

Re-envisioning contemplative pedagogy through self-study

Sabrina D. MisirHiralall *
Montclair State University, U.S.A.

Contemplative educators often emphasize the need to develop a way of knowing that explores the meaning of life, our individual and communal purpose, and societal values. Numerous research studies point to the benefits of contemplative education in higher education (Sable, 2014; Sanders and Wehlburg, 2013). Overall, educators deepen awareness through insightful concentration to educate the whole being of students (Palmer, 1998). All members of the classroom community, the professor included, looks inward with personal awareness and then extends insight outward to foster a social consciousness in an effort to acknowledge our interconnectedness to each other.¹ When we consider our communal connection, then there is an opportunity to engage in an active learning environment that thinks about how to create a more just and compassionate society. To illustrate this, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society developed a visual entitled *The Tree of Contemplative Practices* (Zajonc, 2013, 88). This visual depicts the variety of contemplative practices that emerge from the roots of communion, connection, and awareness.

Before introducing contemplative practices to students, Barbezat and Bush (2014) point to the importance of educators maintaining a personal practice – they acknowledge that it is difficult to expect students to have a contemplative practice if educators do not. Kuchipudi Indian classical Hindu dance is a part of my contemplative practices. For this reason, I share my identity and contemplative practices as a faith-based Kuchipudi Indian Classical Hindu dancer with my students. I convey to my students that what is secular for them may be religious for me because of my identity as a faith-based Hindu. My hope is that my students will understand how who I am as a faith-based Kuchipudi Indian classical Hindu dancer informs my secularized contemplative practices in the classroom.

For the purposes of this article, I place an emphasis on the philosophy and ethics classes that I taught at Middlesex County College in New Jersey although I teach several classes on many campuses. After I teach, I compose a teaching journal to concentrate on how my personal narrative links to my teaching practice as I engage in a self-study methodology. While I have always reflected on my teaching practices, I initially did not maintain a rigorous effort nor did I acknowledge the need for trustworthiness in my reflection. The self-study methodology brings trustworthiness to my research.

¹ I thank my philosophy students, especially Miles Firestine, Bavandeep Singh, Shenne Dugtong, Amandeep Singh, Paul Fricovsky, Elyse Gabel, and Benjamin Lander for their insights on this project. This paper developed from my 2016 presentation for the Spirituality and Education SIG of the American Education Research Association.

* Email: misirhiralall.s@gmail.com

Protected under a [Creative Commons Attributions Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Self-Study

My philosophical method requires me to engage in a self-study of my teaching practices. The *American Education Research Association* (AERA) acknowledges the need for self-study research in education. The *Self Study of Teacher Education Practices* SIG of AERA states the purpose of self-study is “To inform and rethink teacher education by studying practice-varied educational settings and methodologies. (Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices SIG, n.d.)” My project involves self-study as a philosophical research methodology that aims to inform educators and rethink the theories and praxis of teaching. As LaBoskey (2004) writes:

The research is *improvement-aimed*; we wish to transform ourselves first so that we might be better situated to help transform our students, their students, and the institutional and social contexts that surround and constrain us. (820-821)

LaBoskey and other self-study researchers such as Kelchtermans and Hamilton (2004) agree that self-study is a complex educational process that intertwines teaching and learning. This quest for improvement-aimed pedagogy is never-ending. Taylor and Coia (2006, 55) refer to self-study in this manner, “Our self-study is not static. There is no meaningful sense in which it can be considered *done*, a chapter closed once it is written up and the lessons absorbed.” With this un-static approach to pedagogical development in mind, my project is a life-long quest to engage in self-study as I aspire to improve my pedagogy as an educator and reconstruct the field of teacher education practices.

As I work towards improvement-aimed pedagogy, I make myself vulnerable as I share my experiences with my Peer Scholar. My Peer Scholar, which some researchers call a “critical friend”,² deliberates with me to challenge epistemological assumptions along with suspicions. Samaras and Freese (2009, 5) state:

Self-study builds on the personal processes of reflection and inquiry, and takes these processes and makes them open to public critique. Self-study is not done in isolation, but rather requires collaboration for building new understandings through dialogue and validation of findings. Self-study research requires openness and vulnerability since the focus is on the self. And finally, self-study is designed to lead to the reframing and reconceptualizing the role of the teacher.

Essentially, the self-study methodology grants me the chance to develop a sense of trustworthiness in my research. For this project, my Peer Scholar is Dr. David Dillard-Wright, philosophy professor and Chairperson of the History, Political Science, and Philosophy Department, at the University of South Carolina Aiken. As I mentioned, I record my classroom experiences in a teaching journal after I teach with a specific focus on pedagogy. I email my teaching journal entry to Dillard-Wright. Then, Dillard-Wright responds to specific parts of my journal, using the review features of Microsoft Word, as he offers me insightful comments in addition to questions to help me challenge my thoughts through a relational contemplative practice. After, Dillard-Wright emails my journal back to me. Then, we engage in a back and forth dialogue through email until we feel content with the deliberation. Following this, we meet for a video chat through Google Hangouts to further discuss

² I use the term Peer Scholar because I feel the term implies a mutual relationship as opposed to a “critical friend” who seems domineering.

the teaching journals. Although my self-study is ongoing, this article concentrates on journal entries from the Spring 2015, Fall 2015, and Spring 2016 semesters.

The self-study dialogue with Dillard-Wright causes me to define initial components of how I engage in an improvement-aimed contemplative pedagogy. My hope is to support those who wish to implement contemplative pedagogy in higher education as I relate my working framework based on the themes that developed from the deliberation. The following parts, which convey how I engage in contemplative pedagogy, are not meant to serve as a checklist or stern procedure for classroom activities. I share these aspects of my contemplative pedagogy, with suggestive scripts, not as a rigid structure but rather as a work in progress that is always under construction.

Components of Contemplative Pedagogy

Circle Setup

At first, I employed several different physical classroom setups as I taught. However, through my self-study deliberation, the circle setup emerged as a crucial part of my pedagogical method. The circle allows my students and I to acknowledge each individual's importance as we get to know each other, talking directly to one another, which creates a classroom intimacy that builds community. Overall, the circle generates a space for a transformative communal connection to each other. I often sit with my students, as I become a co-inquirer and facilitator of our classroom discussion. When my students see this, I sense they feel comfortable enough to share during the discussion without the intimidation of a professor's authority or the combative judgment of their peers. Although students sit in a circle, I do not demand that all students physically move their own desks. Here is an example of how contemplative pedagogy is at play as my class engages in arranging the circle setup. I frequently say,

If there is anyone who does not feel up to the task of moving desks, then do not strain your muscles. We will not judge you. As you move the desks, please be mindful of your surroundings including the people around you.

This acknowledgement helps to create an ethic of care (Noddings, 1992) within the classroom community. My self-study sheds light on several examples that emphasize the reciprocal compassion my students in turn provide me with, which may be the result of the presence of an ethic of care in the classroom.

Meditation

Following the circle setup, my class and I engage in a secular meditation. Fran Grace (2011, pp. 107-108) maintains that meditation is not the sole possession of a particular religious tradition but rather is a humanistic practice of peace. Here, my students have a chance to participate in a meditation that provokes an inner exploration to help them gain focus through peaceful self-awareness. The goal is to remind my students that they are a whole person who has a purpose in the world. The meditation provides a space for students to let go of any distractions and instead focus on their purpose for being in college and in the classroom. The audio for the meditations includes secular instrumentals by Krishna Das (2010), Karunesh (2002), and Anoushka Shankar (2007). I initially chose these composers because of the Eastern and Western flair that seemed to move across the illusionary binary of the East and the West.

With this peaceful practice in mind, it is imperative to understand that the goal is not to impose a religious tradition onto my students. However, I do confess to my students that the meditations often provide me with a religious and spiritual experience because of who I am as a

faith-based Hindu. Similarly, my students may have experiences during the meditations based on who they are. Students might undergo a religious experience (Taves, 2009) if they identify as faith-based individuals who have a strong belief in a Cosmic Force. A spiritual experience may occur if students are in tune with the immaterial dimensions (Zajonc, 2004) of life but do not resonate with a religious framework. Some may endure a phenomenological experience if they focus on their subjective experience (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Lawlor, and Bergo, 2002). Others may partake in an aesthetic experience (Carroll, 2001) if they connect to the artistic elements of the visual pieces that often accompany the meditations.

Overall, we cannot deny our individual identities because our individuality is always with us. I cannot ignore who I am as a faith-based Hindu while in class just as my students should not ignore their identities either. The meditations grant the classroom community the opportunity to focus on the whole self. Throughout my experiences meditating with my students, I never had a student express discomfort or unwillingness to participate. On the contrary, my students convey that they look forward to coming to class to mediate. Sometimes they tell me they were having a tough day and anticipated coming to class precisely for the meditation. Generally, we begin to mold together as a strong, classroom community without barriers. Here is an example of what I would say to my students before each meditation.

I would like to start our class session with a meditation. I do not wish to impose a religious tradition onto you. This is a secular meditation that is meant to resonate with who you are. You may have a religious experience if you are a faith based person, a spiritual experience if you are in touch with the immaterial dimensions of life, a phenomenological experience if you are in tune with your subjective features, or an aesthetic experience if you connect to the visual art pieces that will appear on the screen during the meditation.

I know that you have individual experiences. Some of our personal experiences might make it difficult to focus on class. However, you are here because you are a capable college student. Let us remember that as we move into our class discussion. Remember your purpose for attending college and remember your purpose in life or try to think about what your purpose in life is as you participate in class today.

As I play this instrumental piece, with the intention to deepen our insight, feel free to close your eyes or leave your eyes open. I consider this to be our meditative moment. I ask that you try to let go of any obstacles that may prevent you from focusing on our class session. Scan your body from head to toe. If you feel any pain, acknowledge the pain and let it go. You may even slightly move your body in a way that helps you to let go of any pain.

During the instrumental piece, you may take a few belly breaths by slowly inhaling as you push your tummy in and slowly exhaling as you push your tummy out.

The goal here is to help you maintain focus and awareness as we enter our class discussion. If the music, the visual, or the activity makes you uncomfortable in any way, you may leave the room for a few minutes and return. However, I do ask that you convey your discomfort to me after class.”

My students and I reflect for a few moments after the meditation. This is important because it helps to build a community of trust within the circle setup. We frequently discuss the distinction between listening to music and meditating during the beginning of the semester. Some students would

chuckle and call the meditation “silly” during the start of the semester. My students repeatedly admit at the end of the semester that they were fearful of meditating at first because they feared harsh judgments from classmates. For this reason, I consider it necessary to share sensitively with my students after each meditation with the goal of building a community of trust.

Dillard-Wright and I noticed that the meditations seemed redundant. Through my self-study deliberations, I decided to develop a varied approach to the secular meditations. I engaged my ethics class during the Spring 2016 semester at Middlesex County College in a traditional loving-kindness meditation to develop a varied approach. Loving-kindness is also known as *metta* in Pali, the Buddha’s language (Miller, 2006, 61). In a loving-kindness meditation, we connect with our own hearts as we generate caring warmth for ourselves. We extend this loving-kindness outwards as we think about living beings and geographical extensions. Regardless of geographical location, a loving-kindness meditation creates the opportunity for compassion, which has the potential to develop when we acknowledge that we are interconnected.

According to contemplative educator John P. Miller (2006), there is a two-fold purpose to the loving-kindness meditation. First, we practice a loving-kindness meditation “for the liberation for others” (Miller, 2006, 61). Second, we practice a loving-kindness meditation with the hope that others will “gain more wisdom that frees them from suffering” (Miller, 2006, 61). You can practice a loving-kindness meditation in several venues. Miller (2006, 63) shares an example of a student who practices a loving-kindness meditation when he sees people on the subway, bus, or while in traffic. Educators can practice a loving-kindness meditation towards their students (Miller, 2006, 63).

Several components of the traditional script of the loving-kindness meditation (Miller, 2006) troubled my class and me. Consequently, we began our class each week as we built on a philosophical discussion that thought about what love for humanity is, what conditional love is, what unconditional love is, who deserves unconditional love, and other questions. We discussed how we could possibly give unconditional love to people that we know and don’t know. My class and I explored the possibility of loving those who are criminals who may have engaged in inhumane behaviors. We investigated the distinctions between tough love and unconditional love. My class stated that respect, sympathy, empathy, and compassion are the necessary building blocks to unconditional love with care and acceptance being the outcomes.

With the philosophical discussion in mind, I wrote a loving-kindness meditation that my class and I were comfortable with. This allowed us to engage in a genuine loving-kindness meditation with the intention to honor humanity after we thought deeply about the concepts within the loving-kindness meditation. I offer this suggestive script to illustrate how my class and I came to terms with developing a loving-kindness meditation that *we* were comfortable with. You are welcome to use this meditation, dissect it philosophically with others, and revise it to bring forth further possibilities of peace.

Metta Meditation (Loving Kindness Meditation)

I would like to share a *metta* meditation with you. This is a meditation that focuses on surrendering to unconditional love expressed through words. First, we should think deeply about these terms. What is unconditional love? Should we give unconditional love? If so, why or why not?

Unconditional love is a genuine kindness that acknowledges that we are connected to the world. It is not based on deserving to be loved. Instead, it is a love that transcends the boundaries of who should be loved and extends into loving all whether these individuals deserve it or not. It is love without conditions or limitations.

I do believe in an unconditional love because love is a necessary component of humanity. We are all interconnected with each other. What one person does effects the other. What one nation does effects the other. We may not see these effects clearly or even understand them, but the effects are there. You may wonder if we should love criminals or those who have committed the most heinous actions towards humanity and the world. Doesn't violence or ill will create more violence and more hate? Why not combat violence and ill will with unconditional love? Why not destroy hate through love?

I do not mean to be foolish through unconditional love. We should not endanger ourselves through unconditional love but instead we should place an emphasis on our ability to send loving thoughts into the universe. What I am saying is that we are all interconnected and should therefore care for each other through a genuine love for humanity and the world. Understandably, some obstacles may block our ability to give unconditional love. Perhaps if we maintain self-respect, we may think about how to respect the humanity of others, which may lead to sympathy for their suffering. This may cause us to develop compassion. In turn, we will help to foster an atmosphere of care that hopes to help others learn to love.

With this in mind, we will focus this meditation on loving ourselves, loving those we already love, loving those we neither love nor not love, and loving those that we may have angry feelings towards.

Maintain a comfortable position. Begin to slowly breathe as you slowly push your tummy all the way in as you inhale and slowly push your tummy all the way out as you exhale. As you breathe, let go of all ill feelings that you have for yourself. Generate kind thoughts for yourself. You may wish to silently repeat the following phrases.

- May I be safe from all physical and mental danger.
- If I am in danger, may I maintain clarity to help me confront the danger with ease.
- May I be free of emotional distress.
- If emotional distress arises, may I maintain clarity to help me confront the emotional distress.
- May I come to know the purpose of my birth.
- May I gain the strength to fulfill the purpose of my birth.
- May the purpose of my birth generate bliss for society.
- May peace surround me always.

Now, think of a person that is easy for you to love. Continue to slowly breathe as you slowly push your tummy all the way in as you inhale and slowly push your tummy all the way out as you exhale. As you breathe, focus on all the wonderful feelings you have for this person and let go of any small indifferences. Generate kind thoughts for this person. You may wish to silently repeat the following phrases.

- May you be safe from all physical and mental danger.
- If you are in danger, may you maintain clarity to help you confront the danger with ease.
- May you be free of emotional distress.
- If emotional distress arises, may you maintain clarity to help you confront the emotional distress.
- May you come to know the purpose of your birth.
- May you gain the strength to fulfill the purpose of your birth.
- May the purpose of your birth generate bliss for society.
- May peace surround you always.

Move your attention to a person that you feel indifferent towards. Continue to slowly breathe as you slowly push your tummy all the way in as you inhale and slowly push your tummy all the way out as you exhale. As you breathe, generate kind thoughts for this person. You may wish to silently repeat the following phrases.

- May you be safe from all physical and mental danger.
- If you are in danger, may you maintain clarity to help you confront the danger with ease.
- May you be free of emotional distress.
- If emotional distress arises, may you maintain clarity to help you confront the emotional distress.
- May you come to know the purpose of your birth.
- May you gain the strength to fulfill the purpose of your birth.
- May the purpose of your birth generate bliss for society.
- May peace surround you always.

Think of a person that is very difficult to love. This might even be someone that you hate.³ Continue to slowly breathe as you slowly push your tummy all the way in as you inhale and slowly push your tummy all the way out as you exhale. As you breathe, generate kind thoughts for this person to the best of your ability. You may wish to silently repeat the following phrases.

- May you be safe from all physical and mental danger.
- If you are in danger, may you maintain clarity to help you confront the danger with ease.
- May you be free of emotional distress.
- If emotional distress arises, may you maintain clarity to help you confront the emotional distress.
- May you come to know the purpose of your birth.

³ My students and I deliberated in depth about the word “hate”. At first, we thought this word was too strong. We eventually came to the conclusion that we should use the word “hate” because it forces us to think about someone that we may possibly feel hatred towards.

- May you gain the strength to fulfill the purpose of your birth.
- May the purpose of your birth generate bliss for society.
- May peace surround you always.

You may wish to send peace to all living beings of this world. You may wish to send peace to the entire universe or universes that we know or may not know.

Refocus your attention on yourself as you breathe. Make a promise to yourself to be the best person you can be because you are an important part of this world. Remember to always love yourself and help yourself to maintain a loving place in this world.

As we end this meditation, remember that your entire life could be a meditative journey if you choose it to be. As the great Zen master, Thich Nhat Hanh says, 'Peace is Every Step.'

If your eyes are closed, open them when you are ready.'⁴

Philosophy for Children

The philosophy for children framework (P4C) is a critical part of my contemplative pedagogy because it creates the prospect to build a community of trust within the classroom through sensitive discussions. In fact, the abovementioned loving-kindness meditation developed through a P4C discussion. P4C (Gregory and Brubaker, 2008) focuses on the development of intellectual rigor through community-based discussion inquiry for students of all ages, ranging from early childhood to adulthood. It is crucial for me to explain the P4C framework to my students before we begin our class sessions. Here is a suggestive example of what I frequently say to my class as I familiarize them with P4C.

In our class, we will engage in rigorous, intellectual discussions. This might cause you to feel that you have to choose a side of the discussion. This is not a debate class. This is not a combative space for confrontation. This is a space where we should aim to engage in teaching and learning together. You should allow yourself to question your own perspectives throughout the discussion. Challenge your assumptions. Lean on each other to help one another in an effort to understand one another during the discussion. Let's build on each contribution to the discussion. Be sure that all of our thoughts connect to one another during the discussion.

Before you participate in a discussion of this nature, I feel the need to give you guidance as we start:⁵

Remember, that we need to be respectful to one another. We should not have side conversations or talk over one another. During the discussion, you should get a sense of when you need to raise your hand and when to speak freely. For instance, if no one is speaking, then you may use that opportunity to convey your thoughts. However, if a few people wish to speak, then you should raise your hand.

⁴ Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKQtImPMOc0>

⁵ This is where I teach my class Socratic Questioning.

My students engage in a P4C discussion that employs Socratic Questioning (Paul and Elder, 2006). I teach my students how to think, not what to think, but *how to think* about asking appropriate questions during the discussion (Splitter and Sharp, 1995). My students tie their questions to a critical thinking moment, which helps them to think deeply about why they ask what they ask. For instance, a student may ask, “What do you mean by that?” The critical thinking move there is clarification. At the end of our discussion, we use the P4C reflection tools to think about how we each did individually and as a group (Gregory and Brubaker, 2008).

Here is an excerpt from my self-study journal that illustrates how my students become a part of a classroom community that philosophizes comfortably with one another as they employ the P4C methodology. Remember, my students sit in a circle.

We started to discuss psychological egoism, ethical egoism, and altruism. Price⁶ said that altruism is a fallacy because everything we do is based on self-interest. Vicky said she disagrees and gave the example of caring for an elderly parent just because you love your parent. The class pressed the points with the examples as they discussed the possibilities of altruism and egoism. At the same time, Devina kept complaining throughout the entire class about hunger. (She came to class right from a full-time job). Pixie, who sits on the other side of the circle, said that she had some goldfish [crackers]. Pixie asked Devina if she wanted it. When Devina said yes, Pixie walked across the circle to give Devina the snack. Right away the class exclaimed with laughter, “Egoism or altruism?!” We started to talk about the live example in class. Not too long after, there was a little spider by Devina’s desk. She was bothered by it but tried to ignore it as the class continued the discussion on egoism and altruism. Mitch picked the spider up with his finger and took the spider outside into the hall where he let the little spider go. He said he doesn’t like anyone knowing he’s a nice altruistic guy. The class continued to press the discussion as they attempted to make distinctions between egoism and altruism with this live example. Talk about pressing the points! The class sure got into it! (MisirHiralall, 2015b)

The class pushed the discussion as they confronted every example with a counter-example, in an effort to move deeper into philosophical analysis. At the end of the semester, Luke approached me after class. Luke shared some of his personal struggles with me and, at the end of our conversation, gave me some relevant literature and his personal phone number, inviting me to share it with anyone who might need help. In my self-study journal, I wrote: “He told me that he might seem altruistic but really [he thinks] it’s all about egoism because helping others is how he manages [to help himself]” (MisirHiralall, 2015a). The class discussion left a lasting imprint on Luke as he reevaluated whether he was an altruist or an egoist. His perspective from the initial discussion changed as he engaged in an internal dialogue with himself to think deeply about these concepts.

My self-study deliberation with Dillard-Wright causes me to acknowledge that the concepts of the P4C framework, is a part of contemplative education. P4C opens up possibilities for students to question themselves to further understand why they believe what they believe and how they come to know what they know. Furthermore, it helps me to question my perspective as a faith-based Hindu as I engage in dialogue with my students. We always test our epistemological perspectives based on our individual identities that come together to form our classroom community.

⁶ All names of students are pseudonyms.

Validations and Pulse

As a result of my self-study, I have come to realize how valuable a class closure is for my students and me as we end our class session. At the end of class, we stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle. We briefly talk about how we did in the discussion as a class. This is the moment where we employ the P4C reflection mentioned in the previous section. I prompt students with reflective questions during the start of the semester until they become comfortable with reflection. I ask my class if they would like to offer validations to someone in the group. Validations are insightful, positive feedback or comments from one individual to the next. Students frequently share how other students helped them in and/or outside of class. Sometimes, students open up very intimately in this space as they share things that they struggle with personally. I believe these validations help to build a community of trust as we get to know each other in a way that seeks to learn about one another as a whole.

I invite my students to cross their right hand over their left. I use my right hand to squeeze the hand of the person to the left of me. This pulse continues clockwise until it comes back to me. When the pulse comes back to me, we turn around and class is dismissed. Many individuals regularly remain in the classroom casually continuing to talk philosophy. In fact, many of us even walk out of the classroom together as we continue the discussion even further. My students often become friends who spend time together outside of the classroom. Also, the mentor-mentee relationships that develop between my students and me are powerful as it enriches my purpose as an educator.

Conclusions

Engaging in self-study helps me to re-envision the way I employ contemplative pedagogy. I implemented the self-study methodology after I realized that only some of my students and I had professor-student relationships that blossomed into mentor-mentee relationships during the semester. The self-study methodology helps me to re-envision contemplative pedagogy by providing me with a lens to analyze and interpret how I interact with my students as I teach, and how I might approach my teaching differently as a result of my interpretations of our interactions.

I must emphasize that the role of my Peer Scholar served to provide trustworthiness to my project. My teaching journals involved much more than mere reflections. The journals served as a space for inquiry as my Peer Scholar and I deliberated about the themes that emerged in each journal and overall throughout the project. The P4C methodology was at play during the deliberations. It is my contention that P4C is not just a methodology in the classroom, but rather is a contemplative practice in and of itself and thus also a part of contemplative pedagogy as well as my approach to self-study.

At any rate, the themes that emerged in my teaching journals caused me to develop components for my contemplative pedagogy. It is important to physically arrange the classroom into a circle, engage in a secular meditation, teach through dialogue, and end class with validations coupled with a pulse activity. I do not offer these components as a mandatory checklist. On the contrary, I plan to consistently re-envision these contemplative pedagogical components as I regularly engage in a self-study to work towards the development of my pedagogy. These components develop through my self-study, which helps me to understand my pedagogical practices. For this reason, I grasp how I teach as a result of the self-study methodology that informs my teaching. Aside from deliberations with my Peer Scholar, my students often share their classroom experiences with me at the end-of-the-semester in an individual learning log and a whole class discussion. This causes me to frequently confirm and challenge my assumptions of what my class experienced. In turn, this informs my pedagogical decisions.

With my contemplative pedagogical framework in mind, students began to engage in extracurricular academic activities outside of the classroom with me. For example, some students participated in Philosophical Conversation meetings, evening lectures on campus, academic

conferences, and enrolled in upcoming classes with their peers and me. In fact, my students worked with me to develop YouTube clips about contemplative pedagogy. It is imperative to note that I continue to mentor several students who were once pupils in my philosophy classes.

I grapple with developing a pedagogy that considers the whole being of not just students, but also the classroom community as a larger part of society. While I engage in teaching, I step back to focus on the epistemological attitude that accompanies my teaching practice. I recognize that I must focus on a complex self-inquiry that brings my entire being into the classroom as a devoted educator. I must constantly renegotiate contemplative pedagogy as I develop my identity and uncover new concepts in my self-study with my Peer Scholar(s). As Taylor and Coia (2006) indicate, self-study is not static. For this reason, my teaching practice as a contemplative educator is always under construction.

Works Cited

- Barbezat, D., and M. Bush. *Contemplative practices in higher education: Powerful methods to transform teaching and learning*. Jossey-Bass, 2014.
- Carroll, N. *Beyond aesthetics: Philosophical essays*. Cambridge UP, 2001.
- Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. *Contemplative practices in higher education: A handbook of classroom practices*. Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, 2008.
- Das, K. *Chants of a lifetime: Searching for a heart of gold*. Hay House, 2010.
- Grace, F. "Learning as a path, not a goal: Contemplative pedagogy—Its principles and practices." *Teaching Theology & Religion*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2011, pp. 99-124.
- Gregory, M., & Brubaker, N. *Philosophy for children: Practitioner handbook*. Montclair State University, 2008.
- Husserl, E., M. Merleau-Ponty, L. Lawlor, and B. Bergo. *Husserl at the limits of phenomenology: Including texts by Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty*. Northwestern UP, 2002.
- Karunesh. Heart chakra meditation. [Deutschland] Oreade Music, 1992.
- Kelchtermans, G. "The Dialectics of passion and theory: Exploring the relation between self study and emotion." *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices*. Edited by J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, and T. Russell. Kluwer Academic, 2004. 785-810.
- LaBoskey, V. "The methodology of self study and its theoretical underpinnings." *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices*. Edited by J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, and T. Russell. Kluwer Academic, 2004. 817-869.

- Loughran, J. "A history and context of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices" *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices*. Edited by J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, and T. Russell. Kluwer Academic, 2004. 7-40
- Miller, J. P. *Educating for wisdom and compassion: Creating conditions for timeless learning*. Corwin Press, 2006.
- MisirHiralall, S. D. (2016). Loving-Kindness Meditation with Dr. Sabrina D. MisirHiralall. Retrieved December 20, 2016, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKQtImPMOc0>
- MisirHiralall, Sabrina. (December 16, 2015a). "MCC Journal Heart." *Self-Study Personal Journal*.
- MisirHiralall, Sabrina. (September 24, 2015b). "MCC Goldfish, Egoism of Altruism." *Self-Study Personal Journal*.
- MisirHiralall, S. D. (2015c, Republished 2016). An Overview of Contemplative Pedagogy With Dr. Sabrina D. MisirHiralall. Retrieved December 20, 2016, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63CkyYeqd4M>
- Nhát, H., and A. Kotler, A. *Peace is every step: The path of mindfulness in everyday life*. Bantam Books, 1991.
- Noddings, N. *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. Teachers College Press, 1992.
- Palmer, P. J. *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. Jossey-Bass, 1998.
- Sable, D. (2014). "Reason in the service of the heart: The impacts of contemplative practices on critical thinking." *The Journal of Contemplative Inquiry*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2014, pp 1-22.
- Samaras, A., and A. Freese. "Looking back and looking forward: An historical overview of the self-study school." *Self-study research methodologies for teacher educators*. Edited by C. Lassonde, S. Galman, and C. Kosnik. Sense Publishers, 2009. 3-21.
- Sanders, L. A., and C. Wehlburg. *Contemplative studies in higher education*. Jossey-Bass, 2013.
- Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices SIG. (n.d.). Retrieved December 19, 2016, from <http://www.aera.net/SIG109/Self-Study-of-Teacher-Education-Practices>
- Shankar, A., and K. Kale. *Breathing under water*. Universal, 2007.
- Splitter, L. J., and A. M. Sharp. *Teaching for better thinking: The classroom community of inquiry*. Australian Council for Educational Research, 1995.
- Taves, A. *Religious experience reconsidered: A building block approach to the study of religion and other special things*. Princeton UP, 2009.

Taylor, M., L. Coia, D. Tidwell, and L. Fitzgerald. (2006). "Revisiting feminist authority through a co/autoethnographic lens." *Self-Study and Diversity*. Edited by D. Tidwell and L. Fitzgerald. Sense Publishers, 2006. 51-70.

Zajonc, A. "Contemplative Pedagogy: A Quiet Revolution in Higher Education." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 134, 2013, pp. 83-94.

Zajonc, A. "Spirituality in Higher Education: Overcoming the Divide." *Liberal Education*, vol. 89, no. 1, 2004, pp. 50-58.