Contemplative Practices and the Concern for Well-Being in Schools: A Well-Being Pedagogy

Thomas Falkenberg

E-mail: thomas.falkenberg@umanitoba.ca

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Abstract

Over the last two decades, well-being in schools has become a major concern to educators, communities, and researchers. At the same time, there is a two-thousand-year-old tradition of contemplative practices that has been mostly ignored in the concern for well-being in schools. This conceptual and theoretical article makes the case for a central role of the latter to advance the former for an education system that places student well-being at the core of its purpose.

Keywords: *contemplative practices, well-being in school, student well-being, mindfulness, inner life, inner work, awareness, attention, noticing*

In this article, I bring together ideas from two educational "movements" for the purpose of creating a stronger base for a more holistic approach to school education. The first school educational movement I discuss can be called the student well-being movement. Since the beginning of the industrialized model of mass public education (Wotherspoon, 2009), student success has been defined in terms of successful learning of curricular content knowledge in school subjects that are primarily derived from academic disciplines like English, mathematics, and the natural and social sciences. This understanding of what schooling is about persists to this day in countries of the Global North and is reflected in the choice of what is tested in standardized testing at international (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], n.d.a) but also at national levels,for instance, in Canada (e.g., Council of Ministers of Education, Canada [CMEC], n.d.). While this understanding of the purpose of school education is still prominent, over about the last 15 years, a concern for student well-being *as a curricular focus* of school education has been making its way into educational discourses at the educational practice and scholarship level.

Child well-being has been a concern for governments of countries of the Global North for a long time (see, for instance, Sandin, 2014), however, a concern for student well-being that manifests itself in assessing student well-being for school success started only more recently. As part of its PISA testing in 2015, for the first time the OECD assessed student well-being across participating countries (Borgonovi & Pál, 2016, OECD, 2011, 2017). In Canada, linking students' well-being, in particular their mental health, to

school success has been a central concern for provincial governments over the last decade (e.g., Alberta Education, 2017; Ontario Education, 2013). This focus on schools as sites of children's lives and as contributors to, or inhibitors of, children's well-being has also been supported by scholarly work. Bacete et al. (2014), for instance, noted that in studies undertaken since the 1970s, "it was noticed in many longitudinal studies on children's well-being and adjustment that there were large differences among schools in their pupils' well-being that could not be explained by any variables other than those pertaining to the schools themselves" (p. 43). More recent studies also identified a direct positive impact of school education – which then, of course, had to be of certain quality – on the well-being of children relative to the respective conceptualization of well-being. Drawing on research on positive mental health, for instance, Morrison and Peterson (2013) make the case for education's potential to contribute to children's well-being. Bacete et al. (2014) referenced empirical evidence that schools provide opportunities to meet children's "three basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence," (p. 1256), which are three basic needs postulated by Self-Determination Theory (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2017).

The move toward making student well-being a core of the purpose of school education has also been suggested in some of the more recent literature (e.g., Hostetler, 2011; Reupert, 2020; Noble & McGrath, 2016; White, 2011). However, this idea has only occasionally been picked up at the school educational policy level, as has been the case, for instance, with a former provincial government of Ontario in Canada (Government of Ontario, n.d., 2014) and the current provincial government of Manitoba in Canada (Government of Manitoba, 2022).

This increased focus on student well-being can be understood as part of a broader shift at the highest political level away from economic growth as the primary indicator of quality of life towards a greater acknowledgement of well-being indicators, including citizens' level of education, their work-life balance, their life satisfaction, and the quality of their natural environment (e.g., OECD, n.d.b). This change in conceptualizing political priorities could be observed in the UK (Beaumont, 2011), France (Stiglitz et al., 2010), and more recently in Scotland, Norway, and New Zealand (Government of New Zealand, 2019).

The second school educational movement I am concerned with in this article can be called the mindfulness-in-school education movement. By this, I refer to the rapid increase of the role that mindfulness practices have been playing in school educational practice in countries of the Global North (e.g., Schonert-Reichl & Roeser, 2016). The ideas underlying these mindfulness practices go back to meditative practices as they were developed and practiced in the ancient spiritual and religious traditions developed primarily in the Middle East and South-East Asia (see Goleman, 1988). More recently in countries of the Global North, neurological and brain research supported the assumed psychological benefits of some of the mindfulness practices (e.g., Austin, 2009), leading to some of these practices being integrated into psycho-therapeutic work (e.g., Gilbert, 2009; Shapiro, D. & Walsh, 1984; Shapiro, S. & Carlson, 2009) and into educational contexts (e.g., Schonert-Reichl & Roeser, 2016; Zajonc, 2006).

The two movements – the mindfulness-in-school education movement and the student well-being movement – are connected. First and foremost, the concern for student well-being, which has been central to the student well-being movement, has also been the driving force behind a greater use and acceptance of mindfulness practices in schools. Second, the scholarship that contributes to the student well-being movement, like the scholarship on positive psychology in school education (e.g., Furlong et al., 2014), includes the scholarship of mindfulness in school education (e.g., Renshaw & O'Malley, 2014).

The purpose of this article is to connect the two educational movements more foundationally by grounding their respective central ideas of well-being and mindfulness in the same understanding of human mental functioning, which will provide us with a means-end connection between these two ideas. To this end, I proceed in this article as follows. First, I develop a foundation for both movements by outlining an understanding of human mental functioning with focus on the processes of awareness, attention, and noticing. Second, I propose a partial understanding of well-being that aligns with this understanding of human inner life. Third, I propose this understanding of human inner life as a basis for understanding "contemplative education", which I will suggest encompasses the educational employment of mindfulness as one specific form of contemplative practice. Finally, I propose a concern for students' well-being, a central part of the purpose of school education, for which I draw on the proposals made in the preceding sections.

Inner Life: Awareness, Attention, and Noticing

In this section I outline some core elements of a theory of human mental functioning – awareness, attention, and noticing – that I suggest can serve as a basis for understanding both well-being and mindfulness/contemplative practices (see also Falkenberg 2014b).

At the very foundation of the ideas presented in this section is the notion that humans – living beings more generally, for that matter – should be understood as living systems (e.g., Capra & Luisi, 2014; Maturana & Varela, 1980). A core feature of living systems is their *continued* interaction with their situational environments, whereby *environment* refers to an intersection of physical and psychologically and socially constructed "worlds" of which the engaged human subject is aware during the situation. This awareness gives then rise to human behaviour, i.e., a particular way of engaging with their environment. *Awareness* as used here does not need to be conscious awareness, rather it is akin to the way in which Mason (1998, p. 258; 2011, p. 43) used the term *awareness-in-action*, namely to refer to a mental state that enables action or behaviour, which in many day-to-day situations is for most of us unconscious or subconscious awareness. Such awareness-in-action is at work when, for instance, it enables my behaviour of walking down a flight of stairs as I intend to get something from the basement. This is an example of a conscious awareness of an action program or elements thereof (see Grawe, 1998/2004), like awareness of the sensation when my right foot touches the basement floor and my action program "tells me" I should expect my next step to be leveled and should move my leg accordingly. Following Brown and Ryan (2003), we can call such focusing of my conscious awareness "attention":

> *Attention* is a process of focusing conscious awareness, providing heightened sensitivity to a limited range of experience (Westen, 1999). In actuality, [conscious] awareness and attention are intertwined, such that attention continually pulls 'figures' out of the 'ground' of awareness, holding them focally for varying lengths of time. (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 822)

Noticing is a *shift* of my attention from one object to another (Mason, 2011, p. 45). My attention can be directed by me, for instance, when I attend to my breathing in a breath meditation activity, or it can be captured, for instance, when I hear a sudden noise right behind me in response to which I turn around. When I notice something, that something captures my attention and I consciously perceive and become consciously aware of that something; it draws my attention away from what I have been attending to just prior. I cannot intentionally notice something, since noticing means that my attention is captured by something. However, I can ready myself in particular ways to make it more likely that I notice

something. For instance, as part of my concentrative meditation practice (Austin, 2009), I can ready myself to notice when my attention moves away from my breath. However, as any practitioner of concentrative meditation knows, that intent is no guarantee that I actually notice this shift of my attention when it actually occurs. However, with time a practitioner of concentrative meditation generally gets better in noticing the shift of attention as it occurs, exemplifying that we can get better in noticing specific events with practice and time.

Awareness, attention, and noticing are forms of mental activities that are part of our "inner life" as human beings, whereby *inner (mental) life* refers to those mental processes that happen within a human mind as a dynamic adaptive complex system (e.g., Grawe, 1998/2004, Part 4). *Inner work*, then, refers to intentional activities involving awareness, attention, and noticing for the purpose of impacting one's inner life. For instance, engaging in mindfulness practices is a form of inner work. In the next section, I link the explicated concept of inner life to an understanding of well-being.

Well-Being, Inner Life, and Contemplative Practices

We can find quite different definitions of *well-being* across relevant literature (for systematic overviews, see Falkenberg, 2014a; Fletcher, 2016). While in principle, we can define *human well-being* as we like, in order for such a definition to be of practical relevance – for instance as part of theory with empirical implications – the definition needs to be such that it captures the core of what it is we want to define. In other words, to define *well-being* in a relevant sense, we need to have some intuitive preconception in the form of prototypical examples, counter examples, core properties, etc. that we can use to evaluate any definition against. Campbell (2016) has provided arguments that this is how defining well-being, especially in the field of philosophy, has been working, suggesting that different philosophers have different core ideas about what the term *well-being* is to capture. In other words, their different understandings of the term *well-being* might be complementary in the sense of capturing different ideas relevant to a concern for human well-being.

With the following general idea of understanding *well-being*, I draw on the philosopher Frankfurt ([1971] 1988), who suggested that one characteristic that distinguishes human beings from other animals is that humans have "second-order desires," that is they have desires to have certain desires. As humans we "may also want to have (or not to have) certain desires and motives. They [humans] are capable of wanting to be different, in their preferences and purposes, from what they are" (Frankfurt, [1971] 1988, p. 12). Philosophers like Bai (2006) and philosophically oriented psychologists like Martin et al. (2003) use *human agency* to refer to our ability to have second-order desires. In a most generic sense, what is it that humans are after when they exert their human agency, or when they desire what they desire? I suggested the following (Falkenberg, 2014a):

> The notion of "human well-being" becomes relevant in the sense that it is the generic notion of what humans generally aim for when exerting their agency: to live well, to live a good life, to live happily, and so on. In other words, *the concept of well-being is to capture what humans aim for when they exert their agency to live their lives one way rather than another*. This concept of well-being has the quality of "prospectivity" (Sumner, 1996, p. 133) or future directedness (Hostetler, 2011, p. 50). This identifies one central reason for the importance of the concept of well-being: What we conceptualize it to mean can and should direct our decisions and actions at the individual, socio-cultural, and socio-political level. (pp. 78-79)

For the purpose of this article, I do not distinguish *well-being* from other terms like *the good life* and *flourishing life* (for an example of a distinction between *well-being* and *flourishing* to capture complementary but different ideas, see Heringer & Falkenberg, in press). While these terms are often used with similar meanings (see Falkenberg, 2014a), they are often used with different meanings. The latter might suggest that such conceptual distinctions are needed to capture connected but nevertheless different phenomena (see Campbell, 2016). Even without identifying a specific meaning for the term *well-being*, we can draw on the general core characteristics of an underlying phenomenon to say *why* well-being matters so deeply to us as humans: because it provides us with a direction or guidance for our second-order desires, i.e., for what we should desire to desire.

With this, a link to the understanding to human inner life, characterized in the previous section of this article, can be made: human desires, including second-order desires, are part of the inner life of humans. Inner work, then, would include working on one's first-order desires under the guidance of one's second-order desires. It would also include reflecting upon one's second-order desires in terms of an intuitive meta-ethics that might suggest to us to want to work on changing aspects of our second-order desires, i.e., our notion about what kind of person,with what kind of first-order desires, we want to be. Thus, our inner life *is* what we want to go well when we are concerned about our well-being.

Now that we have a clearer understanding of the "what" (well-being), we need to engage more deeply with the "how"-question, which means here the question of how contemplative practices can be a form of inner work for well-being.

To contemplate is derived from the Latin word *contemplari*, which means "to observe, consider, probably used orig. of the augurs who frequented the temples of the gods" (Skeat, 1888, p. 131). An Augur "was a priest and official in the classical Roman World. His main role was the practice of augury, the interpretation of the will of the gods by studying events he observed within a predetermined sacred space (*templum*)" (*Augur*, n.d.). Thus, etymologically, *contemplative practices* would be practices through which one looks out for and considers indicators of where and how our life is going – employing here a secularized and personalized understanding of the practice of augury. Following this notion further, we can say that contemplation proceeds through three steps: noticing what matters to one's life (*observing*); grappling with what one has noticed (*considering*); and grasping what one has grappled with (*interpreting*). Thus understood, contemplative practices are about seeing, considering, and interpreting what matters in one's life. With the general understanding of *well-being* as a core concern for living our life, we can say that *contemplative practices have us observe, consider, and interpret what matters to our well-being*. This is the link that I want to suggest between contemplative practices and the general understanding of human well-being outlined earlier.

However, such link between contemplative practices and one's well-being should be grounded in a concern for others, i.e., in an ethic of contemplative practices. Mindfulness meditation has traditionally been undertaken with this ethical purpose. While mindfulness meditation is often practiced in a quiet room by oneself or with other quiet practitioners, it is practiced for our everyday life, as Gunaratana (2002) emphasizes:

> Meditation that is not applied to daily living is sterile and limited. The purpose of vipassana meditation is nothing less than the radical and permanent transformation of your entire sensory and cognitive experience. It is meant to revolutionize the whole of your life experience. (p. 157)

Engagement with other people – and living beings more generally – is a central aspect of human life. Thus, contemplative practices have to respond to our concerns for others in the form of an ethic of contemplative practices. Such an ethic suggests that our contemplative practices are not just to be undertaken for one's own well-being but also for the well-being of others and with a recognition of the impact of social, and more generally ecological, structures on that well-being, as Vokey (2014) emphasized in the following two claims about why and with what focus we should be concerned with engaging in contemplative practices: "It is important to teach and learn contemplative disciplines because of their potential to help reduce the suffering and promote the well-being of self-and-other" and "making significant progress toward the well-being of self-and-other requires political and cultural transformation as well as personal development." (p. 255).

Above I wrote that "contemplative practices have us observe, consider, and interpret what matters to our well-being." An ethic of contemplative practices suggests that we also need to observe, consider, and interpret what matters to the well-being of other-than-self and what matters to a political and socio-cultural context that is supportive of the well-being of self-and-other.

How might we understand the purpose of school education that is open toward such a role of contemplative practices for human living based upon such an ethic? The link of contemplative practices to human well-being outlined in this section will provide the basis upon which such openness can be argued for.

Purpose of School Education

The above analysis of human functioning (as it is relevant to the purpose of this article) suggests that humans derive the direction of their living from the pursuit of their well-being. We all have an inner life that engages our attention and noticing in trying to live in accordance with this pursuit. Since these are central to how we live our life, the question should be asked, what role school education can and should play in supporting children in the way they live their life and will be living their lives in the future, as adults? School education, at its very core, has the mandate to teach children something that society at large considers worthwhile learning in the life of children as they grow into adults. Of course, there is ample disagreement about what is worthwhile to learn for children in schools. The question of worthwhileness is an ethical one and, thus, deeply grounded in values. However, I want to make a *general* argument for making the concern for students' well-being, as students and future adults, a central part of the explicit purpose of school education.

Before I make this argument, though, I need to clarify that "concern for students' well-being" is meant here as an educational *end* that drives decisions about educational means. I do not mean this concern as a *means* of educational practice, as it is, for instance, expressed in the argument that we need to care about students' well-being because students who are not well are not engaged and do not learn. This argument views student well-being as a condition for students' readiness to learn, and thus it views well-being as an educational means. Concern for students' well-being *as an educational end* implies that the underlying understanding of well-being *directs* decisions on school curriculum and pedagogy, which, thus, includes decisions about the "what" and "how" of learning. In order for an understanding of well-being to direct curriculum and pedagogy, this understanding has to be grounded in, or translated into, well-being *capabilities*, for instance in form of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Student well-being (as students and future adults) as a worthwhile purpose, thus, needs to be linked to worthwhile capabilities linked to well-being of students as children and later as adults in order to be able to direct school educational curriculum and pedagogy. Student well-being as an educational end also means that the concern for student

well-being is purpose-driven and thus central to the very endeavour that is school education. I have no trouble acknowledging that teachers care about their students' well-being, because at the core of teaching is the concern for another human being: teaching "is, quite centrally, human action undertaken in regard to other human beings" (Fenstermacher, 1990, p. 133). This concern for student well-being by teachers is demonstrated on a daily basis in classrooms around the world, for instance, when a teacher provides an extension for an assignment for a student who has been struggling with personal issues that did not allow them to finish the assignment in time, or when a teacher gives students a say in the selection of the next text to be assigned as reading. However, this is not the kind of concern for student well-being in focus here for two reasons. First, it is teacher-driven concern rather than school purpose-driven and, second, it is contingency-driven concern rather than systemic-driven concern. This does not make teacher and contingency-driven concerns for student well-being less important. It is just not the kind of concern for student well-being that is in focus in this section, which is on a purpose and systemic-driven concern for student well-being.

After having clarified the type of concern for student well-being in focus here, I turn now to the *general* argument for making the well-being of students (as children and future adults) a core part of the purpose of school education. It seems to me most reasonable that a society would want to use at least the following two criteria for the purpose of school education: (1) the purpose needs to identify directly or indirectly capabilities that are educationally worthwhile to develop; (2) these capabilities are best developed by learning from someone with professional expertise in the teaching of what is worthwhile to develop (rather than, for instance, from parents, the internet, or friends). This *general* list of criteria leaves out some of the more detailed criteria that are also to be applied but, I suggest, only at a later stage of the consideration, like criteria linked to children's age, feasibility of implementation, and limitations in terms of volume.

I now argue that the well-being of students meets these two general criteria for the purpose of school education and, thus, should be taken seriously as an educational end. (That such a school educational mandate poses some serious challenges to the current general understanding, organization, curriculum, and pedagogy of school education is suggested and illustrated by the chapters in Falkenberg (in press).) First, there is something to be explicitly learned about well-being. Well-being is directly linked to our experiences and our experiences are part of and directly shaped by the functioning of and our experiences with our inner life, which in turn is directly impacted by one's capability to engage in inner work. For instance, this inner work can take the form of contemplative practices. Second, the way I proposed understanding human well-being as a general concept, namely as what we pursue when we use our agency, suggests that our well-being is important to us as we live our lives. Taking the first two points together, we have with the capabilities linked to inner work something to learn that is quite clearly worthwhile to learn (first criterion). Third, as the discussed role that contemplative practices as possible means can play in people's inner work for well-being illustrates, the development of capabilities linked to inner work seems to clearly benefit from guidance by someone with professional expertise in teaching inner work. To stay with the example of contemplative practices, although one can learn almost anything autodidactically, most of us quickly get to their limits of autodidactic learning and the learning support by a professional teacher would be of substantial, if not required, help. (*Professional* in *professional teacher* is not referring to the teaching profession but rather to a certain level of recognized competence in teaching and the teaching of particular subjects.) In addition, even autodidactical approaches to learning of inner work generally involve the consultation of documents (e.g., books) produced by experts in the field. Thus, well-being and the

capabilities linked to it also meet the second general criterion for purposes of school education.

Making the development of capabilities needed for student well-being (their well-being as children and future adults) a core purpose of school education is not excluding the learning of traditional school subjects, like Social Studies, Science, English Language Arts, and Mathematics. Quite to the contrary, developing competencies in these subjects can be of central importance to the well-being of many students as children and as adults. For instance, the engagement with such subject matter can provide a child with opportunities for making meaning of their socio-cultural and natural environments or provide opportunities for experiencing joy through the engagement in physical activities. Furthermore, developing academic knowledge at school that prepares, and is required, for further studies of the subject matter at, let's say, university level, which in turn allows a student to enter a particular profession could also contribute to the well-being of a student as an adult. (For a more detailed discussion of this connection of traditional school subjects and student well-being, see Krepski, in press).

Contemplative Practices as Well-Being Pedagogy

In this concluding section, I weave the different pieces together that were developed in the preceding sections to articulate a foundation for school education upon which both movements I introduced at the beginning of this article – the well-being-in-school movement and the mindfulness/contemplative practice movement – can be built for a more holistic approach to school education.

Above, I presented a general understanding of awareness, attention, and noticing as core functions of human inner life. I suggested that the quality of our inner life is a core contributor to human well-being, and I introduced the notion that we can work on the quality of our inner life through inner work and, thus, on the quality of our well-being. I then suggested ethically-grounded contemplative practices as a means to work on the quality of our inner life and, thus, work on our well-being. Since there are capabilities involved that need to be developed in order for someone to be able to engage in this kind of inner work (which makes their development worthwhile), and since the development of these capabilities benefits from support by a professional teacher, *developing capabilities for contemplative practices as a form of inner work for one's well-being should be a central part of the core purpose of school education*. In this sense, pedagogies for developing contemplative practices are *pedagogies for well-being*. Since one develops contemplative practices by engaging in contemplative practices, it is a well-being pedagogy.

What might such engagement in contemplative practices as a well-being pedagogy look like in light of generally over-crowded curricula of traditional subjects that are derived from university disciplines rather than from practices of living a flourishing life and in light of the current dominance of the teaching of these traditional subjects in terms of time and prominence? In such context, one promising approach seems to integrate the engagement with contemplative practices with the teaching of traditional subjects like Mathematics, English Language Art, and the natural and Social Sciences. A framework for such an integration is provided in the work of Oren Ergas (2017; see also 2015).

Ergas (2017) suggested that there is an "inner curriculum" for each of us that is part of our education:

> The narrative that runs in your mind throughout your day (e.g., your worries, hopes, dreams, thoughts of your social-image, body-image), your emotional life, and your bodily sensations are all subject matter that forms

> an inner curriculum. This is regardless of how adequately this inner curriculum reflects reality out there, and regardless of what kind of state of mind you are in when you experience them. A child walking to school with the fear of being attacked by the school bully is 'educated' in fear as the bully waiting around the corner 'educates' himself in violence. (p. 3)

This inner curriculum comprises the experiences that make up what I called above our inner life. These experiences – and this is Ergas's main point here – are educational in the sense that they shape how we see ourselves and the world around us. As such, they complement the "outer curriculum" in how humans are educated, whereby the outer curriculum comprises the experiences with the environment (outside) relative to the individual. What Ergas (2017) is concerned about is that our understanding of school education is generally *limited to* the outer curriculum, not just neglecting students' inner lives while they are in school, but considering certain manifestations of this inner life as negatively interfering with school education, "If a student's mind is preoccupied with his personal worries during a 'school-lesson' then the latter are in fact interfering with the occasion for which 'society' had gathered us" (p. 3). Current school education, Ergas argued, is characterized by focusing students' attention to, what he calls, the "out there", i.e., the educational objects of the outer curriculum. Ergas's curricular concern about traditional school education aligns with a pedagogical concern: traditional pedagogies in school education primarily instruct students to attend out there. For instance, when a teacher writes on the board, read from a book, or asks students to form small groups; each time the teacher instructs students to attend to out there. The distinction between students attending out there and students attending in here is comprehensive in the sense that "*all* moments of teaching carry an implicit or an explicit meta-pedagogical injunction: 'attend out there' or 'attend in here'" (p. 125); i.e., every pedagogical act implicitly or explicitly instructs a student to either attend to something outside the student or to something that is part of their inner life.

Ergas's (2017) distinction between the inner and outer curriculum in education and his notion that traditional pedagogical practices generally direct students to attend out there (in alignment with the teaching of an outer curriculum) provides us with a framework for the integration of contemplative practices in the teaching of traditional school subjects. The curricular and pedagogical aspects of the teaching of traditional school subjects can – within this framework – be understood as having not just an outer curriculum with a class of pedagogies that ask students to attend out there, but also an inner curriculum with a class of pedagogies that instruct students to attend in here, i.e., to attend to their inner life. Contemplative practices are an integral part of this latter class of pedagogies. Important in this approach is that both outer and inner curriculum are not enacted in a parallel fashion but rather in an integrated fashion to truly make the inner curriculum an integrated part of the curriculum of a traditional school subject like Mathematics.

A development of this idea will need to be undertaken in a separate study. However, I will provide a brief general example involving Mathematics as the traditional school subject of choice to illustrate the direction that the development of this idea could take. In Mathematics class, when a teacher asks students to direct their attention to a particular problem written on the board (attending out there), the teacher can also ask students to attend to their inner life *as they engage with* the Mathematics problem. Students could be asked to attend to their emotional states as they arise and change as they engage with the problem. The experiences with such attending can then later be discussed to help students better understand the functioning of their inner life as they engage with

mathematical problems (of certain types and difficulty levels). Crucial, though, is to conceptualize this engagement of students' inner lives as an *integral* part of the mathematics curriculum. In other words, the mathematics curriculum needs to have an inner curriculum component as much as a traditional outer curriculum component – and the former is implemented using pedagogies directing students' attention to their inner lives (to in here); whereby engaging in contemplative practices – like attending nonjudgmentally to one's emotional states as they arise – is a form that such pedagogies can take.

In this article I have made the case that the development of capabilities for, and the provision of experiences of, well-being for students should be a school educational end. Grounded in the notion that working on one's inner life is central to human well-being and that contemplative practices are a means for such inner work, I argued that contemplative practices should play an important role in achieving such school educational end. Finally, using Ergas's (2017) notion of an inner curriculum, I broadly exemplified how contemplative practices as a form of inner work could be integrated into the teaching of a traditional school subject like Mathematics, and thus, how contemplative practices can be utilized as well-being pedagogies and thus have us observe, consider, and interpret what matters to our well-being. The integration of contemplative practices as pedagogies into the teaching of a traditional subject like Mathematics makes the teacher part of a more holistic approach to school education, because not just the need to understand the world out there is addressed but also students' need to understand their world in here, i.e., (the functioning of) their inner life.

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Author Bio

Thomas Falkenberg is a professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, Canada. His current scholarly work is in the area of well-being in and through education (see www.wellbeinginschools.ca). He is the editor of the book Well-Being and Well-Becoming in Schools, which is in press with University of Toronto Press. More on his scholarly and professional work can be gleaned at www.ThomasFalkenberg.ca .