Inward: The Journey Toward Authenticity Through Self-Observing

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ABSTRACT: Early models of professional development commonly directed pre-service and practicing teachers to the external environment for guidance and strategies. Subsequent reflective models acknowledged that personal development was an antecedent to professional development but rarely provided specific maps for teachers to follow in this quest. The purpose of this discussion is to offer a paradigm and process through which educators may become more practiced and astute observers of their own thoughts, feelings and behaviors to enhance their personal lives and the quality of their interactions with students.

RESUME: En général, les premiers exemples de développement professionnel aiguillaient les futurs enseignants et enseignants certifiés vers un environnement externe pour des conseils et stratégies. Les modèles raisonnables qui suivirent, ont reconnu que le développement personnel était un plus pour le développement professionnel, mais ne montrait que rarement les fils conducteurs spécifiques à suivre. Le but de cette discussion est d'offrir un paradigme et un processus par lequel les éducateurs peuvent devenir des observateurs plus expérimentés et plus sagaces dans leurs propres pensées, leurs propres sentiments et leurs propres comportements pour ainsi augmenter leurs vies personnelles et la qualité de leurs échanges avec des étudiants

The longest journey is the journey inwards
of him who has chosen his destiny,
who has started upon his quest for the source of his being.
Dag Hammarskjold, *Markings*, 1964, p. 58.

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In discussing education for the purposes of personal and social liberation, Paulo Freire wrote in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* of the necessity for praxis or "the action and *reflection* of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" [italics added] (1970, p. 60). Neils Bohr, the Danish physicist, commented, "Least of all does he [man] understand his noblest and most mysterious faculty, the ability to transcend himself and perceive himself in the act of perception" (1995, p. 126). In *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action,* Schön comments upon "technical rationality" as a model which "fails to account for practical competence in 'divergent' situations" (1983, p. 49) and advocates that professionals practice "reflection in action" which he describes this way:

> The practitioner allows himself [sic] to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomena before him and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behavior. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomena and a change in the situation. (p. 68)

Writing from the perspective of feminist pedagogy, Shrewsbury contends that "critical thinking ... is not an abstracted analysis but a reflective process firmly grounded in the experience of the everyday" (1987, p. 7). In *Teaching to Transgress* the following description of "engaged pedagogy" is offered:

> Progressive, holistic education, 'engaged pedagogy' is more demanding than conventional critical or feminist pedagogy. For unlike these two teaching practices, it emphasizes well-being. That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students. (hooks, 1994, p. 15)

In *The Contemplative Practitioner,* Miller devotes a substantial part of his book to the role of meditation in education and advocates for teachers "the development of compassionate attention" (1994, p. 2). Palmer writes about the importance of a teacher's self-knowledge and observes that "teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the conditions of my soul onto my subjects, and our way of being together" (1998, p. 2).

What this limited review suggests is that commentators writing out of a variety of theoretical frameworks acknowledge the necessity

for practitioners in the professions to think more critically and introspectively about the work they do. Although early thinking on the need for individuals to reflect-in-action was focused more upon outcomes than process, recent works are more forthcoming and bold in advocating personal development as an antecedent to professional development and that individual growth results from the practice of reflection. In the following discussion, we offer a unique ontological inquiry into three conditions of being including the "Organic Impulse," "Idea Development Process," and the "Self-Observing;" it is our intention to develop this discussion, with the emphasis on Self-Observing, into an overall framework for approaching a reflective teaching practice for discussion in university education classes and as a mechanism for praxis or reflection in action by practicing educators.

Simply stated, it is our desire that our pre-service teachers would graduate not only with prescribed courses in curriculum and foundations, but also with the capacity and commitment to truly reflect on that unique relationship that exists between the teacher and the student and the ability to look introspectively at oneself and how this self interacts with students and the environment. Palmer suggested a similar enterprise when he posed the question, "Who is the self that teaches?"(1998, p. 2).

We propose a reflective teaching practice where we strive to enhance the educator's capacity for self-observation. The framework which we have developed addresses the emergence of the "Self-Observer" inherent in every individual and the means through which observing can be developed by education students as well as current practitioners. In addition to elaborating upon three conditions of being, we will offer an illustrative example of the dynamic, interactive nature of these conditions; we will also offer deliberations on the benefits of teachers becoming more self-observant, and discuss possible ways to develop the process of "Self-Observing."

Theoretical Framework for Teacher Reflection Process in the Emergence of the Self-Observing

Most commonly, discussions about classrooms focus upon teachers preventing, correcting, or directing the behaviors of students whether in terms of social, academic, or affective outcomes. In the paradigm to be discussed, the teacher and student will not be considered in superordinate or subordinate positions; rather, both

will be viewed as equal participants in the human social-interaction that is education. Ultimately, the discussion will focus upon the benefits of the teacher coming to view interactions from the objective, non-judgmental perspective of the Self-Observing.

Introduction

We have based this discussion upon the proposition that mental activity in human beings occurs interactively, and in some instances independently, in three forms:

1.) *Organic Impulse*: The fundamental process of stimulus (external or internal) and response which develops in the human being prior to the emergence of the two successive forms but also endures as long as the individual remains in a state of being. Organic Impulses would include the conventional five senses, basic needs such as sustenance, and shelter, as well as emotions such as fear, anger, loneliness, love, hate, compassion, curiosity, and jealousy.

2.) *Idea Development Process*: The rising of thought within the mind characterized by a capacity to recall, anticipate, discriminate, create, problem solve, choose, desire, and imagine. These ideas, to a degree difficult to ascertain, may be provoked into consciousness through the individual's volition; however, they often occur beyond the individual's capacity to control them in form or duration. Often these ideas interact with the Organic Impulse to create a reciprocal cycle of thought-emotion, thought-emotion. As suggested by the term Idea Development, this form of mental activity often produces artificial constructs of reality with attendant emotional responses.

3.) *Self-Observing*: The condition of consciousness characterized by awareness, objectivity, clarity, acceptance, and being in the present as well as by the absence of opinion, preference, prejudice, and attachment. It is the emergence of the Self-Observing that we see as a critical and integral step in the personal and professional development of teachers; it is this aspect of being that will be discussed subsequent to an elaboration upon the Organic Impulse, the Idea Development Process, and the reciprocal interplay between these two states of being.

Organic Impulse

Considered on a basic level, it is in the brain where organic impulses originate (Fischbach, 1992) whether in response to external sensory stimulation or as spontaneous impulses emanating from within the Self. An external stimulus may provoke the Organic Impulse, perhaps by being touched, perhaps by an object moving into the field of vision, or perhaps by a sound; it may also be elicited by an internal source such as hunger, the rising of a memory, or the perception of danger. Although the Organic Impulse occurs only where there is being, the individual being did not create the impulse nor does the individual have control, in total, over the Organic Impulse until there is conscious intervention by the Self-Observing, which will be discussed later. Even when the Idea Development Process begins to emanate, the way in which the individual experiences the reciprocal interaction between the Organic-Impulse and Idea Development Process is axiomatic and bound by the principles of human beingness.

Idea-Development Process/Organic Impulse

The Idea-Development Process does not exist because a self willed it into being; rather, it is a process which evolves as the individual develops and matures. It is also a process which is reciprocally interactive with the Organic Impulse. Perhaps the following example of a classroom event will illustrate the Idea-Development Process and its interaction with the Organic Impulse.

Classroom scenario: During a grade-eight language arts class, a student unexpectedly gets out of his seat, walks to the door, and attempts to leave the room. The teacher asks, incredulously, "Where do you think you're going?" With an angry tone, the student responds, "I'm leaving." The teacher reacts by saying, "You're not going anywhere until you get permission. Now get back in here and sit down!" The student slams the door as he leaves the room; the teacher races after him and shouts, "Stop right where you are!" When she catches up to the student, she sees a pained look of distress on his face and in a sympathetic tone inquires whether there is a problem. More out of discomfort than anger, the student tersely explains, "I'm sick, gotta go to the washroom." At this point the teacher's fear and uncertainty give way to concern and she asks if there is anything she might be able to do.

The teacher interprets the student's behavior as a threat as soon as that behavior is inconsistent with the rules (or artificial constructs) developed for the class. This is threatening to her as the Idea Development Process rapidly conjures up countless possibilities: Is she losing her power, her control of the classroom? If this student challenges her authority, will the other students all get up and leave? What if the principal walks by? She believes she doesn't deserve this disrespect. She must regain control. These ideas cause her to perceive the behavior as a threat to her security and well-being. Although they are only ideas and not the reality of the event, she reacts to them with fear that she may lose control, respect, and her job because of one recalcitrant child. It is fear that provokes her to demand the student's obedience. When he refuses to comply and leaves the room, a feeling of powerlessness arises which redoubles the fear. As the teacher pursues the child, ideas occur in her mind according to her sense of justice, her desire to regain control, and her indignation over the student's behavior. These ideas sustain or intensify her anger and it is out of fear and anger, generated entirely by illusions, that she interacts with the child and commands him to stop. As soon as she sees the look of distress on the student's face, the cycle of thought-emotion is broken and the illusions from which she acted dissipate. Now, the perception of distress (Organic Impulse) provokes the idea that something is amiss with the child and she realizes that her reactions may have been inappropriate. It occurs to her to ask about the child's welfare to acquire the information she needs to quiet the growing sense of guilt and concern she has about the consequences for the student's inappropriate behavior. Upon hearing the student's reason for leaving the room, it becomes clear in an instant that his disregard for the rules likely resulted from his fear of being embarrassed by having to explain to his classmates the source of urgency in his departure. Putting herself in the student's position, she now feels sympathy and compassion. Either of these Organic Impulses would be sufficient to prompt her to offer assistance to the student.

Especially noteworthy about this scenario are these critical points: a) at no other place in space or time does this perception of reality exist except in the teacher's mind. In this respect, it is the teacher who has created this "reality," actual or imagined; and, b) at no point in this scenario could it be said that the teacher was an objective, detached decision-maker, determining her behavior or her reality by deliberately selecting the thoughts and emotions she

wanted to experience. She did not choose to feel fear; given a choice, she would likely have elected not to feel fear. She did not choose to confront the student but acted upon that idea which arose from experience and perception as the most probable action to protect herself. She did not choose to feel anger nor did she choose to ruminate over the impudence of the student. These emotions and ideas arose and abated without any conscious direction from her; the selection she made was according to the Organic Impulse in play and according to her own limited and predetermined ideas on right and wrong, good and bad, and power and justice (Idea Development Process). It is, in part, because the reciprocal interaction between the Organic Impulse and Idea-Development Process occurs so rapidly in an axiomatic progression that she failed to observe the interplay between the two. Because she does not objectively observe this interplay, does not recognize herself as the "creator" of her own distress, and does not realize that her behavior is based upon a very limited repertoire of strategies or ideas for reacting to external or internal stimuli, she creates turmoil for herself and conflict with the student.

What is most remarkable in all of this is that the strongest, most stressful feelings for the teacher were not based on the simple reality of one human being leaving a room, but issued out of ideas based upon assumptions and illusions that provoked emotion which provoked a further acceleration of the Idea Development Process. Additionally, acting out of this cycle, it was impossible for the teacher to respond appropriately to the needs of the student. Had she, as the teacher, been a practiced Self- Observer, she more likely would have recognized that she was feeling threatened as well as fearful and, rather than acting out of those emotions, would have responded out of a more informed sensibility so that this event would have unfolded in a less stressful way for her, and in a more caring and compassionate way toward the student and the rest of the class. If through reflection upon previous experience, she had developed for herself the strategy of letting the fear and anger pass or responded to the student's rising from the chair with the question, "Is there anything I can do to help you?" the subsequent series of events would have been quite unlike the sequence recounted above.

What requires elaboration at this point is the role of the Self-Observing in extricating ourselves from the cyclical, unexamined interplay between the Organic Impulse and the Idea Development Process. Understanding of this point is crucial to awareness of how

teachers often interact with students; however, it is an examination or observation they rarely make because of the rapidity of the Organic Impulse-Idea Development Process and because they have not been trained to observe themselves.

Self-Observing

What does it mean to become Self-Observing and how can this way of being lead teachers to more accurate perceptions of reality and to behaviors which are more compassionate and based less on illusory constructs? With the emergence of Self-Observing the individual comes into possession of a process through which he or she may watch the Organic-Impulse and the Idea-Development Process; in other words, one now understands the power the Self has in determining outcomes. To become Self-Observing one turns one's glance inward.

When Self-Observing, we extricate ourselves from the illusionary constructs generated upon perceiving a student rise from a desk, and recognize, that on a fundamental level, the event is a matter of one human being walking from a room – nothing more and nothing less. The teacher may feel threatened by the behavior but in the process of observing this threat, she is aware that it is arising out of illusory scenarios which the Idea Development Process is rapidly constructing to trigger Organic Impulses in the form of emotion. As an observer of this process, she allows the ideas to arise and dissipate and emotional responses become just as ephemeral. When she does respond to the perceived event, it is according to the pure reality of the matter and not in response to an idea and an emotion of which she has only limited awareness.

How do teachers become observers of themselves? Without process and practice, it is very difficult to arrange the timely appearance of this Self-Observing. One cannot say with any true expectation, "I shall spend the next ten minutes in uninterrupted observation of my Self by my Self". I may promise myself that the next time a student breaks a rule, I will remain the objective observer and avoid becoming entrapped in the Organic-Impulse, Idea-Development cycle, but most likely, without practice in the interim, I will slip into the cycle as naturally and unmindfully as always.

Strategies for Self-Observation

Although arguably not essential, we believe that aspiring practitioners of Self-Observation would benefit greatly from understanding thoroughly the concepts and dynamics put forth in the foregoing discussion of the Organic Impulse, Idea Development Process, and the Observing Self. Once we understand the nature of each condition of being, we are much more likely to recognize Organic Impulses as the emotions and feelings that are experienced and shared by all of us. We recognize the Idea Development Process as a wonderful mechanism for creativity, divergent thinking, problem solving, and imagination; however, it is also the process through which we worry, develop countless angst-inducing scenarios, create stereotypes and biases, make assumptions, and generate unwarranted feelings of fear, anger, loneliness, and despair. To recognize the illusory nature of the products of the Idea Development Process is to locate ourselves in a perspective which is far more likely to allow us to observe the true nature of these constructs and the reciprocal interplay with the Organic Impulse. To accept that there is the human capacity to observe our thoughts and feelings is to give us hope that we can better ensure our own well-being, to allow us to interact more thoughtfully with others, and to pique the curiosity we all have but need aroused to explore our own interiors. If we, at this juncture, can envision one of our goals as the nurturing of the Self-Observing, then perhaps we can offer the following strategies as possibilities for beginning this quest.

Contemplative Observation

Richard Brown (1998) writes about "contemplative observation," as an approach to teaching based on Buddhist meditation. He uses this method in his early childhood courses at Naropa University by encouraging students to practice not only what is happening in the environment , but also what is happening within themselves. He says, "This method synchronizes the observer with the learning environment; awakens and clarifies perceptions, thoughts, and emotions; and develops knowledge and compassion. In contemplative observation, we observe not only what is happening in the environment, but also what is simultaneously occurring within ourselves, the observer" (p. 70). Brown discusses the idea that by "letting go" of our reactiveness on the spot that we gradually drop our tendencies toward habit and learn to create space to experience and think freshly. In the classroom scenario detailed earlier, had the

teacher been observing not only classroom events, but her own thoughts generated by the Idea Development Process and feelings arising out of those thoughts, she would have been more capable of acting out of clarity and the awareness that, on a fundamental level, all that had actually transpired was another human being leaving a room. Recognizing that as being the situation, the teacher may have been less concerned about control issues, rule breaking, and personal consequences and more open to the needs of the student and a healthier way of interacting with him. Although functional when mindfully utilized, constructs such as rules, authority, "the teacher," and "the student" are merely constructs in the form of labels or abstract concepts. The contemplative practitioner brings this awareness to the interaction we call education and can be more thoughtful and flexible in working with the people labeled students.

Journaling

The power of journaling to come to know oneself at an intimate level has been widely used for many ears in disciplines such as psychology and English, and more recently within the field of education. Progoff (1975) introduced the concept of the "Intensive Journal" technique whereby writing about one's life, a person comes to understand that there is a connective thread that has been forming beneath the surface during the individual's entire life time. Greene (1995) writes,

> A reflective grasp of our life stories and of our ongoing quests, that reaches beyond where we've been, depends upon our ability to remember things past. It is against the backdrop of those things remembered and the funded meanings to which they give rise, that we grasp and understand what is now going on around us. (p. 20)

Clandinin and Connelly (1988) wrote about journal keeping as a tool for "reflection-on-action." A teacher, through journaling, can note classroom activities, his or her behaviors, observations of specific students and groups of children as well as the ways in which a teacher interacts with individuals or groups according to race, gender, class or other student characteristics. Again, to call upon the teacher in the classroom scenario, many educators who experience such an interaction, albeit relatively minor, find it difficult to let go of the matter. It would not be unusual for the teacher to replay the event as real across an entire evening and to experience repeatedly the thoughts and emotions that were conjured up by her own Idea Development Process in the first place. In some instances, perhaps the teacher formulates a new plan to put the child in his place, or a

new rule to preclude the recurrence of a similar situation. In our experience, however, journaling can be a cathartic experience through which one begins to observe one's own emotions and feelings, to enlarge the event to include not only the focus-student but the entire class and, when practiced mindfully, release the teacher from the unexamined cycle of thought and emotion.

Breathing Techniques

Breathing Techniques can provide an avenue for enabling teachers to become more Self-Observing. In *Time Shifting*, Rechtschaffen (1996) suggests that harried teachers may rediscover the more natural rhythms of their bodies and reconnect with authentic reality simply by using breaks from teaching (i.e., recess, lunch) to observe themselves breathing slowly and deeply (p. 85). Breathing techniques as a means of quieting the mind are a cornerstone of many traditions of meditation which may be practiced at work or at home.

The Relaxation Response (Benson, 1975) is a seminal work in which a Western physician details the importance of breathing techniques in meditation practices in Judaic, Christian, Buddhist, Sufi, and Yogic traditions and reports upon medical research confirming the value of meditation in reducing anxiety, stress, and related disease.

Based upon a nexus of Eastern and Western thinking, Benson (1975) identified four key components in the relaxation process: a) a quiet environment; b) a mental device, such as a work or sound which is repeated; c) a comfortable position; and, d) a passive attitude which Benson describes as "perhaps the most important element in eliciting the Relaxation Response" (p. 160). This passive attitude allows emotions and ideas to pass through one's mind without attachment to enable the Self to watch the Self. It is also this passive attitude, not to be confused with apathy or indifference, which one relies upon in reacting to events and others in the classroom. As noted, however, this attitude or Self-Observing cannot simply be conjured up when needed but must be developed through consistent practice. Benson, for instance, recommends practicing relaxation 10 to 20 minutes once or twice each day.

When the ideas proposed by Rechtschaffen and Benson are coupled, we are offered a model through which teacher's can practice watching ideas and thoughts rise and fall outside the seemingly frenetic confines of the classroom; as they learn to watch the

interplay between the Organic Impulse and Idea Development Process, they see more clearly the etiological relationship as it plays out in its unique way in each of us and also the nebulous and ephemeral nature of most thoughts and feelings. When this practiced awareness of breathing and the Self is brought forward into the classroom, what appeared to be a charged, frantic and chaotic environment can be viewed by the objective but compassionate observer as individual human beings all interacting out of their own needs in ways that make sense to each.

Meditation

Forms of meditation have existed in both eastern and western cultures and religions for centuries. The use of meditation is a way for pre-service and practicing teachers to tap into the mindfulness and awareness that leads to the Self-Observing.

In his work on meditation, *Zen Training; Methods and Philosophy*, Sekida (1985) uses different terminology but describes clearly not only the cyclical interplay between the Organic Impulse, and the Idea Development Process but also details the instructive value of this interaction to human development; he also explains the role of the Self- Observing in bringing new options into the Idea Development Process. It is Sekida's position that all that is observed by the Self is integrated into "the stream of consciousness and passed along with new impression" (p. 112), to what we have referred to as the Idea Development Process and Organic Impulse. Sekida devotes a large part of his book to the importance of posture and breathing in practicing Self-Observation and provides considerable research data on the effects of consistent meditative practice. Another contribution made by Sekida is his emphasis upon the necessity for us to accept without partiality or judgment the equal value of the Organic Impulse, the Idea Development Process, and the Self-Observing in our development as human beings.

Dr. John Harvey, whose medical practice focuses upon children with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders, describes breathing-meditation as a process through

> Which ... we cultivate the ability to watch our thoughts without necessarily reacting to them ... [or] getting caught up in our mental melodrama ... we can simply notice and label the current activity of the mind ... acknowledge it with present centered awareness, and let it go. (1994, p. 17)

Applied to the classroom scenario, the teacher notices the student rising from his desk, watches the threat-inducing event pass through her mind, acknowledges it is not the reality of the moment, and then lets go of it. Subsequent to this fleeting process of observation, the teacher has the option of acting on the basis of reality rather than illusion. In fact, research by Currey (1994) indicates that, when event responses occur, meditators, compared to non-meditators, are able to witness stressful events without always reacting to them ... [and] are more likely to arrive at a positive appraisal of stressful events" (p. 21). Again, however, this is a process that a teacher must develop through practice; simply being cognizant of this process on a theoretical level is unlikely to effect a change in response-behavior as events unfold.

Yoga

The art of yoga is 5,000 years old and was first put into written form 2,500 years ago (Zebroff, 1971). Lilias Folan, widely recognized in North America as an expert in yoga, defines yoga as "the science and study of the self" (1994, p. 26). She also argues that "breathing and relaxation techniques are at the core of yoga practice ... [and that] you can learn to quiet the mind by quieting the breath" (p. 27). Through the practice of yoga, we again have available a means to learn to study our own interiors; in doing so, we gradually learn more about what events or behaviors in others elicit what particular thoughts and emotions in our selves. With this awareness we can affect interventions in some interplays between Organic Impulses and the Idea Development Process and we can also learn to find harmony with situations or behaviors which cause us discomfort. For instance, as teachers dealing with a parent whom we believe to be making unreasonable demands or unwarranted accusations, we can watch the words of the parent reaching our ears, entering into our thinking, and evoking emotion. We can see the enormous control we actually have over our thoughts and feelings as we let each pass in its normal course. When we do respond, it is less likely to be out of fear, anger, or revenge but out of objectivity, clarity, and equanimity. Or perhaps we are experiencing one of those blessed days when student and teacher are pursuing a common point of inquiry with a healthy cacophony of voices and activity; rather than being anxious about what the principal might think, we can allow ourselves to experience the joy and satisfaction inherent in social interactions with other people.

Visualization/Relaxation Techniques

There are many strategies for learning visualization and relaxation techniques. In "Creative Visualization," Gawain (1994) asserts that "simply having an idea or thought... [and] holding it in your mind" (p. 112) becomes the basis upon which subsequent action is taken. According to Gawain, an effective method for replacing negative, hostile thoughts about another (in our example, a student) is to practice relaxation techniques such as those offered by Benson; rather than repeating a sound, however, one envisions communicating with one's "antagonist" in "an open, honest, and harmonious way" (p. 109). In this fashion, one is infusing the Idea-Development/Organic Impulse cycle with a new, larger, and, hopefully healthier perspective and disrupting the negative cycle of fear and aggression toward the student. Gawain emphasizes the need for sincerity in this process as well as the value in repeating the visualization several times daily. Ideally, the next interaction with the student would be guided by a more positive, open attitude on the part of the teacher with an attendant change in the behavior of the student. Visualization is also a strategy which can utilize the Idea Development Process not only for the purpose of practicing more effective interactions with students but also in visualizing classroom arrangements, routine procedures such as distribution of materials and, perhaps most importantly, lesson planning. Successful lessons are born not only out of a thorough knowledge of subject matter, but also from creative instructional activities, recollection of what has worked in previous lessons, and visualizing the intangibles and tangibles that will be necessary for the lesson to be effective.

Conclusion

In the foregoing discussion, we have considered several methods through which the Self-Observing may begin to be experienced by students in education classes, practicing teachers, and teacher educators. This does not imply an exhaustive list. It is important that as educators we have some experience with these strategies before we presume to facilitate the emergence of the Observing Self in our students. Courses in contemplative observation, journaling, yoga, and meditation would no doubt enhance the quality and sincerity with which faculty introduce the suggested methods in university classrooms. For example, Naropa University (Boulder, Colorado) is offering graduate-level courses in Contemplative Education in the summer of 2001. Journaling, or the process of writing to one's Self,

is a reflective practice through which we may gain insights into how the Organic-Impulse/Idea Development process works in our unique selves. With the benefit of these insights, we are more likely to develop alternative responses to student behavior and other events in the classroom environment (including teaching methodologies). Journaling and meditation courses are offered through local colleges, professional development activities, and retreat centers. Courses on various forms of visualization and relaxation techniques are also offered weekly in our communities.

To teach and to learn are human enterprises through which we develop understanding not only about ourselves but others. It is through the emergence of the Self-Observing that we bring clarity, authenticity, and reality to our teaching and learning, not only in the classroom but in the world outside the classroom door. We must be ever vigilant that developing the Self-Observing is a never ending process of growth and we are all at different stages of growth. We cannot frighten, cajole, nor coerce the Self-Observing into emergence in our selves or others; rather we must accept the point where we are in our lives. This point is not a matter of right or wrong, but merely our unique place in our development. It is when we acquire tolerance, awareness, and acceptance of the unique place that we each occupy that we can begin to collectively move forward, helping one another while nurturing the growth of our own special selves.

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