Mindfulness Applications in the Higher Ed. Classroom

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Goals

- Principles of mindfulness
- Explore role and usefulness in the college classroom
- Opportunities for practice
- What’s happening at York
- Resources
Getting Here – Summer 2015

[Image of a group photo with the Greater Good Science Center logo]

[Link to Lessons Learned]
Integration at York

• Yearlong cohort (2015-16)
  – *Transformative Conversations*
  – Bi-weekly meetings –SEL, mindfulness
  – Mindfulness speakers (Jefferson & Brock)
• Summer read (*The Slow Professor*)
• LL ED College Reading integration
  – CAS 100/ESL 15, HDFS, Kines
• Graduate education–self-care
• IDs – expanding design considerations
• Intern’l student orientation
My Involvement – Summer 2016

York - MBSR Fall 2016
Thanks to Schreyer!

- Sponsored our faculty cohort and Mindfulness speaker
Gathering Practice

• Helping us get settled and **focused**
  – Breathing exercise (**Woodall**)  
  – Bell  
  – STOP
Roots & Fruits

• Ancient Buddhist Practice (meditation) meets modern day Western need (stress)
    • MBSR
  – Grew from there
Research Centers

- Greater Good Science Center (UC Berkeley)
- Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence
- U Mass Medical School Center for Mindfulness in Medicine Healthcare, and Society (Jon Kabatt-Zinn)
- CASEL Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
- PSU’s Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center (Greenburg & Gill)
- Penn Program for Mindfulness (College of Medicine)
- UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (Winston & Lopez)
- Penn’s Positive Psychology Center (Seligman, Duckworth)
- Harvard School of Public Health Center for Health and Happiness
- The Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) (U. of Bristol UK (Deakin Crick, Claxton, & Broadfoot)
- The Mindfulness Institute of the Jefferson-Myrna Brind Center of Integrative Medicine
- Mindful Schools
- Quality of **paying attention in the present moment, without judgment**
  (Jon Kabat-Zinn – U.Mass Medical Center for Mindfulness)

- Quality of "being aware in the present moment...[it] opens the mind and gives space for new understanding."
  (Barbezat & Bush, 2014)

- Mindful awareness can be defined as paying attention to present moment experiences with **openness, curiosity, and a willingness to be with what is**.
  (Mindful Awareness Research Center – UCLA)
• "Between stimulus and response there's a space; in that space lies our power to choose our response; in our response lies our growth and our freedom." (Viktor Frankl)

• Paying attention to body, mind, emotions - Allows us to act skillfully in the midst of challenges (Joyce Maleo-Meyer – CFM)

• Paying attention to what is and touching it lightly and with a sense of curiosity and playfulness (JKZ)

• To be a scientist in the realm of our own lives (Joyce Maleo-Meyer – CFM)
What are we paying attention to?

- What
- Why
  - Personal well-being
  - Classroom learning & design
Noticing makes change possible

Mindfulness practice helps us become better “noticers”
Improving Noticing

• How good are we? Can we get better?
• In the chat…identify
  – a thought
  – an emotion
  – a physical sensation right now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thought</th>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m not ready for my 2:00 class!</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>I feel a little cold</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fine Tuning

- **Body**
  - Body scan (**MARC**)  
  - Mindful walking

- **Thoughts**
  - Label Game: planning, worrying, rehearsing, playback, problem-solving
Fine-tune Emotions

http://ei.yale.edu/mood-meter-app/
In the chat

- In your courses, what do you want students to “notice”? 
  - Main points in a reading/lecture 
  - Wording of test questions 
  - Assignment details 
  - Characteristics of different species 
  - Subtle differences between physics/math problems 
  - Coherence in writing 
  - Assumptions
With Mindfulness…

• We have the chance to *act skillfully in our lives*
• Noticing plays a key role
• Mindfulness practices can help us improve this capacity

• Let’s make a stronger academic connection
**Metacognition** is the academic connection to “noticing”

**Awareness + Regulation**

Example: During lecture, reading, studying, students ask:

- Did I pick up the important bits?
- Am I concentrating? (lectures, reading, study)
- Do I understand (reading, assignments, procedures)?
- What do I think about it?
- Can I make connections?
- What can I do to improve? (self, task, strategy choice)

And then hopefully they adjust by DOING something to change/improve the outcome
How does Mindfulness Connect?

Metacognition = Awareness + Regulation

Mindfulness broadens the notion of “awareness” + adds options to “regulation”

I see mindfulness as a “type” of metacognitive awareness
Noticing…What else?

- Reflecting & coming to insight
- How?
“Mindfulness and contemplation fosters additional ways of knowing that complement the rational methods of traditional liberal arts education. Inviting the contemplative simply includes the natural human capacity for knowing through silence, looking inward, pondering deeply, beholding, witnessing the contents of our consciousness… These approaches cultivate a capacity for deepened awareness, concentration, and insight.” Such methods include guided meditation, journals, silence, music, art, poetry, dialogue, and questions.”

http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/contemplative-pedagogy/
Getting Comfortable with Quiet

• Our ability to quiet down (outer helps inner)…
• gives us room to ponder…
• which helps us get to insight

• What would you like students to ponder in your courses?
Mindfulness & Pondering

- Mindfulness practice can:
  - help your students become comfortable
  - create the external environment needed

- When to use?
  - Times of transition
  - Beginnings/ends
  - Problem-solving, exploration, meaning-making
Mindfulness & Pondering

• How?
  – Add in brief breathing at transitions to build the capacity
  – Think – Pair/Write – Share (Do we skip the “Think”?)
    • Making Thinking Visible
      – WMYST
      – I Used to Think, Now I Think
Some SoTL Data

- Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI)

What changes happen for students?

Impact of Mindfulness?

Self-knowledge (noticing) + Reflection (quiet)

ELLl Post-Semester Scores CG, LLG, & MG

Classroom Connections

- Managing stress (ours and theirs) - self-care
- Encouraging focus and concentration
  - Memory STM - LTM
  - Insight
- Social awareness and emotional intelligence – positive classroom climate and effective group work
- Building capacity for empathy and compassion (designers, engineers, healthcare, educators)
- Critical thinking (seeing – then evaluating thoughts)
- Building lifelong learning attributes (resilience, curiosity, meaning-making, creativity,)
# Uses/Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gathering</td>
<td>Mindful breathing, bell, body scan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Attention/Focus</td>
<td>Mindful walking, breathing, eating, <a href="#">Exuberant Animal</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Awareness/EQ</td>
<td><a href="#">GGSC</a>, Mood Meter, <a href="#">Micromoves</a>, <a href="#">Stanford D-School</a>, <a href="#">Loving kindness</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Labeling Game, <em>Making Thinking Visible</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Moments @ key junctures</td>
<td>Threshold Concepts, Pondering, Noticing, <a href="#">RAIN</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Time</td>
<td>Head, Heart, Body Scan; <a href="#">Positive Character Traits</a>; 3 Deep Breaths; 3 Good Things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Classroom Climate</td>
<td>What are you proud of? <a href="#">Fast Friends</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td><a href="#">Top Strengths</a>, Think like an Optimist, Grit Pie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing a Class Session</td>
<td><a href="#">Setting an Intention, Breathing to QICS</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Study</td>
<td>SELF Inventory, <a href="#">Stop, Breathe, Think</a></td>
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Learning isn’t just about the Mind

• Are students using everything at their disposal to be successful?

• Are we designing instruction to reach the whole person?

• Are we accounting for ourselves in the mix (self-awareness and care!)?

• We can use mindfulness practice to extend the metacognitive options we normally use
Noticing & Pondering

• What are your learning goals?
  – Cognitive
  – Affect
  – Physical

• What are you building?
  – Skills
  – Knowledge
  – Behavior
  – Attitudes

• What’s the environment?

• What instructional strategies do you use?
  – Lecture
  – Journals
  – Practice drills
  – Homework
  – Assessment
  – Case studies
  – Outside experiences
  – Internships, service learning

• Where can mindfulness practice fit in?
Suggestions?

- Practice yourself
- Start small
- Explain that it’s a secular practice
- Start where there are obvious benefits/connections
  - 3 deep breaths before exams
  - Mindful breathing before class or after stressful events
- Build up over time
One Last Activity

• Breathing
• Set an intention to do one thing as a result of this session – write it down
• QICS
  – Question
  – Insight
  – Connection
  – Surprise
Questions & Comments

- **Resources**
  - [http://sites.psu.edu/selpsy/daily-posts/](http://sites.psu.edu/selpsy/daily-posts/)
  - [https://sites.psu.edu/selfcare/](https://sites.psu.edu/selfcare/)
  - Apps galore!

- **Thank you!**