

Bodymindfulness for Skillful Communication

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Abstract: Although bodymindfulness is only a small part of what I teach in my graduate communication courses, one third of my recent students noted in their final course evaluations that it was what they would remember most about the class. This pedagogical study examines the concept and practice of bodymindfulness and analyzes the effects students reported experiencing when they used it.

Bodymindfulness is an approach to becoming aware of and adjusting our inner state. The term *bodymind* emphasizes the systemic, integral nature of lived experience, and mindfulness is a Buddhist concept and practice of cultivating awareness. Bodymindfulness is the process of attending to all aspects of the bodymind — body, emotion/feeling, mind, and spirit — in order to grasp the holistic personal meaning of an internal event and to use the resultant understanding to communicate skillfully. Because bodymindfulness can help us to access and to understand the pre-rational structures of our meaning perspectives and how we express them, it promotes self-reflexivity in the moment and ongoing integrative transformative learning.

The analysis is based on the reflections of 21 recent students in answer to the question, “While using bodymindfulness and paying attention to your breathing during or outside class, have you observed anything new about your inner state and how it affects your communication?” Data was collected from feedforward sheets that are required after each class, student presentations, and final reflective papers.

Students’ observations focused on 1) attending to their inner states and 2) using the resulting awareness to attune themselves and to do the inner processing necessary to 3) align their actions with their intentions to communicate in more appropriate, effective, and satisfying ways. Student reflections on their ex-

periences of learning and applying bodymindfulness reveal how they responded to this holistic educational opportunity with enhanced self-awareness, improved communication skills, and new ways of being and doing. Their responses confirm that bodymindfulness offers a starting point for cultivating self-reflexivity and promotes an ongoing process of integrative transformative learning.

Introduction

Although bodymindfulness is only a small part of what I teach in my graduate communication courses in English, one third of my recent students noted in their final course evaluations that it was what they would remember most about the class. This pedagogical study examines the concept and practice of bodymindfulness and analyzes the effects students reported experiencing when they used it. Their responses confirm that what they learned about bodymindfulness offers a starting point for cultivating self-reflexivity in the moment and promotes an ongoing process of integrative transformative learning. This paper gives an overview of self-reflexivity and bodymindfulness and explains my pedagogical approach for promoting it prior to discussing the students' experiences.

Self-Reflexivity and Bodymindfulness

Most of my graduate students are working adults in their 20s to 50s who are seeking a catalyst for change in their lives, and the others are usually preparing themselves for working in ways that contribute to effective communication with people of diverse cultures. Usually they talk first about their professional aspirations but later reveal their more personal motivations. They are knowledge workers whose professional work depends on their skillful use of self.¹ The work that they are currently engaged in or that they aspire to typically ranges across education; interpreting and translating; consulting, coaching, and facilitating; business; law; and NGOs, both domestic and international.

My conviction as an intercultural communication educator is that our studies should have a positive impact on our life and work. To prepare my students to use themselves skillfully in culturally complex and dynamic work settings, my pedagogical approach emphasizes the development of *self-reflexivity*, the ability to have an ongoing conversation with your whole self about what you are experiencing as you are experiencing it. The link between theory and practice in our intercultural studies is self-reflexivity, a type of self-awareness which I conceive of as an accelerated form of hermeneutic reflection that has been ingrained by ongoing effort (Nagata, 2005).

Although the intrapersonal effort or inner work is similar, self-reflection is after the fact; self-reflexivity is in the moment; and feeling is likely to have more immediacy so it may be easier to grasp its role (Fisher-Yoshida & Nagata, 2002). To be reflective is to sit and think about what took place after it is completed: our role in it, others' reactions, and our responses to them. This can be done through thinking, writing, or speaking with another person. One goal of engaging in reflection is to learn from our experiences with the aim of improving the quality of our interactions with others in future encounters.

Since intercultural communication is typically practiced in the moment face-to-face, self-reflexivity can be even more valuable than self-reflection. Cultivating the ability to be self-aware of feeling and its impact on thinking or vice versa, then adjusting what we are doing and saying right at that time may confer immediate benefits. If we can defer acting when confused and upset or dogmatically insisting on our own point of view, it may be possible to use our inner resources skillfully and to find an effective approach to communicating in that situation.

Three components have been incorporated into promoting self-reflexivity in my teaching (Nagata, 2005): bodymindfulness (Nagata, 2004), metacommunication (Mindell, 1990; Wood, 2004), and communicative flexibility (Bolton & Bolton, 1996; Merrill & Reid, 1981). Bodymindfulness is the process of attending to all aspects of the bodymind — body, emotion/feeling, mind, and spirit — in order to grasp the holistic personal meaning of an internal event and to use the resultant understanding to communicate skillfully (Nagata, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b).

Pedagogical Approach for Promoting Bodymindfulness

My students are multilingual and are often focused on the importance of language learning, but my emphasis on nonverbal communication usually begins to catch their interest. In trying to understand how to communicate in Japanese with Japanese people, I have particularly sought to improve the nonverbal aspects of my interactions since the people around me often seemed to be communicating without words. Because I was socialized in the mainstream U. S. culture, I expected the most important part of the message to be carried in words (Hall, 1977); but it seemed that this was not the case in Japan. I realized I had to discover and develop other resources in myself in order to communicate well here. Teaching bodymindfulness has provided a way to bring tacit knowledge into awareness and to use it intentionally to promote better communication, especially when people have not mastered a common language.

Peter Anderson's (2000) work on intercultural differences in nonverbal communication identifies *State* as one of four sources of influence on interpersonal behavior. The other three are *Culture*, *Situation* (context), and *Traits* (personality). He theorizes that Culture and Traits are enduring and Situation and State are transient. Culture and Situation have an external focus and Traits and State an internal one.

State is a transient phenomena with an internal focus, which is what I have particularly

tried to bring to my students' attention. Of these four influences, our state is likely to be easier for us to influence in the moment than the others. Using bodymindfulness to attend and attune to one's inner states has been one of my emphases in promoting more skillful communication (Nagata, 2004). I will discuss bodymindfulness here as an example of the extrarational component of my educational approach that is intended to promote integrative transformative learning² of the whole person (Nagata, 2006b).

Transformative Learning

Transformative Learning is an approach to adult learning that was introduced in 1978 by Jack Mezirow (Nagata, 2006b). Mezirow emphasizes that learning in childhood is a formative, socializing, and acculturating process, but adult education can be transformative and move "the individual toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable (open to other points of view), and integrated meaning perspective, the validity of which has been established through rational discourse" (1991, p. 7).

Meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1991) are structures of largely prerational, unarticulated presuppositions; they are mainly out of our awareness and may result in views of reality that Mezirow describes as distorted. They are based in prior learning that has remained unexamined. Transforming these limited meaning schemes or perspectives through examination and evaluation of fundamental assumptions is the essential task of adult learning. It is also vital for interculturalists, people who are committed to communicating across many types of differences.

Although Mezirow's work has been foundational in the field of transformative education, over the years a variety of critical responses has emerged. Edward Taylor (1994, 1997, 2000) has been one of the most articulate of these critics. He argues that "transformative learning is not just rationally and consciously driven but incorporates a variety of nonrational and unconscious modalities for revising meaning structures" (1997, p. 48). In calling for a reconceptualization of the transformative learning process, he emphasized the significance of whole-person learning by quoting the following: "awareness and use of all the functions we have available for knowing, including our cognitive, affective, somatic, intuitive, and spiritual dimensions" (The Group for Collaborative Inquiry cited by Taylor, 1997, p. 49).

O'Sullivan, Morrell, & O'Connor's (2002) definition of transformative learning is particularly relevant to my emphasis on bodymindfulness.

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feeling, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race, and gender; our body-awarenesses; our visions

of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (p. 11)

This understanding of transformative learning includes both rational and extrarational aspects. The learning process I promote is intended to facilitate integration of the whole person and includes both aspects, but I will focus on bodymindfulness here. Because bodymindfulness can help us to access and to understand the pre-rational structures of our meaning perspectives and how we express them, it promotes integrative transformative learning.

Bodymindfulness

Bodymindfulness is a word I coined (2002) for becoming aware of and adjusting our inner state. The term *bodymind* emphasizes the systemic, integral nature of lived experience, and mindfulness is a Buddhist concept and practice of cultivating awareness.

Awareness has two components: attention and intention (Chopra, 1994). Awareness includes a flow of biological information that can help us relate more skillfully (Young, 1997). Bodymindfulness can be used to attend to this type of information, somatic-emotional sensations that are often out of awareness (Pert, 2000), especially during an interpersonal interaction when our attention may be focused on another person or on a group of people. Typically words grab our attention, and bodily experience drops into the background, out of consciousness (Leder, 1990). We typically need to make a conscious intention to be bodymindful.

Engaging in bodymindfulness is a process of attending to somatic-emotional sensations that may also include the *felt sense* (Gendlin, 1981), the holistic personal meaning of an internal event. Gendlin articulates this deep level of experience and how working with the holistic felt sense through a process he named *Focusing* is an integrative approach to releasing new energy for change.

Focusing is not an invitation to drop thinking and just feel. That would leave our feelings unchanged. Focusing begins with that odd and little known “felt sense” and then we think verbally, logically, or with image forms — but in such a way that the felt sense shifts. When there is a body shift, we sense that our usual kind of thinking has come together with body-mind, and has succeeded in letting body-mind move a step (p. 160). . . . The holistic felt sense is more inclusive than reason. . . . It is your sense of the whole thing, including what you know, have thought, have learned. . . . Thought and feeling, ought and want, are not now split in it. (p. 165)

Focusing is a way of tuning into prelinguistic experience prior to a sense of separation of body and mind. Recognizing and working on our inner state at this deep level can change our sense of being, our presence, and also how we express them in language and behavior.

The Quaternity Model

The Quaternity model is useful for illustrating the various aspects of our lived experience of being — body, mind, emotion/feeling, and spirit (Nagata, 2004, 2005, 2006b).

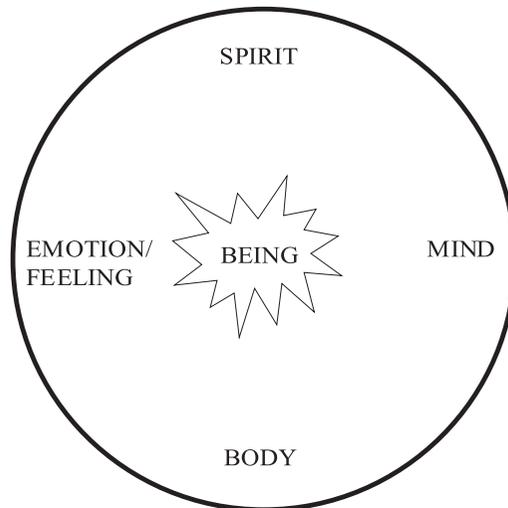


Figure 1. The Quaternity model of the bodymind.

Adapted from C. G. Jung in N. Schwartz-Salant, 1995; K. McLaren, 2000; A. Nelson, 1993.

The definitions used as starting points in presenting this model are as follows:

- **Consciousness:** a person's entire inner experience: thoughts, sensations of the body, emotions, visions of the spirit (Nelson, 1993).
- **Being:** sometimes called *self*; the integral state of all aspects of the self; may be cultivated to a higher than usual level of human functioning.
- **Mind:** the part of a person that reasons, thinks, remembers, imagines, feels, wills, perceives, judges, and so on; the part of a person that pays attention.
- **Body:** a person's physical structure and material substance; the body gives bounds to the personality and provides a vehicle for life.
- **Emotion**³: a complex collection of chemical and neural responses forming a distinctive pattern, an automatic response to a stimulus, that changes the state of the body proper and the state of brain structures that map the body and support thinking. The result is to place the organism in circumstances conducive to survival and well-being (Damasio, 2003).
- **Feeling:** the perception of a certain state of the body along with the perception of a certain mode of thinking and of thoughts with certain themes. "Feelings let us mind the body" (Damasio, 1994, p. 151).
- **Spirit:** incorporeal, transcendent aspects of human being; connection with a larger creative source of meaning, the universe, or the divine.

Although bodymindfulness applies to recognizing information that comes from all aspects of the self and their interactions, I have emphasized somatic-emotional sensations because they underlie our intrapersonal experience and are typically subconscious and neglected. Much of our bodily experience is out of awareness most of the time, but we can become conscious of it if we focus our attention on it (Pert, 2000). Bodymindfulness can help us bring all aspects of our being into consciousness and reveal deep layers of our experience of them as well as how the various aspects may interact. It can alert us to information that might otherwise go unnoticed so that we can use it resourcefully in the moment, both intrapersonally within ourselves and interpersonally in our relationships.

When we communicate, all aspects of our selves — body, emotion/feeling, mind, and spirit — are involved whether we are conscious of them and use them skillfully or not. If, for example, we are unconscious of our feelings, our emotions may leak out in our paralanguage, facial expressions, or movements and send messages that contradict the verbal content of what we are saying. Similarly, if we are unaware of our bodies, our body language may reveal our thoughts and emotions in ways that are not congruent with the text of our speech. Because nonverbal communication is typically out of awareness, when we are sending mixed messages — conflicting nonverbal and verbal signals, people have a tendency to believe the nonverbal ones (Martin & Nakayama, 2004). Additionally, if we are not sensitive to intuitive inspirations, we miss a source of mysterious energy that can promote our creativity and connections to larger frames of meaning that may sustain us beyond the usual limits of our physical and emotional endurance.

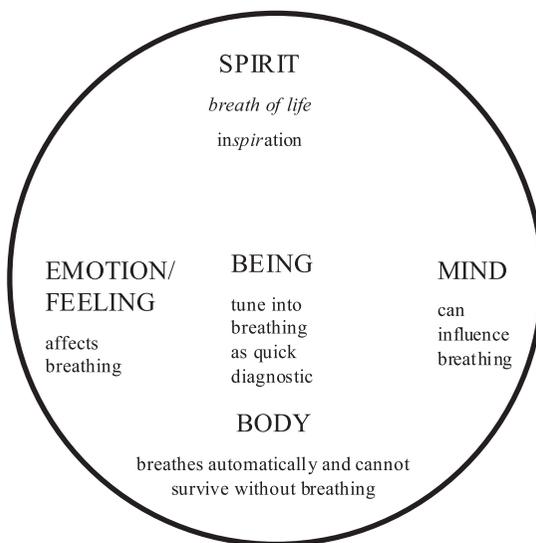
Bodymindfulness is an inclusive term for both intrapersonal attuning to inner states and interpersonal attentiveness to the presence of others. Intrapersonally it is a way of cultivating the ability to metacommunicate. Interpersonal communication scholar Julia Wood (2004) defines metacommunication as “communication about communication” (p. 31); but my focus here in regard to self-reflexivity is more intrapersonal, that is, on being conscious of how the various aspects of ourselves are communicating as or shortly after we communicate. Recognizing the importance of all aspects of our being can help us center and ground ourselves so that we can stay in balance or regain it.

Arnold Mindell (1990), a Jungian psychologist who works on global conflict resolution, describes the aspect of metacommunication that may particularly apply to interculturalists seeking a larger view of self and context. He writes, “the more you work on yourself, the less you will identify with only one part, and the more you will metacommunicate” (p. 85). Working to strengthen this ability can help us to step outside our cultural confusion, frustration, and attendant misunderstandings that were grounded in identifications and assumptions that were unconscious until we stumbled over them.

The Bodymindfulness Practice

Attention to and care for our bodymind affects our internal state. Breathing consciously is the simplest, most fundamental way to tune into our current state, to care for,

and to calm ourselves. Cultivating bodymindfulness with conscious breathing also helps us to recognize the interaction and mutual influence that body, emotion/feeling, mind, and spirit have on each other (Pert, 1997). The following figure introduces these ideas prior to my teaching the *Bodymindfulness Practice*, an exercise for self-attunement.



68 *Figure 2.* Breathing as the connector of the aspects of being of the bodymind.

The Bodymindfulness Practice, a seemingly simple exercise, clears a space for turning attention inward and making contact with our own energy. It promotes development of awareness of our *bodymindset* — the existing pattern of being in our bodymind (Nagata, 2002) — and offers a means of shifting it so that our presence is more poised and effective in conveying a desired message congruently.

Bodymindfulness Practice

- Presence requires being present in the moment: *Be here now*.
- Tune into your breathing and see what it tells you about your current state of being.
- Breathe more deeply and evenly.
- Set your intention for your participation here.
- Use bodymindfulness to **Be here now!**

The Bodymindfulness Practice is a means of diagnosing our own internal states, attuning to our sensations, feelings, thoughts, and inspirations, and then shifting them if deemed desirable. It is a distillation of Asian practices that can be done anytime, anywhere, at no cost, and in the complete privacy of our own bodymind. The Bodymindfulness Practice can be used whenever we enter a new space or begin to interact with someone. It

can provide an orientation to the context of that moment. Ideally, it becomes a means of ongoing self-monitoring and attunement, which are both essential for self-reflexivity in the varied situations interculturalists may encounter.

The Practice of Intercultural Communication as Walking Meditation

The Bodymindfulness Practice is intended to help us develop a holistic self-awareness that will serve us in the moment during intercultural interactions. I urge students to think of intercultural communication as walking meditation if they want to become interculturalists who can manage unexpected communication situations on their feet at the time they are actually occurring.

What is an interculturalist? My simple definition is a person who is committed to trying to communicate across significant differences of various types. Interculturalists typically have a personal stake in communicating in a more satisfying way with some of the people who are important in their lives that do not speak the same language natively, share the same culture, or have other significant differences. They are often motivated to continue developing their relational skills as they encounter and process differences and difficulties they do not yet understand and know how to manage skillfully. They are usually willing to make an ongoing effort to communicate to avoid or resolve misunderstandings. They are typically open to new experiences.

Being an interculturalist has become my practice, a commitment to a way of pursuing a personally important conceptual ideal that leads toward a higher level of functioning. I think of my daily communication as walking meditation, that is, being aware of what I am doing during all my interactions every day. This is my ideal, admittedly not always possible, but very practical because it reminds me to try to figure out my own assumptions and shift my approach when something is not going well.

Student Experiences of Bodymindfulness

The following analysis is intended to reveal the effects of incorporating bodymindfulness into my classroom teaching of graduate communication courses in English. It is based on the reflections of 21 recent students in answer to the question, “While using bodymindfulness and paying attention to your breathing during or outside class, have you observed anything new about your inner state and how it affects your communication?” Data was collected from feedforward sheets⁴ that are required after each class, presentations, and final reflective papers. Content analysis (Creswell, 2003) was used to identify the themes described below that reveal the overall structure and flow of the students’ experiences.

Students’ observations focused on 1) attending to their inner states and 2) using the resulting awareness to attune themselves and to do the inner processing necessary to 3) align their actions with their intentions to communicate in more appropriate, effective, and

satisfying ways.⁵ The quotations⁶ below reveal these inner moves that may also shift how they interact with other people.

Attending to Inner States

Experiencing uncomfortable bodily sensations and unpleasant emotions and feelings were frequently noted and sometimes explicitly related to other aspects of being a bodymind. Brief class exercises led the students toward making these connections, particularly concerning how they were communicating as a result of their inner states.

Students reported using bodymindfulness outside class when when tired, confused, or upset, when hurrying, when waiting in line or riding a rush hour train, when arguing with someone or listening to troubled friends, when anxious while making a presentation, when struggling to concentrate, and so forth. They also used it to relax, to calm themselves down, and to promote sleep. One student, Mihoko Yoshioka (2006), is using it to do her research on bodymindful listening in intercultural dialogues.⁷

The following observation shows how a student understood common physical symptoms in relation to an overall self-evaluation, a metacommunication on self and communication.

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A few weeks ago I caught a cold, and although the cold has more or less gone away, I am still cursed with a cough which I find has held me back in communicating with other people. If I talk for long, my throat becomes dry and I start to cough, and so I am talking less frequently. The significance of this is that my physical state is having an effect on my self-esteem, which in turn is affecting the way I communicate with other people. (Philip Shek)

These insights can support skillful self-management when feeling unwell and discouraged as an alternative to contagiously spreading personal distress in relationships with other people.

As the following quotations illustrate, students varied in whether they were more aware of their bodily condition and how it influenced other aspects of themselves, especially their minds, or how mental states affected their bodies and feelings.

I have noticed that my mental condition is directly and immediately influenced very much by my body state. Whenever I breathe deeply and regularly, I become calm and at the same time keen towards many subtle things around and inside myself. I feel more positive and brimming with hope about the outer world as well as the inner world, both other people as well as myself. I feel myself more lively in this space and harmonious with people and the environment. (MT)

Through understanding bodymindfulness, I have realized that I am such a bodymind,

which means that the state of my mind is immediately represented/inscribed onto my body, which sometimes I do not like that much. (Keitaro Morita)

Recognizing which aspect of ourselves is likely to take precedence in our awareness can alert us to other areas that have been neglected and need to be cultivated so that they become more readily available inner resources.

Attuning With Awareness

Using bodymindfulness to attend to breathing is the first step to becoming aware of inner states and their relation to behavior and outer contexts. Then bodymindful breathing can be used to attune and to shift those states as desired. The following discoveries by H. Asano took place over several weeks and represent a typical emphasis on becoming calm and making choices regarding communication. The second paragraph is an overall reflection from her final paper.

I think, owing to bodymindfulness, I calm down in communicating with people, even when I am worried about something or was rushing just before that. I come to pay attention to my own breathing, not only during using bodymindfulness but also during communication. . . . By using bodymindfulness, I learned to recognize where I am now and what I have to do now. This is because it helps me associate yesterday's self with today's and my present one. . . . Above all, I have come to recognize my current condition by using bodymindfulness, so that I can fit myself to each particular situation as much as I can. Even if I cannot do so, knowing my current condition may help me notice the reason. . . . I believe that such a practice is really useful not only to myself but also to others that I am communicating with. I feel that it has a kind of unlimited possibility for communication.

By encountering and practicing bodymindfulness, I have learned to face myself steadily, and I, accordingly, have come to know how I am expected to behave under a certain circumstance. The knowledge of my own state of being helps me to communicate with others much better than before. Not only my own whole atmosphere but also the ways in which I consider others as well as the ways in which I talk have altered.

When considering the class topic of conflict, we practiced tuning into our *inner aura*—Gendlin's (1981) term for the felt sense of another person, object, situation, or idea—of different people that we imagined relating to. We noted changes in our inner states related to communicating with people who are *uppers* (Wood, 2004, p. 82), whom we experience as positive about us, in contrast to *downers*, people who seem negative about us. One student wrote:

In the last class, we learned to think about people who affect our inner state while breathing. When I thought about a person who was an upper for me, I felt something warm in my body. When I started to think about a different person who was a downer for me, my body felt coldness inside. Usually, I try not to think about the downer person, but while doing bodymindfulness, I could think about the person calmly, at least more calmly than usual. And, I could think why the person was a downer for me, or how I could have better communication with the person. I did not run away from the person in my mind. I think that I always lose calmness when I communicate with the downer person, and that might have a bad effect on my utterances and behavior.

This exercise also resulted in insights about how she evaluated another person and how that evaluation might change. There is a suggestion here of accessing new inner resources for improving communication. Knowing how to shift negative anticipation about communicating with someone is a critical skill for professional people.

In a feedforward sheet, Mihoko Yoshioka described how bodymindfulness influenced her inner states and helped her become neutral in outlook.

I wonder if bodymindfulness is a meta process of imaging nature for me because I seem to be accessing the state I associate with visualizing a lake whenever I want to know my condition, which is usually when I feel I am not neutral.

I am feeling back on form after trying bodymindfulness. Inhaling, I feel as if I am charging my energy to be in a better state, and exhaling, I sense that my aspects of feelings, emotions, and body are calming down and becoming a state of zero. The exhaling process reminded me of my imagination of a process of clearing the muddy water of a lake. I wait for the muddy water to become transparent and its wave motion to be quiet on the surface. After a while, my vision goes close to check the bottom of the lake to see if the water is transparent and also goes back to watch the surface of the lake to see if the beautiful trees and the sky are reflected there as they are. I repeat this movement of looking back and forth and try to come into a neutral state. I guess my lake might be a kind of double metaphor of a lens and a mirror through which I interpret and see the outer world.

Her use of bodymindfulness has evolved into a way to metacommunicate and to shift her inner state.

Aligned Action

Some of the students emphasized how bodymindfulness gave them a new sense of being as shown above, and others focused more on new ways of doing. In both cases, the result was usually improved communication skills. Students often noted how their state

influenced the way they communicated, particularly in the relationships that were most important to them.

The relationship between mood and my communication style is very strong. When I am in some extreme emotion, like excited or angry, the urge to talk will become uncontrollable. Sometimes I quarreled with my girlfriend not really because of the stuff that we debated, but because of the tone, too loud a voice, or some inappropriate, harsh term I used.

Controlling my breathing could help to eliminate the influence of mood and lower the possibility of misunderstanding or even a quarrel. Paying attention to my breathing by counting always makes me calm, and then I could really start to reflect before talking. (JL)

As the result of learning bodymindfulness, Masaki Taniguchi, who works as a facilitator, realized the importance of preparing himself differently for his work.

I tried bodymindfulness at the office before meetings. It is interesting that I plan to design the meeting place, the attendants' circumstance and the control of it as a facilitator without paying attention to my self. Whereas the place is for all the attendants including the facilitator her/himself, it happens easily that I ignore myself — a particularly influential member.

After acknowledging it, I try to consider the position or the meaning of myself at the meeting and to control my attitude toward the meeting members by managing my condition using bodymindfulness.

This sense of realization of something fundamental that had not been obvious prior to using bodymindfulness was expressed by many students.

Arturo Urena Hamelitz, who has a young family and a growing business as well as being a fulltime student, wrote, "Mindful breathing really has become part of my life. It really helps me in starting the day right and in dealing with potentially stressful situations." He uses it to set his intention for the day by making a conscious choice on how to approach whatever the day will bring as well as using it as things unfold. He feels it is becoming a way of life for him.

Toshiyuki Shimano has also found that bodymindfulness has permeated his life. He did his master's thesis about the successful NGO project on blind migration and human trafficking in Cambodia where he did an internship (Shimano, 2006a). Bodymindfulness was particularly important because his ability to speak Khmer was limited, and he had to use interpreters when interviewing Cambodian people. In a presentation reflecting on his studies (Shimano, 2006b), he described his transformative learning experience that prepared him to do the complex development communication work he aspires to at the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), where he is now employed.

What I learned most through my experience in the courses I took is bodymindfulness. Studying about intercultural communication is much easier than putting it into practice. My NGO experience in Cambodia was tough at first. Even though I could understand that there were differences, it was difficult for me to comprehend and to adopt them. The bodymindfulness practice and theories that I learned were really helpful in giving me an inner sense of myself and in noticing resonance in relationships that helped us to understand each other more. Using them, everyday I continue to learn something even though I experience the same things. . . . As I utilized bodymindfulness by keeping a journal and diary and realizing my inner sense, qualitative research and person-centered interviewing made it possible to recognize the basics of HCC's projects' successful points. . . . What I learned is to realize the tacit knowledge and invisible information, to suspend myself when I have some difficulties, to keep a journal and reflect on it after a while, and to be flexible to see the situation from a broader point of view. . . . The most fundamental realization gained through experience during my studies and internship is that there is no single answer to being an interculturalist. For me, each day is a journey to be a better interculturalist — to communicate well using bodymindfulness within myself intrapersonally, interpersonally with others, and interculturally wherever I find myself. Life is like a never ending journey to have more wonderful opportunities with others to explore unknown things.

These reflections about his three years of study and work reveal the connection between shifting state of being and the resulting change in what it is possible to do in the world.

Conclusion

The Bodymindfulness Practice is intended to help us to take a moment to breathe deeply and to consider what we are experiencing and what we intend to do about it. It can be the foundation of self-reflexivity and promote skillful communication. Student reflections on their experiences of learning and applying bodymindfulness reveal how they responded to this holistic educational opportunity with enhanced self-awareness, improved communication skills, and new ways of being and doing. Their responses confirm that bodymindfulness offers a starting point for self-reflexivity in the moment and an ongoing process of integrative transformative learning. Bodymindfulness is a practice particularly suitable for integrative transformative learning because it focuses us at a deep, prereflective level where we can begin to understand the sources of our perceptions, interpretations, and behavior. Bodymindfulness offers us ways to recognize and to shift our inner states whenever and wherever needed as we lay down our paths while journeying through life.

Notes

- 1 The concept of *use of self as an instrument* was introduced to me by organizational development specialist, Charlie Seashore, in a Fielding Institute workshop in July 1996. I have recently come across an earlier reference to it (McCracken, 1988).
- 2 Following Susan Lennox's (2005) usage of *integrative*, I am calling my approach *integrative transformative education* rather than *integral* because the latter term often refers to a specific tradition as described in detail in the Fall 2005 and Winter 2006 issues of *ReVision* (e.g., Ryan, 2005; Esbjörn-Hargens, 2006).
- 3 Damasio's distinction between *emotion* and *feeling* as defined above is particularly useful for interculturalists. Emotions are actions or movements that precede feelings. Many are public and perceptible by others as they occur in the face, the voice, and specific behaviors. These displays provide particularly valuable cues for interculturalists, especially when they are learning new nonverbal codes. Feelings are always hidden, like all mental images necessarily are, the private property of the organism in whose brain they occur (Damasio, 1999, 2003). Ting-Toomey (1999) recommends perception checking as a way of avoiding misunderstandings that arise when we think we know what others are feeling without asking them.
- 4 Feedforward sheets ask for reflection on class readings and exercises. *Feedforward*, suggestions on how to improve a selected behavior in the future, is a term coined by Marshall Goldsmith (2002) and Jon Katzenbach to emphasize the expansive and dynamic possibilities people have in the future rather than focusing on their limitations in the past. It seems more appropriate than feedback for students who are oriented to putting what they are learning to work.
- 5 See Ting-Toomey (1999, pp. 48-52) for a model and discussion of mindful intercultural communication that uses these as the criteria of competence.
- 6 Students are identified by name or initials unless they chose to be anonymous.
- 7 Yoshioka presented an interim report on her research in a panel on "The Transformative Learning of Finding Voice as an Intercultural Researcher" at the SIETAR Japan conference on July 1, 2006.

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