices. This is an area that could use more research but would greatly benefit teachers who all, at one time or another, experience an energy drain from negative emotions. Understanding energy drain and being able to transform or shift that energy could lead to a less stressful working and learning environment for both teachers and students. It is quite possible that specific strategies could effectively be used to shift energy either before negative energy and emotions distress teachers and derail learning. Learning how to decode body messages allowed

these teachers to recognize when their emotions were over-riding or creating an imbalance in the mind/body state.

Study participants used emotional knowing in several other ways. At times they were able to detach or “let go” of feelings that were consuming their time and energy. Learning to pay attention to their body messages and emotional state caused a new conscious awareness of unexpressed emotions and thoughts before they responded. Through this conscious awareness, participants understood what was fueling their thoughts or feelings. They then responded to those thoughts and feelings with clear intention and shaped the outcome of the event in a manner more in line with their personal or yin values. Finally, conscious awareness of their emotions and thoughts allowed participants to alter their verbal and nonverbal communication methods.

Detaching or Letting Go

Recent events in Chris’, Kristen’s, and Elizabeth’s personal lives could have been interpreted as stressful, but instead, after participating in the study, they learned to step back, identify the issues, the emotion attached to the issues, detach from the emotions or feeling and “let go.” All of them attributed this ability to their meditation practice. Chris recognized this was a skill that could not be learned over night.

That is what meditation does. You can let go of the thoughts and just continue your practice...thoughts are the same as emotions so I think for anybody that [letting go of emotions and thoughts] can be beneficial, but it takes quite a bit of practice.

Elizabeth learned to intentionally put her thoughts aside.

There are times when your mind is just popping all over with all the things that have to be done. I think, ‘I can deal with that.’ You [I] would just think about those things

and then set them aside.

Kristen felt “*a little bit calmer now. Things that used to send me flying in stressful situations, I am able to let go of.*” She and the visiting teacher from Thailand taught a student how to release anger.

[Name of visiting Thai teacher] *and I just tried to focus on letting that anger go and we worked on that with her last year and I think we made some strides with her...This year I am on a better track with her. And she has even said herself, you know, last year I used to be bad and this year I am so much better!*

Kristen was in the unique position of working with students for several years. Learning to let go of anger or negative emotional feeling and thoughts is a life long process. Results are not quickly realized, but in this case, Kristen and the student verified the benefits received from detaching from negative emotions.

Conscious Intent

Being aware of how emotions drive thoughts, feelings and actions, allowed teachers to choose their response and shape the situation or event accordingly. Recent work on the Involuntary Nervous System provides an explanation for this body/mind view. Miller (1969) says:

Cellular electric current can be made to occur in protoplasm by *the very act of thinking. Thought alone* can therefore, in and of itself, be the *stimulous* to induce an electric current to flow down any nerve to the affected tissue-demonstrating that *thought is a source of energy...*The involuntary Nervous System is not necessarily involuntary...it is more under our conscious control than previously believed.

(p.440)

Chris explained how clear, focused intent improves her mediation practice. *“When I meditate with an altruistic bodhisattva intention or motivation for the process and its ultimate result, the experience seems more intense, effective and natural.”* Chris gave an example of when she used altruistic intentions towards her family during a meditation session.

[During Ton glen meditation] I intentionally sent needed good energy to each person and took in their problem/negative energy/suffering tendencies ... This practice didn't cure everyone's difficulties....my daughter still complained of her headache problem, but things were pretty mellow for the morning.

When Naomi was unable to stop thinking about issues she was having with an individual student while meditating, rather than enter into a battle with her emotions and mind, she redirected this energy.

I think positive thoughts about kids to try to understand where they are coming from and how I can approach them differently. I think it changes how I respond to them the next day. I am not letting myself go over the edge.

Negative or destructive thoughts about the student were shifted when Naomi used compassion when thinking about other ways to approach the problem. She was then able to change her thought or intentions, think about the situation from a different perspective and emotional state, and select her response based on this new way of thinking about the student and situation.

Naomi used intent as a self-healing technique. She consciously directed healing thoughts and energy to different parts of her body that she felt needed it. *“I do meditate with intention on different parts of my body.”* Intent is a powerful healing force

(Achterberg, 1985; Andrews, 2003; Dyer, 1997) advocated by many Eastern practitioners (Chia & Chia, 1993; Cohen, 1997; Liang, Wu & Wu1997) and in medical Qi Gong training. Intent is usually combined with visualization by healers who use this method. Knowledge of biology is not needed but an intentional focus on being whole and healthy is (Achterberg, 1985; Andrews, 2003). Visualizing the injured part of the body going through the healing process is one method. Some individuals visualize a bright healing light entering the body and flowing to the source of pain or injury (Andrews, 2003; Chia & Chia, 1993). Studies have shown intent and visualization encourage the body to heal itself (Achterberg, 1985; Andrews, 2003). Intent and visualization are techniques teachers can use to encourage healing their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wounds.

Sally and Elizabeth faced different challenges at the end of the marking period that demonstrated they intentionally chose to respond to the situation with a positive response. Both of their situations were triggered by events beyond their control. A computer software glitch created a problem for Sally during a very busy time of year.

We started having problems with the [computer software] program just when I was ready to begin doing the report cards so I started doing them all by hand, writing in comments and that is a lot of work! Then I found that when I was out sick, they had fixed it and I would have been able to use the computer program to write my report cards. I have enough experience to know now that somehow I would get it all done by next week.

Sally could have responded to this situation with anger or panic and allowed those emotions to overwhelm or hijack her system and drive her response. Instead she recognized her initial feelings of panic and fear associated with thoughts of not being able

to complete all those report cards on time. She let go of her fear by trusting in herself, knowing the work would be done “somehow.”

Elizabeth used a combination of internal self-talk and deep breathing techniques to keep her mind calm and clear. She chose these strategies to handle what could have been perceived as a very stressful situation she faced at the end of the marking period when frigid cold weather forced schools to close down.

Closing grades were [due] that Friday that we missed school and we missed 5 days. Technically we could have said report cards would go home one week later if we were counting by the number of days, but most people had already closed their books and were not interested [in extending the marking period for one week]. I was supposed to do reading stuff on Wednesday [one week before report card distribution week] so I did those reading things on the Wednesday right before the report cards had to go home. Thank goodness I only had 13 kids. I just said to myself, ‘This is OK, let’s just figure out what is going to go first, one thing at a time. That is all you can do.’ Then I got home that night and realized I left the whole notebook here [in the classroom] with all the report cards in it. I could have come back but, it was pretty late. [I thought,] ‘OK now wait a minute. We can get through this. Take some deep breaths and just figure out how you are going to do it. Just figure out the order of things to be done.’ I said, ‘I can do this, where do I start?’ There is no sense to get all binged out about it and panicky-you just do it.

Both Sally and Elizabeth completed their work on time. Report cards were in their students’ backpacks at the same time every other teacher was sending report cards home. They could have let their initial feelings of emotional panic drive the event. More than

likely, they would have completed their duties in a timely manner but a negative driving force would have been far more destructive on their mind/body/spirit. They intentionally selected emotions and thoughts that steered them through this event in a proactive manner.

Sally was sick in bed for Christmas dinner. Instead of allowing disappointment, sadness or depression to turn the holiday into a miserable event, she decided to take advantage of being removed from the hustle and bustle of the dinner time and become a fly on the wall or observer of her family's interactions. Since she is always busy preparing and serving and interacting with others, she never had an opportunity to be a detached observer. *"...It was such a pleasure to be in bed upstairs and hear everyone having a good time. That was the good part about the bad part of being sick."* Sally experienced feelings of love and contentment listening to the sounds of her family eating together and enjoying each other's company on this special occasion. Sally could have chosen to think only about how much she missed eating with her family or how much she disliked being ill on Christmas. These thoughts would have created a different effect on her mind/body/spirit.

Sally used other strategies that change how she responded to people that created stress in her life.

When someone in particular is hard to get along with and is stressful to be around, I play a game. Rather than react to a parent or the situation when things get crazy and begin thinking, 'this person is crazy,' I become sympathetic and try to change the situation in spite of the fact that someone is obnoxious.

Sally admitted her interactions with this person were not comfortable, but by opening her heart and using compassion, she prevented her own destructive thoughts from creating emotional and physical stress on her mind/body/spirit.

Kristen recognized the situation she faced in her classroom was driven by external events beyond her control. She chose to accept the situation and join together with her students and “do the best we can” given the circumstances.

I was working on a project with the kids. They were making a calendar for their parents for Christmas on the computer...my mother had her fall [and] I had to go to Connecticut. I was gone for awhile and then when I came back, our computer tech person was out for a few days. I was in the lab and things weren't going well. We were in a rush to get it done and I just thought, 'You know what? So what if it isn't perfect, we will do the best we can and get it done.' I decided I was doing the best I could under the circumstances and I just wasn't going to get all frenzied about it. I wasn't going to get upset with the kids when it was no one's fault. We got it done and they looked like gifts from second graders...It was fine.

Instead of pitting herself against her students, pressuring them and contributing to the stress and tension they were already experiencing, she chose to cheer her students on and encourage them to do their best in this trying situation. She let go of her ego and her desire for the students in her classroom to produce perfect work. She accepted the skill level of each of her second graders. These calendars, created with the skill, effort, and persistence of second graders, were probably far more meaningful to their parents. These calendars captured a moment in time, a snapshot of each child's intellectual growth and development, something a perfectly created masterpiece could never accomplish.

Kristen, a seasoned teacher, knew she could easily become jaded and cynical about education. At the beginning of the study, Kristen stated her intentional decision to prevent feelings of discouragement and disillusionment to enter into her relationship with students or impact her teaching attitude in this new standards-based environment. Kristen decided to make the most of each day with her students. *“I am trying to tell myself...to enjoy them... as I go to work in the morning. That is my goal for the day, to enjoy these kids. To smile at them, talk to them, and teach them, too, at the same time, but take time to enjoy them.”* The yin virtues of kindness and generosity were used to guide Kristen’s work with students.

Internal Dialogue

Internal self talk shaped the emotions of the teachers in this study. They recognized that their self talk could be either a constructive or destructive force to the mind/body/spirit. During the study, people were encouraged to pay attention to their emotions and body messages to understand the emotion(s) driving their thoughts and actions. Chris observed her thought patterns during meditation sessions and learned she was filling herself with negative thoughts.

I give bad self talk results to myself, like I will try a lot of things and say, ‘Yeah, well it is not going to do anything for me anyway. I am going to try this, but it probably isn’t going to do anything different. I know this can work, but I don’t think it is going to work for me.’ So it is self defeating.

This new conscious awareness empowers Chris to more readily recognize these destructive thoughts as they arise and intervene to change her patterned thinking. At the end of the study, she was *“trying to be more open to different possibilities”* in her life.

Naomi recognized fear was severely impacting her life.

I was planning to go to a meeting last night in St. Albans with [person's name] and I started doing that negative mind stuff like: I don't want to go all the way to St. Albans in that cold weather: What if we get in an accident? I started building it up again and I finally said to myself, 'Just stop this!' It is so easy for me to start obsessing on fears. I think meditation has definitely helped me in this area.

Meditation encouraged Naomi to listen to her body's messages and even when she wasn't meditating, she was more aware of recognizing her emotions at work. In this situation, she recognized fear was the driving force shaping her thoughts and actions and she consciously chose to let go of the fear and go to the meeting. Without her awareness and intervention, Naomi probably would have allowed this fear to hijack her emotions and she would have stayed home and not attended the meeting. Naomi reshaped the outcome of this single event by identifying the driving emotion and altering her response. Emotional Knowing empowered her to create a different reality in that specific event. It is not too outlandish to predict when Emotional Knowing is used wisely, Emotional Knowers could create a more content and happier life for themselves by reshaping their reality and world.

These teachers' learned intent empowered them to shape how they respond to unpredictable or unpreventable events or situations in both their personal and professional lives. Naomi noticed how fear and anxiety had the power to limit her life and create more stress on her body. These teachers learned that their responses shaped how they experienced the event and influenced their personal and professional lives. Approaching each situation with a willingness to accept the event for what it was

combined with their ability to use compassion or positive thinking in their response actions, resulted in Chris, Naomi, Sally, Elizabeth and Kristen being able to shape the experience, alter the outcome and their feelings associated with this experience. They decreased or eliminated the stress these situations could have caused on their mind/body/spirit self had they selected fear or anxiety as the emotions to use in their response actions.

It appears that meditation helped these teachers think more clearly about the overall situation. They wanted to act through compassion and then consciously responded or developed their actions from that intention. Meditation helped them remain focused and clear about their intentions while working through the situation. Their actions matched their feelings and intentions, creating harmony within the mind/body/spirit. This group of teachers was able to remain more positive with their students, even while operating under pressure, and not let their fear or anxiety overshadow the event. A long term study designed to measure the impact of internal dialogues and intent on teaching practice would greatly benefit the field and could reveal important knowledge that might benefit pre-service teaching programs and practicing teachers already in the field.

Pattern of Communication

Changes in nonverbal and verbal communication methods were noticed by 3 of the 7 teachers by the end of the study after implementing daily meditative practice in their lives. They identified differences in their communication style, tone and pace.

Before the study, when students weren't doing their assigned task, Elizabeth would ask them, "*Why don't you have that done?*" She noticed she clenched her teeth and her voice rose in pitch when she asked this question. A high pitched voice signals emotional

stress and tension, and so do clenched teeth. She realized this communication style and tone wasn't effective. During the post study interview, she reported being more intentional with the communication style she used when she approached the student. Now she says, "*Let's see what we can do to work this out.*" Elizabeth was working on being gentler with her students and didn't want to "*come at the kids in a strong way.*" At the end of the study she felt she "*yelled less*" and was not "*getting on kids in a harsh way.*" Elizabeth's response showed she was willing to enter into a problem solving mode rather than combative one.

There are many reasons why students don't work on their assignments, generally the student is already experiencing negative emotions. The student's resistance to the teacher's assignment creates negative energy. As mentioned earlier, strong emotional feelings overwhelm or hijack an individual's mental and physical state. Elizabeth's initial communication method was authoritative and combative and encouraged noncompliant students to enter into a fight or flight response. When Elizabeth changed her response to a supportive, collaborative approach, the student was provided an opportunity to move out of the fight or flight response, return to a more balanced emotional state, and reshape the end result of this event. As an Emotional Knower, Elizabeth was aware that the communication methods she used impacted her mind/body/spirit and relationship with the students in her classroom.

After participating in the study, Naomi reported a change in her communication tone, style, and pace. Meditating in the morning before going to work helped her slow her own pace, and as a result, she remained calmer and soft spoken in emotionally charged

situations. She intentionally lowered her voice to calm boisterous and angry students. She also realized she was using fewer imperative sentences.

You know sometimes there isn't even a 'you' in my sentences - just 'stop it...put it away... not now.' I reach a point when I just put it out there and then I think, 'Oh, God, there could have been a nicer way of saying that.' I know meditation is keeping me even. I keep a slow pace, calm voice, give the kids the time they need to do their learning without laying it on so thick that they can't.

Alicia used deep breathing techniques to calm herself before a difficult meeting, clear her mind and slow her speaking pace.

Before meetings I do some deep breathing to get calm. I think it has helped to make the meeting go better. Today I wasn't able to do it and I went to a meeting. I babbled a few times just because my mind was racing....I am using all these big long words and they just don't come out right. If I slow down and am calmer, I speak clearer, my mind is clearer.

Several participants became more attentive to body language. The Tai Ji Quan instructor showed participants how to stay focused and centered while walking.

Elizabeth commented, *"When your neck goes out in front when you are walking, you are not centered. So you need to keep the focus here, in the center of your body, and walk with that in mind."*

Elizabeth reported being more attentive to the nonverbal communication methods she used with her students, *"I have to be sure my eyes aren't, you know, glaring. I tell myself to relax my eyebrows, don't send that frustration message through that hard look that I know I can do."*

It appears that the use of standing, sitting and moving meditation exercises such as Tai Ji Quan and Qi Gong as well as the use of intent and visualization helped these teachers learn different ways to access, feel and understand their emotions. Some teachers in this study felt emotional energy move in and around their body. One teacher experienced absorbing emotional energy from students and transferring this energy to others.

Emotional Knowing provided the teachers in this study with an increased capacity and a heightened awareness to identify emotions that drive their thoughts and actions. Emotional Knowing empowered the teachers in this study to choose how they responded to different situations and events, thereby shaping the outcome of the event. As Emotional Knowers, these teachers showed an increased awareness and deeper understanding of their emotional state. They are more sensitive to the impact of emotions on their mind/body/spirit and on those around them.

Challenges of Emotional Knowing-The Gap

Western enculturation hinders the development of Emotional Knowing and, as a result, our schools are lacking the capacity to deal with many forms of emotional energy that are released in our daily interactions with students, parents, teachers and administrators. Teachers grow up and develop in a society that values Folkway and Formal knowledge but does not place a value on Emotional Knowing. Skillfully working through highly charged emotional issues requires a strong emotional knowledge base. Emotional Knowing requires individuals to connect their mind with their body and spirit. It means devoting time to cultivate the internal as well as external self. As Americans we are taught to dismiss our emotions and ignore the messages and feelings they send to our

physical and mental self (Goleman, 1995; O'Sullivan,1999). This creates an Emotional Knowing gap and a huge disconnect between our heart, spirit and mind. This gap in understanding causes teachers to experience emotional confusion, stress, feel emotionally drained, incompetent and at times even incapacitated while dealing with emotional issues

Teachers know troubled students do not detach from their emotions and leave their problems at home. Students come to school with emotional baggage. Schools are academically, not emotionally oriented. School systems and teachers struggle with the emotional needs of their students.

Some kids have real emotional issues and I don't know if we are taking care of it at school. I do have a little girl who really drove me crazy last year. She was aggressive, volatile, loud, and she just wore me down. I had a meeting with her mom and she was having the same problem with her at home. I was always butting heads with her.

Emotional energy is powerful. Emotions profoundly impact our body and mind. All teachers in this study used a lot of energy working with students they identified as “out of control.” Naomi described negative effects experienced by both the teacher and student as the result of students who have not learned how to control their anger.

I would say the emotionally charged kids are most stressful to deal with. They have no self control and so they are just not in sync with everybody else. They are doing their own thing with outbursts of silliness or anger. With an angry student or student with emotional problems, no matter what you do, they won't succeed. They are just drowning themselves.... When kids get wild and I don't respond to them in the right way, they get out of control and end up getting me out of control”

Sally described a student at school who has made a “*school career of being a bully and bossy.*” When her best friend moved, her behavior escalated. This girl’s emotional stress was transferred to Sally. At the end of the week, both of them were feeling stress. Students coming to school with emotional issues impact the lives of teachers and shape events in the classroom. More attention needs to be paid to understanding emotions and developing teachers as Emotional Knowers.

Not all emotional stress was created by teacher and student interactions. Other situations caused the teachers in this study to become incapacitated, experience physical discomfort, or illness. Naomi found the events reported on the TV news distressing

I find the news stressful. I have to go away or turn something else on because I have such high anxiety. I am now beginning to recognize tremors inside of me. I feel the fear in my stomach. When I begin to get stressed, I tighten up in my throat and start to cough like I am trying to clear my throat and that is another sign that I am just taking it on.

Presenting in front of a group made Chris physically ill.

The worst thing is when someone wants me to get up in front of a group and say something like in a role play or something. I just take the opportunity to opt out and I can most of the time. When I had to present, it was awful and I hated it. I feel incapable. I was physically sick from it. I get so nervous that I can’t think...like my emotional state gets in the way.... It incapacitates me to be so nervous and I can’t enjoy it.

Naomi gave examples of how fear hijacked and temporarily incapacitated her body. Her body entered into a constant state of restlessness and prevented her from being able to relax in her own house.

I have been highly anxious. I didn't realize how much anxiety crept into my life and how nervous and worrisome I can get. I didn't realize it until I got in trouble with anxiety. A couple of years ago I realized that. I can't relax in my own house because I am forever cleaning and don't sit. I can always find something that needs cleaning or doing.

This state of anxiety prevented Naomi's body from being able to relax and rejuvenate itself. Her emotional state incapacitated her physical and mental state.

Five of the 7 teachers reported anxiety and emotional stress prevented them from sleeping. Without adequate rest, their physical and mental health was compromised. They were physically and mentally tired the following day. Lack of sleep impacted their professional performance. They reported feeling more irritated and impatient with their students and peers. Teachers who are anxious, irritable, impatient or angry will have a difficult time creating a positive climate for working and learning. Although teachers in this study did not report better sleeping patterns, they did report practicing relaxation techniques while lying awake in bed and felt their bodies were more rested the next day than if they had not used relaxation techniques. These examples demonstrate the need for teachers to become Emotional Knowers and learn strategies to transform destructive emotional energy into a more neutral state. According to Pert (1999) and Gaynor (2002), our bodies carry every trauma, every negative idea or emotion that we choose to embrace.

Teachers who are not Emotional Knowers don't recognize much of the stress they experience is a result of their choosing.

These examples show Emotional Knowing was not well learned from Folkway or Formal Knowing. These knowledge sources do not value this way of knowing ourselves or our world. At the beginning of the study, the teachers were unfamiliar with multiple exercises and practices available to them to access their emotions. Mind/body/spirit practices helped these teachers respond to situations with a clear head and heart, a calmer mind and voice, and with more compassion and patience. This study points to the fact that many of the problems teacher's experience in the classroom is related to emotions and is the result of the emotional knowledge gap that exists in our schools.

The Emotional Knower

Based on the data from this study, an Emotional Knower:

- understands emotional energy drives thought and action
- feels the energy of destructive emotions and thoughts moving through the mind/body/spirit and brings them to a conscious level
- recognizes the impact of emotional energy on themselves and others
- selects the appropriate intent or intention needed in each situation to regulate the emotional energy in the environment
- practices detachment and letting go of intense emotional thoughts and feelings
- uses yin type verbal and non-verbal communication methods
- listens to messages received from the mind/body/spirit and responds to the situation with clear intent
- moves from the dantian or center of the body

- cultivates a sensitivity to and awareness of hidden and unexpressed emotions and thoughts
- recognizes emotional energy shifts and knows how to respond to these shifts accordingly

Contemplative Knowing

Contemplative knowledge is acquired from listening to the internal self, the mind or body, while in an open, relaxed state. Enculturation teaches us to think about matters external to ourselves and become preoccupied with the mind chatter that follows those thoughts. The voice of the true internal self is silenced and ignored. Ways to access this dimension of knowing are rarely taught to individuals growing up in the United States. Teachers in this study acquired contemplative knowledge when they observed their thoughts and feelings in a nonjudgmental manner, used reflective, introspective thinking and expanded their sensory awareness. Often meditation or journal writing provided space for this type of thinking and listening. They valued contentment, acceptance of self and an awareness of their inner rhythm and needs. Contemplative ways of knowing were expressed in teachers' attitudes. They were able to go with the flow, willing to explore their true self, held a desire to combine contemplative practices with academic learning and by demonstrating a deeper appreciation of others.

Contentment

All 7 of the teachers in this study yearned for deep contentment in their life. Some of them talked of learning to live more simply, others about slowing down the pace of their lives but not knowing how to do that. Contentment was a priority in Kristen's life.

That is what I want-contentment....that internal happiness. Just to be content,

do your best, treat people well...be content with who you are [I am] and enjoy life for a change.

Kristen's last few words are important to emphasize, she wants to "*enjoy life for a change.*" Many books have been written on the subject of how to experience deep contentment. To find the rich, soul fulfilling type of contentment many people in American society are seeking requires a lifestyle change. Attaining total contentment is an ideal worthy of pursuing. It requires consciously infusing our daily life with this intent. It means learning to live life in a fully awake and alive state (Tolle, 1999) appreciating each moment, the pain, the joy, the 'all' of life.

Americans are future goal oriented. We believe a good plan, persistence and hard work will lead to living a happier life in the future. The inherent problem with this belief system is that we never learn to enjoy our lives now, in the present (Tolle, 1999). An underlying false assumption in this belief is that each of us is able to control future life events by preparing and following our life's plan. We fail to understand that our present actions are what shape the future, moment by moment (Tolle, 1999). We are unable to comprehend our responsibility to lead our lives well now, in the present. Even if we reach our long range goals, we tend to create new goals. We are taught to never be satisfied with what we have. We must continually seek to make life better for ourselves. It is no wonder why Americans are constantly asking each other, "Where does the time go?" or feel life is passing us by. It is!

Kristen spoke about "*looking forward to a time*" when she and her husband could do things together that they enjoyed, but she wasn't sure what those things were any more. American couples become so consumed with working and raising their family, who they

are as individuals and a couple is often lost in the process. Once their children fledge the nest, the couple is in a strange position of living with someone for many years who they now realize they may not know very well anymore.

We will have to get to know each other again I think. I don't know how all that is going to go to tell you the truth because that is something that we really haven't had time to explore and that is really going to be unique. I think it is really going to be different. I think it is really going to be work. We are really going to have to talk about how we are going to handle it, where we want to go, where we want to use our time, where we want our focus to be. I think we have some common interests- at one time we did! Now we just have to find them again.

Learning to live in the moment is not a commodity that can be bought or sold or readily transferred into economic gains. It doesn't match the culture of this nation, one that prides itself on being the richest in the world and emphasizes a capitalistic consumerist style of living (O'Sullivan, 1999). Becoming contentment driven, rather than economically driven, means altering a long held American assumption and belief.

Melanie envied a former teacher's new lifestyle.

She is working part time and her husband was laid off from IBM. She says her goal is to not work at all in a few years. She said she felt like me a few years ago, trying to find time to fit things into her life that she thought she wanted. She doesn't want nearly as much now and doesn't need much either. She is happy with less...[name of teacher] would never go back to public school teaching. She just doesn't have that stress any more or feel the confinement of the daily schedule. I have been thinking a lot about our conversation lately.

Melanie struggled to find time in her life for herself. Although Melanie was always interested in leading a simpler life, this study, combined with other factors in her life, caused her to reflect on this idea a little more deeply. Her friend's lifestyle demonstrates that deep contentment is not driven by the external forces of economical growth or conditions. Several months after the study ended, I bumped into Melanie and she reported changing jobs. She accepted less money to work at a private school but will be teaching art and religion, two areas of study she is interested in and finds deeply rewarding in her own life.

Acceptance of Self

Several teachers in this study were highly critical of themselves and had a difficult time accepting their humanness. Humans are not perfect, we sometimes do things well, but we often make mistakes, but that is how we learn about life. When these teachers recognized their imperfections, they had a hard time recognizing and appreciating this very human quality in themselves. They were very aware that what they say and do impacted the lives of their students. That responsibility can become a heavy burden at times. Kristen, as well as most of the others in the group, had a hard time refraining from judging herself. In her post-study interview, Kristen wanted to “*change the beating up*” on herself and learn to say, “*OK this is who you are....*” Although she hadn't reached that point yet, she wanted to become more accepting of herself. At the end of the study she commented she felt she was becoming “*more forgiving*” of herself and she attributed meditation and mindfulness as helping move her in that direction. The ability to withhold judgment and become more accepting of their humanness, is something all participants valued.

Awareness of Inner Rhythm and Needs

All of the study participants were interested in attuning to their natural rhythms and understanding themselves more deeply. They were interested in recognizing subtle changes in their body and monitoring these changes over time. When Elizabeth began the program she didn't think she was very good at noticing these things. She wanted to learn how to listen to her body so she could notice body changes. She thought keeping a journal was "*a really good idea*" because she was interested in "*seeing the patterns-like how you feel when you wake up in the morning or what you have been eating and how you have been sleeping.*" She knew this type of knowledge would help her know herself better and hopefully lead a better life.

Chris recognized the polarized traits of her personality. Eastern philosophy sees these as the balancing yin/yang force of life.

I like to be alone a lot and then I can't stand to be alone. I need some socialization...I live in a very isolated place. I need outside stimulation. Having someone to do something with helps. I like to do things very slowly and thoroughly when I have a chance. It is not always possible but that is the way I normally work naturally. I like being interested in a lot of things but I think I may need to limit that to get more depth or clarity.

Elizabeth and Chris know paying attention to the internal rhythms of their body is important to their physical and mental health.

Non-judgmental Self Observation

Practicing non-judgmental self observation was an internal source of knowledge for these participants. Kristen's first experience with meditation during a week long retreat

was psychologically painful. She expected her technique to improve with each meditation session. When she began having difficulty focusing her mind, letting thoughts go, and relaxing her body, she was very discouraged with herself. When Kristen joined the study group she decided to accept each experience as it was. *“I have to say this week in particular I am enjoying it because I am not beating up on myself. I am trying to tell myself that I have no expectations.”*

Chris learned more about her behavior patterns through nonjudgmental observation. *“When thoughts came I realized I was not in the present. I also noticed that often after thoughts first begin I sometimes put a negative, judgmental overlay on them.”* She recognized that the *“inertia”* she often experienced was part of a pattern. *“It was a habit pattern I had going and still do. Making something I want to do into something I have to do and then not wanting to do it.”* She explained,

I continue watching things and being aware. I know myself better, know how I would like things to be different, know some ways to change things, how to go about it, and some things I am not so sure... Watching the habit patterns over and over, seeing which ones are helpful and which ones aren't.

Chris unburied behavior she was unaware existed once she turned her attention inward and watched her thoughts and those reruns play out on her internal TV screen.

Expanding Sensory Awareness

At the end of the study, all of the teachers were more aware of the broader range of their senses, at both the internal and external level. In addition, 4 of the participants paid closer attention to the feelings they experienced outside in the natural environment.

When I am walking up the hill, looking at the plants, thinking about what they are, it

is kind of like meditation because you are not thinking about anything that is causing stress, you are just observing and enjoying what you are looking at.... I do like being outside in the woods, walking around ...Even thinking about skiing across the backyard over to the lake gives me a very peaceful feeling.

In a few of Naomi's journal entries, she mentioned how much more relaxed she felt after meditating on the dock at her camp. During these times, she engaged several of her senses. *"The air was still, the lake like a mirror and two loons were nearby, one crying out as I sat. These surroundings made meditation very calming. Focusing on my breath was easy. I felt an openness to a larger place."* She later expressed, *"Sitting amidst beautiful trees and water was powerful...Spending more time with nature is like a healthy massage. I need to do this more often."*

Some of the teachers described experiencing very different types of body sensations during their most meaningful meditation sessions. Elizabeth and Sally described "feeling colors" and being filled with an image.

One of Sally's meditation journal entries described a time when she was able to focus deeply and her focus took her *"deep into that red velvet"* of her mind. Elizabeth described one of her peak meditation experiences.

The best one [meditation] I had was when I was at my parents... I was so removed from life. There were definitely these warm rich colors. I felt like my whole insides were filled with blue one night and red one night. I just felt warm and comfortable and relaxed and calm. It felt good.... During another one of these meditations, I saw a sunflower in the center of my stomach and felt relaxed and good.

Although most people experience color through vision, some are able to feel colors

(Andrews, 2003). The thought of color engaging other senses may seem unusual in our culture, but biologist Lyall Watson (1991) reported children living on a remote island in Indonesia had the ability to hear color. Watson (1991) tested the children and found out they all associated the same color with the same sound. High pitched sounds were associated with bright colors and low pitched sounds were associated with dark colors. It may be that by becoming more attuned to the energetic vibrations within our bodies, we will be able to hear and sense colors just as the children on this island were able to do. Elizabeth showed a different type of sensitivity to color than other participants by being able to feel the warmth or calming properties in certain colors.

Some energy healers use color as a form of treatment for their patients. According to Andrews (2003), “every color has the ability to touch us physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Some colors are warm; some are cool. Some soothe and others stimulate” (p.107). Color is a property of light. When white light is broken out into different wavelengths, we have a different color. Each color has its own energy signature and its own effect on the body. Color can be used for healing and balancing as well as for stimulating deeper levels of consciousness (Andrew, 2003).

During this study, participants were asked to create mandalas to express feelings that emerged during their meditation sessions. Melanie used mandalas to express her thoughts and feelings. She used this form of art in the past, but not regularly. This was one of the parts of this study she appreciated.

I had to make time to do it because I was doing it for, for myself ... they [mandalas] provided me with new insight. Thoughts came up while I was creating mandalas that I was often not aware were inside me. Sometimes I am drawn to certain colors.

When I finish with the mandala, I put it up on the wall to look at it and often I see something I didn't see while I was doing it.

This description explains the relationship between color, feeling and thought.

Melanie used the mandala as a tool to tap into her inner self. She did not preplan or hold a vision for the creation before she began. She just started creating and allowed her feelings and thoughts to emerge throughout this process. She was “drawn” to certain colors. These colors triggered thoughts and feelings or possibly these hidden thoughts and feelings were expressed through the colors. These thoughts lay hidden beneath what may have appeared as other more relevant or pressing issues. Often we are not aware that the thoughts that appear to be most pressing are actually dependent on our hidden more subtle thoughts and feelings that drive our emotions. Mandalas are tools that open the communication channels between the mind/body/spirit and internal self (Fincher, 1991; Horvath, 2001).

Other sensations were described. Sally experienced “an empty vessel” feeling and shared the insight she gained from this mediation.

A self discovery was I had been trying for very long to bring my internal eye to my center and I no longer think it needs to be my internal eye. It can be sensitivity. I also had the feeling of being an empty vessel which was quite interesting. I really felt empty, my breathing must have been very slow. I didn't feel a rising and falling of my chest, my skin felt thick, and all my organs were pressed against my skin. I feel an empty space- whatever that feels like. It happens a lot when it is a good meditation. I need to be deeply relaxed. My body is very, very, still.

Chris experienced a similar feeling. *“I feel sort of a clear channel going up and down the center of my torso and head. The body is felt more as an outline. Bright energy goes out from it.”*

Sally and Chris were learning different ways to experience and sense their bodies through meditation. One Buddhist meditation method trains individuals to experience the body as an empty vessel, feeling light and without much substance. The body is then filled with bright cleansing light to purify the mind and body. Often participants experience warmth from the light that permeates all parts of the body.

Chris also mentioned feeling aware but very calm during a meditation session. The calmness created a feeling like she was in a deep ocean *“with little ripples on top of thoughts coming and going, easily let go and not distracting the basic ongoing aware calmness.”* These internal sensory experiences gave the teachers in this study a new window into their internal self, a new way of knowing and sensing their contemplative nature.

Introspective/Reflective Thinking

During the pre-study interviews, several participants made comments such as, *“These are good questions,” “I never thought about these things.”* They said they were so busy with their teaching profession and family life that they never had a chance to think deeply about themselves. Elizabeth summed it up well, *“I never think about these things... who I am anyway? I haven’t thought about that in awhile. Teaching is so much a part of what I am, it is such a huge piece.”* All the teachers in this study were asked to record their meditation experiences and thoughts in a journal. Through the process of engaging in

introspective and reflective thought they were able to gain a deeper understanding of themselves.

Meditation is a time when thoughts of the past often rise to the surface. It provides space for introspective thinking to occur. Naomi recognized how hard she had to work at “*stopping to sit.*” Initially this made her angry and sad. She resented all the time she devoted to school work and noticed all of the activities she tended to become involved with kept her from “*getting to*” herself. During one of these quiet sitting sessions, Naomi was filled with memories of her father’s death. This memory was filled with mixed emotions because she did not attend her father’s funeral. At the time of his death, she was traveling through China and her relatives waited until she returned to break the news to her. As a result of reflecting on these events, she realized she was still grieving the loss of her father even though it has been almost 10 years since he died.

By late October, Naomi’s mind and body registered resistance to quiet sitting and regular meditation practice. She commonly experienced physical pain when she sat down to meditate – a tightness in her shoulders, soreness in her legs or upset stomach. She knew that the anxiety attacks she had been experiencing over the past few years were messages something was not right within. As she continued to meditate, thoughts about her childhood bubbled up and an awareness that she felt detached from her family. She questioned her relationship with her parents and her need to be known as the responsible child. Throughout the intervention study, Naomi’s journal entries recorded the strong emotions and thoughts that surfaced.

I feel very lonely. I don’t sustain relationships and I wonder why. I stay too involved in school...maybe this is a way to avoid connecting with others. I feel

open and able to connect with strangers or people in a school environment. I wonder why this seems so easy for me?

Naomi decided she really needed to let some of that other world go so she could find herself. By mid November, Naomi found herself looking forward to taking the time to sit quietly to meditate, even if it meant the dishes would sit unwashed in the sink for a little while longer. Her journal recorded changes in her attitude.

A noticeable change! I want to sit and meditate.... I was able to work through the resistance I was feeling towards meditation for awhile. It reached a point where I knew I wanted to sit down so if the dishes weren't done or my bag wasn't packed it became a priority for me to sit down and meditate. I don't know where that turning point was but all of a sudden it was like, I want to do this as opposed to I want to do the dishes. There must obviously have been some inner voice, some inner drive that spoke to me. It got busy at Christmas but I don't feel resistance. I think I have turned that corner of trying to make it part of my life and trying to make it part of what I want to do Somehow I just make the time because I am thinking about it as part of what I want for myself.

At the end of the study period, Naomi was still trying to piece together her childhood and solve this puzzle. She was not sure why she had so much fear locked away, but she was determined to find the key to unlock this mystery and release her mind/body/spirit from this hold. She wanted to keep working at connecting to the deep inner thoughts she had ignored for so long.

I made that turning point towards then end, I found myself writing more. I thought journaling was one of the benefits to what we were asked to do. I hope it is

something that I can continue to keep, to do something with a journal, because I think there is power in going back and rereading and seeing what I said.

Chris' journal entries revealed Tai Chi Chih (a modified form of Taiji), Qi Gong, and meditation practice led to introspective thinking. At the beginning of the study, Chris found herself wondering about what she expected or wanted out of life. She realized time with her parents was limited. She wanted to take full advantage of retirement and live her life according to the way she always said she would when she had more time. Now she found herself with the time but wasn't sure of what she should do with it. *"I have more time. I'm retired so theoretically I should be able to focus on my priorities for the rest of my life, not just waste time, waste life..., but what are my priorities, really?"*

Later entries, Chris' thoughts were becoming clearer.

I'm getting messages that I need to stay home, fill up my schedule less, and deal with what ever keeps me from being productive. By being productive I mean practicing meditation, Taiji and Qi Gong, getting more aerobic and weight-bearing exercise in, doing some kind of artwork for fun (maybe to music), taking advantage of the many resources I've accumulated at home (tapes, books, videos, etc.) and cleaning, sorting out and organizing my home environment.

Meditation helped Chris understand more about her problem with inertia.

Black and white, right and wrong thinking also gets me in trouble...having to or wanting to do something perfectly more often than not keeps me from doing it at all. Being "anal" or a perfectionist is involved. Maybe I need to lighten up, loosen up, be more joyful, be present and spontaneous more often, have more fun, stop "worrying", and stop trying to "accomplish" something.

Attitudinal Changes

The teachers in this study applied contemplative knowledge in both their personal and professional lives. They experienced several attitudinal changes. Some of these were a willingness to ‘go with the flow’, a willingness to search within for their true self and ability to show a deeper appreciation for others. They were also interested in including mind/body/spirit practices in their classroom to provide students tools to get to know themselves better.

Go with the flow mentality.

Kristen recognized attitudinal changes in herself as a result of engaging in contemplative practices.

Meditation is helping me deal with ...[my daughter]. [She] is going through a difficult teenage stage. She is 15 almost 16 and her way of dealing at this time in her life is by not sharing that much about what is going on in her life. She isolates herself at home, goes into her bedroom, doesn't offer me much of anything unless she is in the mood to. I am really accepting the fact that that is normal and trying not to feel hurtful about it. She does,... as unpredictable as those times are,...sit down and talk and starts to tell me things. I have to say to myself, stop what you are doing, make the most of it right now- you don't know when it will happen again.

Kristen's oldest daughter was a first year teacher and Kristen was trying to help her daughter rethink these events that were stressful to her and recognize they were only small events in the larger context of her life. *“I have been trying to tell her, who cares? It just isn't that important. A few times I have said - on a scale 1 – 10 this doesn't even make a 1. It is an inconvenience, it is just not a big deal. I think it helps her a little bit.”*

Willingness to explore the true self.

The teachers did not try to ignore or repress the various types of personal questions and challenges that surfaced during contemplative practices. They all willingly entered into deep self exploration to find answers. For years Naomi ignored her body messages, even though she had been experiencing anxiety attacks and unable to relax at home. Naomi's journals documented how difficult it was for her to peel away the years of emotional repression. Naomi was willing and determined to continue exploring her true self in the hope that she would reveal and address the issue that had robbed her of being able to fully appreciate her life. She planned to continue with her meditation, Taiji and Qi Gong practice, record her thoughts in a journal and visit a licensed acupuncturist.

Melanie is an introspective teacher. *"I search if a student doesn't appear to be getting something. I will search or talk to other people because I think it is a lesson for me."*

Melanie feels a knowledgeable person is able to teach students with different learning styles. If she is unable to reach a student or if a student is unable to understand what she is teaching, she spends a lot of time thinking about how to help that student. She thinks about how she taught the student and what she could do differently. She will look for the answers in books or talk with others who might be able to provide her with some new insight or knowledge to help that student. The ability to be an effective instructor is important to her and she spends a great deal of time trying to solve the many mysteries her students present to her in the way they think and construct their knowledge, beliefs and values.

Desire to combine contemplative practices with academic learning.

All of the teachers in the study believed contemplative practices would benefit their students. Most of the teachers introduced meditation to their students when they studied about Thailand. The students loved the time to sit quietly for a few minutes. One teacher introduced an optional weekly meditation session every Wednesday to her fourth grade students. The results were positive. *“I noticed that Wednesday seemed to be a happier day for the students...especially with an ADD child...That child had a better start to the day [and was better able to] handle what was coming down that day.”*

Increased curriculum and assessment demands prevented Sally from continuing these weekly meditation sessions during the year of this study. *“This year I haven’t meditated as much and again it is generally because of feeling the pressure of having to have that assessment done.”*

During her post-study interview, Elizabeth expressed a desire to use some of the techniques she learned with her first grade students.

I think having a peaceful time for kids could be really important but I don’t do it. I could just say ‘O.K., we are going to have a time when we are going to relax and close our eyes.’ I think that kids would really get into it. I think they would appreciate it but I haven’t done it. The year I came back from Thailand I did and they were pretty receptive. I can just imagine taking 3 minutes, three times a day, just to sit quietly- maybe with some nice music playing. I should try it! It would be interesting to see if you did it right before lunch, if you would have fewer problems at recess or if you do it after they come back from lunch, how the afternoon would go. If there would be any kind of calming effect on them. It isn’t

a huge time commitment. It just seems like I don't have 5 minutes to do anything else.

Naomi introduced deep breathing and movement exercises to her students after the study period ended and she reported they responded favorably. During one of our biweekly sessions, Naomi shared some of the activities she had been doing with her students with the teachers in the group. She had found a book that included energy movement exercises for children. At the time of the final interview, it was too soon for Naomi to observe any changes in her students. All she could report was that her students enjoyed doing these exercises and she felt it was good to get them up and moving during the day.

Deeper appreciation of others.

Contemplative Knowing seemed to cultivate a deeper appreciation of others. At the end of the study, all participants expressed a heightened awareness of whom or what was important in their life. Thoughts of immediate family members –children and spouses– often surfaced during their meditation sessions. They would send thoughts of loving kindness to family members and in return think more kindly of them. During her pre-study interview, Naomi expressed anger and frustration with her brother and noted she had difficulty maintaining close relationships. In her final study interview, she shared ways she was working on strengthening family relationships.

Slowing up and meditating does make me think more about my family. Making contacts with other people is more important. I called my sister before Christmas and that was good and I called my brother and I don't usually get in touch with him. ...[Daughter] has called and said that she is pregnant, I need to keep

reaching out there because I have a tendency to pull back- even with family.

Contemplative practices encouraged all of the participants to think more deeply about the painful issues their families were experiencing and the ways they could support these family members. They were coping with parents no longer able to care for themselves, health issues facing aging parents and other family members, strained personal relationships with adult siblings, or a relative's struggle to overcome loss and emptiness after the death of her spouse. Simply thinking about these family members in a loving way, helped participants become more appreciative and compassionate of them.

Contemplative Knowing helped participants cultivate ways to feel fully alive and aware of the present moment. They experienced people and places differently. Elizabeth practiced living in the now when she went for walks. She would spend time noticing the flowers, appreciating the different landscapes along the way and gained a new appreciation for places she passed many times before.

You can mull over a lot when you are walking...like thinking about that awful accident with C.G. and then walking by his farm...you know, it is kind of like the history. I walked by the barn thinking about the activity going on there. It makes me appreciate or respect history and people.

Using a nonjudgmental lens to look within gave participants permission to learn from their mistakes and develop the attitude that *"if I screw up, it is OK."* Participants also reported being *"more forgiving"* of them selves. This unconditional acceptance of themselves led to a deeper, more compassionate appreciation of others. This attitude seemed to spill over into the classroom. Kristen mentioned that she found herself a little more accepting and giving in her classroom. If students were a little noisier than usual or

if all their eyes were not totally focused on her during direction time, she was not so annoyed about their behavior. She now reminded herself they were “*just kids*” and it really didn’t make that much of a difference in the end.

Resistance to Contemplative Knowing

Contemplative Knowing is gained when an individual learns to communicate with the mind/body/spirit. This results in a deeper understanding of our whole being, our multidimensional self. The process of exploring these deep hidden truths reveals previous experiences or a new awareness of the self that is painful to work through. Human nature seems to prefer avoiding unpleasant experiences. For participants in this study, avoidance came in the form of resistance. These teachers began the study excited about participating in a group experience and what they would be learning. All participants experienced resistance to meditation practice about 3 or 4 weeks into the study. During the next few weeks, participants’ feelings of resistance increased. Their logical mind supplied them with many reasons why they shouldn’t or couldn’t engage in contemplative practices.

Naomi wrote,

I am my greatest challenge-finding the time, but really ‘taking the time’ for myself. I’ve struggled with this forever. I’ve always found projects to do instead of finding enjoyment for myself. Relaxing is an activity that is difficult for me. I use the excuse of having a full time teaching job that keeps me so busy, but in reality, I’d managed to find projects without a regular commitment. Even in the summer I tend to stay busy and not read a book or do something just for myself.”

Contemplative Knowing involves the ability to listen to the body in different ways and attend to subtle body messages. For one participant, this experience was frightening.

When I do feel something in my body, I panic about it. I have a tendency to say, 'Oh, my God, what is wrong with me?' and I can get myself sick being in tune with my body ...I churn on it and worry about it."

Subtle energetic body sensations communicate different types of messages to the body. Some of these messages are early warning signals that the individual needs to change something in his or her life, but others are positive and affirming. If an individual is already filled with anxiety or fear, the dialogue between the body/mind/spirit will not be an open and free flowing form of communication. It is likely the person will receive and send mixed messages. He or she may actually become physically ill as a result of being filled with anxiety, negative thoughts and feelings. Thoughts can drive feelings and emotions. Action follows thought or emotion. Fear puts the body system into an alert state. Constant fear weakens the immune system's ability to fight off disease. Eventually the person may become physically ill.

Taoist teaching (Chia & Chia, 1993; Liang, Wu & Wu, 1997) advises individuals to stop their meditation session when they feel resistance or pain, but tell their students to remain diligent and return to meditation every day. Slowly the individual is able to chip away at the internal barrier and eventually the resistance and pain will leave once the blockage is freed. This may be good advice for those who feel intense fear or anxiety when communicating with the mind/body/spirit.

All participants were challenged to find a space to practice contemplative exercises, even in their own homes. They were continually interrupted by telephone calls, spouses, children or other distractions. One person never found a good place to meditate.

Although most participants thought early morning meditations could have worked, none were willing to start their day any earlier than they already did.

The Contemplative Knower

Based on data from this study, the Contemplative Knower

- practices nonjudgmental self observation
- uses reflective, introspective thinking
- actively develops a wider range of multi-sensory modalities and uses their increased understanding of the senses to enhance daily life
- cultivates a 'go with the flow attitude' mindset
- recognizes and honors the inner rhythm and needs of the mind/body/spirit
- willingly explores internal deep hidden truths
- practices living life in the present moment
- maintains a philosophy of self acceptance and forgiveness
- nurtures a sense of deep appreciation and contentment with the self

Artistic/Creative Knowing

Artistic Knowing is a multi-sensory way of knowing. Visual images, sound, words, intuitive and creative thought is used singly or in combination as a form of symbolic communication. This type of knowing involves a non linear form of thinking and is able to capture the raw, primal truth of the human character through deep exploration and expression of the inner self. There is a reflective aspect to the artistic creative process that relates to the way we process information and live our lives. In ancient times and in Eastern and traditional Native American culture, this way of knowing was used to tap into sacred or spiritual dimensions. Data from this study revealed Artistic/Creative

Knowing offers the multidimensional self a connection to the inner and sacred self, a tool for expressing thoughts, experiences or feelings that are unable to be expressed in words or can be better expressed through this mode of communication and gives life meaning. This group of teachers acquired Artistic/Creative Knowing by being immersed in this type of culture while growing up or from formal art instruction. They applied Artistic/Creative Knowing to classroom instruction, lesson planning and experienced it when they are immersed in the act of creating and enter into a flow state or a state of joyful, relaxation.

All of the teachers in this study enjoyed artistic/creative expressive acts. Music was valued for its calming effect by all but one participant. All believed performing and visual arts should be a core component of the elementary/middle level curriculum. All of the participants valued creative instruction. Study participants acquired artistic/creative knowing by being immersed in an artistic culture or being taught by an artistic person. Two of the participants studied art at the college level. Teachers predominantly applied artistic knowing in their instruction and lesson planning. Although there was a strong appreciation for artistic expression, some of the teachers in this group felt uncomfortable moving out of the role of observer and into active engagement with the arts.

Music's Healing Vibrations

Music is a form of entertainment in the United States that is an accepted method of artistic expression. Elizabeth plays piano and is a music lover. *"I like music. I like to listen and I am blown away by people who can play music."* Music is seen as much more than entertainment in many cultures (Campbell, 1991; Cousto, 1988; Gaynor, 2002; Gardner, 1997). According to Taoist Chinese wisdom teachings, music was one of the

basic means of improving and refining human life (Cousto, 1988). Many societies have relied on music for sacred and healing purposes. Most of the teachers in this study valued music for reasons other than entertainment. They found music helped them settle their minds during meditation sessions. They experimented listening to different types of music while meditating and tried meditating in total silence. Sally tried listening to jazz during one of her meditation sessions because she loved jazz. Jazz was great for increasing her energy level but not for entering into a relaxed state. Jazz vibes made her want to move, not sit quietly. Elizabeth preferred to meditate in silence because her house was always filled with music playing in the background. Most of the participants chose to play soft, calming music while they were meditating. Music, combined with meditation, offered most participants an aid or tool to silence the chatter of their mind and also put them in an altered state of consciousness.

It appears music is a tool for healing our frenzied society but deeper analysis is needed to understand how music actually calms or energizes the body. Western scientists believe the vibration sound patterns released during the Big Bang holds the key to understanding how matter in the physical universe is organized (Gerber, 2001). It is at this point where Eastern and Western thought is in agreement. Many eastern cultures believe everything seen and unseen, including humans, is filled with vibrations that come from a single universal source. In India, the belief is that the universe hangs on a cosmic vibration that is all encompassing (Beaulieu, 1987, p.35). Western and Eastern thinking appears to agree that sound vibrations contain profound information, and connect us to our universe. In India and many other cultures, sound is sacred. Music is an expression of the sacred and a sacred link between humans and a higher universal order.

Western society has lost its connection to the sacredness of sound and the use of music as a healing tool (Gardner, 1997; Gaynor, 2002). The healing power of music involves some important sound principles such as entrainment (Beaulieu, 1987; Hart, 1990), resonance (Cousto, 1988), transcendence (Halpern, 1985), intent (Andrews, 2003), the power of vibrational healing (Andrews, 2003; Gerber 2001), and connection to the universe (Andrews, 2003; Gerber, 2001).

Music facilitates the mind/body/spirit connection. Music is nonverbal and moves through the auditory cortex directly to the emotional response center (Halpern, 1985, p.102). Music may also activate memory flow across the corpus callosum, creating harmony between the two hemispheres of the brain (Halpern, 1985). Music can help define our emotions, compose our moods, evoke imagery and be an antidote to stress. Halpern describes music as a carrier wave for consciousness. Music and sound may be used as sources of energy and as a way to correct energy imbalances in the body and mind (Halpern, 1985; Gardner, 1997; Gaynor, 2002).

The entire mind/body/spirit is affected by sound. Sound waves can change the frequencies of brain waves and move the brain into different states of consciousness from alert to relaxed (Gaynor, 2002; Goldman, 2000) therefore, sound is an excellent aid to meditation because sound can alter consciousness and even silence thoughts. Calming music can slow your breath rate, heart beat and brain waves. Quick paced, loud music can increase your breath rate, heart beat and brain waves (Goldman, 2000). Often the music that is best for relaxation or used as a learning aid is music that is less interesting, more repetitious, monotonous, sparse, and slow similar to shamanic drumming. Slow Classical music is often recommended for relaxation. Steven Halpern's music is composed

specifically for relaxation and this music is known to induce alpha waves in 95% of the people who listen to it (Halpern, 1985). During the normal waking period, brain waves pulse at a frequency of 14-20 hertz or cycles per second. This is known as Beta state. The brain enters into an alpha state when the brain waves slow to 8-13 hertz. This is usually the frequency of brain waves while in a meditative state.

A teacher in this study's listening preference alternated between Halpern's tapes and Classical music. Other's selected calming music from other cultures. Some enjoyed listening to tapes that verbally guided their meditation and had soft music playing in the background. Others were annoyed by the tone of the person's voice or the background music in those tapes. The teachers alternated the music they listened to according to their mood. Although all the tapes were developed to help individuals enter into a relaxed state, participants did not use the same tape each time they meditated and each person responded to the sounds differently.

What makes particular music healing for someone may be because it contains the qualities that are lacking in oneself or one's life. Teachers experiencing a high stress state may need to listen to music with lower tones than teachers in lower stress states or who are feeling calm. Highly stressed teachers may be drawn to music that is composed of music with lower tones that vibrate at lower rates or more of the vibration frequencies they need to readjust their body's vibrations. After a few minutes of listening to these sound vibrations, the body's energetic field begins to resonate at those same vibration frequencies and they are able to experience a calmer state of being.

Music can have different purposes. Jazz, as Sally discovered, is not a tool to use to calm the body. Jazz music may be excellent for ratcheting up the energy level of teachers

and students when they are feeling tired or are working on a routine project. Although this study did not examine the effects of music on a teachers energy level or emotional state, it is one that merits further study because of the implication that sound could alter the emotional state of individuals in the classroom, affecting classroom climate and student learning.

Artistic/Creative Knowing in the Core Curriculum

As mentioned earlier, 6 of these 7 teachers had studied in China, Japan or Thailand. Those teachers envied the visual and performing artistic abilities of the children and adults in those societies and the comfort students and adults showed while performing or sharing their artistic abilities with others. From an early age, students are taught to sing, dance, play instruments and learn traditional art techniques in school. Adults sang karaoke solos, danced, practiced calligraphy skills on the sidewalks, and performed Tai Ji Quan and sword dances in parks. Artistic expression permeates Asian gardens, architecture, private homes and community spaces. Aesthetics and attention to detail is important. Japanese meals are not only delicious, but visual delights. Each meal is arranged to please the eye, the spirit, and the taste buds. The Thai people create intricately carved fruit masterpieces for special meals. The arts are taught in schools and expected to be integrated in all aspects of adult social life. In these cultures, art is a way of knowing and being. It creates a balance in the mind/body/spirit.

All of the teachers in the study believed the arts should become a more integral part of their school curriculum. The 3 elementary teachers in this study who worked in the same K-8 school were expected to teach art but admitted they neglected art instruction. At the beginning of the study one of these teachers said,

I don't allow that kind of time [art instruction] in the classroom. The only place where that comes in is when I use technology. That is the place when I use classroom time and via technology, creativity occurs.

These 3 teachers didn't see themselves as possessing any artistic ability. One teacher said, *"I wish I was artistic, I am not very artistic at all."*

Another lamented, *"I am not creative artistically. I don't feel that I am creative or artistic."*

All of these teachers, even the 3 who claimed to lack artistic creativity, were unhappy with the current direction of education because there is less time for creativity and artistic expression in the classroom. All 7 of the teachers expressed concern about the current state of art education in schools. They felt a strong arts program was important to develop the whole child.

The teachers in the study who easily integrated art in classroom instruction spent time with artistic individuals or were encouraged by an artistic person and received formal art instruction. Melanie demonstrated artistic knowing.

My mother was a fifth grade teacher and she went back to teaching when I was in second grade so I always saw her do these wonderful creative things in the classroom....When I grew really interested in clothing my parents bought me a [sewing] machine and I was creative.

Melanie was immersed in a creative, artistic environment at an early age. She witnessed her mother's creativity and enthusiasm for integrating the arts into her classroom. Melanie began sewing and creating her own style of clothing in her adolescent years. Melanie's creations were recognized and appreciated among her peers. That

satisfying experience led her to pursue a college education in home economics. Although Melanie no longer teaches home economics, she continues to take art classes and integrates the arts in the work she does with her students and in her personal life.

Melanie integrated artistic expression in her work with students in the classroom. Each year her students created mandalas. She used the mandala as a symbolic tool to talk to her students about their similarities and differences. She taught poetic expression, paper and book making. Melanie was very comfortable with artistic creative expression. She thrived in the creative world. In fact, she was uncomfortable when she taught something the same way more than three times. Melanie knew she was a “*creative, not the book, test, lecture kind of teacher.*”

Creative expression is important part of Melanie’s personal life as well. She has a highly symbolic relationship with an author friend. “*We have a theme in our friendship of a clothesline. We always expose our dirty laundry to each other.*” They exchange photos and cards that relate to this theme. Melanie’s friend has a special closet for posting all of Melanie’s notes, photos and cards. In her own home, Melanie composed poetry, made paper, sketched and created collages. Melanie used art as a way to connect with her mind/body/spirit. Art gave meaning and purpose to her life.

Sally used art to relax. “*I have a hobby-me, VPR and art. I love going down into my basement. This is where I do my artwork and can spend hours there.*” Sally enjoyed being able to totally engage in this form of expression. When Sally and Melanie became totally immersed in the creation process, they reported feeling like they were in a meditative state. Buddhist monks talk of being in the flow state. This happens when the body/mind/spirit is synchronized with each other and work is experienced as effortless.

Both Sally and Melanie appeared to receive many benefits from expressing themselves through art.

Chris, a former art and media instructor, continued to appreciate and engage in artistic creative expression during her retirement years. She used the arts to connect her inner with her sacred self. During meditation, Chris sometimes felt the presence of spiritual guides in her life. She decided to put a visual form to her inner guides by drawing their images. The process of giving them form on paper helped her see these guides with more clarity in her mind's eye. Now, when she thinks of her guides, she has an image to attach to them, making it easier for her to connect with them.

It appears the teachers who had been exposed to artistic knowing either by participating in formal art instruction or working alongside an artistic person, were comfortable using this form of expression in their personal and professional lives. The teachers in this study without an artistic background or experiences felt incompetent and uncomfortable expressing themselves in this way and tended to avoid or rarely encourage their students to use artistic expression in the classroom.

Creative Instruction and Lesson Planning

All of the teachers in the study used their creativity while planning lessons and classroom instruction. Naomi reported,

I spend time trying to create activities that are engaging and that is creative for me and keeps my mind active for sure....I want to keep learning and growing, when that desire stops it will be the end of me... I have to learn something new every year for myself. I can't repeat the same show as last year. It has to have a spark to it somehow.

Kristin enjoyed creating units of study. *“There is something about pulling a unit together versus opening a book. It creates more of a spark on their [the students] part and me too.”* Based on the results of this study, it appears regardless of these teachers feelings about their visual or musical artistic abilities, they appreciated and valued creativity and expressed creative thought through a medium they were comfortable using, planning classroom instruction to shape student learning in the classroom.

At the end of the study, Naomi was beginning to think more deeply about the role of artistic creative expression in her life.

I don't have a creative outlet like crocheting or sewing or knitting or painting... So for me spending time looking for things on the internet related to technology and developing lessons is my creative outlet... Geez, what am I going to do when I am not teaching?

Resistance to Artistic/Creative Knowing

Based on the results of the teachers in this study, it appears that it is not uncommon for teachers to feel uncomfortable and resist using art as a form of expression and communication. During the year, Naomi made plans for an artist in residence to work with students in the school. As the artist's visit neared, she was experiencing tension and pressure because she was preparing her students for their upcoming national assessments. She hesitated “giving up” precious instructional time to this artist, but felt it was something her students needed. *“It sounds like a great activity... but there goes a big hunk of time in the afternoon that could have been used to do other things.”* This study points to the fact that individuals not exposed to creative artistic experiences through

Folkway or Formal Knowing sources may never learn to feel comfortable expressing or knowing themselves in this way.

Although all the study participants enjoyed art and music as a form of entertainment, many felt threatened or intimidated when they were asked to create or express themselves artistically. The 3 teachers who had previous art instruction did not express this fear or intimidation and did use visual, artistic expression to communicate in their meditation journals. The other 4 participants experienced anxiety immediately after I discussed the mandala's use as a data collection tool. Mandalas capture colors, images or feelings that may be extremely difficult to describe in words. I wanted them to creatively express their meditation experiences and not be limited by words. Anxieties continued to surface throughout the study when teachers would meet and hand in their journals. The teachers asked questions such as, "*Is this what you want?*" or "*I can't really draw, I am not an artist.*" Many of the teachers said they didn't have time to color a mandala AND write in their journal, even though one could be used in place of the other.

Melanie copied mandala templates for the group because she felt this would help scaffold this creative act and remove the initial intimidation of creative expression by providing structure to the activity. She talked about how she used mandalas in the classroom and in her personal life. The teachers selected the photocopied template designs they liked. These template mandalas were used by 4 of the study participants to capture the colors or feelings they experienced while meditating once or twice. Yet, this was done in order to satisfy the requirements of the study and not in the spirit of self-expression. Even though most of the group members didn't respond well to the use of

mandalas themselves, 2 of these teachers used them in their classroom with their students.

All of the teachers in this study were very comfortable using logic, reasoning and words to express themselves. Only three were able to use art as a means of expressing themselves or as a means of connecting with their mind/body/spirit. Based on this group's data, it appears that artistic/creative expression is not learned well from being a passive observer in an audience. Watching a dance or musical performance or walking through an art gallery does not provide the type of learning necessary for artistic knowing. Those who were active in the process of artistic creating experienced art through the heart, hand, and mind and acquired this knowledge through Formal or Folkway Knowing. They either were taught through formal instruction or grew up in a family where artistic expression was modeled by one parent. Without these fully integrative artistic experiences, these teachers only know art in a detached manner. They were not able to communicate or express their deep inner selves as an artistic creative knower.

The Artistic/Creative Knower

Based on the data from this study, the Artistic/Creative Knower:

- actively engages in the act of artistic/creative expression
- appreciates working and living in an artistic/creative environment
- uses artistic/creative methods to connect the inner self with the outer world
- understands sound vibrations from music alters the feelings, thoughts and emotional state of themselves and others and uses music to bring their mind/body/spirit state back into balance

- explores the connection between artistic creative expression and the sacred or spiritual dimensions of the self and/or universe
- enters a free flowing creative/mental state when engaged in artistic/creative expressive acts
- views the act of artistic creation as a way to maintain or bring harmony or balance to the mind/body/spirit

Spiritual Knowing

Accessing spiritual ways or dimensions of knowing presented challenges for most of the teachers in this study. Five of the 7 teachers in this study struggled to talk about spirituality. This was largely due to negative feelings they had towards organized religion. The study found the group did hold similar spiritual values and beliefs. They valued spiritual ways of knowing as a blueprint or guide on how to live life and connect living on earth to a larger, universal purpose. These teachers gained spiritual understanding or ways of knowing from nature's lessons or through spiritual guides who provided a connection to the unknown.

Spiritual Knowing, as it relates to this study, was experienced or realized when individuals remained open and appreciative to the awe, revelation, reverence, intuition, wonder and mysteries felt or experienced in daily life; when they practices living spontaneously and directly by engaging in the "all" of the experience. This kind of knowing helped these teachers feel more intimately connected to the whole universe. Spiritual Knowing is difficult to express through words and ideas. It does not relate to religion or religious doctrines, although the religious path can offer spiritual knowledge.

Spirituality as a Blueprint for Living

All of the teachers in this study expressed a desire to connect with their spiritual self.

I have a need for something spiritual in my life, believing in something- that there is a purpose to our existence, maybe, that we are here for a reason and have some sort of something that we should accomplish or some way we should give our life so that when we are gone, we were here for a reason.

At the end of the study, Chris described how meditation served this purpose.

It [meditation] has a spiritual dimension to it...Relaxation isn't something I am looking for in meditation. My goal can be looked at as spiritual or not... it is a way of being. I want to live directly, spontaneously, being open and accepting. It might not happen for many lives, but at my age, I am retired...I have time. I can choose to do with it what I want to some degree. I have a need for something spiritual in my life - believing in something. [Knowing] that there is a purpose to our existence, that we are here for a reason and have some sort of something that we should accomplish or some way we should give our life so that when we are gone, we were here for a reason.

Chris was looking to recapture something in her life that we are born with-the ability to live directly and spontaneously. Few people in American culture are living directly and spontaneously. American culture suppresses spontaneity. According to Dr. Suryani (personal communication, February 26, 2003), a highly respected Balinese psychologist and traditional healer, the Balinese “act and then think” while Americans “think and then act.” In her view neither is better than the other because both ways are valid response methods in different situations. Dr. Suryani believes western cultures fail to develop

intuitive qualities within the individual and inhibit creative, spontaneous forms of expression.

Balinese people live in a culture that values intuition and spiritual development. Their culture emphasizes a spiritual lifestyle and the people have no difficulty recognizing the sacred and spiritual dimensions of themselves, their environment, and universe. Their lives are filled with spiritual rituals and celebrations. The Balinese people regularly invite spirits into their families and communities to help them resolve conflict or problems. They regularly seek advice from Spiritual Knowers and healers. They celebrate the New Year by remaining at home meditating and reflecting on life. The people of Bali maintain a strong connection to the physical and spiritual world. They have many different ways of knowing and connecting with themselves, their world and beyond. Bali is a wonderful example of a society that has managed to keep its ancient spiritual beliefs and practices alive, even in the center of its most modern cities. Spiritual life is part of their way of being while at work or at home. The temple is only one of many places where spiritual knowing is cultivated. There is much American spiritual seekers can learn from cultures such as this. Balinese culture reflects Chris' desire to live directly and spontaneously as a spiritual way of living.

Intimate Connection to the Universe

Of the 7 teachers who participated in the study, 6 valued meditation because it felt spiritual. Religion played an important part in Elizabeth's life when she was growing up. She enjoyed going to church and attending religious services. Attending church and its related activities served as a social outlet, a place to sing with a group and be with other people. Elizabeth never connected spiritually to religion. Elizabeth accessed her spiritual

self when she meditated. *“Meditation is spiritual in a nebulous sort of way. This is very lonely, this is just me.”*

Sally spoke of the enjoyment she received from attending Christmas mass and hearing the songs and music played. She did not feel spiritually connected during those times but did with meditation. She struggled when she tried to explain why. *“Meditation feels spiritual to me and I don’t know why because it also feels very personal and I think spiritual has to be more than personal.”*

Sally continued to think more deeply about the meaning of spirituality in her life throughout the study. During the post study interview, she felt a need to clarify her initial thoughts on spirituality. She described an internet web site she stumbled across that captured the essence of how a spiritual knower relates to the world.

There is a point when you see things at a 1:1 reality on a leaf and then with the click of a mouse you step in to the leaf to the 100th power. So if you are going inside you are going to eventually get down to the cellular level, chromosome level, electron level... Part of this is a real picture- the leaf and the cell. Beyond that is the artist representation of the internal structure. Then if you go the other way, you are stepping out so you are looking down at the tree, looking down at the earth.... Some of these are real pictures taken from satellites. Then of course when you go out further, you are looking at the solar systems. And you know what? It all looks the same! When you look at the universe, it looks like the electron, it looks like that sub particle and that feels spiritual to me.”

Sally’s description refers to the spiritual feeling of universal oneness. She was able to relate the interconnectedness of the leaf to the electron or the solar system. This internet

site gave Sally a visual model that showed what she had been struggling to explain in words. This site provided her with a way to articulate the essence of what makes something feel spiritual to her. This example demonstrates how artistic/creative expression can communicate far more effectively than words. This visual tool was the link Sally needed to be able to put her feelings and thoughts about spirituality into words.

Lessons from Nature

All 7 teachers in this study felt a deep connection with nature. Based on the responses of the teachers in this group, nature provided many opportunities to grow and develop their spiritual self.

Moving to Vermont was a huge eye opener for me. That was an awakening of this whole love of the outdoors. I can remember driving on the interstate that didn't have any billboards and looking up and seeing these beautiful mountains with these views. It was incredible, I was just blown away...beautiful dirt roads, lake and mountains. It made such an impression on me that I was able to just turn my back on everything in Connecticut and leave it all behind. It was all part of the Vermont aura.

Kristen was swept up in the “Vermont aura.” At that moment she was awakened and made a spontaneous and courageous decision to “turn her back on everything” and move to Vermont.

Over the years, Kristen learned to separate spirituality from religion. Like Elizabeth, Kristen enjoyed the social life of church while growing up but didn't feel a spiritual connection. *“I think my spiritualism has become more outside and it is just different. It is a transition or shift that has taken place over the years. I go out in the woods and that is my church. I do feel like I have a lot of spirituality. I made the shift.”* The shift Kristen

referred to was a shift in mindset, recognizing the difference between religion and spirituality. Catholicism did not feed Kristen's spiritual appetite. The awe and inspiration she receives from nature fills this spiritual void.

Elizabeth echoed similar feelings, *"I have always sort of thought that nature was my spiritualness....Spiritual moments don't have to be religious. I think spiritualism is coming up over the hill out of [name of town] and just loving that view, thinking this view is so gorgeous! This world is just so beautiful."* Elizabeth felt a deep connection to herself, her community, and the world by connecting with the natural environment around her home. Words such as gorgeous and beautiful do not adequately capture the deep appreciation, the intense emotional energy, the total sensory engagement that nature uses to teach spirituality.

Elizabeth described another lesson from nature that was spiritual. *"... just walking around in the woods, it was so cool, so invigorating and calming. I walked right along the top of a rock ledge and walking on that rock is somehow just great. ..Like how many others have taken this route?"*

Elizabeth was awe struck from experiencing that moment in time. When she shared this information during our final interview, her minds eye and body recaptured the image and feeling of that moment. She glanced to the side and paused. She sat back in her chair and said, *"It was wonderful, it was really cool."* Nature once again provided a lesson in spirituality. Each time Elizabeth is able to capture the "all" of the moment, her spiritual self is awakened. These are the moments when the self is fully engaged and alive. Experiencing these moments require individuals to slow our pace, calm our minds, heighten our senses and open our multidimensional selves to our surroundings,

appreciating all that is offered in that moment of time. Adults living in a busy world won't experience this unless they intentionally cultivate what was once a natural way of appreciating and knowing our world.

Spiritual Guides

During one of the last study sessions, a spiritual healer was invited to present to the group. This provided the group with the ability to interact with someone who was comfortable entering into the spiritual world of the unknown and expose them to a way of knowing that our culture is unable to explain and accept.

Elijah, a retired military man, began experiencing sacred visions and connected with animal and human spirits a few years ago. Rather than dismiss or fear the messages he received, he listened and responded. Elijah believes he is "just a conduit" for receiving messages from a higher source. Elijah helps individuals release the emotional trauma they have suffered in the past that is creating emotional or physical pain and illness and energy blockages in the body. According to Elijah, trauma is locked into human cellular memory and is passed along from one generation to the next. When Elijah does spiritual healing work, he decodes messages he receives from family or friends who have some type of spiritual connection with the person he is treating. Often the friends or families guiding him are deceased. These messages come to him in many small increments. By the end of the session, the individual and Elijah have pieced together his or her traumatic event into a cohesive event that makes sense. The individual may have uncovered information that was stored away for a long time that is driving this emotional or physical dis-ease.

The teachers in this study group had never experienced this way of knowing. They weren't sure what to do with the information they gained from his work. Their brain did not know how to file or associate this information with previous learning, probably because this was not part of their way of knowing the world. It was not part of their life experiences. *"Boy, I don't know what to say what I got out of that [Elijah's Talk]....it is like one of those things that is just sitting back there somewhere and I am not sure what to do with it."*

Elijah led the group through several exercises that showed how intent, or positive and negative thoughts, can increase or decrease a person's physical energy and strength. Elijah then demonstrated his form of spiritual healing. Melanie, the *"spiritual seeker, not afraid to go to higher places,"* agreed to participate in the demonstration. She approached Elijah's work with healthy skepticism. Elijah scanned her energy fields by placing his hands several inches away from her body and running through her energy field from the top of her head to her feet. This initial scan located the areas experiencing energy blockages. Elijah returned to those areas and began receiving messages from a higher source. In this case, the image of the person he described as helping him was identified by Melanie as her deceased father. Melanie did not volunteer much information but did verify what Elijah was reporting was something she experienced. Her father's spirit helped Elijah piece together the tragic death of her brother as the emotional trauma Melanie hadn't been able to release. Elijah felt that Melanie's on going battles with different forms of cancer was directly related to this event. Melanie was stunned by Elijah's accuracy and believed he had a special gift.

I think because he [Elijah] did say things that were uncanny, things that he wouldn't

have known about me- like the beagle, like the toy truck, the hole, then he went around and touched the cross...and asked me if I was a religious person....Those are things that he wouldn't have known about me that makes me want to know some more. Then towards the end he started getting a little close [revealing things about her personal life] and that is when I started feeling a little uncomfortable in the group because I didn't want him exposing everything. But that was valuable. I would relate that [his ability] to intuition and a connection to something else, a gift,...something spiritual and a giftedness. Something I can't put into a category.

Naomi, like the others, had difficulty assimilating what she learned from Elijah's talk into her life.

He made me think more about those who have passed over and made that intent more plausible. I think we've got to be in another dimension to do that. He is in another dimension and there are people who aren't going to believe him. You've got to have that belief in order to go there.

Elijah's way of knowing the world left the teachers with more questions than answers, and they asked many questions while he was there. Most teachers in the group would agree with Chris' comment, *"I would like to know more about those things but I haven't had enough personal positive experience to really, really believe it yet."* Elijah's work brought the group to the limitations of their spiritual understanding. It was the boundary where their cultural belief and experiences came in contact with unknown and inexperienced realms. These teachers had a choice, they could either dismiss Elijah's spiritual connections as quackery or unworthy of knowing or become spiritual seekers, searching to understand more about this way of knowing themselves and connections to

the source of universal energy. If they never traveled to the extreme boundaries of their spiritual limits for a brief visit of what might be, they would not even think about other possibilities.

Chris received a spiritual gift during a guided meditation. Two guides entered her life. She came to know one of these guides as her spiritual guide and the other as more of a critical friend who helped her move through the “*inertia*” she experienced from time to time.

My spiritual guide is helpful. One is around during my rainbow meditation. The rainbow is a feeling I get when I do certain meditations. I am getting to know it better and use it differently. My spiritual guide shows up in the rainbow meditation. The other guide I forget a lot. He shows up in daily life- like for the inertia. It is usually for stupid things like, ‘OK, you see string on the floor? Are you going to pick it up?’ And Sam [her spiritual guide] will say, ‘Come on, come on.’ He is like a gentle coach. I feel Sam’s presence at times, sometimes not at all. He just pops in. I don’t intentionally call to him. Sometimes if I am not doing something then I might think, ‘Oh, yeah what about Sam? He would want me to...’

Becoming Spiritual Knowers.

Sally, along with most of the other teachers in the study, had difficulty discussing spirituality out of the context of church and relating it to their daily lives during the pre-study interview. Sally struggled to articulate what spirituality meant to her at the beginning of the study but during the post study interview, felt she had a clearer sense of what that was.

To have a strength of character, to feel there is a greater meaning to your life than

simply to earn your money, go to Florida, that kind of thing. The good you do for other people is spread to other people and other people and we are all interconnected that way. The way you look at your life and the lives of the people around you.

At the beginning of the study 2 of the teachers mentioned their confusion around religion. They explored different religions and weren't sure which path they should take. By the end of the study, 1 of them decided to pursue Buddhism.

Last night I had this great dream that indicated to me that I was ready to dive in...Spiritual practice is broad but I do want to continue with my Buddhist practice and continue where I left off... I had committed to a Buddhist path and dropped it for a long time and I am isolated from any group...but I am willing to go to Burlington once a month to make some connection. I could probably get a meditation instructor that I could talk to every month and get some guidance and instruction. I am clearer as to where I want to go.

All of the teachers in this study aspired to living their life more simply in a spiritual, connected way, not driven by consumption and materialism. It appears that these teachers were looking for ways to lead a more spiritual life. Most of the teachers in the study had not devoted much time to think about their own spirituality before the study began. Nature was the only area in their life that provided spiritual lessons. Data from the participants post study interviews and meditation journals, showed some of the teachers were able to experience the "all" in a natural place after engaging in regular meditation. Participants became more aware of their senses and used these to connect with nature and themselves. Although most teachers in this study were interested in learning relaxation techniques, it appears they received another benefit. Regular meditation practice that did

not include specific religious teachings or practices, gave these teachers a clearer spiritual voice and understanding of their own spiritual needs.

Resistance and Challenges to Spiritual Knowing

Pre-study interviews revealed 5 of the 7 teachers in this study immediately associated religion with spirituality. Religion was the lens most of the teachers in this study used to discuss their spiritual life. Many of the teachers in this study struggled to answer the pre-study question about their own spirituality or thoughts about spiritual health. Sally returned to this topic at the end of the study.

During the first interview, I didn't know how to define spirituality out of the realm of church. When I try to define spiritualism and take it out of the realm of the Church with a capital C, then I am left trying to define it and I really don't know how to say it.

Guilt and shame were associated with these religious experiences. Their noncompliant attitude towards their own family religion and its practices were a source of guilt. None of the teachers in this study attended church regularly and most were complacent about or in direct conflict with religious doctrines or practices. According to this study, Folkway Knowing is a very effective method of transmitting core family values except those relating to spirituality.

Kristen attended parochial school and her parents were devout Catholics. She tried to connect with Catholicism several times in her adult years. Her most recent experience caused her to leave the church permanently. Her church community's response to Vermont's Civil Union bill resulted in Kristen's decision to leave her local parish and the Catholic religion. *"The whole hypocrisy overwhelms me. 40% of the entire priest hood is*

homosexual and yet they condemn people for this lifestyle. It is just so wrong! I don't want to have anything to do with it at this point." It was the conflict between their personal values and religious positions on different social issues that caused the teachers in this study to separate themselves from organized religion.

Organized religion does not address the spiritual needs of people who are searching for inspiration and reaffirmation of life's purpose (Greenspan, 1995, pp 113-122). The 2 educators who were "spiritual seekers" were not looking to attend a church regularly. They were seeking a spiritual direction and path that would involve their whole way of being. It appears that the teachers in this study had to unlearn their religious beliefs to be able to connect with their spiritual self. According to Greenspan (1995),

By the time schools get around to teaching certain aspects of living, much unlearning may be required for people to begin again with a reasonable awareness of the world around them...Spiritual development may come as a natural instinct, but it can also be developed, evolved, and taught to people willing to work hard. (p 116)

Spiritual life is difficult to pursue in a society that does not recognize or value spiritual beings. This limits our ability to open our minds and hearts to spiritual ways of knowing. The spiritual component of the Multi-Dimensional Knower may be the most difficult of all to nurture and grow in contemporary American life and education.

The Spiritual Knower

Based on the data from this study, a Spiritual Knower:

- remains open, appreciative and humble to the wonders of nature and daily living
- receptive to knowledge about the unexplainable or unexplained through spiritual guides or from nature

- allocates time for spending time alone in nature to connect the self with the spiritual world
- cultivates the practice of engaging in the 'ALL' of the experience or situation
- believes all lives have a greater meaning and purpose while on earth
- feels an interconnectedness to all things in the universe & beyond
- actively seeks spiritual experiences
- infuses the ability to live directly and spontaneously in daily life

An Example of Multi-Dimensional Knowing in Practice

Teachers in this study learned more about themselves and became Multi-Dimensional Knowers. They listened and responded more consciously and with a clearer intent to their bodies. After practicing the mind/body/spirit exercises and techniques they were taught, study participants gained access to different dimensions of their inner self that resulted in an increase in their knowledge of the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual self. Finally, they learned to honor and acknowledge the multi-sensory messages their received from their bodies.

One teacher provided a detailed example of a situation that involved the full spectrum of multi-dimensional knowing that she believed she handled more effectively because of her new willingness to trust in her intuition and to listen to her body. She was intentionally focusing on becoming more trusting of her intuition and heart. This teacher spent a great deal of time designing a lesson she felt was quite creative and engaging. She put her artistic skills to work by creating decorations for the room in hopes of bringing the lesson to life for the students. She invested quite a bit of her personal time and

creative energy in preparing this learning activity. She selected the content for this lesson that she felt had meaning and relevancy to the students.

As mentioned earlier, the first few classes loved the lesson. She felt their positive energy and this increased her own energy level. She was in a very positive emotional state. The last class' response was dramatically different from the others. She felt the combined negative energy force of this group of students overpower her positive energy. The more energy and effort or push force this teacher applied to change their attitude and response to the lesson, the more resistance she experienced. Physics tell us every action produces an equal and opposite reaction. Taoist philosophy shares a similar way of thinking about exerting force.

This teacher was quickly being depleted of all of the positive energy she had to offer these students. She realized logical thinking just wasn't working in this situation. She stepped back, scanned her body for what she was feeling, trusted what her intuitive inner voice told her, and responded to the situation in a calm, clear, state of mind. She stopped applying a pushing force. She changed her approach to the situation and spoke from her heart, stating what she was feeling and why she felt that way. She felt a shift in the energy in the room. The negative energy was neutralized and although she didn't leave the classroom feeling buoyant and energized, she was able to prevent the downward spiral of energy from overtaking her to the point where she would become physically and emotionally exhausted at the end of the class.

This teacher managed to salvage her emotional energy, but her spirit was wounded. At the end of the class, she decided to talk with her spiritual guide to help restore her spiritual balance. This person helped her engage in reflective, contemplative thinking.

She recognized the students entered her class filled with negative energy and she may have been able to diffuse their energy earlier. It is possible that as teachers become more experienced Multi-Dimensional Knowers, they will read the students' energy as they come into the classroom and take preventative measures to neutralize the students' emotional energy before moving on with the lesson. But this teacher was just beginning to rely on Multi-Dimensional Knowing.

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CHAPTER SIX: CULTIVATING THE SAGE

As previously mentioned teaching is a way of being. This deeply personal profession permeates all aspects of a teacher's life. Changes in the personal self impacts the professional self and changes in the professional impacts the personal. One can not be separated from the other. Mind/body/spirit practices helped these teachers become Multi-Dimensional Knowers. This group of teachers was more aware of their true self, who they were and what they believed in. The previous chapter described how Multi-Dimensional Knowing influenced teachers' ways of thinking, knowing, feeling and acting. This chapter describes how mind/body/spirit practices and multi-dimensional ways of knowing influenced these study participants beliefs and values in their Folkway and Formal ways of knowing. It will address the changes in teachers thinking, feelings and actions separately in each of those domains. Finally the chapter addresses various challenges that presented themselves to these teachers as they integrated mind/body/spirit practices into their lives.

Mind/Body/Spirit Influences on Folkway Knowing

At the core of Folkway Knowing is a set of beliefs and values that relate to family expectations, family living, how to relate to others and respond to events, a sense of community mindedness and belonging. As mentioned in the first section of the data analysis, Folkway Knowing taught these teachers how to mentally, physically and socially connect with the people who live in their immediate environment. Folkway beliefs and values were either affirmed or altered as a result of including mind/body/spirit practices in these teachers' daily lives.

Changes in Teachers' Thinking and Feeling

Folkway beliefs and values taught the teachers in this study how to build, maintain, and redefine family relationships. According to 6 of the 7 participants, meditation helped them clarify or affirm the importance of their family or loved ones. For two of these teachers, regular meditation practice motivated them to reconnect with 1 or more family members. Meditation heightened 6 of the 7 participants' awareness of the need to strengthen and appreciate family relationships, even relationships that were more difficult to cultivate.

Family role models, community members and colleagues shaped Folkway Knowing values and taught these teachers ways to respond to people, situations and events. These teachers were presented with many challenges each day. They and their colleagues were on a mental marathon. They were learning new content, changing classroom instruction and assessments, working with student issues, juggling daily classroom management while making multiple instantaneous decisions during the school day that impacted their students' lives. Their minds were over stimulated and they suffered from mental exhaustion. Mind/body/spirit practices helped these teachers respond differently to these events and feel less overwhelmed. Regular meditation practice helped them develop a mind set to practice living in the present moment. Remaining focused in the present moment helped them relax and better prioritize what needed to be done. Rather than engage feelings of fear, anxiety or worry about an unsuccessful past event or become anxious about the 'what ifs' of a future event, they focused on what they could do in the here and now and responded accordingly. Several participants found this new mental attitude created more balance in their lives. They approached situations with a new focus

and confidence that they were doing the right thing. They trusted things would all work out in the end. This decreased the amount of stress these teachers experienced once they recognized they had techniques to think about the situation differently and accept it for what it was.

Data from this study demonstrated some of these teachers were able to transform angry feelings by neutralizing or changing them into feelings of compassion. They learned mental techniques that taught them how to redirect their anger toward a particular student and convert that anger into compassion. They combined several techniques- intent, visualization and meditation. Sitting meditation effectively focused their mind and enabled them to set the clear intent of sending loving kindness to the student. At the end of the meditation, these teachers reported the tension in their physical body had often decreased or been eliminated and the destructive emotional force of anger had been released and replaced with compassion. Some participants stated that sitting meditation increased their own ability to feel or receive love and they felt more appreciative or compassionate towards their students and family members as well.

Folkway Knowing intentionally and unintentionally teaches us family expectations. Family expectations involved learning what is accepted and what is not. Thoughts and actions are judged as appropriate or inappropriate. Some thoughts and feelings are accepted while others are deemed unacceptable. Formal Knowing also supports judgmental thinking. Teachers are trained to assess and evaluate students. They must decide the level of student performance that is acceptable. They are encouraged to continually self-evaluate their own teaching. Passing judgment is part of a teacher's daily life, part of their way of being. During the study period, most of the teachers in the group

experienced difficulties while learning to observe their thoughts, feelings and actions without making comparisons and judgments. This was not a familiar way to know and relate to their world. Through non-judgmental self observation, one teacher recognized how often she negatively judged her thoughts. She learned her pattern of inertia resulted from negative thinking. By watching those patterns over and over, she recognized this habit in her life and was empowered to make changes. She stopped requiring perfection from herself.

Self acceptance was not easy for the teachers in this study who were highly critical and judgmental of themselves. This was a trait about themselves they wanted to change. It appears this group had a difficult time accepting their human imperfections. By the end of the study, a few teachers reported being more accepting, less judgmental, and more forgiving of themselves.

Changes in Teachers' Actions

As a result of the changes in Folkway thinking and feeling, Folkway values were affirmed or altered. Folkway values were strengthened or reshaped, the teachers reported changes in how they acted or responded to people or situations. Compassion appeared to be the underlying emotion that drove their actions. Most of these participants believed they were more accepting, patient or calm, and balanced while working through unstable periods of time that involved realigning or redefining their family roles after they integrated regular meditation practice in their lives. Mind/body/spirit practices appeared to positively impact these teachers' family relationships.

Meditation combined with a more conscious effort to live life in the present moment helped one teacher accept and become more patient with her daughter's mood swings and

periods of silence. At the end of the study, Kristen attributed her regular meditation practice and daily reminders to herself to be more mindful of each moment in her life, as practices that were helping her “better cope” with this period in her life. When Kristen’s daughter talks, she listens. She has learned these fleeting moments reveal information about the young woman her daughter is becoming and gives her something to contemplate while her daughter returns to a world of silent introspection.

All of the teachers in this study were drawn to yin characteristics such as patience, compassion, sensitivity, acceptance, generosity, kindness, gentleness, humbleness, nonjudgmental attitudes and the ability to remain calm. Some participants learned these traits from a parent, spouse or mentor teacher. By the end of the study, 5 study participants felt they were kinder, gentler, more compassionate, calmer and more patient with their students. It appears mind/body/spirit practices strengthened a value they already held regarding these ideal traits. This was evidenced by these teachers increasing or more intentionally using these yin characteristics in their daily lives.

The data revealed four teachers’ noticed a change in their verbal and nonverbal communication methods as a result of engaging in regular meditation sessions and/or deep breathing techniques. The teachers in this study learned how to respond to others from Folkway Knowing. It appears mind/body/spirit practices also helped to reshape teacher’s ways of responding. The teachers in this group found themselves using a different communication style, tone, and pace. One teacher reported that taking a moment to engage in deep breathing before a meeting or when she felt overwhelmed by her workload, calmed her mind and enabled her to speak clearer and more articulately. Three teachers reported using a calmer, quieter voice in the classroom. One teacher described

being more willing to engage in problem solving efforts with her noncompliant students and another noticed she used fewer imperative sentences. It appears mind/body/spirit practices helped these teachers think clearer and respond to their students in a kinder, more compassionate and caring way.

Mind/Body/Spirit Influences on Formal Knowing

Professional knowledge can not be separated from professional value and belief systems. The teachers in this study identified a core set of formal values and beliefs they believed were necessary for success in their profession. These were the specific traits teachers should possess, the need to teach content that the teacher finds personally meaningful, an understanding of how children learn, and the need to provide students with skills to live and work in a rapidly changing society.

Changes in Teachers' Thoughts and Feelings

One trait that was seen as important by these teachers was flexibility in the classroom. They felt a successful teacher must be able to effectively handle the many interruptions and challenges that teachers face each day. Based on data collected from these teacher's meditation journals, bi-weekly sessions and post study interviews, deep breathing and meditation techniques were reported as methods that helped them relax and calm their mind. These 'tools' helped them organize and prioritize their thoughts, make decisions, and face difficult situations with a calmer, clearer mind. Deep breathing alone was preferred by one participant but the other 6 participants felt a combination of deep breathing and meditation was most effective.

Being able to relax and clear their mind of clutter produced greater clarity in participants' thinking and increased their ability to 'go with the flow' or demonstrate

more flexibility during the school day. Although not reported as such, this should have helped them deal more effectively with the many daily interruptions or changes in the schedule of the school day that are so common in American schools.

Conflict or strained relationships between students and parents were normal occurrences in the lives of these teachers. Participants reported being able to clear their mind of student, parent or school related issues while meditating. They found that while in a relaxed state, they could recognize the source(s) of stress in their lives and its affect on their body. Once aware of the driving emotion driving, they were empowered with important information that enabled them to rethink and reshape the outcome of the event into a less stressful experience on the mind/body/spirit. Although much of the external events that created stress in their lives were often beyond the control of these teachers, they could choose how to respond to the situation. This choice could either increase or decrease the level of emotional stress they would allow their mind/body/spirit to experience. A teacher in a relaxed state of mind is less preoccupied with their personal needs and, therefore, can be more sensitive to the social, emotional and academic needs of the students in their classrooms.

Learning acupuncture, intent and visualization techniques along with Qi Gong, Tai Ji Quan and meditation exercises added to the knowledge base of these teachers. Teachers in this study believed knowing about a lot of different things was important if one was to become a successful teacher. The participants' experiences with mind/body/spirit techniques and exercises led them to believe their students could benefit if they included contemplative or mind/body/spirit practices during the school day. These teachers felt the current curriculum did not provide any breathing room for students. Students were

pushed and rushed to complete learning activities but little or no time was given for students to think about themselves, their needs as learners or how they learn. Since meditation helped them become calmer and more aware of their inner self, several teachers mentioned they would like to include a time for contemplative or meditative thinking in their classroom. The school day is filled with yang or active activities and students are often rushed to complete them. Several teachers in this study reported their students' listening and attention spans grow shorter each year. It appears providing quiet, contemplative time might help to bring a balance to the classroom curriculum as well as student behavior.

The teachers in this study valued teaching content that held personal meaning. The 3 teachers that were trained or immersed in artistic and creative expression through Folkway or Formal Knowing sources were active in the artistic creative process. They experienced art through the heart, hand and mind. These teachers saw art as both a product of skill and a tool for relaxation. During the study, two teachers reported experiencing a spiritual feeling or connection while engaged in art. During the study, these teachers created mandalas and other artistic creations. They valued the act of creating since art allowed them to enter into a meditative state. Based on their descriptions, these teachers entered into a "flow" state, a time when the mind/body/spirit is synchronized and work becomes effortless. Since these teachers had been involved with artistic expression before the study, the only benefit of mind/body/spirit practices that was clearly seen was that this study provided encouragement and support for them to more frequently engage in artistic and creative expression and helped one teacher return to mandala art that she had enjoyed doing in past years.

The teachers who were only briefly exposed to the arts in their Formal or Folkway Knowing experiences thought of artistic and creative expression differently. They focused on the skills and the final product. Their Formal and Folkway experiences did not encourage them to cultivate these skills. Artistic forms of expression seemed awkward and intimidating to them. They were reluctant or uneasy to engage in this form of expressing themselves but two of these teachers used the activity with students in their classroom. This shows that they did believe students need opportunities to engage in activities that encourage artistic/creative expression. Although all of the teachers believed art should be an integral part of the curriculum, the teachers who were uncomfortable with their own artistic expressive acts, did not easily integrate art activities in their class. Mind/body/spirit practices only seemed to heighten their awareness of their student's need to engage in artistic/creative expression in school. For those teaching in schools that did not provide an art instructor, their intimidation or lack of enjoyment for engaging in artistic expression continued to limit the integration of the arts into their classrooms.

Changes in Teachers' Actions

Several teachers began to think more kindly of their students after engaging in mind/body/spirit practices. This change in thinking altered how they responded to students and created subtle changes in their teaching style. Prior to the study, these teachers learned these aspects of teaching from the content delivered in teacher preparation courses, graduate level courses and mentor teachers.

One teacher realized the discipline system she was taught to use in teacher education courses, a method that uses rules and consequences to modify student behavior, was inadequate with many of her students. Responding to some of these students with loving

kindness was more effective in changing their behaviors. This teacher decided to modify her discipline system after working alongside a visiting teacher from Thailand who was also a practicing Buddhist. The Thai teacher showed this Vermont teacher that responding to students with kindness and love was more effective at changing their behaviors than using a discipline system based on rules, rewards and consequences. Regular meditation practice helped this Vermont teacher cultivate the yin characteristics of compassion and kindness that she needed to draw from as she changed how she responded to inappropriate student behavior.

Attitudinal changes altered the teaching style of 3 teachers. At the end of the study, they reported being less of a “hard nose” and more animated with students, more willing to “lighten up” and use humor in their classrooms. It appears that learning various relaxation techniques helped them “loosen” up. One teacher reported a new willingness to “open up” and share personal stories with her students.

I have always been too straight forward. (Now) I talk about my dog or my pets or my kids or my step grandsons. I didn't do that before but it creates a lighter atmosphere to me. Just the other day I was probing them to make a list of questions after reading the story and they had tons of questions. They got into it and I got animated. I guess when I get animated I am lightening up and getting into it...I was really trying to pull the answers from them so I teased them, encouraged them as opposed to just giving them the assignment. It was fun, maybe had a little humor in it too....This is something I want to see happen. I would like to see that change in myself-to lighten up.

This teacher worked hard at supporting her student's emotional needs. After the study, she reported being more intentional about remembering to affirm her students, and recognize their positive strengths and ideas. It is quite possible that these teaching style changes would help students relate more comfortably to the content material being taught. The ability to help students relate comfortably to the content being taught was identified at the beginning of this study as important trait or skill every teacher should possess.

Several teachers in this study changed their thinking about classroom management by the end of the study. Mind/body/spirit practices contributed to their more relaxed attitude towards student learning and an acceptance for less than 100% on-task behavior in the classroom. After participating in the study, 3 teachers mentioned they were not as "controlling" of student behavior as they had been in the past.

One teacher confided,

You know I think in terms of teaching in my classroom, I have always been very controlling-I know I have. When I talked I wanted everyone listening to me and when I look out, I want to see everybody working. I think I have gotten a little bit less controlling, maybe I am a little bit looser about that....Like with the noise level- I think sometimes I was too much of a hard nose.... Now I give myself reminders, these are just little kids. It is fine if they are not using all of their time wisely 100 percent of the time....You know, what difference does it make in terms of the long run? They need social outlets too.

It appears that learning relaxation techniques helped some of the teachers become more relaxed in the way they responded to students and more sensitive to their students'

needs. They felt less of a need to control the behavior of others and were more interested in improving their relationships with students. They were not as regimented about using every single minute of the day for instruction. They felt justified to use a portion of this time to build stronger relationships with and amongst their students. There was more consideration for balancing their students' social, emotional and intellectual needs. They confided that at times they permitted the student noise level to rise more than they had in the past. Accepting less than 100% on-task behavior from students, becoming less controlling in the classroom, and becoming more comfortable with more noise in the classroom does not mean learning is not taking place but exactly the opposite is probably happening. According to Langer (1997) the mind is able to learn more efficiently while in an open, relaxed state. Changes in their teaching expectations may very well help students learn more with less effort involved, but more research is needed in this area.

Two teachers used mind/body/spirit techniques with their students. Deep breathing was taught to a kindergarten student who was angry and having a bad day. The teacher showed the student how to breathe in slowly, count, hold the breath, and exhale slowly while counting. The student used this technique for just a few breaths, gained control over her emotions and calmed down.

Another teacher introduced deep breathing and movement exercises to her entire class of students and reported these exercises were well received by the students. Clearly mind/body/spirit practices were integrated into these teacher's formal knowing values or they would not attempt to integrate these techniques in their classrooms. A study that examines the influence of mind/body/spirit practices on students' way of being in their classroom, their learning and behavior, is also an area that warrants further study.

Participants reported mind/body/spirit practices helped them regulate time for themselves and in their classroom. During their post study interviews, 2 teachers mentioned they were more careful about volunteering to serve on committees or adding more responsibilities to their job. They were more conscious of their tendency to stretch themselves to maximum capacity. They recognized they harbored feelings of anger and resentment after experiencing feelings of being overwhelmed or overworked. These feelings created stress, disharmony and discontentment in their life. Since mental and physical exhaustion caused these teachers to become irritated, quick tempered and angry with students, this creates disharmony and imbalance within these teachers. These ways of responding to students do not align with their internalized belief that good teachers are sensitive to their students' social, emotional and academic needs and help students relate comfortably to content knowledge.

Meeting the Challenges Head On

When teachers implemented mind/body/spirit practices and exercises into their daily routines, they reported changes in their thinking and feeling. These changes clarified or reshaped their Folkway and Formal Knowing values. They resulted in subtle changes within themselves, their relationships with others and in their teaching practice.

The inclusion of these practices as part of their daily routine required them to make modifications in their lives. Many individuals interested in mind/body/spirit practices often feel that only others who are less busy than they can include these practices in their lives. They read about the benefits and think it is something they could never experience because of their hectic lifestyle. What they fail to realize is that several of these practices and techniques do not require much time and do alter a teacher's way

of being, even those working in the most stressful and demanding situations. In fact, those with the most demanding and stressful occupations stand to receive the most benefit from mind/body/spirit practices. An active, busy, yang occupation, such as teaching, benefits from the yin qualities gained from practicing mind/body/spirit techniques. The yang is balanced by the yin, creating unity and harmony between the mind/body/spirit and a healthier way of being for teachers.

Most of the teachers in this study were initially challenged to find an adequate space to practice meditation, Qi Gong and Tai Ji Quan. It was difficult for them to find a location in their house that offered a quiet space and provided sufficient room to practice these movement exercises. Even the teachers who no longer had children living at home, found it difficult to find a quiet spot where they wouldn't be disturbed. Participants were continually interrupted by the telephone, family members, or pets. Sometimes the selected space was filled with too much background noise, making it difficult for them to relax. For teachers interested in including mind/body/spirit practices in their lives, it is important to think about the best possible space in the house to use for their daily practice. If one is trying to meditate and the phone is constantly ringing, or people are entering and leaving the space, or one is trying to learn Tai Ji Quan and continually bumps into furniture, it is difficult to concentrate and feel the flow of calming energy moving through the body, release physical and mental tension, let go of thoughts, or listen to the body's messages. In fact, one may just become more stressed at not being able to calm the body while using techniques and exercises that are meant to do just that! It is not difficult to create space in our homes. It may mean unplugging the phone, designating an area off limits to traffic and disturbance for a short period of time,

rearranging furniture for a better flow space in the room or requiring regular silent contemplation time for all members in the household twice a day for 20 minutes. The busier the house-hold, the more important it is to build quiet time and space into each day. This provides the yin balance to a yang household and all family members benefit from time to unwind.

Tai Ji Quan was identified as too difficult to learn using a bi-weekly session format. Tai Ji Quan requires a long learning curve and a long term time commitment to learning the set of moves. Teachers in this study felt that in order to learn Tai Ji Quan effectively, they would need to meet at least 2 times each week over several months. They didn't feel many teachers would want to commit this much time to learning Tai Ji Quan and, therefore, did not see Tai Ji Quan as a mind/body/spirit practice that would be practical for most teachers to integrate into their daily schedule. Even the two teachers who enjoyed Tai Ji Quan and experienced its benefits, did not recommend Tai Ji Quan for the majority of teachers because of the time required to learn the complete set. Both of those teachers recommended Tai Chi Chih, a simplified and westernized form of Tai Ji Quan, as a movement exercise that according to their personal experience, has calming effects on the mind/body/spirit.

Several teachers in this study experienced resistance to mind/body/spirit practices during the third and fourth week into the study. Their resistance was expressed in many ways. They experienced feelings of resentment towards mind/body/spirit practices because of the time required to exercise or sit in quiet meditation. They felt guilty for taking this time to "just sit" when there were so many other things they 'should' be doing. One teacher reported experiencing physical pain, panic or feeling nauseas when

she sat down to meditate. These were barriers her emotions and mind was constructing to prevent her from seeking inner truths.

It would be abnormal for practitioners not to experience resistance or reluctance because these practices require us to devote new attention and time to them. Experienced practitioners are persistent and self-disciplined. They recognize training the mind involves as much work as training the body. Self-discipline is needed to establish a new pattern in our life and maintain a regular practice. We face similar challenges when we begin a new physical exercise program and want to establish these new routines in our lives. Most of the teachers in this study worked through their initial resistance with self-discipline and personal determination. They believed mind/body/spirit practices “could” or “would” benefit them and the commitment they made to themselves and the group to gain all they could from this study, provided motivation to move them through these hurdles. Their resistance passed by the sixth and seventh week of the study.

It should be emphasized that these teachers responded to or preferred different practices or methods. By the end of the study, one teacher had eliminated meditation from her daily practice and several others eliminated Tai Ji Quan. This confirms what Patricia Mathew Canes stated that individuals need to be introduced to a variety of different mind/body/spirit practices. Cultural and lifestyle differences and beliefs influence what individuals are comfortable using or find acceptable to include in their lives.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: WITHIN EVERY TEACHER LIES A SAGE

The Chinese have understood the need to listen to your inner self for a long time. The Chinese character for the word sage is rich in this meaning. It holds multiple meanings - sage, divine and holy. The character has a pictogrammatic mouth preceded by the image of an ear, above the character for great or artful (Aria & Eng Gon, 1992). This character shows the sage is gifted in the arts of listening and speaking. Listening comes first, because through listening, one gains an understanding of, or oneness with, the universe. Teachers who participated in this study learned to listen to their inner self and learned to know their world differently.

This study showed that mind/body/spirit practices shaped and influenced the personal and professional lives of the teachers. The changes these teachers experienced were not extreme or drastic, but subtle and of varying degrees. Whether or not these teachers will choose to continue to use these practices in their lives is difficult to say at this point. Many felt that without the regular group meetings, they would not be motivated to continue practicing mind/body/spirit practices on a regular basis. Certainly for these educators to receive maximum benefit from mind/body/spirit practices, these practices do need to become part of a regular routine. That is not to say, however, that they can not obtain benefits from knowing and using these techniques on a less frequent basis.

Learning to connect with their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual selves provided them with a new way to know their world and reshape their previous ways of knowing. The teachers in this study learned new ways to cope with stressful situations

and events in their lives. They became more aware of how their body responds to stress and its affect on themselves and others. Several teachers were able to feel their own qi energy and all acknowledged the ability to balance qi energy is important to their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. These teachers know by simply being mindful or noticing signs of stress in their body and responding to this stress, they can prevent a lot of unnecessary wear and tear on the mind/body/spirit. They learned by pausing to take a couple of deep breathes from their dantian they were able to refocus and temporarily disconnect the destructive emotion that was pulsing through their body creating stress and tension. Most importantly they have experienced the effects of mind/body/spirit practices for themselves. They understand themselves better as a result of “being there” rather than reading about these practices in a book. They lived it and reflected upon the experience to gain further insights into their practice. They now have a tool box of various techniques and practices added to their repertoire of knowledge.

Data from this study suggests that energy significantly impacts teaching and learning. Mind/body/spirit practices helped the teachers in this study feel the energy within and around them. Emotions appeared to impact the energy levels of these teachers. Emotions increased or decreased energy levels and were both beneficial and harmful to the health of the mind/body/spirit. In this study, teachers gave examples of emotional energy being absorbed and transferred from student to student, student to teacher, parent to teacher and teacher to teacher. It appears emotional energy is absorbed and transferred through all daily interactions. The emotional intensity of these interactions varied depending on how attached the teacher was to the situation and outcome. The mind/body/spirit was continually wounded and healed, or imbalanced and re-balanced throughout the teaching

day. The types of interactions these teachers experienced with students, parents, colleagues and administrators during the day determined whether the teacher felt emotionally charged or drained when they left the workplace.

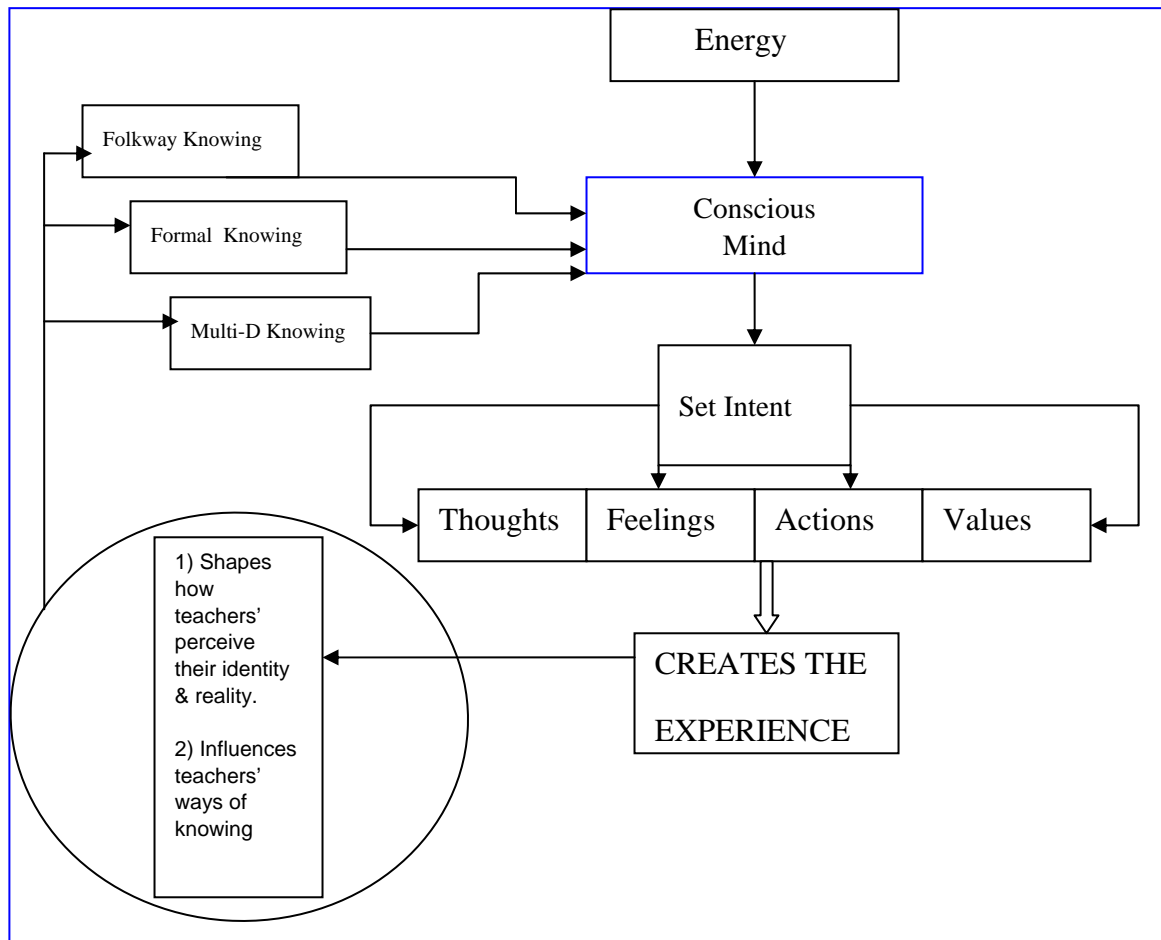
At the end of the study, many teachers reported the ability to change how they experienced a situation by taking a moment to step back and detach from the event. This allowed them to determine the type of intention they wanted to bring forth into the event. Each intention carries its own emotional energy signature. For example, a teacher could intentionally decide to respond to an event with either compassion or anger. Both of these emotions carry a different type of energy, release different ideas or thoughts and feelings and result in very different actions. The intent selected eventually shaped the experience or outcome. This experience or outcome could be shaped to increase stress or decrease stress in the teacher's life. Although many external events that came their way were initially beyond the scope of their control, this study demonstrated teachers were able to shape how the event was experienced and influence the end result. Understanding the power of intent is quite enlightening. Once a teacher recognizes that no matter what curve ball life pitches them, they have the power to shape which direction the ball will go by choosing the angle or intent they will use when they hit the ball. The teacher can decide, to some extent, how their game of life will play out.

Figure 5 on page 209 represents the theoretical model that was developed from this study's findings. Energy is continually entering and flowing through the mind/body/spirit. Our mind/body/spirit is made up of feelings, thoughts, actions and values that are constructed from our Folkway, Formal and Multi-Dimensional ways of knowing the world. These ways of knowing are influenced by family members,

community members, colleagues, the local environment, role models, past school experiences and learning, professional readings, study abroad experiences, remarkable events or unexplainable events, social modeling, nature, spiritual guides, meditative practices, non-judgmental observation, introspective thought and multi-sensory engagement. The mind is continually processing and responding to situations and events during the day. These ways of knowing are filled with assumptions, beliefs and personal values that are emotionally laden. These ways of knowing also influence how the mind responds to the day's situations and events.

Undisciplined or untrained minds allow emotions to jumpstart the mind before the mind has consciously processed the situation or event. Emotions such as fear, anxiety, anger, hate, joy, compassion, empathy, or love all have a different emotional signature and release different thoughts, feelings, actions and values associated with each one. When these thoughts, feelings, actions and values are released, they create an experience that is comprised of this energy. The emotional energy is transferred through the mind, through the intent, through the thoughts, feelings, actions and values of the person and into the experience. When the experience is shared with others, their thoughts, feeling, actions and values also bring a certain type of energy into the experience that can alter the energetic level of the experience. The experience can be realized as pleasant and harmonious or unpleasant and filled with discord. How the experience is perceived, affirms, readjusts or changes the teacher's ways of knowing and experiencing the world. It is fair to say that individuals create their own reality or world.

Figure 5. How Energy and Intent Shapes Teachers' Lives



Mind/body/spirit techniques disciplines or trains the mind to respond in a more conscious manner. Individuals are able to pause and think about the conscious or unconscious source that is preparing the gears of the mind to spring into action. Individuals are able to respond with a clear head.

Sally's and Elizabeth's dilemma at the end of the marking period is an excellent example of this. They were thrown a curve ball and forced to deal with events beyond their control (technology glitches and winter storms). They were facing a report card deadline and unable to finish final assessments and grading as planned. Time was running out to get everything done before report cards needed to be distributed. They began to

panic and then realized they could choose other ways to respond to the situation.

Meditation practice gave them the type of mind training they needed to be able to detach or let go of their initial panic. They decided this wasn't a life and death situation and didn't warrant panic. They chose to remain calm and focused on what could be done in that moment of time. They continued to respond in this way, not allowing themselves to worry about what would happen if they didn't get everything done. They remained focused on what they could do with each available moment. Both teachers finished report cards on or before the deadline. Elizabeth was handing out report cards as the students were lined up for dismissal at the end of the final day, but she and Sally were both able to keep their energy in balance and remain calm. By setting a clear intent, their minds were free to focus on the task at hand. This allowed them to work efficiently and save wear and tear on their body. Had they responded with fear and panic, they probably still would have completed the job in the same amount of time but spent the rest of the evening exhausted and dealing with a tension headache.

This study described several other examples when teachers paused, stepped back, selected to respond to a situation with compassion or kindness instead of anger and resentment and then transformed the energy from the angry emotion into feelings of compassion. The intent they focused on was to send loving kindness to the student. It is not known whether this action helped the student, but it appears it did remove the tension and stress the teacher was feeling once the anger was transformed into compassion. The teachers in this study did not use this technique every time they were angry with a student, but learning this response provided teachers with another way to cope with the situation, another option in their toolbox. As with any learning, the more one is able to

practice disciplining the mind in this way, the more automatic and fluid the response becomes.

As the teaching profession continues to place more demands on educators' personal and professional lives, the time to address teacher's mind/body/spirit needs in formal academic setting is long overdue. It is difficult to accept the fact that teachers are graduating from teacher education programs and receiving graduate level degrees with little or no instruction in how to regulate emotional and qi energy. Wellness programs offered in schools focus on physical exercises that relieve stress. These programs do little to provide teachers with a toolbox of mind/body/spirit exercises that could help them better deal with emotions and stress.

Mind/body/spirit practices help teachers sift through the clutter in their minds, prioritizing and reorganizing their lives according to what is most important to them in that moment. Teachers are able to identify trivial thoughts and events and prevent them from creating stress in their lives by consuming vast amounts of personal time and energy. None of us ever question the rationale for cleaning our homes or our bodies, so why should we feel any differently about practices that have a similar effect on our mind? It is quite sensible to regularly clean and organize our mind.

Teachers enter the profession with knowledge about child psychology, education theory, academic content, learning methodology, classroom management and skills or strategies to work with students with learning and emotional difficulties. Yet, teachers do not know how to access the dimensions of their inner selves that so significantly shapes who and what they are and the type of teacher they are or will become. They do not know the impact of their own emotions on teaching. They have not learned ways to balance

their emotional, physical and spiritual selves. According to the teachers in this study, this is not something that is learned from colleagues or working in the field. These seasoned teachers, each with over two decades of teaching experience, struggled to maintain their energy levels and keep their mind/body/spirit healthy.

How teachers come to know their world shapes their humanness and their reality. Their Folkway, Formal and Multi-Dimensional Knowledge domains are continually reshaped by how teachers experience each day of their lives. Every day teachers make many decisions, some more important than others. Each decision leads to a different set of experiences. Each teacher embarks on many experiences in their life that continues to influence who and what he or she is and who he or she is becoming.

When these teachers' entered the field of education, the philosophy, methodology and content promoted in the Vermont Design for Education aligned with their personal and professional beliefs and values. They were "at one with" teaching. Their view of teaching and learning was supported at the various institutional levels; the school, community, university, and State Department of Education. They shared and contributed to energy that eventually changed teaching and learning in Vermont schools. Their energy flowed in the same direction as their colleagues, administrators and the policy makers around them. They were in sync or harmony with their profession.

This stands in sharp contrast to what this group of teachers is currently experiencing with the new education reforms they are being asked to embrace. The teaching and learning pendulum has swung to the opposite side of the spectrum. Although this group of teachers recognized teaching involves continuous learning, change, and growth, they struggled to find common ground with the new demands being placed on them. They

took courses to learn new content and ways of teaching. They found themselves being torn away from individualized instruction and pushed toward standardized teaching and learning methods. Their autonomy and decision making power was quickly eroding. Their teaching energy was being channeled, diverted, and constrained. They exerted a great deal of energy as they tried to find ways to align their thinking and actions with these new reform efforts. Yet, when they used reflective, contemplative practices, they realized they yearned to be able to return to holistic teaching methods and include learning activities that addressed the social, emotional and physical needs of their students along side academic content. The mandated changes left them feeling discontented with their profession. Their heart, mind and spirit was wounded each time they had to eliminate learning activities they felt were meaningful and worthy of teaching. They no longer received support at the administrative, university or state level to teach in a manner that encouraged them to fully engage their whole self.

It is said that the education system has a reputation of hiring young saplings and turning them into dead wood. Educational reform policies rarely consider or include the personal and professional knowledge, skills, beliefs, and values teachers bring into the profession. This group of teachers had decades of experience in the classroom. They willingly devoted their lives to teaching children. They had little leisure time in their lives. They cared deeply about their students and thought of themselves as counselors and surrogate parents. They were nurturing care givers who felt responsible for the welfare of their students. As stated earlier, the profession of teaching permeates all aspect of a teacher's personal life. Because they care, this group of educators used a great deal of their qi or life energy teaching. Yet, they were consistently being told by administration,

media, and policy makers that what they had to offer was not enough. Over the years, they began to lose themselves, their heart, and spirit in the process. If true reform is to take place in education, reform efforts and policy must seriously include teachers in this process. They must consider teachers feelings, emotions, knowledge, and skills in all stages of the change process. Teaching and instruction can never be improved if teachers are not given the respect and credibility-the humanness- they deserve. It is their knowledge, skills, thoughts, and actions that must be the driving force at the heart of any educational change effort.

Teachers are always in the process of becoming. To ensure one does not reach the end of his or her teaching career, or life for that matter, feeling the years have been meaningless or purposeless, one must take the time to ask each day, “Who am I and what do I want to become?” One must be vigilant and mindful of the process of becoming, for it is the continual engagement with this process that allows teachers to choose how they want to live their lives, the person they want to be and result in living contentedly.

A lesson all teachers need to keep in front of them at all times as they are being pushed and pulled in all directions as they try to appease all the demands being placed on them is to first know themselves well and secondly stay true to themselves. For once they betray or lose sight of their true inner self, they become slaves to the bombardment of trivial minutia that is ever present in their daily lives. They lose site of who they are and what is important to them. Staying focused, balanced, centered, and being guided by the true inner self, is a critical lesson for all teachers to learn. Keeping the mind/body/spirit in balance will help teachers remain energized and alive while teaching.

Teachers can not just rely on their logical, reasoning mind to seek these answers. Logical decisions that neglect the emotional, mental or spiritual self, leave teachers feeling restless and discontent. The power that lies in mind/body/spirit practices is in their ability to lead teachers to their true selves, connecting their hearts to their minds and bodies and the sage that lies within. With the understanding and wisdom of their inner sage, teachers will be better prepared to handle the demands of teaching in the 21st century.

Limitations of the Study

The findings from this study must be interpreted with caution. This study population was a small, homogenous group. Although the original design of this study intended to include both male and female elementary teachers and both were actively recruited to participate in the study, only females expressed a willingness and interest to join the study. All of these females were also 50 + years old and had been teaching for over 20 years. It is quite likely that the results of this study would be very different if the study population included men and younger teachers. A similar study that includes a more diverse study population is a recommendation for future research.

The study period was quite short. Data were collected from October, 2003 through January, 2004. Many of the practices and exercises introduced in this study such as Qi Gong, Tai Ji Quan and meditation are usually taught with the intent to become part of an individual's daily routine and practiced over that person's lifetime. This study captured the initial and immediate benefits of these mind/body/spirit exercises on novice practitioners. A long term study with a group of teachers willing to commit to using

mind/body/spirit practices on a daily basis over several years would greatly benefit knowledge in this area.

So Much More to Be Done

Western medicine and science is at the very frontier of understanding energy as it relates to our mind/body/spirit and health. Quantitative measurements can be obtained with the use of modern medical equipment and technology. Data from those studies may very well support the qualitative findings of this study. New technology is available to measure human energy emissions from various parts of the body. The AMI machine which stands for the Apparatus for Measuring the Functions of the Acupuncture (Acupressure) Meridians and Corresponding Internal Organs was invented by Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama, a researcher in Japan (Gerber, 2001, p.186-187). This machine measures the electrical characteristics of the different acupuncture meridians in order to obtain physiological information and diagnose physiological imbalances. Medical practitioners in the United States are using the AMI with positive results. I don't know of any studies that have examined the affects of negative or positive interactions on a teacher's energy field. This machine could be used to measure these effects and provide quantitative measurements that monitor energy changes on different chakra or meridian points on the body, pointing to areas of imbalance.

Several teachers in this study claimed they were able to convert feelings of anger into feelings of compassion and all reported being able to let go of emotional stress and calm their bodies on occasion. Research in this area using a biofeedback machine could support these claims and also reinforce study participant's own learning by providing them with quantifiable data. This machine would show the direct correlation between the

thoughts or feelings the teachers choose to use and the desired or undesirable physiological changes that result. Biofeedback machines monitor brainwaves, pulse rate, skin temperature, and muscle tension. It is a powerful way to learn how to control the messages sent to the body and subconscious belief system. This machine could also show teachers how intent influences an individual's feeling, thought, actions and shapes their experience or perceived reality.

At this point, I am not aware of any technology that could readily be accessed and used to measure how a person's intent influences another person's energy field or determine methods that might prevent harmful intent from entering another's energy field. Additional research in this area would greatly benefit teachers who find themselves interacting with angry students, parents or administrators. Research that examines how one type of interaction energizes a teacher while another drains the mind, body, and spirit of energy could provide teachers with excellent information on how to maintain or re-establish balance and harmony in their lives.

Studies that examine different sound frequencies emitted during various interactions in the day could solve some riddles about why teachers enjoy interacting with some individuals and are repulsed by others. Sound waves or vibrations are released each time we speak. According to Hykes (2000, p.66), the human voice reveals a lot about the person. It reveals "their motivation, their tension, their understanding or confusion (Hykes, 2000, p.66). A tense voice has a high pitch and can be annoying, while a relaxed voice has a lower pitch that is generally calming. Each person's voice calls out to the vibratory world for a certain kind of listener (Hykes, 2000, p.66). What kind of 'listeners' were these teachers looking for as they interacted with others?

Melanie mentioned she felt alienated from her team members in her school, yet felt a connection with the teachers in the study group. According to the sound vibration principle of sympathetic resonance (Guzetta, 2000, p.148), when vibrations emitting similar frequencies come in contact with each other, they reinforce the vibrations of the others. Entrainment, an aspect of sound that is closely related to rhythm, then comes into place. During entrainment “the powerful rhythmic vibrations of one object causes the less powerful vibrations of another to lock into step and oscillate at the 1st object’s rate (Goldman, 2000, p.218). Nature uses entrainment as an energy conservation measure. Fireflies blinking on and off, entrain with each other. Females working or living together often have synchronized menstrual cycles. Entrainment also takes place when people enter into an enjoyable conversation together (Goldman 2000, p.220). According to these principles, it is possible that the teachers in the study who shared similar motivations, beliefs and understandings about teaching, were vibrating at a similar frequency as Melanie’s mind/body/spirit. It very well could be that when Melanie joined the group, her energy entrained or merged with the group’s synchronized vibrational pulse and rhythm, requiring her to use less of her own energy and she left the group recharged.

If this analysis is correct, the reverse situation would occur when Melanie or other teachers come in contact with people holding different beliefs, values and understandings of teaching. In those situations, the teacher’s vibrational frequency would be out of sync with the other individual or group members. In Melanie’s case, she felt like the other group members thought differently than she did and she felt alone and unsupported. The converging energy vibrations in this situation might have created a pattern of discord or disturbance in her energy field and her system would have to work very hard at returning

to its normal or fundamental operating state, thereby draining her of energy. This thinking goes beyond the scope of this study but as western minds become more comfortable relating to human beings as genetically preprogrammed vibrating molecules of energy (Guzetta, 2000, p.149), this thinking will not seem so stretched.

Another area that would benefit from a longer period of study relates to the challenges and barriers teachers experienced while trying to implement mind/body/spirit practices into their lives. Although several teachers in this study believed they worked through their initial resistance to these practices they experienced a few weeks into the study, it would be of interest to determine if these stages are cyclical in nature or if they repeat themselves whenever educators expose parts of their inner self that are painful to examine. It would also be of interest to determine if there are certain times in the year when an educator has greater difficulty including these practices in his or her daily life and determine what those reasons are.

Finally, a follow up study with this same group of teachers one year after the study to determine what, if any, of these practices teachers are still using and how these practices continue to shape their personal and professional lives, would also enhance the results of this study.

As stated at the beginning of the study, teaching is considered the 3rd most stressful profession, yet little research was available on stress based management programs and intervention strategies for educators. This study provided data on mind/body/spirit techniques that appear to have reduced teacher stress and improved their coping mechanisms. The techniques used focus on improving or encouraging qi or energy to move freely within and around the body to create a physically, mentally, emotionally and

spiritually healthy teacher. It used a holistic approach to deal with stress management.

The study also helped teachers know themselves and their world differently as they intentionally looked at the wisdom sources that lie within their internal self. Much more work is needed in this area because education has moved into a different age. It demands more of our teachers. For teachers to not only survive but thrive in this age of information bombardment and rapidly transitioning society, they must become Multi-Dimensional Knowers and find the sage within.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Body/mind/spirit practices: Energy based exercises such as Tai Ji Quan, Qi Gong, Yoga, chanting, acupuncture and meditation.

Dantian: Refers to the general area in the lower abdomen, beneath the navel and about one-third of the way in the abdominal cavity where vital energy or qi is cultivated and stored.

Healing: Comes from the Latin root Kailo, whose derivatives include whole, wholesome, health, holy, and hallow. Being whole implies being integrated, holistic return to balance, harmony, and wholeness in the person. Healing does not occur in isolation and is an ongoing, interactive, dynamic process that occurs between the individual and the physical and spiritual components found within his/her environment.

Inner Knowing: Knowledge or understanding that is gained through reflection, meditation and altered states of consciousness. This knowledge is not acquired from an external source (teacher, book, media).

Qi: The Chinese word to identify life energy force, Hindus refer to it as prana (Cane, 2000) and the Japanese refer to it as Ki (Grow, 1996). qi energy flows through twelve unseen meridian points and these points connect energy to tissues and organs. Hindus refer to seven charkas that resemble whirling vortices of subtle energies that serve as energy transformers, stepping down energy of one form and frequency to a lower level of energy to supply nourishment to the physical body (Gerber, 2001). Both the Chinese and Hindus believe illness is caused by energetic imbalance within the meridians or charkas that supply energy to the body.

Qi Gong: Qi is the energy that circulates through out your body, Gong means work in Chinese. “Qi Gong means the cultivation of the body’s energy to increase or control its circulation” (Yang, 1998, p.1). Qi Gong exercises have been developed to help individuals cultivate qi.

Quantum educator: Educator as a manifestation of energy information (body) in dynamic interaction with fields (soul) (adapted from Fox & Sheldrake's definition of quantum human being cited in Daily, 2000)

Spirit: "what happens to us as the boundaries of the self give way" (Kovel, p.62)

Traumatic stress: Defined in the holistic model as an energy block in the body, mind, and/or spirit of the person.

APPENDIX B

CERTIFICATION OF IRB EXPEDITED REVIEW OF STUDY

CHRBS 04-047

The University of Vermont

COMMITTEES ON HUMAN RESEARCH
231 ROWELL
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05405-0068
TEL. (802) 656-4067
FAX (802) 656-3190

PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS ASSURANCE

Title: "Using Meditation and Movement Practices to Rejuvenate the Educator's Soul"

Principal Investigator: Debby King

Institution: University of Vermont and State Agricultural College, Burlington, VT 05405
This institution has an approved assurance of compliance on file with the Department of Health and Human Services which covers this activity.

Assurance number for University of Vermont and State Agricultural College: FWA 00000723

IRB number: IRB 00000486

(Fletcher Allen Health Care Assurance number: FWA 00000727)

CERTIFICATION OF IRB REVIEW OR DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION

X This activity has been reviewed and approved by an IRB in accordance with the requirements of 45 CFR 46, including its relevant Subparts; and, when applicable, with the requirements of 21 CFR 50 and 21 CFR 56.

Date of approval OCT 17 2003 Full IRB review _____ Expedited review X

____ This activity contains multiple projects, some of which have not been reviewed. The IRB has granted approval on condition that all projects covered by 45 CFR 46 will be reviewed and approved before they are initiated and that appropriate further certification will be submitted.

____ Human subjects are involved, but this activity qualifies for exemption under 46.101(b) in accordance with paragraph ____, but the institution did not designate that exemption on the application.

As a condition of approval, this institution's Committee on Human Research required ____ did not require X changes and/or modifications to the above referenced application. (A list of required changes and/or modifications is attached as appropriate.)

Institutional Signature/Date: Berta Geller 10/17/03

Name and Title of Official: Berta Geller, Ed.D., Chair, Committee on Human Research in the Behavioral Sciences

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Dear Potential Study Participant,

My name is Debby King and I am a doctorate student in the Education Leadership program at the University of Vermont. The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in this study and provide information about this project and the procedures involved.

Aim:

The intent of this dissertation project is to explore how the use of meditation and energy exercises are experienced by educators and seasoned energy practitioners and how they influence their lives. Data gathered from educators beginning experiences will be compiled along with information collected from seasoned energy healing practitioners who are highly skilled in using energy practices for a minimum of 3 years. The combination of this information will provide a deeper understanding of energy practice experiences and influences as the mind/body/spirit is cultivated through these practices.

Background information:

Energy work orqi (energy) exercises are also known to assist individuals in becoming more intimately connected with their physical, mental and spiritual selves. Eastern holistic healing methods respect knowledge that arises from within an individual. This form of knowledge is used to balance the creative, expressive self with the logical, rational self, providing a more connective or whole way of seeing, perceiving and relating to ourselves and others. Many Vermont educators feel that current constraints on curriculum time and content discourages their ability to express themselves creatively or promote creative expression in the classroom. Research has suggested by ignoring our internal knowledge and creative expression, we are limiting our way of knowing how to approach and handle complex situations. Accessing this knowledge requires the use of meditation and practices designed to promote movement of energy within and around the body. These exercises are often referred to as holistic or mind/body/spirit exercises. Meditation and mind/body/spirit exercises are known to improve physical and emotional health in individuals who are regular practitioners.

My interest in doing this work stems from my experience as a former grade 5/6 teacher, my current work with K-12 teachers in schools around the state and the results of a pilot study completed two years ago. Conversations with Vermont educators confirm what research says about the education profession. Teaching is one of the 3 most stressful professions and is becoming more stressful with current educational reforms and social demands. Contemporary research shows ancient eastern holistic healing methods are effective in reducing symptoms of

stress, anxiety, high blood pressure, trauma, and depression. Research also shows the use of meditation and energy exercises designed to release energy blockages and move energy through the body, increases the individual's ability to remain calm and focused during stressful events. I am interested in exploring how these energy practices are experienced and influence educator's lives.

Procedures:

- seven educators and three energy practitioners will be selected to participate in this study and sign a release of information form
- participants will complete a pre/post general health questionnaire
- an audio taped interview with each participant will be conducted before and after the study period
- the study will begin in September and end in February.
- the seven educator participants will meet for 2 hours every two weeks to learn and practice energy healing exercises and meditation techniques. The first training session will involve a 3 - 4 hour session
- trained meditation and energy healing practitioners will instruct study participants in mind/body/spirit exercises.
- bi-weekly meetings will involve educators sharing their experiences with these practices as well as new instruction and review of past techniques
- each participant will maintain a journal and follow the journal guidelines throughout the duration of this study

Risks and benefits involved:

Since mind/body/spirit exercises such as meditation, Qi Gong, Tai Chi and self-healing message are used with physically disabled and senior citizens with health problems, it can be safely said there is minimal risk involved. The greatest risk to participants is if the exercises are performed using incorrect breathing or movement techniques. Energy practitioners claim that digestive problems can result. Generally mind/body/spirit exercises are seen as highly beneficial to those who use these practices on a regular basis. These exercises have been known to strengthen muscles and joints, improve breathing, reduce stress and anxiety and promote general feelings of balance and harmony within the individual.

Cost:

All group sessions are free of charge. The seven educator participants will be required to provide their own transportation to the meeting site and commit to approximately one hour of practice time each day and time to complete 2 – 3 journal entries each week.

APPENDIX D

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

Title: Using Meditation and Movement to Rejuvenate the Educator's Mind, Body and Soul.

I have been given and have read or have had read to me a summary of this research study. It has been explained to my full satisfaction. Should I have any further questions about the research, I realize I am free to contact the person conducting the study at the address and telephone number given below.

I understand the procedures I will undergo, including any potential benefits, risks or discomforts.

I acknowledge that my participation is voluntary and I am aware that I may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice to my present and/or future care.

I realize that the results of this study may eventually be published, but that the confidentiality of all research data associated with this study will be maintained to the maximum extent allowable by law.

I give permission for photographs, video and audio taped material to be used in the publication. These materials will be erased or destroyed after the information is no longer deemed useful.

I understand that it is not the policy of the University of Vermont to provide payment or free medical treatment in the event of injury resulting from the research. I understand that I may contact Nancy Stalnaker, the Institutional Review Board Administrator at the University of Vermont (231 Rowell, 656-4067) should I have any questions about my rights as a participant in a research project or for more information on how to proceed should I believe that I have been injured as a result of these research procedures.

I agree to participate in this study and the terms of this study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this signed form.

Signature of Subject Date

Signature of Investigator Date

Debby King
474 Gilman Road, Enosburg Falls, VT 05450
(802) 933-2363

APPENDIX E-1

PRE STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) First, I would like to ask you to tell me something about you as a teacher.
 - a) How did you decide to become a teacher?
 - b) How long have you been teaching?
 - c) How would you describe yourself as a teacher?
 - d) What is most rewarding for you about teaching?
 - e) What is most challenging for you about teaching?
 - f) What life experiences do you think have influenced or shaped how you teach?

- 2) There is a lot of discussion about what should be taught and what knowledge is.
 - a) How would you describe a “knowledgeable” person?
 - b) How would you describe the relationship between how you think about knowledge with what and how you teach in your classroom?
 - c) What life experiences influenced or shaped how you think about knowledge?

- 3) Now I would like to hear more about you.
 - a) How would you describe yourself to yourself?
 - b) What would you change about yourself if you could?
 - c) What part of yourself do you want keep just the way it is?
 - d) Tell me about the relationships in your life that are important to you.
 - i) Why are they important to you?
 - e) Could you tell me about some relationships, situations, or events in your life you see as stressful or difficult for you right now?
 - i) What makes these relationships, situations, or events stressful or difficult for you?
 - f) How would you describe how you stressful people, situations or events affect you?

- 4) I would like to spend a few minutes talking about health.
 - a) How would you describe a healthy person?
 - i) How would you describe a physically healthy person?
 - ii) How would you describe a mentally healthy person?
 - iii) How would you describe a spiritually healthy person?
 - b) How would you describe your health according to what you just said?
 - c) Are there ways you enhance your health now?
 - i) How long have you been doing this?
 - ii) How is it helping you get or stay healthy?
 - iii) Has it changed your life in any way?
 - d) What types of challenges or barriers do you face while trying to live a healthy lifestyle?

- 5) How do you envision this program in your life?
 - a) What do you hope to receive by participating in this program?

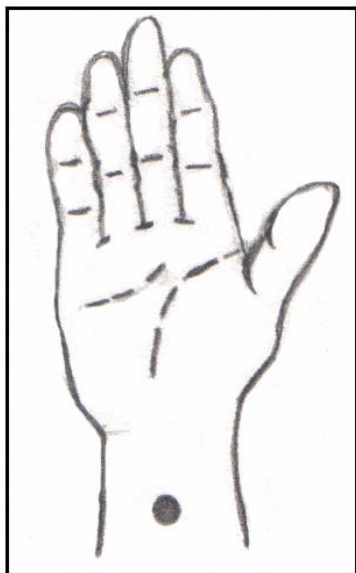
APPENDIX E-2

POST STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

As you know, I am looking at what changes you have experienced as a result of your participation in this study.

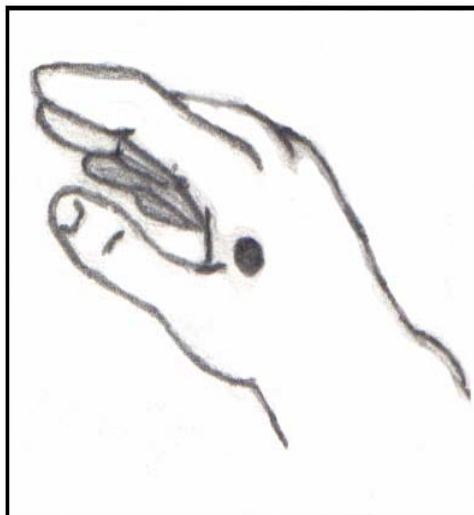
- 1) Do you see a difference in yourself as a teacher?
- 2) Do you see a difference in how you think about knowledge and what is important to teach?
- 3) Do you see a difference in who or what is important to you in your life?
- 4) Do you see a difference in yourself or how you deal with stressful people or situations in your life?
- 5) Do you see a difference in your health or how you take care of yourself?
- 6) As you know, I am trying to determine the types of exercises that would benefit other educators.
 - a) Which exercises taught in this study, if any, were beneficial to you and in what ways?
 - b) From your own personal experience with these exercises, which ones would you recommend to others and why?
- 7) What was most difficult about integrating these practices into your life and how did you deal with those difficulties?
- 8) What else would you like me to know about your experience as a participant in this project?

APPENDIX F-1

ACCUPRESSURE POINTS**Inner Gate****PC 6 - Pericardium Channel**

Location: Look for the two points on the outside of the forearm below the little finger by the crease of the wrist.

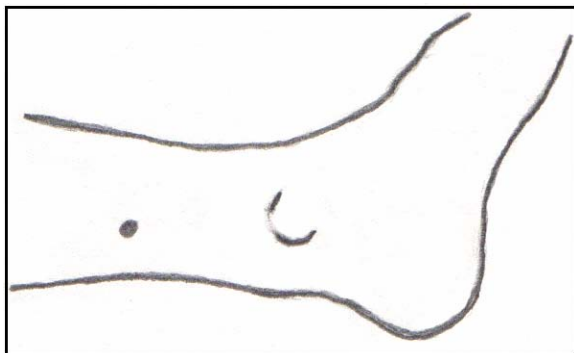
Effects: Helps with emotional imbalance, fear, nervousness and anxiety. Relieves feelings of nausea.

**Joining of the Valleys****LI 4 - Large Intestine 4**

Location: On the top side of the hand, on the web between the thumb and index finger. To locate, squeeze the thumb against the base of the index finger. The point is located on the highest of the bulge of the muscle, level with the end of the crease.

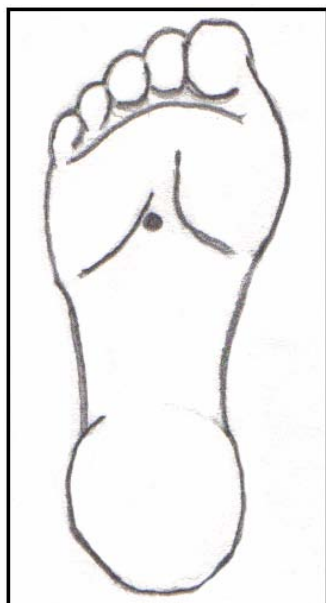
Effects: Helps to let go of grief, recover from colds, calming.
*Don't use during pregnancy.

APPENDIX F-2

ACCUPRESSURE POINTS**Three Yin Intersection****SP 6 - Spleen 6**

Location: On the inside of the lower leg, one hand width (four fingers) above the tip of the ankle bone, on the back of the shin bone.

Effects: Calms, relaxes and reduces irritability. Helps relieve fear and worrying. *Don't use during pregnancy.

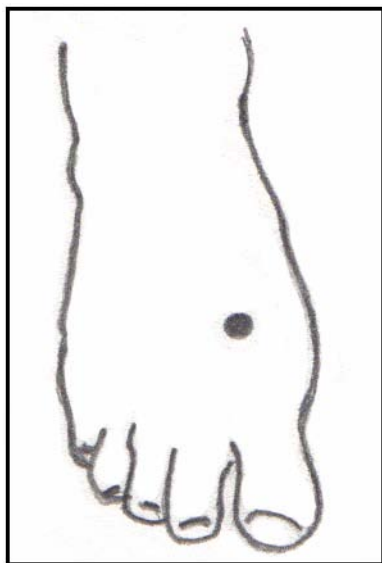
**Gushing or Bubbling Spring****KI 1 - Kidney 1**

Location: On the sole of the foot, in depression when the foot is flexed. Follow the center line of the foot from the heel up approximately 2/3 of the way near the pad of the big toe.

Effects: Use for hypertension, headache, blurred vision, dizziness, anxiety, insomnia, nervousness, and restlessness.

*Use on a regular basis to improve and promote health.

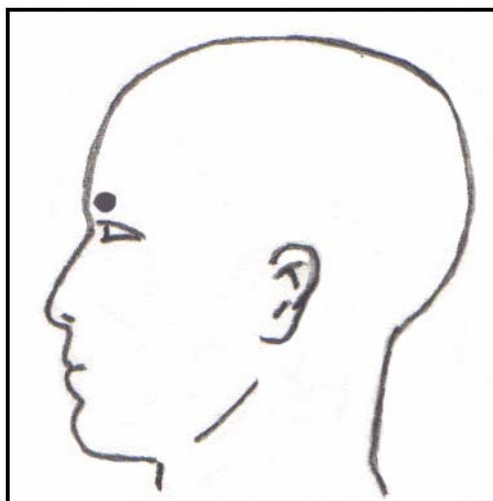
APPENDIX F-3

ACUPRESSURE POINTS**Great Rushing****LV 3 - Liver 3**

Location: On the foot, on the line between the big toe. It is about 3 finger widths from the edge, in the pronounced depression the size of a finger tip you can feel there.

Effects: Relaxes and unblocks emotions especially repressed anger and depression.

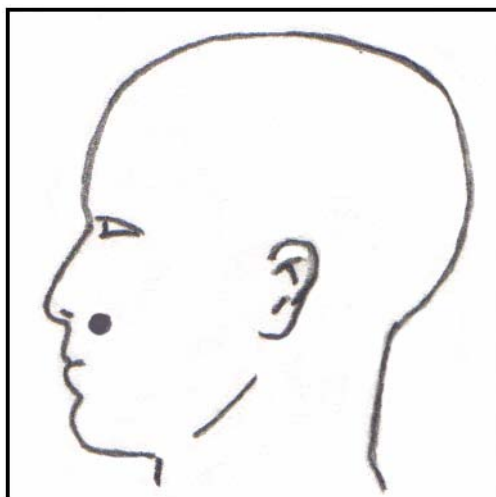
*Don't use when weak or low on energy. Use SP 6 instead.

**Gathered Bamboo (Zanzhu)****BL 2 - Bladder 2**

Location: On the supraorbital notch at the medial end of the eyebrow.

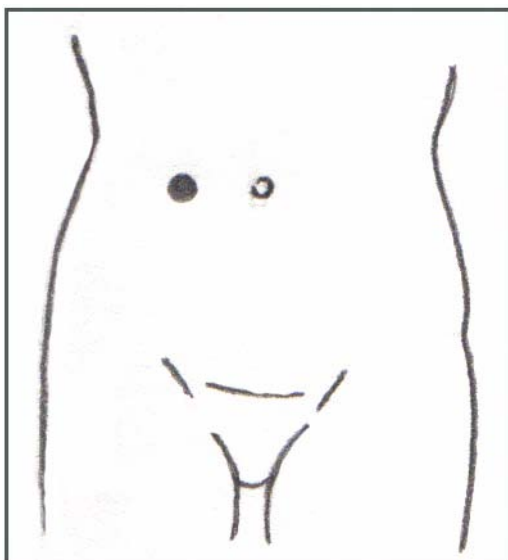
Effects: Benefits the eyes, blurred vision, clears the head, pain in the eyebrow region, frontal headache, visual dizziness.

APPENDIX F-4

ACCUPRESSURE POINTS**Yinxiang****LI 20 - Large Intestine 20**

Location: This is a half finger's width to the side of the lower end of the nose.

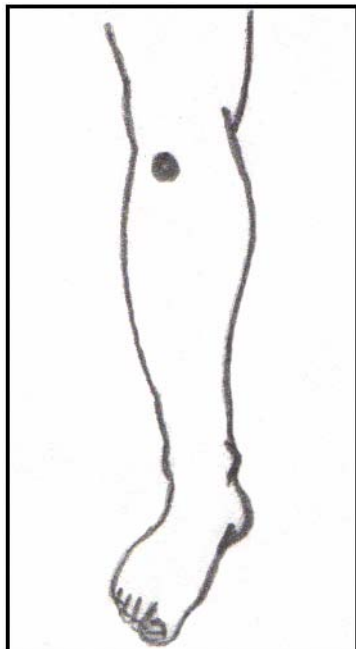
Effects: Opens the nasal passage, good for loss of sense of smell, nasal congestion and discharge, nasal polyps, sneezing.

**Heaven's Pivot (Tianshu)****ST 25 - Stomach 25**

Location: On the abdomen, 2 finger widths from the navel

Effects: Single most important point for the treatment of a wide variety of intestinal disorders; diarrhea, constipation, urinary dysfunction, abdominal pain, uterine pain, and irregular menstruation.

ACCUPRESSURE POINTS



Leg Three Miles (Zusanli)

ST 36 - Stomach

Location: 1 hand width below the knee, 1 finger width from the tibia.

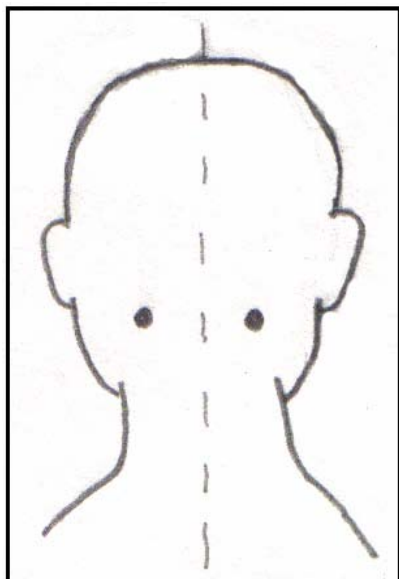
Effects: Benefits gastric pain, nausea, vomiting, hiccups, fullness and distention in the stomach, poor appetite, indigestion, diarrhea and dysenteric disorders, lower abdominal pain, tinnitus, hypertension, lumbar pain.

APPENDIX F-6

Accupressure Points for Hypertension

Hypertension is said to be intimately connected with blockages in the liver meridian. Points useful for treatment of hypertension are GB 20, LI 11, HT 3, ST 36, LV 3 and KD 1.

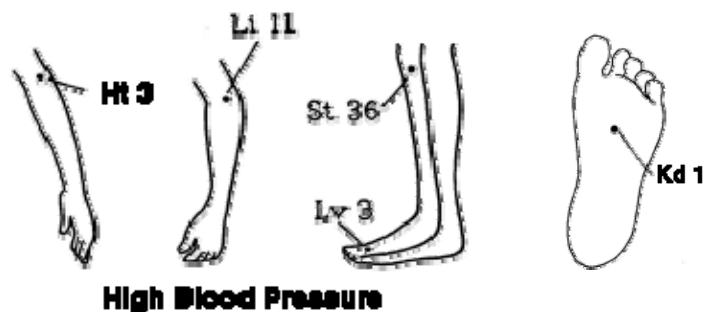
Caution: If blood pressure exceeds 200/100, do not do acupressure at all

Gates of Consciousness (Fengchi)**GB 20 - Gall Bladder 20**

Location: On the vertebrae of your neck at the base of your skull. Place your thumbs on your earlobes. Slide them back toward the center of your neck. Now your thumbs will be approximately one thumb width above the hairline of your neck, at the base of your skull. (If you slowly bend your head forward and then back again, you will be able to identify these depressions easily.)

Effects: Regulates internal movement of energy, good overall pain-relieving point and one of several anti-inflammatory points. Benefits headaches, colds, neck stiffness and pain, neck tension, irritability, depression, hypertension, insomnia, fever, chills and vertigo.

APPENDIX F-7

Accupressure Points for Hypertension

Use points Li 11 and HT 3 together.

Location: Li 11 - Hold your arm in front of your chest, as if you were holding a cup in your hand. The point is at the outside end of the crease on your arm at the elbow joint.

HT 3 - Hold your palms facing up. From Li11 slide your fingers across the elbow crease until you feel the bony projection is a natural depression. Ht 3 is in this depression

Other Points to Use For Hypertension:

Use points St 36 (Leg Three Miles) and Li 11 together. This combination is used extensively to treat hypertension. (see previous handout to locate these points)

Use point LV 3 (Great Rushing) for hypertension. (see previous handout to locate this point)

APPENDIX G

EXPLORING YOUR OWN ENERGY FIELD**The Energy Ball.**

This exercise appears in most energy healing techniques as the basic standard means of experiencing human energy.

- 1) Rub your hands together vigorously for a minute,
- 2) Hold your hands so that your palms are facing each other, about two inches apart.
- 3) Take a few deep breaths, focusing your attention on the space between your hands.
- 4) Move your palms apart until there is about six inches between them, and then move them forward till they are almost touching. Continue moving them gently, apart and together, for a minute or two. Pay attention to the sensations between your hands.
- 5) Then move your hands till they are about 12" apart, and begin moving them slowly toward each other, focusing on the sensations. You may feel some tingling or warmth. You may find that at some point, it feels as if there is resistance; it may feel like "the air is thicker" or like there's outward pressure like magnets pushing each other away. This is because you have met the edge of the energy field emanating from the other palm.
- 6) Gently move the hands a little closer together (about an inch). You may now feel tingling on the back of your hands. The energy field of each hand has passed through the other hand.
- 7) Move your hands to 12" apart again. Move them toward each other, until you feel resistance. Imagine this energy is a ball, and curl your fingers around the edges of it. Play with this, moving one palm up along the top side of the ball, while the other moves below, and so on, exploring how the energy feels.
(From Jeanette Moy's Instruction)

Circling Palms

This experiment can help you understand the principles of transmitting therapeutic energy.

- 1) Ask a friend to hold out his/her left hand, palm up.
- 2) Place your right hand a few inches above his hand, finding the distance that allows maximum qi sensation.
- 3) Now as your partner's hand remains still, slowly rotate your right hand in tiny counterclockwise circles, as though the center of your palm is a laser beam, drawing a circle around your friend's palm.
- 4) Increase the circumference of your circle, so that your palm is shining light on each of your partner's fingertips and then moving down to the top of the wrist.
- 5) After several circles, reverse direction, circling clockwise. Ask your friend what he or she felt...What sensation is produced by counterclockwise circles, what sensation by clockwise circles
(From Jeanette Moy's Instruction)

APPENDIX H

Breathing Exercises

The breath can be consciously used to unblock, move, increase, and balance energy. When doing these exercises it is important to let go of all thoughts and worries of the day.

Abdominal Breathing

- 1) Sit, stand or lie comfortably.
- 2) Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and center yourself in the moment
- 3) Place your left hand gently on your abdomen below the navel, and your right hand on top of your left hand.
- 4) Take a slow deep breath through your nose and imagine the air moving down through your body and into your abdomen. Fill your abdomen with air as if it were a large balloon. Feel your ribs expanding outward and upward as your abdomen expands and fills.
- 5) Exhale slowly, contracting the muscles in the abdomen, letting go of all tension in your body as you release your breath. Pause for a few moments and then repeat the full abdominal breath for several minutes. If thoughts come into your mind, gently release them and think of the warm air moving in and out of your body.
(From Jeanette Moy, Tai Ji Quan instructor)

Observation of the Breath

- 1) Sit or lie comfortably, with a straight back.
- 2) Close your eyes, breathing normally, and become aware of the air flowing into your body.
- 3) Notice how the air circulates through your body
- 4) Now breathe out and notice how the air leaves your body.
- 5) Repeat this inhalation and exhalation several times, observing but not judging how you normally breathe.
Notice if you breathe in through your mouth or nostrils.
Notice if the air you breath stays in the throat and upper chest area of if it moves down the trunk and into the abdomen.
Notice if you breathe out through your mouth or nostrils.
Notice any sensations in your muscles as you breathe such as tightness, warmth or softness.
Notice the quality of the air you are breathing in.
Notice if the quality of this air is effecting how you are breathing.
- 6) Continue observing your normal breathing patterns for several minutes, appreciating the importance of the breath.