CHAPTER 1

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF EDUCATING FOR SELF-REGULATION AND INTENTIONAL, REFLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Learning how to learn is the element that is always of value . . .
I am talking about LEARNING—the insatiable curiosity . . .
significant, meaningful, experiential learning . . .

When such learning takes place,
the element of meaning to the learner
is built into the whole experience.

—Carl Rogers, *Freedom to Learn* (1983, pp. 18, 19, 20)

FROM LEARNING TO LIFE

Think back to the moments you truly remember from school. For me, it was those moments when I was completely engaged in the process of learning. There was a first grade play that we, a committee of 6-year-olds, wrote and performed as our own production. I recall sketching the choreography on the chalkboard and working out each step, erasing and reworking as we created. I remember my mom helping me sew my costume, the satin fabric, her hand over mine as we stitched, our single-mindedness, breathing in concert as she guided my fingers, the needle, and thread. I have another memory of raising flour beetles in third grade. I observed them keenly, taking notes as they scrambled around in the bottom of a waxed-paper cup. Throughout their life cycle, from eggs to pupae to larvae to adults, our teacher thoughtfully guided us to notice each aspect of the beetles. We detailed their three-segmented antennae and notched eyes as they grew. In sixth grade, I was lucky enough to be considered gifted and talented and be assigned to an experimental classroom with a dark room, botany lab, engineering lab, and loft filled with musical instruments, sound system, and stage. The entire year was a practice in presence, focused attention, and integration of mind and body. Of all my years of school memories, this year is the richest. We wrote and bound our own books. A dear friend and I handcrafted puppets and were puppeteer MCs at the variety shows performed in our classroom. We learned about photography and developed our own photos in the dark room. I ran year-long trials exploring and recording the

outcomes of various ways to grow basil effectively. We danced, sang, and argued about the myths of the Egyptian pyramids. What sets each of these experiences apart is the embodied mindfulness, pure observation, engagement of the senses, and construction of meaning. The many years of my education that followed pale in comparison to these crisp and clear memories. Years passed. I graduated from high school, college, and grad school. Not without bumps in the road. Nevertheless, I graduated.

At the age of 35, I took my first yoga class. It had been about 25 years since I had been in sixth grade, constructing my own learning, engaging in bare attention. As I left the yoga class, my heart was light, my head was clear, and I was full of ideas. There was something more. I could not put words to what I was feeling. I later realized that it was nostalgia. In yoga, I felt the mind and body connection, the joy that was part of my experience of self so many years ago. I wasn't sure when and how I had become disembodied. I tried to trace my life back to the point of separation when my mind and body began to exist in parallel ontologies. It seems that, at some point, there were two distinct aspects of self: the part of me that thought and processed information (e.g., school stuff), and the part of me that was in the experience (e.g., friendships, fun). I am certain this disconnection was the source of my disengagement from learning during my later middle and high school years. Moreover, it is what put me at risk for substance use, eating disorder, mood dysregulation, and anxiety. I had somehow made it through the cognitive achievements of my education without an authentic experience of embodied learning and most certainly without joy. The more I realized this, the more my nostalgia turned to a real sense of loss. It was then that I began researching yoga as a prevention intervention in schools. I was determined to give kids tools to stay connected and integrated before they lost a sense of themselves.

Over the years, owing to a multitude of influences, some valid and some less so, schools have become increasingly focused *solely* on the cognitive aspects of learning, the academics, test scores, and grades. Still, there has always been a voice—sometimes raised as a confident herald, loud in the forefront of the discussion, bolstered by supporters, and other times expressed as a quiet whisper in the back row—asking, "Why are we doing this?" and "What is our goal?" This voice has come from many: teacher, parent, student, lawmaker, and educational researcher. Perhaps harkening back to the roots of education in the United States, there is a growing consensus that school is about more than academics, and the charge is to prepare students not only for work, but for life—the embodied experience of life (Comer, Ben-Avie, Haynes, & Joyner, 1999; Dewey, 1938; Mondale & Patton, 2001).

I have spent most of my life thinking about and researching the social and emotional aspects of learning and school. I have read extensively on the history and theory of education and spent nearly half my life as a student. I grew up the daughter of an English teacher (my mother) and physics and Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) teacher (my father). My father also went on to be a vice principal, principal, and school superintendent. I have worked as a school psychologist and, for many years now, as a university educator, researcher, and mentor. I have distilled my countless readings and experiences down to this: Essentially there are three main goals of education: (a) impart academic knowledge (i.e., conceptual and procedural) and tools for learning, (b) teach students to be active architects of their own learning and well-being, and (c) prepare students to be collaborative problem solvers in service of societal well-being. To achieve these goals, education should be embodied, active, and filled with purpose. Aligned with Vygotskian theory (see Karpov, 2014), schools can be seen as mentorships for life (see Figure 1.1). Fittingly, given the complexities, dynamics, and rapid evolution of today's geopolitical and sociocultural landscape, it makes
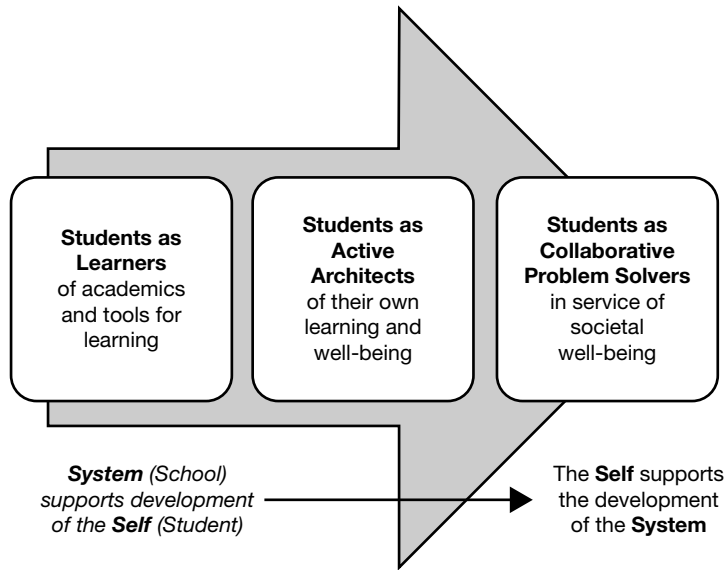
FIGURE 1.1 Effective schools as supportive mentorships.

sense that, in order to prepare students for life, we must teach students more than what we know—knowledge and skills, that is, academics and tools for learning. We must teach them how to know, how to apply knowledge and skills to build a good and healthy life, and, finally, how to use what they know to create, problem solve, and know more. As Comer et al. said in 1999, "And when this is the case for most people in society, that society has a reasonable chance to survive and thrive for a sustained period of time" (p. xx).

Ultimately, the goal is to help the student mature from the early developmental stages during which the school setting provides the support and structure for learning into an independent, whole, integrated, and creative problem solver who now helps to support and develop the structure from which he or she came (see Figure 1.1). There is a growing consensus that for school learning to be an effective mentorship for life, it should be *embodied*, filled with moments of sensory experience and bare attention. Academic learning is most certainly primary in this process. Also critical to the process is learning how to learn, self-regulate, care for your own needs, work with others, and contribute in an intentional and reflective manner. Within the process is an essential role for self-regulating tools (i.e., methodologies and practices) that help the students develop a measured and intentional way of being with their schoolwork, friends, families, and communities (Comer et al., 1999).

In this chapter, the conceptual model for the text is presented with a focus on the student as an effective learner who is mentored in the use of academic and self-regulatory tools that can be found in mindfulness and yoga practices. These tools facilitate the learner's ability to construct his or her own meaning and cultural impact. A brief history of the goals and values of education in the United States is offered as context. Connections to Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Service Learning (SL), and Contemplative Education (CE) are made. Next, based on the attuned representational model of self (ARMS; Cook-Cottone, 2006, 2015), the text reviews the Mindful and Yogic Self as Effective Learner (MY-SEL) model, as well as the theoretical underpinnings and empirical support underlying the development of a mindful

and yoga-based approach to embodied self-regulation and well-being. Finally, the concept of teacher as learner and practitioner is emphasized.

EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES: FROM BUILDING DEMOCRACY TO ONTOLOGIES

The roots of formal school systems in the United States can be traced back to 1635 when a Latin grammar school was opened in Boston, Massachusetts, and a free school was opened in Virginia. Throughout the centuries that have passed, there has been a range of goals for education, including creating effective work and military forces as well as an educated, egalitarian, democratic community (e.g., Dewey, 1916, 1938; Meier, 2013; Mondale & Patton, 2001). Historically, American educational approaches have reflected the shifting balance between the needs of society and the needs of the individual during any given era. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, during the formative years of the nation, thinkers like Thomas Jefferson advocated for public education to not only impart academic knowledge but also to support democracy (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Indeed, it was held that the main function of school in the early 1800s was to teach "correct" political principles to the young (Mondale & Patton, 2001, p. 2).

As the 19th century progressed, and the nation grew in numbers and diversity, educational thinking evolved. Founding ideals gave rise to the modern, public school system. Horace Mann, often called the Father of the Common School, believed that school should be free, embracing children of all backgrounds and means, and taught by well-trained, professional teachers. Central to his vision was this: that, above all, schools should build character and instill the values that, in turn, would shape a responsible, productive citizenry (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Later in the century and into the 20th century, this idea was endorsed and expanded by the progressive educational thinker, Dewey, saying (1916), ". . . a government resting upon popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and who obey their governors are educated" (p. 83). And, so, a fundamental link was established that informs education to this day: That school, in giving students the tools they need to reach their full potential, is vital to a stable democracy and strong social fabric.

Over the course of the 20th century, local schools grew and evolved along with their associated school districts as the national educational system was built. There were initiatives for smaller schools in the 1960s, advocacy and action for *cultural democracy* or equal rights and access for all to education, and calls for *economic democracy* in order to close the gap between districts of different income levels (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Many of these issues remain central to the educational discussion today. A review of the history of academics reveals that, at its roots, the U.S. education system was never solely about academics. The system was created to facilitate the development of citizens, voters, and skillful community members. For all of these hundreds of years, it has almost always been about preparing students for life and community, a process that includes academic learning, of course, as well as so much more (Comer et al., 1999). Notably, for much of this time, it has been a top-down, didactic process.

At the present moment, we are faced with challenges. To negotiate our future, we must not only be capable of the academic solutions, we must also manage the personal, social, and civic collaboration that will be required to effectively address the massive challenges we face as a nation. In this way, graduates need to be both educated, active problem

solvers, as well as citizens capable of working as effective and collaborative members of the community. Again, they need to be able to do more than know all that we know. It is our collective hope that the future scientists who will cure the now incurable diseases; the environmental engineers who will figure out our massive waste management challenges; those who will solve the food, energy, and water crises to come; and the creators of literature and arts not yet imagined will be effectively prepared in today's schools. In essence, our way of life depends on the content and quality of the education provided to each child in this country (Comer et al., 1999). It cannot be more of the same. Today's students need to be innovators, creators, and destroyers of paradigms. For deep change, this cannot be taught top-down.

These challenges are complicated by a world with a rapidly changing landscape of obstacles, tools, and problems (Comer et al., 1999). As educators, we struggle to keep pace with sociocultural and technological changes that are undoubtedly shaping the brains and minds of students. The term *ontological development* describes the experiential shaping process in which the mind affects the world and the world affects the mind. The process of human development is an ongoing cycle of mutual and contingent influences creating a student body inherently different from school cohorts of past decades, even past years (Vygotsky, 1978). This process can be passive or active (Roeser & Peck, 2009). Today's students can, and perhaps must, learn to be active architects of their experiences both internal and external. In Siegel's (1999) groundbreaking book, *The Developing Mind: Toward a Neurobiological Understanding of Interpersonal Experience,* he discusses a phenomenon that can be referred to as *ontological sculpting* in which we have the opportunity to be the architects of our own neurobiological development. Accordingly, as educators, we can help to create a learning environment and experiences that support the positive, healthy development of our learners. Specifically, the term *ontological sculpting* recognizes that individual genetics and biology shape experience. Conversely and reciprocally, the environment (e.g., loved ones, friends, community, and culture) shapes us, the learners. Ontological sculpting occurs within lived experience and is an ongoing, recursive, iterative, process of mutual self/environment influence. Who is the sculptor? That is, in part, up to us. In a school in which we are educating for life and for the well-being of all, an empowered, effective student learns skills and gains the competencies needed to be the architect of his or her own learning and, ultimately, his or her own life experience (Roeser & Peck, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978).

The history of public education in the United States is the story of a gradual shift toward the learner as the maker of meaning (Karpov, 2014). Rechtschaffen (2014) explains that, before formal education, it was believed that we did not learn about experiences, we learned from them. In fact, he explain that the root of the word *learn* has the same etymological root as the words to *follow* or *track*. Rechtschaffen (2014) calls to mind how our ancestors may have learned. He paints the picture of a young student, guided by his or her mentor, tracking animals through the grass, streams, and forests, learning about the world through the senses—an experience-up process. He suggests that, at its roots, learning is a "purely sensory, relational, and wholly mindful experience" (p. 16). To be true constructors of meaning, students need an experiential process in which they can integrate what is explained to them and what they know in a felt sense. Consistent with what is known about neurobiology and learning, truth lies in the place between what is told to us and what we have lived. Echoing and extending Deweyian thinking (Dewey, 1938), today's schools should be places in which students can find their truth, liberation, and place within society through opportunities to both know and experience.

THE LARGER CONTEXT OF YOGA AND MINDFULNESS IN SCHOOLS: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING, SERVICE LEARNING, AND CONTEMPLATIVE EDUCATION

As we have reviewed the progression of education and the learner, we are left with the notion that: (a) education is about preparing students for life, and (b) we are, in our essence, mindful and embodied learners. From this, SEL, SL, and CE initiatives emerged as efforts to offer embodied learning experiences that prepare students for life. It is not entirely clear exactly when these types of learning initiatives first formally entered public education. In the late 1960s, Comer initiated a school approach that would later be viewed as one of the early roots of SEL (Comer, 1988). His work centered on the theory that it was the contrast between a child's experiences at home and those in school that deeply affected the child's psychosocial development. Comer (1988) created the School Development Program in 1968, focusing on two poor, low-achieving, predominately African American elementary schools in Connecticut. These schools reported poor attendance and low academic achievement. Comer helped the schools to create an environment that integrated social and behavioral, school-wide goals and supports that changed the experience of the students. By the early 1980s, academic performance at the two schools was reported to exceed the national average, accompanied by a notable decrease in both truancy and behavior problems. His approach held central that effective schools do more than deliver academic knowledge. It was from this line of understanding education that the SEL movement began.

Social Emotional Learning

SEL competencies are believed to be important foundations for students' well-being (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). There are many SEL definitions and foci to be found in the education, psychology, and political literatures. The SEL competencies vary by source and program and can include: emotion regulation, self-awareness, self-management, relationships and relationship skills, social awareness, and effective learning (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2003; Durlak et al., 2011; Elias et al., 1997; Philibert, 2016a, 2016b; Rechtschaffen, 2014). Across programs and approaches, you will nearly always find goals that address both the development of the capacity to form close and secure peer and adult relationships and the development of specific relationship skills (e.g., conflict resolution; Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; CASEL, 2003; Elias et al., 1997; Parlakian, 2003). Broadly, SEL approaches integrate the promotion of competence and youth development. These approaches accomplish this by developing protective mechanisms known to lead to and maintain positive adjustment as well as the reduction of risk factors (Durlak et al., 2011; Philibert, 2016a, 2016b). To promote resiliency, SEL programs provide direct instruction and actively practice social and emotional skills (Durlak et al., 2011). To reduce risk, many SEL programs apply skill development in the prevention of problem behaviors (e.g., substance use, bullying, and school failure; Durlak et al., 2011). Both of these foci may also include opportunities to be actively involved in whole-school initiatives and community building (Durlak et al., 2011). Example programs include the Inner Resilience Program (www.innerresilience-tidescenter.org/index.html) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; www.casel .org). See also Philibert's *Everyday SEL in Elementary School: Integrating Social-Emotional*

Learning and Mindfulness Into Your Classroom, and *Everyday SEL in Middle School: Integrating Social-Emotional Learning and Mindfulness Into Your Classroom* (Philibert, 2016a, 2016b).

In an extensive meta-analysis of 213 school-based, universal, social and emotional learning programs involving 270,034 kindergarten through high school students, Durlak et al. (2011) found that, compared to controls, SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance. Overall, many of the significant findings remained significant at the 6-month follow-up with a noted reduced magnitude in scores. Specifically, SEL programs have been shown to promote youth development, reduce negative behaviors, and increase social-emotional competence (i.e., positive self-orientation, positive other orientation, and positive work orientation) and social skills (i.e., cooperation, assertion, and self-control; Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Durlak et al., 2011). Not surprisingly, in Durlak et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis, researchers found the largest effect size (mean = 0.69) in the focus area that included emotion recognition, stress management, empathy, problem solving, and decision making. Further, SEL programs enhanced student behavioral adjustment as shown by increased prosocial behaviors and reduced conduct and internalizing problems (Durlak et al., 2011). Perhaps of most interest to academics, DiPerna and Elliot (2002) reported that social-emotional and cognitive competence (i.e., reading, writing, and critical thinking skills) were found to be predictors of academic achievement. In fact, in Durlak et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis, an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement was found for those participants who engaged in school-based universal SEL compared to controls. It is important to note that many programs reviewed for this analysis did not collect academic data at posttest or follow-up.

In a cluster-randomized trial demonstrating SEL impact specifically on academic achievement among elementary school children, Schonfeld et al. (2014) found that the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum fostered acquisition academic proficiency, especially among youth attending high-risk school settings. The PATHS curriculum is a program for educators and counselors designed to facilitate the development of self-control, emotional awareness, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. The curriculum consists of six volumes of lessons designed for use with elementary school children. The specific intervention used for the Schonfeld et al. (2014) study included other intervention elements, such as additional training and support for teachers, that may have contributed to the positive impact. Specific findings include greater basic proficiency in fourth-grade reading and math, and in fifth- and sixth-grade writing, compared to the control group. Interestingly, the analysis of dosage effects provided additional support for intervention effects for both reading and math.

Overall, SEL programs are focused on the development of relationship and personal emotional competencies that help to promote well-being and positive school adjustment. Learning experiences are both didactic and experiential and can be individual, class wide, and school wide. Further, methodologies include the weaving of SEL goals and learning experiences into academic learning, as well as distinct SEL learning opportunities. Although many programs encourage active learning, the emphasis is on the development of psychosocial competencies and not necessarily the experiential or embodied nature of learning. Notably, self-awareness and intra- and interpersonal self-regulation are key competencies addressed in SEL.

Service Learning

SL is a pedagogical approach that integrates community service with academics (Celio, Durlack, & Dymnicki, 2011). SL theory is based on the beliefs that learning is best when

students are involved in their own learning; learning is active and experiential; and the learning has a distinct service/civic purpose (Berman, 2015; Billig, 2000; Celio et al., 2011). Accordingly, SL typically involves active participation in organized experiences that focus on the needs of the community and the cultivation of a sense of caring for others (Billig, 2000). Berman (2015) holds that SL helps students understand their connectedness to their communities as they experience the role of a provider of services versus the role of consumer. Further, in service of the academic curriculum, there is an emphasis on the application of skills and knowledge and a commitment to extended learning opportunities (Billig, 2000). The National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC; http://nylc.org) provides a good illustration on their web page. They explain that picking up trash along a riverbank is *service*. Moreover, studying various water samples under a microscope is *learning*. *SL* occurs when environmental biology students collect and analyze water samples, document their results, and present findings to a community pollution control agency.

The roots of SL can be traced back as far as John Dewey and Jean Piaget (Billig, 2000; Giles & Eyler, 1994). Although Dewey did not specifically refer to what we now understand as SL, he and his colleagues established the intellectual foundations of SL (Berman, 2015). Dewey's principle of interaction holds that the internal and objective aspects of an experience interact to form a learning situation (Dewey, 1938; Giles & Eyler, 1994). Learning occurs within the transaction between the learner and the environment (Giles & Eyler, 1994). Within this philosophical context, SL provides the environment and accompanying, real-world challenges that cultivate learning situations. Key also is Dewey's notion of reflective thinking as central to the learning process (Giles & Eyler, 1994). Finally, Dewey wrote extensively on the connection between education, citizenship, community, and democracy (Giles & Eyler, 1994). In this way, pedagogy is more than a methodology used in schools; it is a means by which citizens become informed, communicate their interests, create public opinion, and make decisions (Giles & Eyler, 1994). Giles and Eyler (1994) suggest that schools go beyond preparing students for life, they model it: ". . . saturating [the student] with the spirit of service, and providing [the student] with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious" (Dewey, 1900, p. 44).

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps. In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson created the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). These programs were markers of the national commitment to service (Berman, 2015). The term *service learning* was coined in 1967 by Robert Sigmon and William Ramsey to imply a value consideration linking authentic community service, intentional academic learning, and reflection (Berman, 2015). In the 1970s, the National Student Volunteer Program was established and began publishing the *Syntegist*, a journal that emphasizes community service and learning (Berman, 2015). Since those early days, the field of SL has grown, adding journals, AmeriCorps (www .nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps), the National Service Learning Clearinghouse (https://gsn.nylc.org/clearinghouse), and national and internal conferences on SL. For more on the history of SL, see Berman (2015).

SL is believed to help develop higher order thinking, cultural awareness, personal and interpersonal development, motivation to engage in social issues, academic motivation, self-efficacy, and civic responsibility (Warren, 2012). In a meta-analysis of 62 studies involving 11,837 students in SL, Celio et al. (2011) found that, compared to controls, students participating in SL programs showed significant gains in five outcome areas: attitude toward self, attitudes toward school and learning, civic engagement, social skills, and academic

performance, with mean effects ranging from 0.27 to 0.43. In a much smaller meta-analysis of 11 studies, Warren (2012) found that SL was associated with statistically significant and positive effects on student learning outcomes that were measured by both self-reported and concrete measures of learning (e.g., exams and student assignment scores).

The Celio et al. (2011) study also found that better SL outcomes were associated with: linking SL programs to academic curriculum; incorporating the youth voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating SL experiences; involving community partners in the creation of the elements and goals of SL projects; and providing opportunities for reflection (Celio et al., 2011). Interestingly, it is believed that the opportunity to reflect on the SL experience provides the link between the action of service and the ideas of learning (Celio et al., 2011). In fact, reflection was included in at least half of the studies reviewed by Celio et al. (2011). Overall, SL combines embodied, active learning through meaningful service projects as a methodology for integrating academic curriculum and real-world needs. A common thread through many SL models is an emphasis on reflective learning and practice. To learn more about SL, see the National Society for Experiential Education (www.nsee.org) and the Corporation for National Service (www.nationalservice.gov). For a list of standards for SL programs, see the NYLC (http://nylc.org).

Contemplative Education

Contemplative practices are those practices that require individuals (e.g., students and teachers) to practice intentional control over physical and mental activity (Mind and Life Education Research Network [MLERN] et al., 2012). Roeser and Peck (2009) offer a more comprehensive definition: Contemplative practices are "a set of pedagogical practices designed to cultivate the potentials of mindful awareness and volition in an ethical-relational context in which the values of personal growth, learning, moral living, and caring for others are also nurtured" (p. 127). Many see CE programs as complementary to SEL and SL programs (e.g., Roeser & Peck, 2009). As can be found in both SEL and SL methodologies, CE involves active student participation and a set of experiential learning opportunities provided to the student by a competent, contemplative instructor (Roeser & Peck, 2009). Unique to CE is the primary goal of helping students to develop the ability to access concentrated states of awareness within the context of open-mindedness, curiosity, and caring for others (Roeser & Peck, 2009; Waters, Barsky, Ridd, & Allen, 2015). Roeser and Peck (2009) describe CE learning opportunities as including: nature walks, art, tai chi, yoga, guided imagery, contemplation of existential questions, and practicing meditation. It is believed that the key mechanisms of growth are the presence of a disciplined practice and a one-pointed awareness that is cultivated and maintained over time (Roeser & Peck, 2009).

The Garrison Institute's report on CE (2005) describes three types of programs being offered in schools: small, voluntary programs; social and emotional learning programs that integrate mindfulness and yoga practices; and school-wide programs. Research on CE is in its early stages and has yet to organize a set of best practices (Lawlor, 2014). Often, research focuses solely on meditation, mindfulness, and/or yoga practices depending on the researcher's definition of CE (e.g., Waters et al., 2015). For the context of this text, we look specifically at mindfulness and yoga, along with the body of literature that accompanies each, as distinct sets of practices. For more about CE, see the Garrison Institute (www.garrisoninstitute.org/contemplation-and-education).

Yoga and Mindfulness as Contemplative Practices

Overall, SEL, SL, and CE share many key competencies as operational goals (e.g., the development of psychosocial skills, mindfulness, and active/embodied learning). Generally speaking, mindfulness and yoga are considered contemplative practices (Greenberg & Harris, 2012; MLERN et al., 2012). As sets of practices, mindfulness and yoga provide powerful tools fitted for each of the larger contexts of SEL, SL, and CE (Figure 1.2). Yet, mindfulness and yoga should not be minimized as simply activities or techniques. Beyond their obvious compatibility with SEL, SL, and CE, mindfulness and yoga are practices with their own unique histories and relevancies in research as well as in the larger culture, community, and in the schools (MLERN et al., 2012). They are described here briefly as a basic introduction and considered in detail throughout the text.

Mindfulness

The interest in mindfulness programs has grown rapidly within the last 15 years (Greenberg & Harris, 2012). Siegel, in his foreword for Jennings's (2015) book, *Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom*, defines mindfulness as a "...way of being aware of what is happening within us and around us with a clear focus of attention on moment-to-moment experience that enables us to be fully present for life" (p. xi). Mindfulness is the ability to guide and direct attention to the current experience as it unfolds, in the moment, with an open-minded curiosity and acceptance (Greenberg & Harris, 2012; Kabat-Zinn, 2013; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010). The most accepted definition of mindfulness comes from *The Mindful Nation. U.K.* (MAPP, 2015): "Mindfulness means paying attention to what's happening in the present moment in the mind, body, and external environment, with an attitude of curiosity and kindness" (p. 14). Mindfulness is further described as the development of the
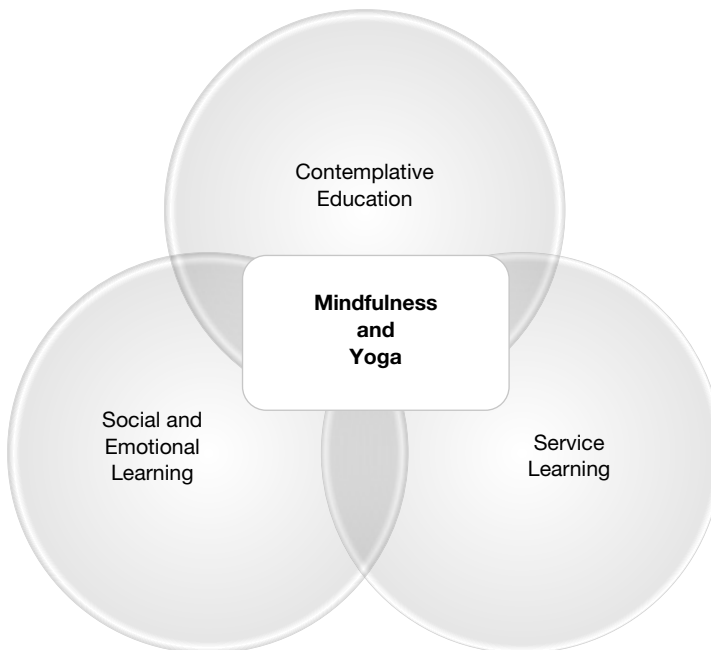

FIGURE 1.2 A context for mindfulness and yoga in schools.

ability to sense life deeply and to observe experience. Therefore, it is first the differentiation of sensing and observing, and next, the integration of or linkage of both the sensation and the observation of the experience (Siegel, 2015). Mindfulness has a deep and rich history, a growing body of research, and a range of practices. Mindfulness practices include entire programs such as mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), and distinct practices such as walking and seated meditation (Cook-Cottone, 2015). There are also both formal (e.g., loving-kindness meditation) and informal (e.g., mindful eating) practices (Cook-Cottone, 2015).

Generally, mindfulness has been found to be associated with improved self-regulation, physical health, self-awareness, and reduced reactivity, worries, and anxiety (Weare, 2013). Mindfulness has also been utilized as an effective intervention for youth. To illustrate, a recent meta-analysis of 20 studies found that overall mindfulness interventions with youth are helpful and do not carry iatrogenic harm (Zoogman, Goldberg, Hoyt, & Miller, 2014). The primary omnibus effect size was small to moderate at 0.23 ($p < .0001$), indicating superiority of mindfulness interventions over active control comparisons. Further, a larger effect size was found for psychological symptoms and for studies drawn from clinical samples.

Given the variety of specific formal and broader informal mindful practices, as well as protocols specifically designed for implementation in schools, researchers have struggled to aggregate studies (Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz, & Walach, 2014). Overall, findings on mindfulness in schools suggest effectiveness and promise. For example, Zenner et al. (2014) completed a systematic review and meta-analysis on mindfulness interventions in schools, finding positive effect sizes for cognitive performance, stress reduction, and resilience. Much more on mindfulness in schools—the research, applications, and school-based programs and activities—is provided in Chapters 4 to 7 of this text.

Yoga

Yoga is a set of practices designed to bring calm, alert awareness to the mind, and health and well-being to the body (Cook-Cottone, 2015). As practiced in schools, yoga consists of a set of physical postures called asanas, regulated breathing techniques called pranayama, relaxation, and meditation (Cook-Cottone, 2015; Hagen & Nayar, 2014). There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that yoga can help with the development of executive functions like self-control, self-discipline, and creativity (Diamond & Lee, 2011). Yoga works by helping the practitioner develop a calm yet highly alert awareness within the context of embodied action (Cook-Cottone, 2015). It is believed that calm and alert awareness helps school performance. To illustrate, both independent and collaborative learning require both *stirrha* (i.e., structure) and *sukkha* (i.e., ease). That is, there needs to be a balance of structure and ease. To be successful, students need to demonstrate self-control and discipline (stirrha), as well as the creativity and flexibility that come from ease with content and materials (sukkha; Diamond & Lee, 2011). There are a variety of formal yoga practices (e.g., asana [yoga poses], breath work, relaxation, and meditation), informal practices, and yoga protocols specifically designed for schools. These, along with yoga theory, a review of Eastern yoga roots and current practices, as well as a review of research, are discussed in Chapters 8 to 11 of this text.

THE MY-SEL: FROM ARCHITECT TO CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

As introduced earlier, the Vygotskian framework of school-as-mentor holds that there are mentors and apprentices that are working to teach the learner a craft. In the case of the education system, the *craft* is the construction of meaning. To do this, our students need

psychosocial tools, and they need to learn how to use them. Mindfulness and yoga are spe-cific sets of tools that have been developed and proven for thousands of years to enhance individual efficacy (Roeser & Peck, 2009). Given that mindfulness and yoga share com-mon values and methodologies with SEL, SL, and CE (Lawlor, 2014), they are increasingly popular and considered accepted and feasible psychosocial tools for the cultivation of SEL competencies (see Figure 1.2; Rechtschaffen, 2014). The next section details the model of the MY-SEL. You will see how these methodologies, practices, and techniques can enhance nearly any approach to student learning.

The MY-SEL

The MY-SEL can be represented as a system of both internal and external influences (see Figure 1.3). Within this context, the learner exists in a central position negotiating chal-lenges and benefiting from both: (a) the internal and interacting influences of his or her body (i.e., genetics and current physiology and health), emotions (i.e., the internal emo-tion regulatory system), and thoughts (i.e., internal cognitive systems), and (b) the external and interacting influences of his or her family (i.e., microsystem), school and community (i.e., exosystem), and culture and society (i.e., macrosystem). At the center, the *self as effective learner* practices the integration and attunement of two critical aspects of being: (a) self-regulation and care, and (b) intentional, reflective engagement. In this way, the self as effec-tive learner is the architect of his or her own learning and experience.

The Effective Learner as Central Architect

The learner is the effective, central actor in his or her own educational journey (Roeser & Peck, 2009). The effective action of the student is manifest in internal self-care and regulation and in the external school environment promoting a freedom to learn and perhaps even a
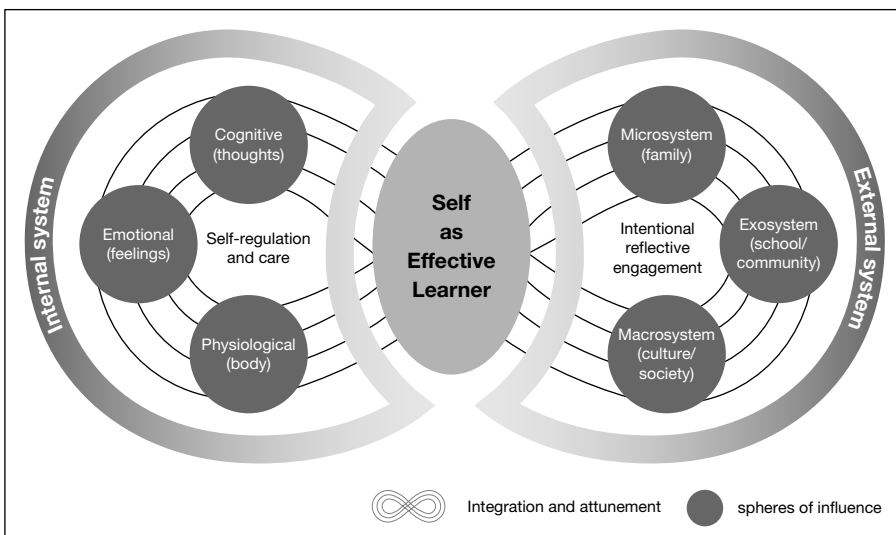

FIGURE 1.3 The mindful and yogic self as effective learner.

transcendence of formal education. It is important to note that, within the MY-SEL model, the dualistic notion of mind over matter holds. That means that the learners, you and me as students of life as well as the students in the classroom, have the ability to create our own learning experiences in a manner that is not solely determined by the apparent physical limitations of our brains. I tell the students with whom I work, "You are the boss of your brain. Don't let it tell you what is and is not possible." For example, when I am working with a child who has attention difficulties, I explain, "This is good information you now have about your brain. It is harder for your brain to pay attention than it is for a lot of other students' brains. Now, it is your responsibility to secure the tools that will help your brain attend and learn." I explain to them that I don't have a great sense of direction; for some reason my brain is not very effective at navigation. I ask them, "Does this mean I should stay home and not try to go anywhere because I might get lost?" They laugh. When I ask what I should do, they answer that I should use a GPS or a map. "Yes," I say, "I need tools." Better, I explain that there are cognitive tools that help me find my way around without a GPS or a map, and they too can learn about and practice their own cognitive tools for their challenges.

Similarly, Roeser and Peck (2009) explore self-regulated learning and motivation within the framework of the Basic Levels of Self (BLoS) model. This comparatively complex and compelling model of self differentiates the concepts of *I*, defined as both active and passive awareness, and *Me*, which reflects the sense of self we hold as our ideas about ourselves, our representation of self. According to Roeser and Peck (2009), the Me-self includes our self-narratives held in long-term memory, our temperamental characteristics, emotions and moods, our beliefs, as well as our implicit motives. For example, my Me-self can be reflected in my explanation that I am not a good navigator. That is how I see myself and part of my Me-story. Within their model, the I- and the Me-selves are differentiated by the stream of consciousness inclusive of a sense of self, self-awareness, and self-reflection (Roeser & Peck, 2009). The I-self is in the experience and in the awareness of experience. According to some theorists, the I-self is the active architect of that experience, allowing me to set-shift, regulate my focus, and manage myself as I work toward a goal (Roeser & Peck, 2009). For example, it is the I-self who is finding her way to her car in the parking lot, looking at the tree line, the cars in rows, feeling the wind on her face, and using the tools that I have developed over the years to support my lack of visual–spatial awareness. It is the I-self who is recalling that, when I parked, I said, "four and two," so that I would recall that I am four rows back and two cars in. It is the I-self who keeps me focused and out of rumination about my lack of visual–spatial skills. In its way, my I-self can volitionally control my Me-self (i.e., the self I know to lack navigation skills). See Roeser and Peck (2009) for a complete description of the BLoS model.

The MY-SEL model is consistent with the BLoS model. The MY-SEL model integrates the Me-self into the cognitive and emotional aspects of the internal side of the MY-SEL model. Next, the I-self and aspects of the stream of consciousness are consistent with the *self-as-effective-learner* represented centrally in the MY-SEL model (Figure 1.3). Finally, the MY-SEL model adds the external self-system as integral to the phenomenological experience of self. That is, within the MY-SEL model, the self does not exist distinct or wholly separate from its internal (i.e., body, emotions, and thoughts) or external context (i.e., external self-system; family, school/community, and culture). Further, as reflected in Figure 1.3, the lines that weave the internal and external aspects of self together reflect the integration and attunement that are required for effective functioning. Integration is the bringing together of each

of the aspects of self, both in service of being in the present moment and in action within relationships and toward goals.

In his book, *The Mindful Therapist: A Clinician's Guide to Mindsight and Neural Integration*, Siegel describes the importance of differentiation before integration. I often explain to my students and patients that the human body is a beautiful example of differentiation and integration within an effective system. I explain that the liver, stomach, heart, and lungs are all made of tissue, human cells. If they were undifferentiated masses of cells, they could not perform their critical roles as organs in our body. We would have no filtering of the blood, storing of glycogen, digestion of food, or pumping and oxygenation of blood. Without differentiation, our organs and, by default, our bodies could not function. Also, we need our organs to work together, to integrate as an effective system. The integration is as critical as the differentiation. Analogously, each aspect of our psychosocial self works in this same way. We must be able to differentiate our cognitions, emotions, and physical self; the unique needs and demands of our families, friends, school community, and cultures, as well as our roles within them. The differentiation allows for effective integration of our own abilities and strengths within the context of our unique roles within the external systems.

Critically, attunement is the quality of effective integration within self and within the context of your relationships and external world. Attunement is the ability to experience reciprocal and supportive processes and interactions within, with those in our lives, and within the context of community and culture. As you see in the MY-SEL model (see Figure 1.3), the mindful and yogic self (center) is aware of each aspect of self and is the central architect of how these processes are integrated and attuned as the self develops and learns.

How we, as educators, view this process can play a substantial role in how students internalize their understanding of the centrality of their role in learning (see Figure 1.3; External System). We have known this for a long time. In his 1973 essay titled, "The Banking Concept of Education," Freire (2013) writes about a narrator concept of teaching in which the teacher talks about reality as if it were "motionless, static, compartmentalized and predictable," as if it were a commodity, money to be placed in a bank (p. 103). He explains that, within the context of the banking concept of education, teachers fill students with the content of their narration of words, words disconnected from reality, emptied of their concreteness and experienced as hollow and alienating (Freire, 2013). Education, then, becomes an act of depositing. Implicit in the banking concept of learning is the assumption of a dichotomy between human beings (e.g., students) and the world (Freire, 2013). In his words, "a person is merely *in* the world not *with* the world or with others; the individual is spectator and not a creator" (Freire, 2013). It is what I believed happened to me over the years of learning. I slowly left my embodied, active self and became a bank account in which I facilitated deposits of information. Consistent with the model of self as effective learner (MY-SEL; Figure 1.3), and what I hope for all students, Freire (2013) argues for students to be active subjects, not objects, in a conscious problem-posing education. In this way, we teach the students the content of academics and we give them tools (Karpov, 2014). Ultimately, the self as effective learner is viewed as the problem-solving architect of knowledge (Siegel, 1999).

Embodied Experience and Practices as the Facilitators of Learning

The MY-SEL model holds that embodied experiences and practices are the facilitators of learning (see Chapter 3). To educate students for work, civic engagement, and life, it is believed by many that students must acquire the collective, organized body of information,

as well as actively practice the skills that allow them to comprehend and use the material (Dewey, 1938). If learning is the internalization of knowledge, skills, and tools, then what is the role of experience? Experience allows for an externalized practice in which students can eventually internalize psychological tools (Karpov, 2014). Experience and practice allow the learners to do in order to know. Karpov (2014) argues effectively that psychological tools cannot be taught in a lecture format. It is in the application of knowledge within the context of experience that the tools of self-regulation and care, as well as intentional reflective engagement, become critically important. As we apply what we know to real-world problems and challenges, not only must we deal with the limits of our concrete knowledge and set of skills, we must also negotiate the needs, strengths, and limitations of our bodies, our emotions, and our mental states. We need to teach academic tools as well as the tools that help us with our ways of being with the challenges we face (see Figure 1.4).

Noah was a first-grade boy with severe behavioral problems. He had many family issues that included drug and alcohol abuse, drug-related criminal mischief, and borderline neglect. Despite many visits from child protective services, he remained in his home, with few improvements. Noah brought all of his stress and anger to school with him each morning. One-on-one, he was insightful, reflective, and surprisingly thoughtful. He was able to problem-solve the behavioral difficulties he had experienced the previous day and plan for interpersonal challenges that would likely present in the classroom after our meeting. If this were the only assessment of his success, that is, his ability to know the information and list the skills he needed to use, he would have demonstrated a 100% success rate. However, it was the experience, the lived, in-the-moment behavioral choices that were his challenges. This well intentioned, insightful, stressed first grader was unable to utilize what he knew and the skills that he could articulately describe when he needed them most. In the lived experience, all he knew did not seem to matter. Noah needed real-time, active practice.
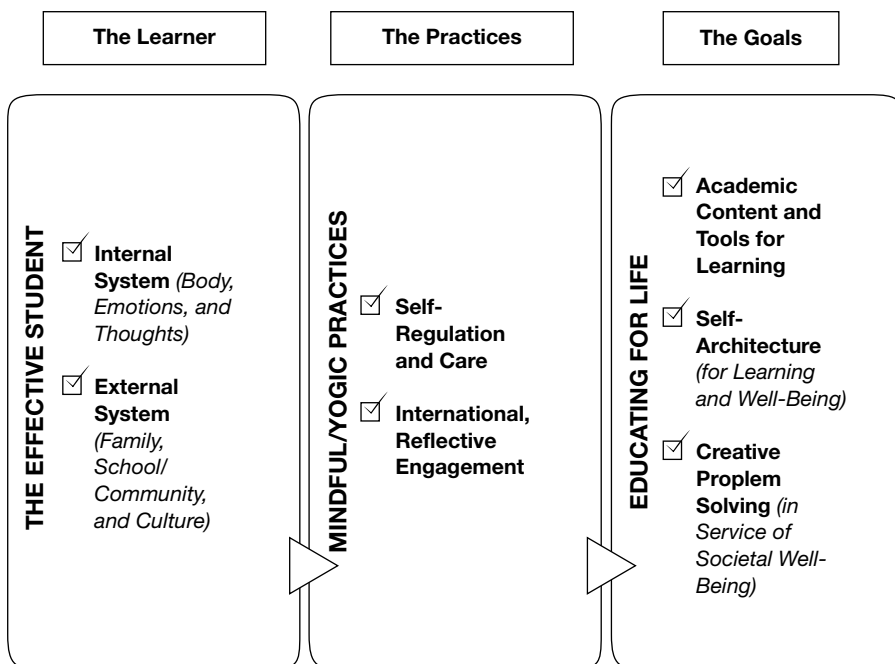

FIGURE 1.4 Learner, practices, and goals.

As part of an after-school program, Noah took part in a twice-weekly, 60-minute yoga session. The teachers noted that he really struggled to pay attention. In fact, there were times when they wondered if he heard anything they were saying. The class would be in tree pose, or deep breathing, and it seemed as though Noah was somewhere else. To be certain, he was rarely in tree pose. Before class, he would get into disagreements with others and needed constant redirection to get back on his mat during sessions. Each week, yoga class began with each student stating what they were working on. Each week, Noah told the group he was working on breathing and thinking before acting when he was mad. For the first few weeks, the teachers reported that, despite Noah's proclamations, he seemed to be struggling. Over time, the teachers began to notice something different. They noticed that he had begun to hold poses longer. His breathing had become part of his yoga practice as well. The teachers noticed that, in active and challenging poses like lunge, Noah appeared to be using his breathing and self-talk to persevere. During his active, embodied yoga practice, Noah was applying the very tools that could help him with peers and in class.

It was around the fourth week of yoga class that the yoga teachers noticed a shift. Noah had rolled out his mat and walked away to get a drink of water. Another student sat down on Noah's mat to begin class. Class started; Noah was just returning only to see another child on his mat. The teachers described how Noah clearly chose intentional, reflective thinking and breathing. He stood, perhaps for 10 seconds, staring at the little boy on his mat. Noah placed a hand on his own stomach and breathed. He walked over to where the yoga mats were stored, picked one up and rolled it out, noticeably far from his first mat and the little boy who had taken his spot. The teachers acknowledged his good choices as an example of using your yoga *off the mat* (see Chapter 10). Through embodied practice, Noah was able to bring skills to his social world and set himself up for even more learning. It was from this shift in his behavior that Noah was able to more successfully benefit from the academic aspects of his classroom. As shown in Figure 1.4, Noah demonstrated the *self-as-effective-learner* as he practiced the integration and attunement of two critical aspects of being, his own: (a) self-regulation and care, and (b) intentional, reflective engagement. In this way, Noah was an effective learner and an empowered architect of his own learning and experience.

Dewey (1938) argues, "there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education" (p. 20). There must be real-time opportunities for growth and learning. As the teachers and schools provide learning environments that facilitate the development of an engaged and active learner, the internal experience of the student is also central (see Figure 1.4). For Noah, there was no learning if there was no self-regulation. Further, there was no self-regulation without the opportunity to actively practice the skills on his yoga mat and then within the classroom.

CULTIVATING THE QUALITIES OF A MY-SEL: MINDFULNESS AND YOGA PRACTICES

The qualities of mindful and yogic learners can be viewed in terms of the self-system (i.e., internal or external) in which they are most actionable (see Table 1.1). First, some student learning occurs independently. Within the internal system of cognitions, feelings, and physiology, self-regulation is the key mechanism of effective functioning and facilitator of learning. Specifically, the independent activities of learning require the student

TABLE 1.1 Qualities of a Mindful and Yogic Learner

INTERNAL SYSTEM QUALITIES (SELF-REGULATION AND CARE)	EXTERNAL SYSTEM QUALITIES (INTENTIONAL, REFLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT)

Independent Learner Skills
• Self-regulation
  – Self-awareness
  – Executive control
  – Emotion regulation
  – Stress regulation
  – Responsible decision making
• Self-care
  – Mind–body awareness
  – Healthy behaviors
  – Self-compassion
	Collaborative Learner Skills
	• Intentional, reflective engagement with others
	  – Social awareness
	  – Compassion for others
	  – Maintenance of close, secure, meaningful, and positive relationships
	• Intentional, reflective engagement in learning and service
	  – Inquiry
	  – Active, intentional learning
	  – Civic contribution

Source: Ashdown and Bernard (2012), CASEL (2003, 2005), Diamond and Lee (2011), Durlak et al. (2011), Elias et al. (1997), Greenberg and Harris (2012), Parlakian (2003), Weare (2013), and Willard (2016).

to be self-regulated and engaged. That is, a well-regulated learner is able to demonstrate self-awareness, executive control, emotion and stress regulation, and responsible decision making. Further, he or she shows positive self-care skills that begin with mind and body awareness, health-promoting behaviors, and self-compassion. The learner has the psychological and self-care tools needed to be in the classroom ready to learn.

One of the most compelling reasons to bring mindfulness and yoga into the classroom is stress and trauma. Childress and Harper (2015), Willard (2016), and Steele and Malchiodi (2012) all underscore the unmatched stress and trauma exposure experienced by children today. The stress and trauma experienced is embodied and integrated as our students develop into adults (Damasio, 1999). In addition to the potential learning outcomes, a key benefit of implemented mindfulness and yoga programs is giving our children and youth tools to manage their stress and negotiate the effects of trauma as it presents in day-to-day life. Willard (2016) describes this generation of teens as the most stressed on record with high achievement demands, a seemingly unsteady economy, testing, domestic and foreign terrorism, and ongoing war. Many of our students have too few tools to deal with all they hear and see, including the stress in their own homes. A student with knowledge of breathing techniques, who can slow his or her breath, find grounding and stillness within his or her own body, and act with intention, even when triggered and upset, has a substantial advantage in today's schools.

Next, as much of learning is collaborative, the effective learner is also able to negotiate the external system in a manner that facilitates learning and creativity. Learning and the development of creative ideas are often the fruit of family, student–teacher, and peer relationships. Of course, self-regulation and management of the internal system is key. For example, it is readily accepted that self-regulation, especially emotion regulation, is required for a student to learn successfully within the context of relationships (Durlak et al., 2011). As the tasks of the internal self-system are managed, external engagement is enhanced. Further, the effective learner has the psychosocial tools and skills needed to present as intentional and reflective while engaged with others. These skills include social awareness, compassion for others, and relationship skills. Empowered with these

tools and skills, the effective learner presents with a sense of inquiry, engagement in active and intentional learning, as well as a commitment to civic contribution and creation of meaning. From the regulation of the internal aspects of self to the active commitment to contributing to community and culture, the self-as-effective-learner is grounded in a solid sense of who he or she is, the strengths and challenges, and his or her valued place within the ecology.

Mindfulness and yoga-based methodologies are the psychosocial tools for these processes. As mindfulness and yoga are the foci of this text, they are introduced here briefly and expanded upon theoretically, empirically, and practically in the following chapters.

LEARN FOR YOURSELF: PRACTICE IS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Ultimately, mindfulness and yoga practices ask you to learn from your own practice. In this way, you are the researcher. Mindfulness and yoga practices require the teacher to be the very things he or she hopes to teach the students. In order to teach these skills effectively, it is believed that you must understand the journey, the challenges, and the benefits. In her essay titled, "Success in East Harlem," Meier (2013) writes, "We have also become better observers of our own practice, as well as more open and aware of alternative practices" (p. 145). In Comer et al.'s groundbreaking book, Joyner (1999) writes, "To ask the best of children, we must ask the best of ourselves" (p. 277). The truth is modeling matters (Joyner, 1999). The teacher is a practitioner. David and Sheth (2009) suggest that gaining experience with practices such as mindfulness and yoga prepares you to teach these skills with authenticity. In the book, *Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness: A Guide for Anyone Who Teaches Anything*, David and Sheth (2009) describe the reciprocal relationship between mindful teaching, which nurtures the learner, and teaching mindfulness through direct instruction. As with other subjects, information and instruction is followed by practice (David & Sheth, 2009). I would argue that it starts with practice.

CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an overview of the historical pathway of education to the implementation of mindfulness and yoga in schools. The concept of the student as active architect of his or her own learning was emphasized within a Vygoskian constructivistic framework, with references to more recent neurobiological understandings of the brain, relationships, and learning. The specific tools of mindfulness and yoga within the context of SEL, CE, and SL were discussed. The MY-SEL model was introduced and reviewed, and the concepts of yoga and mindfulness were presented as technologies for learning. The shortcomings in the body of research in the field of mindfulness and yoga were reviewed to potentiate the reader to look critically at the evidence presented as techniques, tools, and protocols that are introduced in the forthcoming chapters. Last, the importance of the teacher's own practice was emphasized in accordance with an ongoing personal mantra of mine, which I believe makes me a better teacher and yogi: "We can't give what we don't have."

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