

Developing a body scan meditation for contemplative pedagogy through self-study

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As I teach, I consider contemplative practices as a part of my pedagogy because I understand the importance of maintaining a sense of well-being for myself and for those I teach. I employ contemplative pedagogy since I acknowledge that several students often enter the undergraduate classroom community with feelings of stress due to several factors. My students often admit this to me over the course of the semester and during course reflection discussions at the end of the semester. It is imperative to pay attention to the state of the body because a lack of attention could cause students to develop a low self-esteem that provokes overly self-critical mental states, which may cause a lack of compassion for the self and others. Higher education has a responsibility to pay attention to the well-being of students as part of the educational enterprise.

In this article, I focus on how I engage in a self-study to develop a body scan meditation as a part of my contemplative pedagogy. To begin with, I provide a literature review on contemplative education to help position the contemplative practice of the body scan. I include scholarly resources from contemplative pedagogues and self-study practitioners as I discuss embodied pedagogy. Contemplative pedagogy together with self-study guides me to understand my development of the body scan meditation, which I share with my students. Following this, I relate how I employ the self-study methodology to develop a body scan meditation that my students and I are comfortable with. The methodology section focuses on self-study as a hybrid methodology where contemplative practices contribute to self-study and self-study contributes to contemplative practices. After, I discuss how I engage in a body scan meditation with my students to shed light on how I arrive at a new understanding of who I am as a contemplative pedagogue. I conclude with gentle reminders about contemplative pedagogy and self-study along with a framework for the body scan meditation, which educators may consider.

The body scan meditation is one of many contemplative practices that provide an opportunity to help individuals learn to de-stress while embracing their bodies. This encourages students to develop self-awareness as they connect to what they feel in their bodies and the emotions that arise. Students open themselves up to identifying what they feel as they scan their bodies. This meditation focuses on nonjudgmental awareness of the body's current state of being by breathing with attention to the body parts. It is my contention that the body scan should concentrate on the well-being of the whole self. With well-being in mind, I aim to reevaluate the traditional body scan to concentrate on spirituality coupled with the physical body. For the purposes of this project, I refer to spirituality as an aspect of the body scan meditation that is concerned with developing a connection to the human soul. With the development of the body scan meditation in mind, I now turn to relate the literature on contemplative pedagogy.

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Contemplative Pedagogy Literature

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society describes several undertakings that are a part of contemplative pedagogy. In particular, mindfulness is applied to meditation, body-practices, deep listening, silence, individual contemplation, and interactive contemplation.

Mindfulness is not thinking, interpreting, or evaluating. It is an awareness of perception. It is a nonjudgmental quality of mind which does not anticipate the future or reflect back on the past (Center for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education, 2008, p.13).

Through the art of mindfulness, individuals become aware of their perception in the present moment. Thus, educators can use mindfulness to teach students to become more aware of their academic as well as social interactions. If educators are mindful, then students may learn to be mindful too. Educators can teach students to develop an open mind with compassion.

Contemplative practitioners empathize with worldviews by thinking compassionately as they acknowledge the interconnectedness of humanity. Because of this compassion, contemplative practitioners view the world in a nonjudgmental manner. This means that judgments are not based on one perspective, but rather are based on multiple perspectives that provide a variety of views to the situation or person being judged. Therefore, contemplative pedagogy is a type of pedagogy that is used to help teachers and students think, with an open mind, about the interconnectedness that is present within the world between the self, other beings, and non-beings.

This is important because many undergraduate students often enter the college classroom with the self-indulged mindset of merely going through the motions of a higher education to obtain a degree.

Although the majority of community college students enter with the hope of transferring to a four year institution, the media conversation rarely involves supporting general education for the benefit of students themselves. On a deep level, students are likely aware that their educations are designed for the benefit of other powers, and they arrive at the door of the classroom often wary, overscheduled, stressed out, and afraid, one failure away from dropping out. (Haight, 2010, p. 30).

Because I am mindful of the well-being of my students, my pedagogy centers on contemplative practices in education. Educators who engage in contemplative practices in the classroom offer students the chance to mindfully think with clarity about what is meaningful to them. Students embark on a prospect to connect with themselves and a classroom community. This extends to the campus community and the world at large. This is essential because students today live in a culture of distractions, often from digital devices:

The practice of mindfulness develops two root skills necessary to success: attentiveness and concentration. Students today have grown up immersed in a culture of distraction. From iPods to cell phones, their day is a series of responses to bells and clicks. In addition, students appear to lean always toward the future, thereby sacrificing the present moment with the expectation of a future one. (Haight, p. 31)

In many instances, students indulge themselves in their technological gadgets and plans for the future to the point that they miss the opportunity to be mindful of the present moment. Too often, students ignore the well-being of their whole being because they are distracted.

David Sable (2014) reports the benefits of contemplative education for students in higher education as he engages in a contemplative research analysis:

In general, the contemplative practices positively affected students' dispositions for critical thinking. As the excerpts from the data ... show, the contemplative practices also deeply affect students' communication skills, understanding of themselves, and understanding others. One unanticipated outcome was that some students felt more connected to people in the class that they disagreed with than to people they agreed with easily. The mutual exploration of different views, through listening, inquiry, and dialogue gave individuals an unexpected feeling of being heard and hearing others, of being enriched and seeing the world through someone else's eyes. (p. 13)

Sable shares how he engaged in contemplative pedagogy in the classroom with student success. Students learned to understand each other with a nonjudgmental awareness that focused on listening to one another and viewing different worldviews through distinctive lenses. Sable provides an example of the benefits of contemplative pedagogy that acknowledges the successful outcomes for students. I consider the success of my students as I engage in embodied pedagogy.

Embodied pedagogy is an aspect of contemplative pedagogy that mindfully considers the whole being of students and their relation to others. Nguyen and Larson discuss three components of embodied pedagogy that concentrate on the unification of the mind and body (see Nguyen & Larson, 2015, p. 332). First, one should acknowledge sensations and movements with bodily and spatial awareness in mind. Thus, I specifically pay attention to how my body language and the body language of my students impacts teaching and learning. Second, one should recognize the unity of the mind and body when learning. I focus on how my emotions and the feelings within my body influence the choices I make as an educator. As I reflect on my teaching, I acknowledge how the mind and body impacts how I teach. Third, one should acknowledge that the body has a sociocultural context in teaching and learning. I guide my students to focus their attention on the influences of race, gender, and sexuality. I pay attention to these three components when in an in-person or virtual pedagogical space.

It is my contention that the body scan meditation is an embodied practice that is part of embodied pedagogy, which falls under the umbrella of contemplative pedagogy. The body scan meditation helps my students and I to maintain awareness of the body. The mind and the body unite together in the body scan meditation. Moreover, we specifically pay attention to sociocultural factors such as race, gender, and sexuality as we engage in the embodied practice of the body scan meditation.

John P. Miller (2006), a scholar of spirituality in education, writes about timeless learning as a part of contemplative pedagogy. Timeless learners are embodied because they attempt to live their lives according to their ethical beliefs. Timeless learning, therefore, involves being in the present moment as opposed to thinking only of the past or only of the future. Miller discusses timeless learning as an interactive holistic type of learning that involves a mind-body connection. There is a connection between the relationship with the self and others as well as between the self and the universe:

Another connection that can arise is our link to the earth. Timeless learning often leads to a sense of how we are supported and nourished by the earth. Indigenous peoples have felt this connection and reading their literature can help restore the connection in ourselves. Finally, timeless learning connects us to the cosmos as a whole. This last connection can deepen our connection to the mystery of being in the universe...A real test of spiritual practice and timeless learning is the development of deep and lasting compassion (Miller, p. 7).

Miller implies that the timeless learners acknowledge interconnectedness to the self, others, and the cosmos, but the acknowledgment is in a non-egotistical manner. Through interconnectedness, the timeless learner participates in reconstructing knowledge based on experiences (Miller, 2006, p. 10). In this sense, knowledge is based on timeless lessons that are learned through experiences with the self, others, and the cosmos.

Miller writes about four procedures that occur during timeless learning. First, learners let go of biases that may cause agendas, which can lead to attachment. Hindu philosopher Yogananda (1995) elaborates on this claim. Yogananda writes about the importance of remaining detached from our personal agendas and building upon the attachment to move towards the achievement of a divine goal (Yogananda, 1995, p. 343). Second, Miller believes that learners need to pay attention to learning by using meditative practices that involve being in the present moment. For example, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (2008, p. 27) discusses the body scan as a mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) exercise that helps to harmonize the mind and the body by using the mind to become aware of the body's sensations. Third, a focus on compassion helps the learners empathize with the interconnected elements that are present among the learner. Fourth, according to Miller, contemplation helps the learners maintain a balanced mental state by being mindful of the present moment (Miller, 2006, p. 13). This last idea is evident in the scholarship of the venerable Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh (1987, p. 14) who discusses mindfulness as a state of being in the present moment.

A look at care ethics examines this claim further. Theorists such as Nel Noddings (1992), Virginia Held (2006), among others discuss care theory. In particular, Noddings, (1992) discusses care ethics in the educational sphere as a form of compassion that occurs when both the cared-for and the care-er engage in a reciprocal relationship. Noddings states that care is present in education when the cared-for acknowledges the efforts of the caregiver. Thus, it is important to build on not only having compassion but also applying the ethics of care to engage with students in timeless learning.

As I engage my students in the body scan meditation, I display care both for them and for the process of developing the body scan meditation. As I will mention as the article continues, I collaborated with a group of students who reciprocate care and compassion for me. These students have shown me that they care about me as their professor and mentor. I believe that Noddings provides an approach to engaging in care theory in the classroom that has a profound impact on the mentor-mentee relationship.

Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices

Self-study of teaching and teacher education practices methodology helps to understand one's self in relation to teaching and learning (Loughran, 2004, p 9). This approach to research provides the opportunity to pay attention to one's self as an educator for the purpose of improvement. According to Samaras and Freese (2009, p. 8), the study of self in relation to teaching and to practice occurs not in isolation but in collaboration. Self-study requires collaboration as a crucial component that lends validity to self-study. This prevents self-study from being delusional and centered on one individual's

subjectivity. Collaboration also brings trustworthiness to self-study. This collaboration occurs in different forms as Davey and Ham (2009, p. 188) indicates. Each self-study project requires its own unique components based on the nature of the study. While self-study maintains key elements such as attention to one's self and collaboration, the workings of each self-study are unique. Bullock and Sator (2018), for example, acknowledge the diversity of self-study methods that help educators explore pedagogical practices. Fletcher (2020) argues that the researcher is the researched because the researcher explores personal pedagogical practices critically through an epistemological lens in a manner that makes a significant contribution to educational research. Ritter and Haylor (2020) explain how teachers construct a self-narrative that provides professional development:

A research methodology that invokes the term self in its name immediately suggests that its conduct will require an intimacy that is often avoided in more traditional forms of research. Interesting and compelling topics of self-study often require discussing the problematic features of one's own identity and practice, which necessitates honesty and a willingness to share vulnerabilities and uncertainties. As a consequence, those considering self-study should be emotionally prepared, interested, and willing to embark on such a personal challenge and undertaking in their professional lives. (Ritter & Haylor, p. 6.)

Self-study research requires an intimacy with the self that many researchers often avoid. Because self-study research frequently involves the exploration of one's innermost self, self-study researchers ought to emotionally prepare for what arises in their research, as they need to be brutally honest with themselves. For this reason, self-study research is often very challenging because some individuals would rather not explore the core of their innermost self.

Forgasz and McDonough (2017) provide an exemplary example of how self-study has the potential to explore embodied pedagogy that helps educators to understand the embodied dimension of teaching and learning, particularly in environments that often privilege other approaches:

In many higher education contexts, logical deduction and critical thinking are prized as the most trustworthy processes of knowledge production. Students are invited to contemplate ideas and experiences and to demonstrate understanding to themselves and to others through the written or spoken word. These occur to us as processes of thinking our way into knowing. In contrast, our narratives revealed that embodied learning is a concrete meaning-making process in which we employ our bodies to both feel our way into knowing and to physically express ourselves in order to make ourselves known to others. In this sense, embodied pedagogies might be said to involve feeling and seeing our way into knowing. (p. 58)

In many instances, higher education values critical thinking coupled with logical reasoning but devalues embodied ways of knowing. Forgasz and McDonough use their bodies to help them understand their epistemological framework for teaching and learning. The body and the emotional self becomes involved in the educational process as an embodied way of knowing. Resistance to embodied pedagogy often occurs because people are most comfortable with cognitive methods (Forgasz and McDonough, 2017, p. 61). However, resistance might cause individuals to miss a vital opportunity to explore their innermost self. Educators can guide students through resistance by helping them to understand their fears and thus, open the door to new ways of knowing. Forgasz and McDonough went on to state:

Embodied learning demands that we make ourselves emotionally vulnerable and that we expose that vulnerability in the most visible way: through our physical bodies. All of this poses a tremendous challenge to participants, one that ultimately requires a skilful facilitator who can scaffold and support these strange and new ways of coming to know. (pp. 64-65)

I thus hope to serve as a facilitator for my students as I teach them how to allow themselves to become vulnerable and open to embodied ways of knowing.

Contemplative Pedagogy Coupled with Self-Study

When I think of contemplative pedagogy, I think of the tools that are often necessary to engage in self-study. My ongoing self-study prompts me to acknowledge the components of contemplative pedagogy that I use as tools for my self-study. I engage in mindfulness as I focus on being in the present moment when I teach, reflect on my teaching practices, and focus on deliberations with other scholars. Mindfulness helps me to suspend my judgment as I pursue my self-study. Instead of critiquing the feelings of others and my perceptions in my self-study, I suspend my judgment to allow myself to develop a sense of clarity that reveals an embodied way of knowing. This helps me to empathize with worldviews because I acknowledge that we are all interconnected. Essentially, contemplative pedagogy provides the tools for my self-study.

Contemplative pedagogues may benefit from self-study since self-study provides an educational research methodology that helps contemplative pedagogues use tools, which they already maintain. Self-study helps contemplative pedagogues to engage in a method to explore and develop their unique version of contemplative pedagogy. Contemplative pedagogues who focus on improvement-aimed pedagogy should employ self-study for this purpose. They may develop their self-study by developing a *mindfulness of teaching journal* where they explore critical questions directly related to their teaching and learning practices. Afterwards, they should engage in deliberations within a community to challenge their embodied way of knowing and discover new possibilities for their practices. This is one example of how contemplative pedagogues may conduct self-study. Essentially, self-study is a type of contemplative practice that educators may use to improve their pedagogy with their identity as an educator in mind.

Engaging in the Self-Study Methodology

Through my ongoing self-study, I came to understand the need to vary my secular meditations, which is a contemplative practice that I usually begin class with. I elaborate on this in my article “Re-Envisioning Contemplative Pedagogy Through Self-Study” (MisirHiralall, 2016). Essentially, I ask my students to arrange their desks into a circle when I teach in person classes. We begin class with a secular meditation. Students listen to a musical instrumental piece while pondering on a reflective meditative prompt that I share with them. Some students choose to look at the visuals that accompany the audio whereas most students rather close their eyes as they place attention on the meditation prompt. At the end of the semester, students and I discuss the course structure including the meditations. Because my self-study is ongoing, I cannot point to an absolute beginning or end of my research process. However, what I will say is reflecting on my pedagogy at the end of the semester with my students is a key part of my self-study methodology. The end of the semester sometimes creates a new beginning for me since my students help me to think about specific ways to improve my pedagogy.

My students prompted me to explore a variety of meditation practices since they found them to be beneficial for beginning class sessions. For this reason, I developed a loving-kindness meditation

with my students as a part of our Ethics class during the Spring 2016 semester at Middlesex College, formerly known as Middlesex County College. Many students in this particular course had several other classes with me in the past. My students and I decided to film a YouTube video that conveys the rationale for the loving-kindness meditation and shares a suggestive script for the loving-kindness meditation. I began to ponder on other unique secular meditations that I should explore. I soon began to explore the body scan meditation as a part of my contemplative pedagogy that I am focused on improving. My philosophical method requires me to engage in a self-study of my teaching practices with improvement-aimed pedagogy in mind. The goal of this self-study is to determine how to develop the body scan meditation as a meditative contemplative practice in a manner that remains in fidelity to my identity as a teacher and considers the needs of my students.

For this self-study research project on the body scan, I collaborated with my philosophy students and my Peer Scholar, which is the term that I use to describe what some might refer to as a “critical friend.” I elaborate on defining the term Peer Scholar in my text *Confronting Orientalism: A Self-Study of Educating Through Hindu Dance* (MisirHiralall, 2017). My Peer Scholar, who has worked with me for several years and continues to collaborate with me, chooses to remain anonymous. At any rate, I began the project on the body scan by first thinking about who I am as an educator who employs contemplative pedagogy. My Peer Scholar and I met virtually on Skype once a week to discuss who I am as a contemplative educator. Thus, I first reflected with my students at the end of the semester as I mentioned earlier and then reflected with my Peer Scholar. Here, deliberations, first with my students and then with my Peer Scholar, are a part of my application of the self-study methodology.

My Peer Scholar is a part of my overall self-study practice that centers on improvement-aimed pedagogy. I develop journals, either written journals or video journals, for each class session that I teach. This is a crucial part of my self-study methodology. My Peer Scholar reviews the journals and deliberates with me about the explicit and implicit themes. Deliberations are a vital step in the self-study methodology because self-study is not done in isolation. I will not elaborate on this further here because it is not the focus on this article. However, I share this to press the point that the body scan meditation is a part of a larger self-study project that emphasizes improvement-aimed pedagogy. Because my Peer Scholar has collaborated with me for several years, my Peer Scholar is familiar with my students and my self-study research.

When I taught philosophy at Middlesex College, several of my students gravitated towards me as a mentor. I remember after the first day of philosophy class in the Spring 2015 semester, one of my students stayed after class. He smiled as he shook my hand and expressed to me that he was looking for a mentor and thinks that I would be a great mentor for him. Although some may wonder how the first day of class could have such a profound impact on a student, I carefully structure the pedagogy of my first day of class with contemplative features in mind in order to establish a precedent of consideration for my students. This particular student under my tutelage became a part of the History and Philosophy Honor Society and also came to serve as my Teaching Assistant.

Several other students soon became a part of a group of students that wished to discuss philosophy outside of the classroom. While many of these students enrolled in more than one class with me, as they seemed to travel with me from semester to semester, they did not have a forum to discuss philosophy outside of the classroom. Because Middlesex College did not have a Philosophy and Religion Club, I began to host Philosophical Conversations as a weekly activity before class. One semester, I also developed a Mindfulness Meditation Series. My students finally had a space outside of the classroom to discuss philosophy. Many of my students became regular attendees to the point where they would even return upon graduation to occasional meetings.

Once all of my students graduated and I no longer taught at Middlesex College, I had to think of another communication platform to meet with my students professionally. Just because my students graduated and I left the campus did not mean that our mentor-mentee relationship needed to end. For this reason, I decided to gather my students together for virtual meetings through the medium of Skype. This also allowed my students from Montclair State University to participate. My students and I began to continue Philosophical Conversations virtually on Skype. When I asked my students what they wanted to explore, they were very interested in meditations. This was serendipitous because I wished to delve deeper into secular meditations that I could include as a part of my contemplative practices as I engage in contemplative pedagogy in the classroom.

During the 2016-2017 Academic Year, I shared several body scan meditations with my undergraduate philosophy students from Montclair State University and Middlesex College during Skype meetings. The meetings included about seven students. I became a co-inquirer with my students as I facilitated the dialogical discussions after the body scan meditations. As Simmer-Brown (2013) states, "Dialogue is itself a contemplative practice, especially when participants engage with one another in a way that honors deep listening and opening. (p. 35)." The relational practice of dialogue is evident as students engage in a reciprocal contemplative practice of speaking and deep listening. We participated in a philosophical discussion in a community of inquiry (Splitter and Sharp, 2005). My students built on each other's ideas as they formulated questions to agree with, disagree with, or challenge one another. They aimed to problem solve as they asked questions that promoted self-reflection about the body scan.

We began with a discussion centered on Jon Kabat-Zinn (2013) who originally established the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts. Zinn derives the body scan from Vipassana meditation. Based on Buddhist traditions, Vipassana meditation aims to gain insight into reality. Kabat-Zinn adapts the Buddhist tradition of Vipassana meditation to develop the body scan as a secular meditation practice. According to the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, the purpose of the body scan is to understand how stress and anxiety affect the body. MBSR hopes to help individuals gain insight about their body through an in-the-body experience with the hope of comprehending what your body does and does not need.

After this discussion, my students and I meditated to a seated body scan that Richard Shusterman (2012, p. 115-117) developed. The following week, the group participated in a breath, sound, and body meditation by Diana Winston (2015) from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Mindful Awareness Research Center. Following this, we became engrossed in an audio version of the body scan posted by the Greater Good Science Center of Berkeley University of California (2017). My students and I continued to absorb several scripted body scan meditations throughout the academic year.

Next, I deliberated with my students about the scripted versions to discuss likes, dislikes, and how the body scans felt individually and collectively. Overall, my students felt the body scans were robotic in the sense that it only paid attention to the body parts. They conveyed that they had difficulty with the body scans because there was too much emphasis on the physical body and seemingly no emphasis on the spirituality of the body. By spirituality, my students and I refer to the connection to a soul. We do not claim that all body scan meditations focus solely on the body. There may be accessible body scan meditations that do concentrate on the mind, body, and soul. However, the body scans that we engaged in emphasized the mere physical body, which was not appealing to us. Also, we do not mean to say that all body scan meditations must integrate the body and spirituality. Some may prefer a body scan that solely focuses on the body. On the contrary, my students and I prefer a body scan meditation that emphasizes the body and spirituality. My students desired a body scan

meditation that allows them to connect with their inner self. The deliberations with my students caused us to arrive at a new understanding of the components that we would like in a body scan meditation. Essentially, we desired a body scan that focused on spirituality and the body from a philosophical stance.

My students and I deliberated to build a philosophical paradigm of the components that we envisioned for a body scan. My students suggested that I develop a meditation that focuses on spirituality in addition to the physical body. My students and I do not view the mind and body from a dualist perspective, but rather discussed the body scan as monist. I worked on a draft of the body scan meditation and shared it with my students. With the constructive feedback in mind, I revised the draft and shared it again. I also continued to deliberate with my Peer Scholar about each virtual class session and the drafts of the body scan meditation.

This self-study was especially unique because it involved my students shedding light on my personal identity as a contemplative educator. These students knew me very well because I was their professor in several classes. In addition, they were familiar with my research as a Kuchipudi Hindu Dancer and as a philosopher of education who focuses on contemplative pedagogy. In fact, several of my students attended campus-wide dance lectures that featured me and also were present for conference presentations that I gave. I advised many of them as they participated in the Undergraduate Section of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the American Academy of Religion annual conference. I was comfortable being vulnerable with my students, as they would offer me comments and feedback to help me resonate my spiritual identity in an appropriate manner with my contemplative practices for the classroom.

I engaged in a two-part collaborative process as I deliberated with my students and then with my Peer Scholar, which played a significant role in my self-study methodology. The discussions with my students focused on the script of the body scan in relation to my identity as a contemplative educator and the needs of my students whereas the consultations with my Peer Scholar focused more on the teaching experience that occurred during the Skype sessions with my students. My Peer Scholar would ask me questions that centered on my comfort level with my students and focused on how I received the comments from my students.

Body Scan Meditation

To continue, I developed a body scan meditation script that my students endorsed and found useful for their varied spiritual contexts. This permits my students to participate in a body scan meditation that they believe emphasizes spirituality. As I developed several drafts of the body scan meditation, I shared the body scan meditations with my students who provided feedback. The subsequent meditation is the version that my students were pleased with. This version of the body scan meditation is not intended as a rigid scripted meditation but rather serves as a suggestive script. I invite you to engage in this meditation, scrutinize it individually or with others in a community of inquiry, and revise it to bring forth new versions. While this meditation is one that my students and I resonate with, we do not claim that all parties prefer this body scan meditation.

A Body Scan Meditation for the Whole Self

Maintain a comfortable position.

You may choose to close your eyes during this time or you may choose not to.

This is a meditation that focuses on self-love for the whole self.

Inhale deeply and exhale even deeper.

Allow your body to expand and contract as you breathe.

Continue this a few times.

As you inhale, think about bringing wholesome energy into your body.

As you exhale, let go of toxic thoughts that cause self-harm.

Keep your breath going with the concept of forgiveness in mind.

Forgive yourself for any faults that you feel you may have.

As you continue to breathe, focus on the light within your body.

Feel the energy of your body in your heart.

Think of this energy as a candlewick burning.

Perhaps, this is the wick of your soul.

Focus your attention on the top of your head.

Imagine a cool, soothing waterfall showering you with cool water. May you always feel level-headed as you think about self-love.

Focus your attention on the space between your eyes underneath the forehead.

Imagine a foggy cloud. Create a space for clarity so that you can see beyond the foggy cloud. May you always maintain clarity.

Focus your attention on your throat.

Do you feel any tension? Sometimes, we might become tense in the throat area if we have difficulty communicating.

Focus on creating a space for you to engage in self-expression with gentleness as you communicate with others.

Once again, focus your attention on your heart.

Some people say that their heart is filled with joy or that their heart hurts. Some may have a feeling of indifference in their heart. How does your heart feel? May your heart be filled with peace, joy, and love.

Focus your attention on your upper abdomen.

What sensations do you experience here? Create a space of confidence for yourself. Do you see yourself as strong and capable? May you maintain a sense of confidence that remains humble and not arrogant.

Focus your attention on your lower abdomen slightly below your navel.

What do you feel? Create a space for new experiences that center on your well-being. May you maintain a healthy well-being and help others develop a sense of well-being.

Focus your attention on the base of your spine in the area of the tailbone.

Do you feel any tension? We need sustenance to survive in life. Create a space for survival that considers your own well-being and the well-being of others. May you have what you need to survive.

Focus your attention on your thighs.

Does one thigh feel different than the other?

Think of your strength. May you be strong throughout the journey of life.

Focus your attention on your legs.

Does one leg feel different than the other?

Where will you go in life?

May your journey be prosperous.

Focus your attention on your toes.

You might even stretch them.

May each toe guide your feet along your journey in life.

Focus your attention on your arms.

What will you do in life?

May your arms serve yourself and others with well-being in mind.

Focus your attention on your fingers.

You might even wiggle them.

May your fingers guide your hands to act in a way that considers well-being.

Imagine your whole body under a waterfall in a scenic setting. May the water cleanse your whole self so that you walk the journey of life with clarity that acknowledges the need for you to consider your well-being.

If your eyes are closed, I invite you to open them.

As you continue the journey of life, remember to focus on self-love for the whole self.

As my students participated in the meditation, they each worked to maintain an awareness of the mind and body as one. Students shared that they believe they participated in a spiritual experience during the body scan meditation. I developed this body scan meditation with my spirituality and the awareness of the body in mind. By spirituality, I mean that the body scan meditation connects the mind, body, and soul. Despite this, I do not expect that all students will have a spiritual experience during the body scan meditation. In fact, I expect that some students will not believe in spirituality and instead may possibly view the body as a material substance.

Contemplative researchers acknowledge that some individuals misunderstand the nature of contemplative practices, which are sometimes misconstrued as a demanding pedagogical method that forces students to maintain a specific worldview:

Contemplative methods do not teach, encourage, or require students to become religious or to adopt a particular worldview or faith commitment. Rather, contemplative methods unlock the innate yet often unexplored capacity for intuitive knowledge, expanded consciousness, unconditional compassion for self and others, appreciation for beauty, and creative fulfillment. (Coburn, T., Grace, F., Klein, A. C., Komjathy, L., Roth, H., & Simmer-Brown, J., 2011, p. 169)

It is crucial to understand that contemplative pedagogues do not mandate that students adhere to a religious or spiritual worldview. That is not the purpose of contemplative pedagogy. On the contrary, contemplative pedagogy is designed to help students explore their own personal worldviews as their views are interconnected with those of their peers and the world. I do not demand that my students maintain a particular spiritual worldview. My goal is to engage in contemplative pedagogy as I employ the body scan meditation to help my students discover their perspectives as they consider who they are, others, and the world that we live in.

Nevertheless, I will have to proceed cautiously when sharing this body scan meditation with students in a classroom setting. Before engaging my classes in this body scan meditation, I believe it is crucial to first have a philosophical discussion about the possible ramifications of engaging in contemplative practices. My self-study indicates that reflecting together with my students in the classroom community helps me to understand the needs of my students. For this reason, I would reflect on the body scan meditation with my students prior to engaging my students in the meditation. Here are some discussion prompts that I would employ for discussion purposes:

- *What do you think about focusing attention on your body?*
- *Is this easy or difficult for you? Why?*
- *Are you indifferent to focusing attention on your body? Why?*
- *Can we use the body scan meditation as an opportunity to display care and love for our entire being?*
- *How may individuals who suffer from bodily trauma possibly feel about participating in the body scan meditation?*
- *How can individuals who suffer from bodily trauma comfortably participate in the body scan meditation?*
- *Are there any other questions that we should consider before engaging in the body scan meditation?*
- *How does the class feel about engaging in the body scan meditation?*

Following this class discussion, I would focus on a discussion about the history of body scan meditations. I would share the earlier mentioned versions of the body scan meditation that I encountered, and would inform the classes of how I developed this particular body scan meditation with a cohort of my philosophy students based on the philosophical components that we envisioned. Most importantly, I will seek the class's input on whether or not the body scan meditation is an activity that the class would like to participate in. This is imperative because some students may be extremely uncomfortable with engaging in the body scan meditation if they have suffered physical trauma to the body. For example, if a student experienced physical abuse or sexual abuse, the body scan meditation might be traumatic for them if they are not ready to participate. It is crucial for educators to consider the needs of students when employing contemplative practices such as the body scan in the classroom. If the class does not reach a consensus on participating in the body scan meditation, then I would offer the opportunity for students who wish to participate in the body scan meditation to meet either virtually or on campus as an activity before our class session. My main point is that because of the nature of the body scan meditation, it is important to seek the feedback of students. Educators must not demand that students participate in the meditation if the class does not reach a consensus on participating.

Conclusions

This article contributes to educational literature in two main ways. First, I contribute to the self-study methodology and also to contemplative pedagogy. Contemplative pedagogy provides many tools that merit consideration by self-study researchers. The tools of mindfulness, suspending judgment, and empathizing with worldviews, to name a few, are contemplative practices that will benefit self-study. I applied these contemplative tools as I shaped my self-study. These tools helped me to engage in a mindful self-study that improves my pedagogy in the spaces in which I teach. Self-study also contributes to contemplative pedagogy because self-study provides a methodology for contemplative

pedagogues to utilize the tools that they already maintain. Contemplative pedagogues who engage in self-study have the opportunity to intentionally improve their pedagogical practices.

Second, I contribute to the literature on contemplative practices as I develop a suggestive body scan meditation for educators to engage in with their students. The body scan meditation is a contemplative practice that has the potential to help educators and members of the classroom community to develop a nonjudgmental awareness of their individual body. The earlier mentioned body scan meditation script is an attempt to reevaluate traditional notions of the body scan meditation. The developed body scan meditation places an emphasis on spirituality as opposed to the mere physical body. This accounts for the well-being of mind and body and the connection to a soul. This is crucial because some individuals may enter the classroom community with a sense of stress that has the potential to harm the self and the members of the classroom.

Contemplative educator Fran Grace (2011) states, “Contemplative pedagogy is not about a goal, an outcome, or even effort. It is about being alive to the lifelong path of self-evolution – thereby becoming a beneficial presence in the world, to all beings” (p. 118). Drawing on the observations of Grace, I view contemplative pedagogy as way to awaken my students to who they are and what their views of the world are. To build further on this, my students also awaken who I am and what my view of the world is. I believe that as a professor, I must create a safe space for professor-student relationships to develop during the course of the semester. Furthermore, I wish to ensure that students develop working relationships of care with each other to create a strong, vibrant, transformative classroom community. This is a part of my contemplative pedagogy, which undergoes consistent inquiry through an ongoing self-study. Contemplative pedagogy affords me the opportunity to build strong mentor-mentee relationships with my students and helps me to remain loyal to who I am as an educator without demanding that students conform to my beliefs. While I believe the body scan meditation benefits participants, I will not demand that my students participate in the meditation unless if the entire class reaches a consensus to participate. I simply hope to provide an opportunity for my students to develop attentiveness to their bodies in a manner that embraces their whole self through the body scan meditation. This may cause students to de-stress as they build community within and beyond the classroom.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank my students Miles Firestine, Paul Fricovsky, Elyse Gabel, Ben Lander, Bavandeep Singh, Megan Drew, and Derrian Douglas for their encouragement and support with my ventures in contemplative pedagogy. I also would like to thank my Peer Scholar who wishes to remain anonymous. My Peer Scholar dedicated time and enthusiasm to my self-study deliberations. In addition, I am grateful to my colleagues at Middlesex College who supported this project.

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