

Integration of Contemplative Practice in an Academic Setting for Transformative Education

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The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

defines “contemplative practices quiet the mind in order to **cultivate a personal capacity for deep concentration and insight**”

Conceptual learning: a learning method or a form of critical thinking

individuals master the ability to categorize and organize data by creating mental logic-based structures

Procedural learning: individuals memorize procedures but does not require the understanding of concepts.

transformative learning: “deep learning,” not just content or process learning

-examines how to move from a limited knowledge of knowing to learning to identify, assess, evaluate, and reframe the learner’s world-view through the incorporation of new knowledge into zir/her/his world-view or belief system

Transformative Learning

learning to **integrate intellectual understanding** (*knowledge*) with **emotional understanding** (*affect*)

Learners are given the opportunity to develop the relationship between their *experiences* (*subjective, 1st person inquiry*) and the *knowledge* (*objective, 3rd person inquiry*)

Integrate *personal inquiry* with *scientific inquiry*



Transformative Learning includes both Cognitive (knowledge) and affective processing

Conceptual learning (knowledge) alone
does not transform **attitudes, values, and
beliefs** that are learned through
socialization from early childhood (*mostly
implicit learning*)

Reflection on your schooling

What was emphasized?

- Cognitive processing (conceptual learning, objective, third person inquiry)
- Affective processing (learning with emotion , subjective, first person inquiry)
- Transformative learning (integration of cognitive and affective processing)

Affective Processing

1. Drawing
2. Expressive Writing & Dancing (without judgment)
3. Reflective writing
4. Mindfulness movement (e.g. yoga)
5. Dream journal
6. Creative expressions
7. Meditation (Centering)
8. Poetry



Barriers

A. Implicit learning

In contrast to the first hundred years of research, which conveyed a view of memory and beliefs as operating exclusively in a conscious mode, the past decades have shown increasingly that both **memory** and **belief** also **operate implicitly** in powerful yet **unconscious** way, **outside the actor's awareness** (Banaji & Bhaskar, 2001; Heiphetz, et al. 2013)

Children as young as 5 years old show that they not only have learned to be loyal to their in-group but also have learned to dislike other children who do not conform to the norms of their in-group (Abrams, et al., 2004; Nesdale & Brown, 2004; Heiphetz, et al. 2013)

Once implicit attitudes are formed individuals are **resistant to new information** (Rydell et al., 2007; Heiphetz, et al. 2013)



- We also have been rewarded for valuing **competitiveness** and **individual achievement** over group achievement (Schwartz, et al., 2013)



B. Conventional thinking styles

inappropriate dichotomous, hierarchical, linear thinking

It is hard to deconstruct inappropriate dichotomous and hierarchical thinking styles because children from cultures that emphasize competition, superiority, and external images are likely to learn to value these as their core values through conditioning

It is embedded in **Americans' consciousness** (Singer & Kimbles, 2004)

- Individuals who are socialized in a culture where **dichotomous and hierarchical thinking styles** are valued **internalize these values** through repeated practices. They become ethnocentric **without being aware of it** (Implicit learning, Machunsky, & Meiser, 2013)

These thinking styles lead to ingroup-favoritism

Meta-analysis on in-groups and out-groups

indicates that people have a tendency to **favor in-groups** (Bruckmuller & Abele, 2010; Hegarty & Bruckmuller, 2013; Robbins & Krueger, 2005)

- A behavioral indication of in-group favoritism is **inter-group discrimination** which is based on dichotomous (& hierarchical) thinking and divides “**us**” vs. “**them (other)**”



a) attribution error:

Positive behaviors -- internal traits of ingroup
Negative behaviors-- **internal traits** of outgroup

b) social projection:

Individuals expect others view the world like them
(**N=1=many**). “I” (we) am (are) right and “you” are
wrong [Bianchi et al. (2009)]

c) asymmetric perception:

Pronin et al.'s (2004) review of studies
from **1949-2004**
participants stated they are **more objective** and
less biased than others

C. Inappropriate generalizations

Generalization takes place **inside** the individual (**internally**) and is difficult to stop and analyze the process due to the lack of internal feedback system.

Generalizations about members of a particular group are often based on **one's experience with single individual**, and the process is **unconscious** (Henderson-King & Nisbett, 1996)

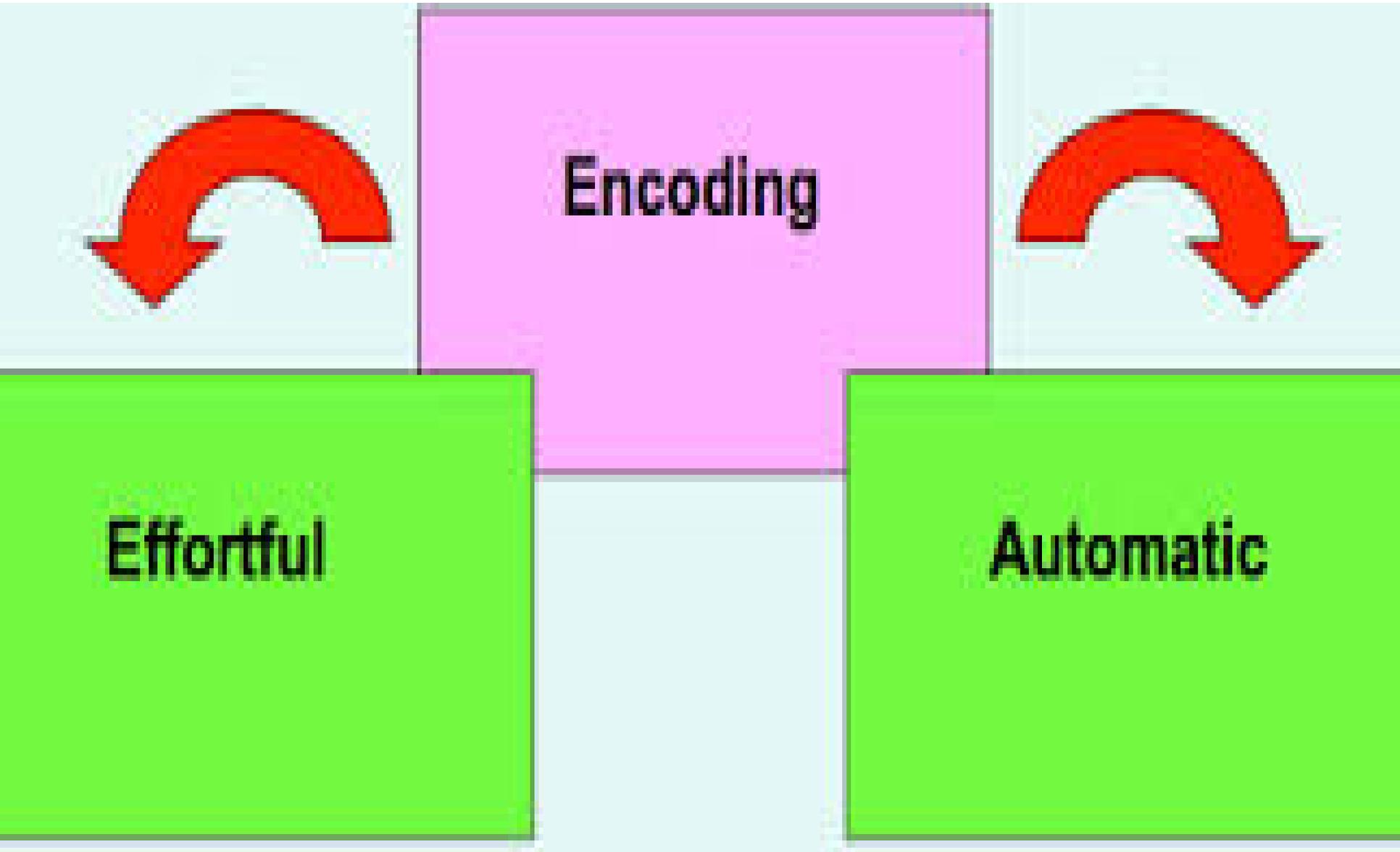
Attribution error, social projection, asymmetric perception, and ethnocentrism are often based on inappropriate generalization.

D. Automatic information processing

is lower levels of information processing and is due to inconsideration of the target (an individual, individuals, or a group).

Age, race, and gender categories are automatic categories because responses to them are easily activated (Nelson, 2005; Susskind & Hodges, 2007).

Controlled vs. Automatic Information Processing



E. Racing mind

Intrapersonal : A communicator interacts with self. It is a mirror image of one's own cultural values, beliefs, and biases. All communication starts from this

A communicator talks or thinks to himself/herself/hirself. A communicator is his/her/hir own message sender and receiver in an ongoing internal process

Conscious part ranges from thinking to interpreting the verbal and nonverbal communication of others.



Intrapersonal communication

starts in early childhood as a result of external messages from social agents (i.e. parents, peers, media, schools, churches, etc.).

It reflects one's own culture [**individualistic** (**competition, individual achievement**), **collective** (**cooperation, group achievement**), or something in between], thinking styles, beliefs, experiences, expectations, etc.

Ways to Facilitate Transcending Barriers

- Encourage students to **observe their inner-world without judgment:**
 - encourage them to be **aware of body, mind, and emotions** in the learning process.
- Incorporate ideas and learning activities with your lecture so that students critically examine their barriers.
- Create assignments and lectures to encourage students to cultivate **awareness of alternate ways**
- Establish a learning environment characterized by **trust** and **care**
- Demonstrate ability to serve as an **experienced mentor** reflecting your own journey.
- Help students **question critically examine their inner-reality**

To implement in an academic setting

Structured safe spaces are needed for students to learn how to **observe** and **reflect** their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors **without censoring**

Diligent and **mindful practice** of observing their inner experience **without judgment**

Introspective assignments

1. Start class with 2-3 min. Contemplative Practice

2. Weekly Contemplative Practice (CP) Recording sheet. Instructions: Understanding yourself includes learning about the connections between your mind, body, and spirit. To facilitate this understanding, record your activities each day mindfully and observe your inner world. Describe what you discovered about yourself from the activities. Filling out the form on the day before or on that day by attempting to recall a whole week is inaccurate and defeats the purpose of activities. Please do not kill your soul by pretending (display from the file)

3. Process Papers

Instructions:

The goal for the learning process paper is to **reflect** on how you learned.

The intent of the process paper is to provide a space for you to reflect. **You are writing for you and not for your faculty.** You can be honest with yourself. This is the process of getting to know you which is one of the important components of multicultural counseling competencies.

- READING: (1) State how many pages you have read for the assigned reading each week. (2) State how closely you've read. If you just skimmed the reading, what was the reason? (3) How did you feel about skimming or reading thoroughly? So far this quarter, (4) how often did you read thoroughly or just skim? (5) Do you consider this your pattern? (6) Describe the author's major theme from each week's seminar reading.
- LISTENING: (1) How well did you listen in lecture, seminar, workshop and peer groups? (Answer separately for each.) (2) Did you listen well? If you are attentively listening, why? (3) Do you listen more attentively in some areas than others? (4) What could you do to become a more attentive listener? (5) An excellent listener would probably be able to state in some detail what was discussed in each week's lecture, seminar, or workshop. State some from each week.

- SPEAKING and PARTICIPATING (1) How well did you participate in seminar, workshop, and peer group? What is your definition of “participation”? (2) Did you monopolize the conversation? If so, why? Did you stay quiet? If so, why? (3) Did you actively participate in the workshops? Why or why not?
- GROUP WORK: (1) How many hours did you spend **actually working** in your small group at the Learning Summary Group Meeting? This should not include socializing time. (2) Did you stay focused on the task at hand –processing weekly learning, counseling skill tape review, etc.? (3) Did you talk more than your share? (4) What could you have done differently to stay more focused?
- MOVEMENT: Understanding yourself includes learning about the connections between your mind, body, and spirit (soul). What did you learn from the in-program movement activities?
- RECORDING CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES: Describe your learning.

4. Concrete Strategies from the Text

You will be completing a series of reflective learning activities called “Concrete Strategies” in the *Social Justice, Multicultural Counseling and Practice* text. These activities will provide you with excellent opportunities to transform if you approach the task mindfully and honestly because you want to learn about who you really are through exploring the relationships among your memories, beliefs, values, and your inner and outer experiences. Complete the assigned pages and submit them on due dates which are specified on the syllabus. The faculty will not read the content but check assigned page numbers for completion only to protect your privacy and return the assignments to you as soon as possible on that day. The purpose of checking is to make sure you complete the exercises and have them for discussion that day and therefore they are not accepted late. Your Concrete Strategies responses may be handwritten or typed (e.g. Jun, 2009, p.25, 33#6, 50#1, 129#1&2)

5. Mindful Movement

Students engage in their narratives through listening to their body stories once a week for 30 minutes

Activities vary from visualization, meditation, yoga, constructive rest, observing body's reactions to the course content, expressive movement, etc.

