



MBME (Mind-Body Management Education) program – Educational Tool for Self Development

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Abstract

This study of MBME (Mind-Body Management Education) program accepts a common sense approach that “self-development” is a natural part of what we can call “maturity”. Clearly, self development involves both the mind and body of the individual, and this thesis follows the original Eastern understanding, and current Western scientific understanding, of the unity of the mind and body. We are all aware of how the mind affects the body. But less well appreciated, changes in the body will affect the mind. The MBME is designed to provide participants with a physical movement program which includes the following qualities: flexibility, awareness, balance, breathing, beauty and grace. The hypothesis for this research project is that if an individual can learn to develop these qualities in their bodies, this will help them develop the same changes in their minds and their behavior.

Key Words: Mind, Body, Management, Education, Self-development

Introduction

For some millions of years our predecessors lived almost entirely in the physical domain. Initially, we survived as hunter gatherers, constantly on the move in search for food. Then, a few thousand years ago, the possibility of agriculture began to emerge, giving us the possibility of being able to feed ourselves by cultivating our food from fixed areas of land. Over time, most of humanity became more and more settled into this farming life. Even though we didn't have to walk miles a day to find food, our lives still involved a lot of physical exertion to tend to the land.

Now we could build fixed structures for shelter, to store that food. The first cities appeared about 12,000 years ago and were a direct result of our new fixed lifestyle. Still most of us live on the land. It was a physical existence.

In very recent times, this process has dramatically accelerated with the decline of the numbers of people involved in agriculture and the explosive growth of the modern city.

In short, agriculture was the key implement in the rise of sedentary human civilization.

In contemporary society increasing numbers of people live in what has been called, “the information age,” processing information through the mind. Compared with millions of years of living very physically, we have very recently and very suddenly moved our whole energy from the body to the mind. Now suddenly our whole existence has become mental.

This change has had dramatic effects on our bodies and our minds. And it has happened so quickly that we are still struggling with this transition.

The effects on the body are significant for all of us, often called “the diseases of civilization.” These include epidemics of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, deep vein thrombosis, colon cancer, osteoporosis (bone disease), lipid disorders....

The effects of the mind are equally significant with vast numbers of people in modern societies suffering from stress and mental illness.

We seem to be becoming increasingly a species of obese, couch potatoes, who spend more time worrying about psychological phenomena than being concerned about any physical threats. Almost exactly the opposite situation we have experienced for most of our history.

As both the mind and the body are involved in this process, it is not surprising that the response to this change has been a whole exercise industry on the one hand and a vast increase in the numbers of mental health professionals who play a wide variety of supporting and caring roles on the other.

However, even in the gym many of the people pedaling away furiously are glued to yet another screen which is either balanced on the edge of the machine or up there on the wall blaring out yet more “information.”

This study starts from the premise that this new situation requires a totally radical reappraisal, and proposes that the key step is for us to get back into our bodies again.

In addition, this thesis accepts the original the Eastern understanding, and the current modern scientific understanding of the unity of the mind/body. From this perspective, the mind and body are totally interdependent entities. The state of our minds affects our bodies and vice versa.

This approach also notes the wide acceptance of psychosomatic phenomenon: that whatever affects the mind will also have an effect on the body. However, the starting point for this study is to appreciate the converse, which is much less well

appreciated, and is almost counter-intuitive: that change in the body will similarly affect the mind.

Building on the recent, increasing body of evidence that physical activity supports mental health, the MBME program is a movement program that, not only provides a valuable opportunity for exercising the body, but is so designed to support a healthy mind too.

The MBME is designed to provide participants with a physical movement program which includes the following qualities: flexibility, awareness, balance, breathing, beauty and grace. The hypothesis for this Ph.D. is that if an individual can learn to develop these qualities in their bodies, this will help them develop the same changes in their minds and their behavior.

For example, the proposal is to help the participants to learn to be flexible in their approach to life. How many times have we read how important it is to be flexible and welcome change in our rapidly evolving modern world. How many times do we confront colleagues who are rigid and won't embrace new ideas? What "cognitive therapy" would you suggest to help your colleague to be flexible? And how many years and what cost would that be? If we can help the mind to be flexible via the much simpler route of bodily flexibility, we have discovered a truly win-win situation.

It is the same with awareness. How can we really know what is going on in our lives without awareness. Could we help people to develop awareness of what is happening both inside and around them, whether at work or at home through the body?

Or consider how importance it is to be "balanced. Could we support people to remain balanced no matter how difficult and stressful the situation? – to realize that instead of becoming emotionally charged in the heat of the moment, they can just breathe naturally and remain relaxed.

And as a natural outcome could they realize that they can live their lives with grace and beauty?

Then these people will certainly be “developed” and “mature” – and a joy to work or live with.

This research project is to explore the hypothesis that the MBME can provide a key to natural healthy movements – which will also support a healthy mind. And to measure how these changes could be effective in providing precisely the kind of developed and mature individual that is becoming such a necessity in today's environment.

Objectives of Research

The specific objectives of this research can be described as under:

1. To undertake a literature study for analysis and interpretation of body-based programs and their effects on the body and the mind.
2. To select appropriate components for study of mind-body management education and to measure body changes in respect of the same.
3. To prepare the Mind-Body Management Education program which provides the selected qualities of movement on the body and the mind.
4. To study the effects of the MBME program on the body and the mind. To analyze and to interpret the effects of MBME program

Research Questions

1. It is easier to approach the body as a doorway to the mind rather than trying to approach the mind directly.
2. The five body movement qualities chosen will create the same qualities in the mind.
3. Movement of the body affects the ability of the mind to also be mobile. Mind-Body Management Education (MBME) is a method that provides health benefits and energizes the mental back up which in turn leads towards functional excellence and self development.

Operational Definitions of the Terms Used

<Five Qualities of MBME>

Flexibility

■ BODY

- Capable of being bent or flexed, usually without injury or damage; easily bent
- Applied to the body to refer to ease of movement

■ MIND

- Responsive to change; adaptable: e.g., a flexible schedule
- Supple mind

Balance

■ BODY

- The ability to maintain bodily equilibrium
- A harmonious arrangement

■ MIND

- Mental steadiness
- Emotional stability
- Calm behavior producing a harmoniously integrated whole

Awareness

■ BODY

- Body recognizes something that is sensed or felt

■ MIND

- Watchful, conscious
- Implies understanding gained through one's own perceptions

-To be awake is have full consciousness

Breathing

■ BODY

-To inhale and exhale in respiration

■ MIND

-Doorway to relaxation: breathing freely and easily

Beauty

■ BODY

-Looking nice for oneself

■ MIND

-Gives pleasure to the mind

-Feeling nice

and Grace

■ BODY

-Seemingly effortless beauty or charm of movement

■ MIND

-A disposition to share whatever is genuine within

-A sense of what is appropriate for each moment

MBME (Mind Body Management Education) is a program which uses these five bodily qualities – Flexibility, Balance, Awareness, Breathing, Beauty/Grace – to educate the mind through the body.

Review of Related Literature

The hypothesis is that this MBME will provide many benefits. Firstly, it can support the health requirements from a purely bodily perspective. And secondly, this movement program will affect the body in such a way that not only are we breaking old habits, rooted in the musculoskeletal system, but also breaking the associated psychological habits within the mind – like fixed ideas and an inability to move, change, and be flexible.

In terms of the simple health benefits, it is clear that today's working business environment, for example, is increasingly part of "the knowledge economy" (Drucker 1994). People tend to use their heads all day and become stressed. Stress is everywhere in today's rapidly changing world, and is a constant challenge to our minds and therefore our bodies. It is estimated that 60-90 percent of visits to health care professionals are of stress-related disorders (Cummings 1981), and is said to be a major factor in a wide range of conditions including hypertension, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders, tension and vascular headaches, low-back pain, and decreased immunological functioning (Pelletier 1988).

In terms of mental health, "Sedentary living is at epidemic status in Europe. The evidence linking inactive living with a range of physical and mental diseases and disorders is now accepted by leading authorities worldwide. At the moment, the situation seems to be worsening rather than improving. Costs in terms of human

suffering, lost productivity and health care are high” (Biddle 2000). For example, “Mental disorders are common in the United States, and in a given year approximately one quarter of adults are diagnosable for one or more disorders.” (Statistics from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/statistics/index.shtml> provided by the SAMHSA and National Institute of Mental Health, 2008)

Meanwhile machines increasingly replace physical work. Not surprisingly, the bodies of today need more movement. For example, in a recent article in the Journal, *Heart*, the author points to recent UK government figures which revealed that only 37% of men and 24% of women met the current guidelines of undertaking 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days. (Wannamethee 2006). Other recent articles continue to confirm the benefits of exercise for health (Manini 2006, Rothenbacher 2006). Not to mention the need for the right kind of exercise.

So, not only would exercise benefit people’s physical health, but there is now ample evidence of its beneficial effects on mental health. “Exercise improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression, and negative mood and by improving self-esteem and cognitive function (Calaghan 2004). And, “exercise has also been found to alleviate symptoms such as low self-esteem and social withdrawal” (Guszkowska 2004).

This need can be fulfilled with a simple, movement exercise for mind body management which not only satisfies the requirements for energy expenditure, but can also include elements which help the participant enjoy the wider health benefits of flexibility, awareness, balance, breathing, beauty and grace with this combination of movements.

So, in terms of “self-development” what better place to start than the body, so the body/mind can experience through this movement program, the kind of flexibility and the ability to change, awareness, and balance that today’s world will require of us all.

Conclusion

This research study (interdisciplinary) of MBME (Mind-Body Management Education) program currently under way at the University of Pune, India, addresses some of the most critical issues we face as human beings.

It is designed to provide a physical movement program for contemporary people, based on the premise that changes in the body will not only affect the body but also the mind. So that the easiest way to change the mind is to change the body. And that in particular, this addresses the question of what it means to "develop" and "mature" as individuals.

Everything about our world today is about “change.” In fact, only those who can embrace and love change will survive.

If it can be shown that unlocking our rather rigid and inflexible bodies will help us unlock our rather rigid and inflexible minds, we will have discovered an invaluable short cut to that survival.

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