



Heiner Böttger
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Travis Jensen
(Hrsg./Eds.)

Mindful Evolution

Conference proceedings Eichstätt 2016
& Thessaloniki 2017

Böttger / Jensen / Jensen
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Verlag Julius Klinkhardt
Bad Heilbrunn • 2018

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Dieser Titel wurde in das Programm des Verlages mittels eines Peer-Review-Verfahrens aufgenommen. Für weitere Informationen siehe www.klinkhardt.de.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation
in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten
sind im Internet abrufbar über <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

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Foto Umschlagseite 1: © freshidea / fotolia.de

Druck und Bindung: AZ Druck und Datentechnik, Kempten.

Printed in Germany 2018.

Gedruckt auf chlorfrei gebleichtem alterungsbeständigem Papier.

ISBN 978-3-7815-2218-3

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Vorwort

As is often the case with good ideas, the Mindfulness in Education conference was born during a convivial conversation among friends over wine and cheese. It began innocently enough with the remark, “Hey, I’ve been studying something fascinating; I think you might be interested.” That sparked a dialogue, which grew into a conference in Germany, which led to another conference in Greece, which then inspired other academic work across multiple continents, and ultimately evolved into this volume. While the scholarly product of this work is impressive, more importantly, that initial conversation deepened existing friendships and engendered new relationships across the globe. This exchange has helped us discover new ways to approach our professional and personal lives more meaningfully . . . more mindfully.

This volume explores historical contexts and theoretical underpinnings of mindfulness, as well as offers pragmatic pedagogical methods built upon that historical and theoretical foundation. Whether you are already on board the mindfulness train, yet craving more information (like Karla), or you are intrigued by the notion of mindfulness, but need even more empirical evidence to be fully convinced (like Heiner), or you’re not quite sure what this whole “mindfulness thing” even is or how it might fit in your life or in your classroom (like Travis), we hope you find this collection useful.

We also hope the information presented here inspires you to invite others into the conversation by continuing the research, participating in conferences, and sharing – with students, colleagues, and friends – how you incorporate mindfulness in your life. We look forward to evolving with you.

Lincoln, Nebraska

Karla and Travis Jensen

Einführung – oder: Warum Sie sich auf das Buch einlassen müssen

Um es vorweg zu sagen: Der vorliegende Band ist ein sicher ungewöhnlicher, keiner, den man zügig durchlesen kann, keiner, der sofort auch stringent zu weiteren Erkenntnissen führt, einer, der weitere Fragen aufwirft.

Einer, auf den sich man sich gedanklich etwas einlassen muss.

Der Band, entstanden nach zwei thematisch aufeinander abgestimmten Konferenzen an der katholischen Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt sowie in Nei Poroï/Griechenland, möchte sich zunächst und zuvorderst einem Thema annähern, das geprägt ist von Vorurteilen, Mythen und oft unreflektierten Datenlagen: Achtsamkeit oder *Mindfulness* oder auch *Contemplative Pedagogy*.

Dieses Thema ist eines derjenigen, die schnell in esoterischen Gefilden verortet werden, sich auf den ersten Blick nur schwer greifen lassen, die scheinbar auch jeder wissenschaftlichen Grundlage entbehren, die landläufig zusätzlich als genuin weiblich identifiziert werden.

Die vorliegende Einführung soll ein wenig helfen, auf die Beiträge im Band vorzubereiten, sie in Beziehung zueinander setzen und sie zu einem strukturellen Ganzen zusammenzuführen. Sie soll beitragen, dass Interessierte sich einlassen können auf die Gedankenwelt, die hinter der vordergründig durch Modeströmungen und Kommerzialisierung vereinfachten und verkäuflichen Welt der Meditation und des Yogas stecken.

Der Aufbau des Bandes folgt einer Struktur, die sich vornehmlich aus der Organisation der Konferenzen ergeben hat.

Die beiden zeitlich und örtlich getrennten, aber aufeinander aufbauenden Veranstaltungen

Mindfulness in Education 2016 in Eichstätt

Mindful Communication 2017 in Nei Poroï/Griechenland

werden in den beiden Buchteilen dokumentiert und inhaltlich abgebildet. Da die erste Konferenz durchweg englischsprachig stattfand, sind die Beiträge des ersten Teils auch in dieser Sprache gehalten, der zweite Teil folgt dem deutschsprachigen Konferenzablauf in Griechenland. *Abstracts* vor den Beiträgen, jeweils in der anderen Sprache, verbinden diese sprachliche Trennung und ermöglichen Interessierten in beiden Sprachen, sich einen Überblick über den gesamten Band zu verschaffen.

Inhaltlich beschäftigte sich die Tagung *Mindfulness in Education* insbesondere mit Möglichkeiten und wissenschaftlichen Evidenzen achtsamer Pädagogik in erziehe-

rischen Kontexten, wobei Konzentration und Meditation ernstzunehmende und zentrale Rollen spielen.

Zunächst kommen – in beiden Teilen des Bandes – jeweils die Vortragenden zu Wort, die in beiden Teilen ihre Redebeiträge nahezu wortgetreu zur Verfügung stellen. Anschließend finden im ersten Teil *Mindfulness in Education* ausgewählte Artikel der eingeladenen Expertinnen und Experten aus dem Bereich Erziehung in alphabetischer Reihenfolge Berücksichtigung. Sie sind als Konkretisierungen der Impulse zu verstehen, sie reichen dabei über sie hinaus in vielfältige weitere erzieherischen Anwendungsbereiche hinein.

Im zweiten Teil, der Konferenzdokumentation zu *Mindful Communication*, wird die Hauptidee der ersten Tagung, dass sich Achtsamkeit zuvorderst in entsprechend ausgerichteter Kommunikation realisiert, aufgegriffen. Hier sind es dann die Zusammenfassungen von wiederum ausgewählten, sich an die Impulsvorträge anschließenden Workshops und Arbeitsgruppen zur Thematik der *Mindful Communication*, die achtsame Kommunikation beispielhaft für die Bereiche Schule, Universität und Betriebe konkret verfügbare und anwendbar machen wollen. Insgesamt, so sehen es die Herausgeber, sind beide Teilaspekte, die achtsame Erziehung sowie die achtsame Kommunikation, thematische Ankerpunkte, an denen eines der größten menschlichen Grundbedürfnisse, nämlich des sich aufeinander Einlassens aus den unterschiedlichsten Motiven, konkret erhellen lässt.

Warum also nicht zunächst damit beginnen, sich auf dieses Buch und seine Beiträge einzulassen?

Heiner Böttger

Eichstätt

1 Mindfulness in Education

Vorträge

Caroline Barratt¹

Welcome to Mindfulness in Education

Abstract: In diesem Vortragsmanuskript wird das Konzept der Kontemplativen Pädagogik als ein sehr subjektiver Ansatz des Lehrens und Lernens beschrieben sowie ein Zusammenhang zwischen dieser Pädagogik und Achtsamkeit im Bildungskontext erläutert. Durch konkrete Umsetzungsbeispiele in Bildungsinstitutionen (Schule, Universität) werden Implikationen abgeleitet und Herausforderungen für Lehrkräfte, die den Einsatz von kontemplativer Pädagogik im achtsamen Bildungskontext erschweren können, diskutiert.

For this presentation I was asked to talk about contemplative pedagogy, and specifically to explore mindfulness in education as an important aspect of contemplative pedagogy. So, I have called this talk “Being present in learning and teaching: exploring the potential of contemplative pedagogy in higher education.” I wasn’t entirely sure who the audience would be made up of. If you don’t teach in higher education much of this will still be relevant to you, but, inevitably, I will be talking about this with that emphasis, as it is the sphere of education I work in. What I intend to do is to define what contemplative pedagogy is, or at least suggest a possible definition; explain why I think contemplative pedagogy is appropriate now; talk about the connection between mindfulness and contemplative pedagogy; and then provide some examples of contemplative pedagogy in the classroom to try to give you a sense of what it might look like in practice. I think teachers tend to be pragmatic – I like to know what can I do. What does contemplative pedagogy actually look like in the classroom? So, hopefully I can give you a sense of that as well as some of the more philosophical aspects. Lastly, I will talk about the implications for us as educators and identify some of the challenges that might lie ahead.

Defining Contemplative Pedagogy

This is a definition from my blog, the Contemplative Pedagogy Network, which I will explain a bit more about in a minute:

“Contemplative pedagogy shifts the focus of teaching and learning to incorporate ‘first person’ approaches which connect students to their lived, embodied experience of their

¹ Dr. Caroline Barrat, School of Health and Human Sciences, University of Essex/UK

own learning. Students are encouraged to become more aware of their internal world and connect their learning to their own values and sense of meaning which in turn enables them to form richer deeper, relationships with their peers, their communities and the world around them.”

Contemplative pedagogy is about encouraging students to engage in internal exploration to gain awareness of their own internal world. But very much with a sense that this exploration then enables them to connect with others, developing awareness of how they interact with, and what impact they have, upon the world around them. Having gone back to this definition as part of preparing for this presentation, I have noticed that I have missed out that contemplative pedagogy also provides a way of developing deeper connection to what they are learning. Rather than learning being the assimilation of information, learning becomes something more profound, deeper.

The Place of Contemplative Pedagogy

So, why now? I think contemplative pedagogy is something of a response to where we are right now. This quote by Parker Palmer (2010: 21) sums up that response really well for me. He says:

“...we also seek forms of knowing, teaching and learning that offer more nourishment than the thin soup served up when data and logic are the only ingredients. In our complex and demanding worlds – inner and outer worlds – the human species cannot survive, let alone thrive on a diet like that.”

I think what this quote is pointing to is the increasing dominance of the scientific model in higher education and the dominance of objectivity as a way of knowing the world. I think within that, subjectivity has become devalued and other ways of knowing are being pushed out of how we are encouraged to learn. And in that sense, truth has become a very narrow thing. I believe we can also see this, in the increasing focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths as key subjects and in the marginalisation of the Arts and Humanities. Education is becoming more of a utilitarian enterprise about creating productive citizens who go off to a workplace to do something useful that will generate profit. My sense is that contemplative pedagogy is a reaction against that. Now, I am not suggesting that we throw out the scientific model, I am not suggesting that we throw out reason and logic and rational thinking at all. Nor would it be beneficial if the important and necessary technical and applied aspects of education are disregarded. But what I am suggesting is that currently there is something of an imbalance, in both the curriculum and how the curriculum is taught, that we can help to correct perhaps

through contemplative pedagogy. I think the danger is by failing to incorporate the subjective experience of students into the classroom and not providing an arena in which they can become self-aware, we then let them out into the world ill-equipped to deal with the reality that they face. That is where contemplative pedagogy can come to its own.

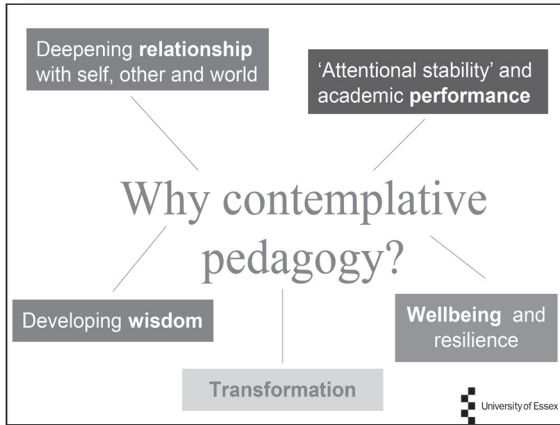


Abb. 1: Why contemplative pedagogy?

This diagram shows what I consider to be the key ways that contemplative pedagogy can be beneficial. Some of the strongest evidence we have in this field is that mindfulness in particular, and contemplative pedagogy more broadly, has the potential to increase pupils' ability to pay attention and increase wellbeing and resilience amongst students. Although contemplative pedagogy has been a growing field in the US for a number of years now and there are increasing studies of how students react to it, its evidence base is still quite limited. However, thus far it is suggested that contemplative pedagogy really does help to deepen people's relationship with self, other and world. It helps us to form communities, it helps students to become aware and enables them to become citizens that can critically engage and take action in the world, which I think is fundamentally important. Something we overlook in education is the development of wisdom. Perhaps it is too big of a thing. But I think the idea of wisdom is a really important one. Daniel Barbezat, one of the main contributors to the field of contemplative pedagogy, emphasises the importance of making people aware of the choices that they make, how other people influence them and how our external actions are driven by our internal experiences (Barbezat 2013). This awareness lies at the heart of wisdom. We are not rational decision-makers but I think we teach our students that they are – or we certainly don't highlight that they are not! I am not saying that we are irrational decision-makers either, but we are emotional beings. Barbezat (2013)

emphasises that we often act in hugely contradictory ways, we can know about the concerns we have about the world, for example I know about climate change, and yet I still get on a plane to go on holiday. I know that I want to be healthy and yet I cannot resist the second slice of cake. I know that I need to meet the deadline and yet I can't help but check my emails again. These are contradictions, in some ways illogical. They do not move me in the direction I wish to travel. Why do such contradictions exist? It is really important that we start looking at those things and encourage students to engage in that complexity because I think we often ignore it and we certainly don't give students the tools to actively explore it.

Contemplative pedagogy gives us the tools of transformation so that we can become more effective in the world and not so blown about by the conditions that we find ourselves in. As my mindfulness practice has developed my capacity to be accepting of and compassionate towards others has increased. My capacity to deal with the world and people in it when it is not as I perceive it "should be" has improved considerably. I respond with much greater patience when the top is left off the toothpaste or I find the bathroom floor covered in damp towels! I find that it is often those small battles that are often my working ground. When a colleague sends that slightly unreasonable email and I have to sit for a few minutes to experience my reaction and respond carefully – rather than blasting off a reply with reactive anger. That is, well, I don't want to incriminate everyone, but that is my working ground of mindfulness but I have experienced the changes that can come with sustained effort.

So, as we deepen wisdom and create the possibility of transformation internally, so we then create the possibility of change externally. Eaton et al. (2011: 32) puts this very beautifully:

"As we nurture students' capacity for contemplation and reflection...we are striving for learning in the moment, but we are also planting the seeds of yet unimagined possibilities, leading to actions that challenge the status quo and to the imagination of bold agendas for reform grounded in a shared vision of a just, sustainable and peaceful world."

I think that we need bold agendas right now.

Growth of CP

[Center for Contemplative Mind in Society](#)

[Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education](#)

- Brown University – degrees in Contemplative Studies as well as options to include contemplative practice in other degree programmes e.g. medicine.
- The University of Virginia - [Contemplative Sciences Center](#), Charlottesville
- Atlanta - [Emory Collaborative for Contemplative Studies](#).
- New York University's postdoctoral program in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis has a [Contemplative Studies Project](#).
- Rice University, religious studies graduate students can concentrate in [contemplative studies](#).
- [Stanford University](#) has a Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education.
- [Mind and Life Institute](#)



Abb. 2: Growth of CP

To highlight that it is not only me who is thinking in this way I have listed a few organisations currently working in this field that you might want to look into if you are interested. The *Association of Contemplative Mind in Higher Education* has played a really big role in me presenting here today. It is an US based organisation; they are a subsidiary group of the *Center for Contemplative Mind of Society*. After going to one of their workshops at the Omega Institute in New York I felt really inspired to work with these ideas. After that conference I set up the Contemplative Pedagogy Network and that is how Karla got to know me. This is only a snapshot but the other organisation I would like to especially mention is the *Mind and Life Institute*. They have a US wing and a European wing and they do a lot of research on neuroscience, contemplation, mindfulness and their website is an immensely valuable resource.

So, what am I doing at the moment? This is the screenshot of my blog, the Contemplative Pedagogy Network. It is called the Contemplative Pedagogy Network but it exists as a blog and an email list, there is no more to it than that at this point. But it is doing what it needs to do I think. So, when I came back from this conference in New York, a couple of years ago now, I knew I wanted to work with these ideas so I emailed the *Association of Contemplative Mind in Higher Education* and said: “Could I please have all the email addresses of everyone in the UK and Europe who are a member of your organization?” So, I had a list of about maybe eight to ten. So, I emailed them all and we managed to meet in London which was really, really inspiring and off the back of that we decided to develop the blog and collaboratively we have organized several days to explore ideas.

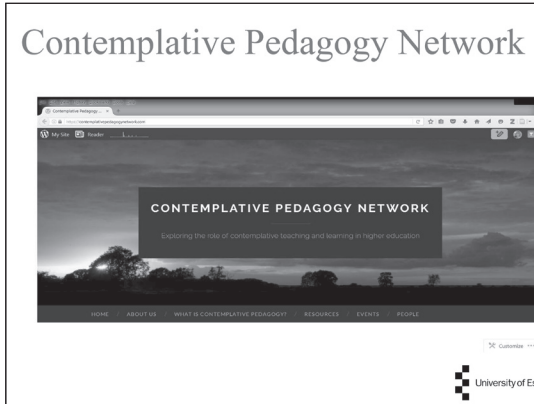


Abb. 3: Contemplative Pedagogy Network

It has been really exciting to see it manifest. At a recent event organized by Iddo Oberski at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh we had rich dialogue about contemplative pedagogy stimulated by the use of Open Space Technology. In addition to our meetings, I also invite people to write guest blogs. One thing that has really surprised me about this blog is that people in over 30 countries have viewed it and I am not sure how they get to know about it! People seem to be open to these ideas, more so than I had imagined, so it has been a real joy to work on.

Contemplative Pedagogy in the Classroom

That brings us to considering contemplative pedagogy in the classroom. For me there are two main modes of using contemplative pedagogy. The first is to include contemplative practices or approaches within the standard curricula. Within my department, the *School of Health and Human Science*, we teach students to be Nurses, Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists amongst other things. In this context, including contemplative practice might be to include a short period of meditation at the start of a class for example. The other way of looking at contemplative pedagogy in the classroom is to actually create whole modules or courses that aim to develop contemplative practice. For most people I have spoken to, it is not realistic for them to design modules or programmes on contemplative practice but it is viable for them to be thinking about on how to include contemplative practice in their everyday teaching. And that seems to be main focus of most of my discussions about this topic.

I really want to emphasise that contemplative pedagogy is not a narrow set of practices; it is an incredible broad and diverse range of teaching and learning

activities. To illustrate this notion, the Association of Contemplative Mind of Education produced the tree of contemplative practices. I think it illustrates well the massive diversity of things that might take place under this banner. It doesn't have to be doing a mindfulness exercise at the beginning of classes. Contemplative practices are hugely diverse.

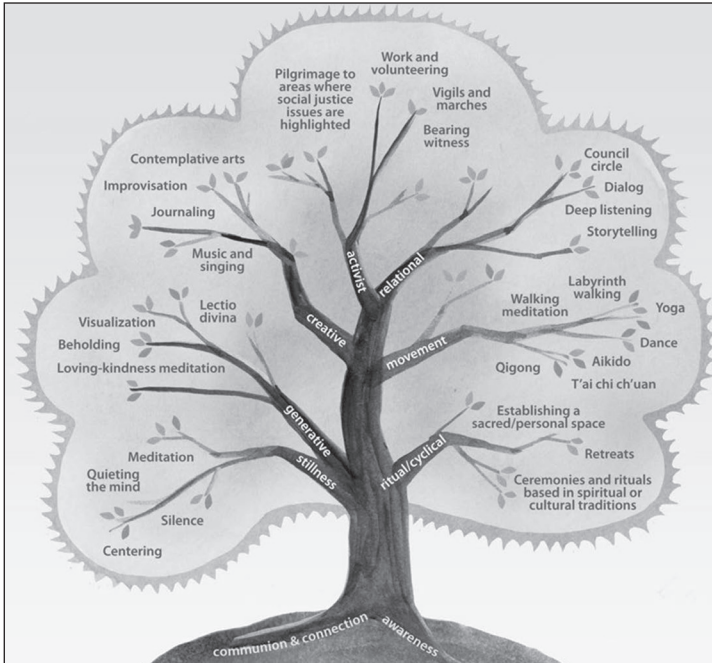


Abb. 4: The Tree of Contemplative Practices

Most of the contemplative activities I have included in my teaching have been meditative or involved silence, so, including five minutes of written reflective practice at the beginning of a class or even two minutes of silent reflection. I had an email from a colleague just before I came away saying *“Thank you for the seminar. I used the two minutes of silence on a recent course and it was really well evaluated by people.”* We shouldn't underestimate the number of demands on our students' attention. When they arrive in the classroom we don't know what has been going on for them that might make it difficult for them to engage. As a teacher I might think, *“Why are you [not] paying attention to me?”* Actually there could be any good number of reasons why they are not paying attention. Perhaps it is our role as educators to facilitate attention, to even make students aware that they are not paying attention. I have realised quite recently that I am not even sure if students (or myself for that matter!) are aware when they have been distracted.

I want to draw your attention to the fact that awareness is one of the tree roots in this diagram. Even though we might not be explicitly doing a mindfulness practice, actually in order to be contemplative, there has to be awareness, there has to be attention on the object of contemplation. So, mindfulness as awareness underpins contemplative pedagogy.

Contemplative pedagogy asks that we create a learning space in which students can connect their own sense of meaning and values to their experience of the world and their own learning, however this pre-proposes that they know this about themselves. Conversely, contemplative pedagogy asks that we as teachers examine the values that underpin our own teaching that we wish to model and develop. We need to know about this in ourselves, too. So, again, we can see how awareness necessarily underpins contemplative practices.

Mindfulness and CP

- Mindfulness promotes self-knowledge, understanding and equanimity
- Important component in many other contemplative practices (see tree roots!)
- Improves student performance and wellbeing (Chamarkohi and Amini 2012; Gockel et al. 2013; Shapiro et al. 1998)
- Dealing with driven activism or despair that comes from deeply engaging with the problems we face (Macy and Brown 2014)




Abb. 5: Mindfulness and CP

Here I have highlighted a few key articles related to the evidence base of mindfulness in higher education. I've only included a few because I knew Karlheinz and Heiner would explore mindfulness scholarship in more detail, so this list is not by any means comprehensive. The other work I wish to highlight is that of Macy and Brown (2014). Joanna Macy in particular has been very vocal about how activists often burn themselves out. She talks about how mindfulness and the development of awareness can really help to support and make us more resilient in a world where, perhaps, our aims and objectives are not being met and the values we hold dear are contradicted.

This is a lovely quote from Judy Lief (cited in Macy & Brown 2014: 19) to summarise what I have said over the last few slides:

“Our hope is that if we keep all the distractedness going, we will not have to look at who we are, we will not have to feel what we feel, we will not have to see what we see.”

For me this fundamentally sums up the value of mindfulness in the classroom, that we need to invite our students to stop, to look and to feel, and then they have a really firm basis to start learning from.

My Contemplative Pedagogy Experiences

What I am going to do now is just take you through some of the teaching that I have done myself and share some of the practices that I've used.

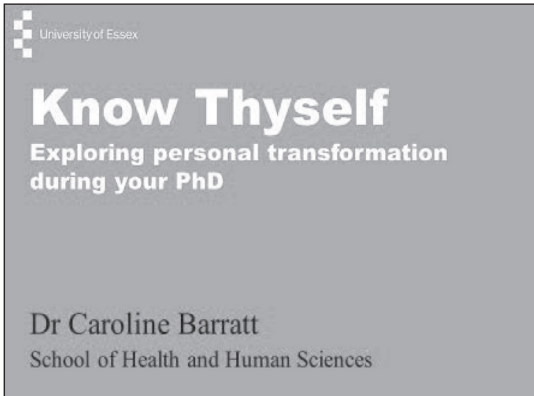


Abb. 6: Know Thyself

The first example is a daylong workshop I taught called “Know Thyself: Exploring personal transformation during your Ph.D.” I designed and offered this self-care and awareness workshop as part of our post-graduate research training at my university. It was an opportunity for the Ph.D. students to stop, to think about where they were, and to identify how they wanted to move forward. I started the class with a five-minute breath awareness practice. I then did an introductory exercise using postcards. Students were asked to select the postcard they were drawn to and answer three questions when they introduced themselves to the group: What is your name? Why this course? Why that postcard? When they explore why they picked that particular postcard you get an interesting snapshot into their world. The next task of the day was a drawing task. Participants were asked to draw an image that depicted “Where are you now? What has the journey been like so far?” I provided big sheets of flipchart paper, lots of colour pens and I was repeatedly surprised by the student’s willingness just to go with this. I am still waiting for someone to say: “You’re mad. I am not doing that.” But they don’t. They just get on with it! After about 20 minutes of drawing students explain their image in a deep listening exercise with a partner.

In the afternoon we talked about self-compassion and I introduced a loving kindness meditation. We also did a short meditative reflection. I asked students to bring to mind a time when someone has really criticised their work. I asked them to think about where they were, what the situation was, to bring to mind as much as they are comfortable with, to bring back the feelings of that arose for them. And I then ask them to do the counter, bring to mind a time when someone really praised your work and think about how that feels. And then I ask them to see if they can sit between the two experiences and notice that neither experience is objectively true. Just to see if they can hold that sense with openness and equanimity not being pulled to either extreme. When I asked for feedback one student said: “Thank you for organising this training session and for being so patient with us. It was truly refreshing... You’ll help save a lot of students from despair!” I was quite pleased with that.



Abb. 7: Creating space to know

The next teaching event I’ll share was a day’s training for teaching staff at my university, the University of Essex where. Ruth Windscheffel who works in our Learning and Development Department came to one of our contemplative pedagogy weekends and has since encouraged me to do a variety of things on campus. We called this training “Introducing contemplation into teaching and learning in higher education.” The day began with a mindfulness practice and then I introduced contemplative pedagogy using a number of examples and activities, pretty much like I am doing now to be honest. Participants then engaged in a free writing exercise. Free writing is something I come back to it again and again. Normally when we are writing, particularly in academia, we have to think for half an hour and then we write five words! Free writing asks that we write before we think; it runs counter to how we are used to functioning and as such challenges our habits and unconscious behaviours. The idea is that participants have to write continuously

in response to a prompt for a set amount of time. It is quite challenging. The things I got them to write about, for two minutes each, were “I think contemplative practice will be useful in my work with students because...”; “My fears about exploring these practices are...”; The practices I am most interested in exploring are...” The responses then fed to rich discussions in small groups.

In the afternoon, I wanted to give some space to consider “Who are we as educators?” This took the form of another meditative reflection in which they were asked, “Why do I teach? What effect do I want my teaching to have on me? What effect do I want my teaching to have on my students? What effect do I want my teaching to have on the world?” After posing each question and repeating it, participants were given time to consider what arose in response to each question. I hoped to offer a meditative space just to contemplate these deep questions and to see what comes up. What I found most interesting about the day was that people saw contemplative pedagogy as quite resistive of, or resistant to, the current norms in higher education. That surprised me. In particular, it became apparent that the responses that they experienced during the exercise, and the values that were expressed in those responses, did not reflect their everyday experience in their work, which tended to prioritize issues such as income and student numbers. An interesting complexity to the day slowly emerged which highlighted the importance of the exercises and the honest dialogue that drew out these contradictions and helped remind us why we do what we do.



Abb. 8: Developing as a compassionate practitioner

Lastly, I'd like to share my course, “Developing as Compassionate Practitioner.” The other examples I have offered have been one-day workshops; in contrast, this is a credit-bearing module that can be taken at master's or third year undergraduate level. This class is for people who have been in health or social care practice for a minimum of two years, and for those who have practical experience of working in caring roles. The key elements of the course are the development of mindfulness