

Consciousness-Based Education: A Simple Solution to the Fundamental Problems in Education.

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Abstract: Consciousness-Based education offers, in addition to the study of traditional academic disciplines, technologies of consciousness, including the Transcendental Meditation technique, that unlock the hidden reserves of the brain. Extensive scientific research, together with direct application in hundreds of schools and colleges worldwide, confirms that students receiving a Consciousness-Based education exhibit increased receptivity, creativity, and intelligence, together with reduced stress and anxiety. The result is superior academic outcomes, better health, and improved social behavior.

Introduction

Traditionally, education has focused primarily on what a student studies—mathematics, physics, art, literature etc. However, education has lacked a systematic means to develop the full value of the consciousness of the student—qualities such as creativity, intelligence, receptivity, alertness, and breadth of comprehension. As a result, increasing academic demands on the student are not accompanied by an increase in the student's capacity to learn. This failure to expand the student's "container of knowledge"—this failure to unlock the hidden reserves of the brain—not only restricts the full expression of the inner genius of the student but also leads to the accumulation of fatigue and stress, resulting in the epidemic of stress-related health and behavior problems prevalent in society today.

To date, over 600 scientific studies performed at more than 250 universities and research institutes in 33 countries, and published in over 100 peer reviewed journals such as *Education*, *The American Journal of Cardiology*, and the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, have confirmed that Consciousness-Based education, which includes the Transcendental Meditation program, results in increased brain wave coherence, growth of creativity and intelligence, improved academic outcomes, decreased stress and anxiety, lower levels of substance abuse, a decline in school bullying, and reduced crime and violence in society.

Over the past thirty years, Consciousness-Based education has been implemented in hundreds of schools worldwide. These schools have introduced two short periods of "Quiet Time" each day so that students have the opportunity to practice the Transcendental Meditation technique. The resulting growth of student receptivity, creativity, and intelligence, together with reduced stress levels throughout the school system, has resulted in significantly improved academic outcomes and enhanced quality of student life.

What is Missing from Modern Education?

Why is it that there is so much dissatisfaction with the state of education in schools and universities today? Fundamentally, it is because “fact-based” education, which often involves merely book learning and career training, does not develop the total creative potential of the student—it does not unfold the student’s inner genius.

Why is this? Let us consider the three-fold structure of education comprising the knower, the process of knowing, and the knowledge that the student learns. Modern education focuses primarily on providing the student (the knower) with skills and information (the known) and does not provide the means to fully develop consciousness—alertness, receptivity, intelligence, creativity, and breadth of comprehension. The result is that students become overwhelmed with information, suffer from stress and anxiety, and gain only partial, fragmented knowledge of any particular discipline. All of these factors contribute to fragmented brain development. So while parts of the brain may be stimulated by studying a particular discipline such as mathematics or language, education must add something to the curriculum that enlivens the whole brain physiology to ensure that students graduate using their total creative potential.

Only the Experience of Transcendental Consciousness Results in Total Brain Development

Today, we know that the Transcendental Meditation program unlocks the hidden reserves of the brain and enlivens holistic brain functioning. The Transcendental Meditation program provides a simple, natural, effortless mental technique that is practiced for 15-20 minutes morning and evening and allows the student to gain the experience of the field of pure, silent, unbounded awareness at the source of thought.

The experience of pure consciousness at the source of thought—the fountainhead of creativity and intelligence within everyone—results in an increase in coherent, holistic brain functioning as shown by numerous EEG studies of the brain. For example, research by Dr. Fred Travis, published in the journals *Biological Psychology* (1) and the *International Journal of Neuroscience* (2), shows increased brain wave coherence in students who practice the Transcendental Meditation program, both during meditation and even when engaged in activities with eyes open after meditation.

The practical application of this holistic brain development is illustrated by a study published in the journal *Intelligence* (3), which found that, when compared with a control group, students who had learned the Transcendental Meditation technique six months earlier exhibited increased creativity, enhanced fluid intelligence and practical intelligence, and decreased levels of anxiety.

Experiencing the Most Fundamental Level of Life

Why is the experience of the source of thought so important for total brain development and the growth of creativity and intelligence? It is because the field of silent, Transcendental Consciousness is the source of the student's creativity and intelligence. Moreover, it is also the unified source of nature's infinite creativity and organizing power.

The experience of the field of unity underlying the superficial diversity of the universe is easily gained through the practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique. During this simple practice, the conscious mind expands from its "classical," fragmented, thought-dominated style of activity, to a quieter, more subtle, more expanded "quantum mechanical," state of awareness, known in the scientific literature as Transcendental Consciousness, a fourth major state of consciousness distinct from waking, sleeping, and dreaming. Only the experience of Transcendental Consciousness has been found to enliven the holistic functioning of the whole brain physiology.

Unified quantum field theories of modern physics reveal that at the basis of the infinite diversity displayed in the universe is a single Unified Field, which is a field of infinite creativity and organizing power—the unified source of both the knower and the known. The Transcendental Meditation technique allows the student to experience this Unified Field within themselves at the source of their own thinking. As a result they naturally grow in creativity, intelligence, and organizing power and spontaneously begin to appreciate the connectedness of all disciplines and the relationship of all disciplines to their own Self.

Benefits of Coherent Brain Functioning

When students experience this unified state of inner silence as part of their daily routine, extensive research and practical experience in schools has found that students become more awake and more receptive in class, their creativity and intelligence increases, and as a result academic outcomes significantly improve. Students also suffer from fewer stress-related disorders, spontaneously reduce their consumption of cigarettes and alcohol, and naturally exhibit improved social behavior. And of course, since teachers can also learn the Transcendental Meditation program, they can experience less stress, better health and more creativity, resulting in decreased absenteeism, greater job satisfaction, and improved health.

Benefits for Health

Stress related disorders are growing not only in the general population but also amongst children and young adults. Rising rates of hypertension, adult-onset diabetes, anxiety, depression, ADHD, alcohol and drug abuse, and rising incidence of bullying and violence are clear evidence of rising stress levels amongst our youth. The Transcendental Meditation technique has been found to be by far the most effective way to dissolve the harmful effects of stress and to increase longevity as reported in the *American Journal of*

Cardiology (4). A recent study at the University of Kentucky in the United States received world-wide media attention when it reported that the Transcendental Meditation technique is an effective treatment for controlling high blood pressure, with the added benefit of bypassing possible side effects and hazards of anti-hypertension drugs. The study appears in the *American Journal of Hypertension* (5).

These findings of improved health and longevity confirm that schools now have the opportunity to make education “prevention oriented” so that students are not only well prepared academically but also have the knowledge that will help to prevent disease and enjoy a long and healthy life.

Consciousness-Based Education in Schools.

In Consciousness-Based schools, at the beginning and end of the school day, students sit in their classrooms with eyes closed and practice the Transcendental Meditation program for fifteen minutes. The results reported are nothing less than astounding. For example, at the Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment in Fairfield, Iowa, USA, where I have been the director for the past seventeen years, students have won more than 600 individual state championship ribbons in math, science, history, creative problem solving, speech, photography, athletics and art.

Here are just a few of the honors this small private school, which has an open admissions policy, has been awarded since its first high school class graduated in 1983:

- State drama competitions competing against over 300 schools—more “Critics Choice” awards in than any other school in the history of the state,
- “Destination Imagination,” an international creativity competition—4 time world champions and more top-ten finishes in the global finals than any school in the world,
- Top honors in art and photography contests at the state, national, and international levels, including first place at the Congressional High School Art Contest three years in a row,
- Five state titles in the State History Fair,
- Ten state titles in State Science Fairs,
- 17 state championships in tennis,
- State champions in golf.

These results are even more remarkable given that students admitted to Maharishi School are not required to take any entrance exams. Studies published in the journal *Education* (6, 7) found that students just beginning at Maharishi School performed about average on standardized tests (ITBS) but improved significantly over time compared to controls. In fact, in the high school each grade level consistently outperforms 99% of their peers in the United States and every year almost 100% of graduating students go on to attend university.

Today, hundreds of schools in countries as diverse as Peru, Australia, India, Holland, United Kingdom, India, Haiti, Trinidad, the United States, and Canada are experiencing similar levels of success with Consciousness-Based education.

Benefits for Society

It is well known that a stressed individual is more prone to have an accident, more likely to suffer from stress-related disorders, and more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior. Since a society is a collection of individuals it should come as no surprise that studies have shown that when a small percentage of a population is practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique there is a measurable reduction in the acute social stress of society as measured by decreased rates of sickness, accidents, crime, violence, and conflict. These improvements in quality of life have been measured when just 1% of the population has learned the Transcendental Meditation technique.

Furthermore, extensive research has shown that there is an even more powerful influence of harmony and coherence generated in the whole society when the Transcendental Meditation technique and the advanced TM-Sidhi program, including Yogic Flying, is practiced in a group equal to, or exceeding, the square root of 1% of the population. Many of these studies have been published in independent refereed journals such as *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* (8), *The Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* (9), *Criminal Justice and Behavior* (10), and the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (11) to name but a few.

Reducing the Threat of Terrorism and War

The published scientific research reporting that crime, violence, and conflict in society are reduced when the square root of 1% of the population participates in the group practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program, including Yogic Flying, confirms the practicality of schools becoming sources of coherence and positivity for the whole nation. For example, in Serbia, with a population of around 10 million people, this would require a group of slightly more than 300 students, which could easily be achieved in most high schools.

By creating greater coherence in the collective consciousness of society, and thereby reducing the acute social stress that gives rise to terrorism and war, Consciousness-Based education offers to create an integrated national consciousness where negativity and conflict cannot arise within the nation or afflict the nation from the outside. This is the principle of creating national invincibility by preventing the birth of an enemy.

By implementing Consciousness-Based education in schools, Serbia can quickly rise to invincibility. Then the economy will flourish, wealth will increase, sickness and suffering will decrease, together with crime, terrorism, war and all forms of negative behavior. Serbia will become a friend to all nations, and the Serbian people will experience that they are living in Heaven on Earth. Even if only one school in Serbia adopts

Consciousness-Based education, that school will have the ability to bring peace and invincibility to the whole nation.

How to Learn the Transcendental Meditation Technique

The Transcendental Meditation technique is taught to everyone in a standard and systematic manner by instructors who have graduated from a Transcendental Meditation program teacher training course. The course is taught in seven steps:

1. An introductory lecture (1 hour)
2. A preparatory lecture (1 hour)
3. A personal interview with a teacher
4. Personal instruction (privately with the teacher)
- 5,6,7 Three sessions of group instruction

In a school setting, the school incorporates two 15-minute periods a day of “Quiet Time” into the daily schedule. All students are offered the opportunity to learn the Transcendental Meditation technique and those students who choose to do so meditate twice a day in their classrooms or in an assembly hall, while any remaining students gather in a separate room for some quiet activity such as silent reading.

The benefits of introducing Consciousness-Based education into a school become apparent immediately and the result is a fulfilling educational experience that benefits the students, the teachers, and the society as a whole.

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