



*INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ON SCHOOL CLIMATE
AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION,
VOLUME 2, NUMÉRO 1, 2017, 62-89*

*ENHANCING TEACHER WELLBEING SOCIO-
POETICALLY THROUGH THE MINDFULNESS OF
SEMINARIA*

*FAVORISER LE BIEN-ÊTRE DES ENSEIGNANTS PAR L'ACTIVITÉ
POÉTIQUE DANS LE CADRE DE SÉMINAIRES SUR LA PLEINE
CONSCIENCE*

GAYLENE DENFORD-WOOD

*FLINDERS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY AND
SOCIAL WORK, AUSTRALIA
SWAPV RESEARCH CENTRE, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
MINDFULNESS RESEARCH SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP
AUT UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION (NZARE)
SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AOTEAROA (NZ)*

*Address correspondance to dent0076@flinders.edu.au
gaylenedw1@gmail.com*

RÉSUMÉ

Le bien-être des enseignants est un indicateur essentiel du climat scolaire. La baisse des effectifs des enseignants à l'international est directement liée à un stress chronique, tandis que de plus en plus d'éléments démontrent le potentiel de la pleine conscience dans le soulagement du stress. Nous avons réalisé une enquête heuristique dans le cadre d'une activité poétique « La pleine conscience dans les séminaires » (*Seminaria*) auprès d'enseignants, chefs d'établissement, travailleurs sociaux de l'enseignement supérieur dans les établissements publics et privés en Nouvelle Zélande et au Royaume Uni. Les résultats montrent que *Seminaria* est devenu un dispositif simple, semblable à une application de poésie, auquel les enseignants peuvent avoir recours lors que le stress nuit à leur calme, leur concentration et leur créativité.

MOTS-CLÉS : Bien-être enseignant, pleine conscience, application pour la poésie, socio-poésie, recherche heuristique, pratiques réflexives, recherche action.

ABSTRACT

Teacher wellbeing is a vital indicator of school climate. Internationally teacher attrition correlates with chronic stress, while growing evidence shows the potential of mindfulness in stress alleviation. Heuristic Inquiry into a poetry practice 'the mindfulness of seminaria' adopted by teachers and leaders, ECE to higher education, State and private, in NZ and the UK, evidenced wellbeing using OECD measures. *Seminaria* became a simple tuning-in device, like a poetry-app. to which teachers could turn for renewal when stressful feelings undermined their calm, concentration and creativity.

KEY WORDS: Teacher wellbeing, mindfulness, poetry-app, socio-poetics, heuristic inquiry, reflective practice, action research.

INTRODUCTION: TEACHER WELLBEING, STUDENT WELLBEING

Teacher wellbeing is an important predictor and determinant of teachers' length of professional service (Vazi *et al.*, 2013) that adds relational stability in fostering student wellbeing (McCallum & Price, 2010). Increasingly, however, evidence identifies chronic stress as a major contributor to teacher attrition (Chang, 2009; Fisher, 2011; Kyriacou, 2001; Steinhardt, Smith Jaggars, Faulk & Gloria, 2011), along with the potential contribution of mindfulness practice in stress alleviation (Albrecht, 2014; Brown and Ryan, 2003; Burrows, 2015, Denford-Wood, 2017). Rix (2012) has reported that mindfulness meditation benefits brain function to the extent that participants feel calmer, more aware, have increased ability to focus and concentrate, remember things better and feel happier – attributes key to teacher performance and wellbeing.

It is argued though, that because most mindfulness studies are quantitative and employ a range of mindfulness scales (Rapgay & Bystrisky, 2009), new qualitative approaches to studies are necessary in order that more subtle, refined and nuanced participant voices are revealed that can critically inform teacher education (Burrows, 2013; Grossman, 2011). The investigation of seminaria mindfulness reported here, fits that criterion. True to the methodological design of this research (a phenomenological heuristic inquiry), the participants became – in their own right – seminaria co-researchers and in so doing, each reported discovering from their daily practice of this unique poetic approach – potential for a profound sense of wellbeing.

Their descriptions without exception, fit the category of eudaimonic (as opposed to hedonic) wellbeing. Identified in Aristotle's works, eudaimonia (Greek: eu = good + daimōn = spirit), a central concept in Aristotelian ethics and political philosophy, was a term used for the highest human good. Therefore, it became the aim of practical philosophy too, to consider and also to experience what this kind of wellbeing really is, and how it can be achieved. Ryan and Deci (2011) bring the term right up to date in its context of a sense of self-realization and meaning in life which includes for example, attributes of growth, authenticity and excellence (Gibbs, 2006; Giles, 2008; Ryan and Deci, 2001).

Additionally, scrutiny of Lips-Wiersma and Morris's (2011) Map of Meaning through a lens of teacher wellbeing, is that their "guide to sustaining our humanity in the world of work" (p. 220) is built on key elements of a holistic development model that embraces self-realisation and meaning – personally and professionally, for self and society. Further, going to the core, it is in the origin of wellbeing (salutogenesis¹) that Antonovsky's (1979, 1987) landmark work identifies three clear criteria: comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. How then, were the above attributes of wellbeing discovered through the mindfulness of seminaria – a practice that uses a simple, socio-poetic form? Firstly, socio-poetic philosophical principles in

¹ Latin *salus* = health + Greek *genesis* = origin. Antonovsky (1923-1994) developed the term from his studies of how people manage stress and stay well.

research, education, and care are culturally inclusive, pluralistically affirming, and yield ethical and epistemological outcomes (dos Santos and Gauthier, 2013).

The following introduction to, and explanation of, Seminaria – provides both the context and impetus for its implementation as a mindfulness approach for teachers as part of their reflective practice. This heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990, 1994) examines the mindfulness of seminaria, and identifies the elements of wellbeing reported by the participants, six teachers and educational leaders.

THE ORIGIN AND CONSTRUCT OF SEMINARIA

I was looking for a poetic form which would adequately reflect our time ... amenable to my own poetic consciousness, developed in the spirit of this time (Linde, 2013, p. 2).

Seminaria is a new, minimalist approach to mindfulness practice. Its source is the 27-year legacy of Jens-Peter Linde's (1988/89) liminal, poetic 'Seminar Form'.

... a form simpler than the sonnet, more comprehensive than haiku Linde (2014 n. p.).

When Linde named his poetic construct, Seminar Form (synonymously, Seminar Verse) – upon discovering the power of its potency, he recalls back then, being 'unable to speak about it for quite some time' (personal communication, 29 October, 2013). Now, following author publication of his 27th English collection, it is acknowledged that worldwide, few are known to use this form. Extensive literature searches showed no sign of its contemplative use or efficacy. One long term practitioner however, a professional musician and teacher, introduced me to seminar form, informally, early one morning at a meditation course (www.alamandria.co.nz) in New Zealand, in 2013. Exploring the lived experience (Moustakas, 1990; van Manen, 1990) of this poetic form for myself, forged a deeper interest in its phenomenology, igniting my research question: What is the nature and being of Seminar Form? Intrigued by my experience of its apparently eudaimonic presence (Evelein & Korthagen, 2015; Scharmer, 2009) and sensing its potential to be of wider social value – I set out to understand its relevance, potential purpose and contribution. This search became a quest (Moustakas, 1990, p. 14) which, now in its fourth year, though more fully understood, is still a work-in-progress.

When you
'Seminar'
A social science
Supporter put up your hand
I answered your sign
Let our search
Begin!

THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF SEMINARIA

Seminar Form (Linde, 2013) or Seminaria, is inspired by three scholarly origins:

- the seven steps of philosophy argued by Thomas Aquinas (1225 –1274)
- an integral model of learning and teaching proposed by Steiner (1861-1925), used, among others, by teachers in an era of digital download, to safeguard student learning from the superficiality of ‘undigested’ information overload (Gidley, 2007; Nielsen, 2003; Riccio, 2000; Van Houten, 2000, 1995). This seven-step ‘life’ process advances an integrative model of thinking, cognitive-affective processing, and meaningful activity that engages volitional will. Notably, these latter three are commensurate with the three key components of mindfulness: intention, attention and attitude (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).
- Theory-U that Scharmer (2009) terms ‘presencing’, another seven-step process starting with intention, commitment to a project, immersion in its challenge through an inner journey, synthesis of key insights, deep reflection and presencing work. Then from identifying key initiatives, recognising that the work begins to operate from a different place, level of energy, and inspiration.

“The first part of this process is to observe ... which means [to] stop the downloading and open up into a full immersion into the context. Then you retreat and reflect, allowing the inner knowing to emerge. You access your own source. So you go from the chaos of observation to the still, inner place where knowing comes to the surface. You must ask yourself who is my self and what is my work? Your self doesn't mean your ego, but your highest future possibility. By “work” we mean 'what is your purpose?' The more profound changes usually include a change of identity, an evolution in who you are and what you are here for. It requires a letting go of your old self in order to find your emerging authentic self. When the spark comes to the surface, you move into action quickly ...”(Brown, 2005, p. x).

Linde (2013, p. 3) describes how he uses the thought processes of these scholarly origins when constructing Seminar Verse:-

A premise or statement (line one) is given depth, colour, and life through an example, or picture as a second step. Next, this is thrown into question by contemplating consequences or implications. The third line involves emotional intelligence. A tension is felt. The movement of the fourth line resolves the tension with a decision and action. It provides a turning point and by the seventh line, a resolution.

Composed as seven, syllabically sequenced lines, i.e. 2,3,5,7,5,3,2 as shown²:

(2) Listen
(3) With the heart
(5) As well as the head
(7) Learn to tune your middle space
(5) Warmth pulsed, radiant
(3) Plus gut truth
(2) Trust it!

SEMINARIA AS A MINDFULNESS PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS

What is mindful about the practice of Seminaria? Firstly, it is important to understand the nature of both mindfulness and of seminaria poetic form (as outlined above), and their nexus as a practice. A broad definition of everyday contemporary mindfulness as a natural human capacity to –

- engage with life intentionally, affectively, and simultaneously with focused attention
- with equilibrium, calm acceptance, compassion, and kindness (Sauer et al., 2011)
- knowing what you are doing when you are doing it (Williams, 2012) - may be cultivated, applied and practised through movement or in stillness.

Mindfulness can be applied to everyday activities such as walking, studying, storytelling, writing and eating (Albrecht et al., 2012; Hanh, 2013).

From an informal pilot study with fifteen participants aged 26-70, five of whom were teachers, practising seminaria over three days and collaborating by comparing and contrasting their experiences and results from using this word form – Seminaria's 'presencing' potential was commonly expressed by many of them also as '*mindfulness*'. That is, while focused mindfully with the writing and later, reflecting on seminaria – whether as a group, in pairs or individually – the experience was commonly described as being grounded in a state of physical embodiment, engaged in participatory and conscious awareness with present-moment openness and acceptance of that which arises both outwardly and inwardly, and simultaneously being conscious of four possible levels of connectedness – with self, other, nature and some notion of external inspiration (Fisher et al., 2002; Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2011).

Secondly, this lived experience (Moustakas, 1990, van Manen, 1990) of pilot-study participants compares well with Kabat-Zinn's (1990) landmark mindfulness definition, 'paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-

² Author's example, 18 April, 2014.

judgementally’ that Gause and Coholic (2010, p. 5) contend has been operationalized as a cognitive behavioural intervention. They question (p. 9), whether mindfulness practice can be sustained long-term without recourse to a holistic philosophy.

Lastly, it is pertinent to argue that *Seminaria* provides a holistic ‘container’ for the three key axioms of mindfulness: intention, attention and attitude. These were variously expressed during the pilot phase, as three domains of human functioning: volitional will, focused cognition, and emotional intelligence (more commonly known perhaps, as thinking, feeling and doing; idiomatically – ‘head, heart and hand’). Clearly, teachers and leaders are challenged to operate effectively in all three domains. *Seminaria* mindfulness for example, requires an idea to be expressed in words which evokes an emotional response to the word content, in turn, connecting cognitive and affective processing. The active will is evidenced in the written documenting and ‘mirrored’ reflecting of lines as well as acting upon any realisations inspired by the *seminaria* themselves.

MEANING MAKING

Meaning, being paramount in the process, is not a fixed quality that words, marks and squiggles possess (Randall & McKim, 2008, p. 181). Rather, meaning is process, a continual making and re-making – an active noun, a gerund. It is, as Randall and McKim point out, ‘literally, mean-ing’. Meaning is made through relationships (words acting as conduits connecting self, other, Nature and a sense of ‘Source’ or Inspiration); and, as Bateson (2000) famously asserted, meaning comes from the relationship of one word to another.

So just as different approaches to mindfulness have grown out of generic contemplative practices, so has the mindfulness of *seminaria* evolved from individual word relationships. Encoded in this particular seven-line, 27-syllable form, ‘*seminaria*’, they may reveal to the practitioner something of their liminal essence.

Part of its gift [is] that it creates space, outside of linear time to whoever is doing it. ... there’s something very healing about that – Olivia (sixth participant/co-researcher).

INVESTIGATING SEMINARIA THROUGH HEURISTIC INQUIRY

Heuristic Inquiry (HI), aims through self-inquiry and dialogue with others, to find the underlying meanings of important human experiences (Moustakas, 1990, p. 14). In heuristic research the investigator must have had a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated. A question of personal challenge and puzzlement can become quest-like and as with virtually every question that matters personally, there is also a social, perhaps universal, significance.

Recognised as one of a number of transpersonal research methods for the social sciences, heuristic inquiry honours human experience (Braud & Anderson, 1998) as a way of being informed, a way of knowing (Moustakas, 1990, p. 10). Whilst it has a twenty-first century locus within social science research, a cautious and careful literature review soon highlighted its integral character. I recognised that heuristic inquiry was perfectly designed to provide researchers challenged by the sort of phenomenological conundrum I was facing, with the ‘thinking and linking’ to the tenets of other transpersonal methods of inquiry. Heuristic Inquiry validates as research evidence, for example, the symbolic growth experience (SGE), (Frick, 1983, 1990), frisson (Colver & El-Alayli, 2016) and peak experience (Maslow, 1964), consistent with being ‘in the flow’ or ‘the zone’ (Csíkszentmihályi, 1996).

The recognition of ‘heuristic fit’ was considered the most appropriate way to investigate the question of seminaria’s essence. As Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2011, pp. 97-98) demonstrate through their holistic model, *The Map of Meaning*, designing from wholeness is contingent with the full potential of individual experience becoming socially transferable as ‘service to others’. An example of such service is the growing professional support for teachers of mindfulness meditation practices within the education sector (Arthurson, 2015; Burrows, 2011; Miller & Nozawa, 2002).

Mindfulness meditation is a key component of teachers’ contemplative and reflective practice (Bacchus, Denford-Wood and Hancox, 2002; Denford-Wood, 2004, 2013, 2014), while seminaria is a new, evolving strand of the work. Since March 2013, I have explored how the mindfulness of seminaria might contribute to this changing landscape.

All such
Self-study
Must lead out again
Preoccupation with self
Is not the purpose
But social
Reform.
(gdw)

TEACHERS AS REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS

A generic model of ‘teacher as reflective practitioner’ is defined as one who researches their own thoughts before, during and following teaching practice in order to analyse, interpret, construct meaning and evaluate effectiveness of that practice. This process involves the ability to perceive what is subtle, complex and important. The spontaneous, intuitive performance (Schon, 1983, p. 49) of ‘knowing-in-action’ and ‘reflection-in-practice’ (Schon, 1983, p. 68) has been embedded in teachers’ professional development since the 1980s having evolved from Kurt Lewin’s landmark

1947 work. Carried to its logical conclusion (Denford-Wood, 2004, p. 137), teachers' reflective practice is a form of participatory action research (McNiff, 1988, 2013; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007). While classroom action research typically involves the use of qualitative, interpretive modes of inquiry and 'best evidence' to help teachers make better judgements about how to improve their own practices to further facilitate student learning – away from the classroom, in contemplation of the day passed and the next to come – the nature of the action research cycle for increasing numbers of teachers tends to include another component: the practice of mindfulness meditation.

What the contemplative offers education is not a different set of knowledge so much as an expanded approach to knowing (Hart, 2014, p. 16).

Mindfulness meditation in its many forms provides a three-point approach: a path of personal-professional development ('Know yourself', that which Zajonc (2009, p. 46) terms 'a schooling for experiencing life from the inside'); a means to understanding deeper levels of students' needs and how to provide for them (Denford-Wood, 2017), and stress release (Williams, 2013).

Finding
What's within
Original Source...
Human being: Know yourself
Education's aim:
To lead out
Knowing.
(gdw)

MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION – THE TERMINOLOGY

Debates on definitions of mindfulness, meditation, and their relationship exist within the field. Some consider practising contemplative mindfulness, to be a form of meditation (Hölzel et al., 2008; Kabat-Zinn, 2014). Others regard meditation as a practice that facilitates mindfulness (Israel, 2013; Segal, 2015). Contemplative forms of mindfulness and sitting meditation therefore, are frequently found in the literature as 'mindfulness meditation' for reasons Kabat-Zinn explains. No further terminology untangling is warranted in the context of this study whose focus is the investigation of a poetic form employed as an innovative mindfulness practice that embodies both the physical movement of writing alternating with an open contemplative stillness.

We must be still and still moving into another intensity. – T. S. Eliot (1943, n.p.).

The Study

Having received ethics approval, in 2015, I led a heuristic inquiry into the mindfulness of seminaria with six teachers and educational leaders employed in a variety of educational settings in New Zealand and the UK. These educators volunteered to co-research the form contemplatively as a component of their daily reflective practice. Participant selection was made by first identifying two primary population sets: (a) teachers and educational leaders in the sectors, early childhood to higher education, of whom more than 98,000 are New Zealand registered and (b) mindfulness/meditators who, from aggregating the totals provided by spokespeople from the most prominent mindfulness groups, gave a New Zealand total that exceeded 30,000. The intersection of these two sets (c), although currently inestimable was the group from which I expected to derive the study sample. Accordingly, advertisements were placed in prominent education and mindfulness sites. From the first eight respondents five were selected and the others kept in case of ‘drop-out’. A sixth volunteer was later accepted. The criteria: being a teacher or leader for at least five years; having a regular mindfulness or contemplative practice for the previous five years, and a predilection for arts-based writing. The second criterion initially based on self-report, was able to be verified in the first structured interview when, alongside the demographic questions, twenty one further questions were asked about the nature of the candidate’s contemplative practices. This interview process not only verified the three selection criteria, it established a relationship of trust and set the tone for the study. The practice of writing seminaria was introduced as outlined above, and a journal was provided for the purpose. It contained a backup section for the induction process; a list of suggested topics for the personal-professional application of seminaria as well as encouragement to contact the primary researcher for support or clarification if needed. Participants volunteered to make seminaria a three-week, 15-20 minute daily practice, to document what they noticed, and to be available for at least two more interviews, conducted as in-depth, conversations (Moustakas, 1990, 1994; Hiles, 2008) in a place nominated by the co-researcher that met ethical requirements for confidentiality and anonymity.

Participant profile

Three women and two men of the eight people who applied to participate in this study, met the selection criteria and agreed to become co-researchers. They were:

- ‘Hope’, late 30s, a UK secondary school art teacher, now a part-time early childhood teacher and writer in the North Island of New Zealand
- ‘Gordon’, early 40s, a primary school teacher of Year-3, experienced haiku-ist and Zen mindfulness practitioner who teaches an evening adult meditation class in the lower North Island, New Zealand

- ‘Maree’, late-50s, previously a secondary school physical education teacher who has taught in the International School system in PNG; volunteered in Africa and continues to fund-raise for school building development there; now a New Zealand primary teacher of Years 5 & 6
- ‘Mikaela’, in her 60s, a published author and leader in higher education who teaches diverse groups in university and corporate settings in NZ and internationally after an earlier career in journalism and as an artist
- ‘Murray F’, mid-50s, a UK secondary school principal who has taught extensively in NZ and the UK; an accomplished artisan with qualifications in Art and Design.

Supplementary evidence came from:

- ‘Olivia’, mid-50’s, a primary teacher of Year-5, with an earlier successful stage career. She contacted me, at the end of the school year, keen to share her discoveries from a solidly developed seminaria practice, having been introduced to it three months earlier by her colleague, Gordon.

The research aim

With these co-researchers exploring a totally new process – the mindfulness of seminaria – my aim was to:

- Examine the relationship of each co-researcher to the practice of seminaria mindfulness
- Understand their essential lived experience of seminaria
- Identify any praxis³ of seminaria mindfulness of potential use to others

Though each participant was given the scholarly background to seminaria’s poetic construction, they were asked not to let it dog their spontaneity. I wanted them to avoid any sense of complexity that in the orientation phase might put them off or limit them to logical brain ‘getting it right’ (Cropley, 2015; Arrowsmith-Young, 2012). As Einstein pointed out, the intuitive mind is a sacred gift; the rational mind, its faithful servant (McGilchrist, 2009) aptly exemplified by the following co-researcher’s point:

I’m working with the head very much at school, and if [by practising seminaria], I allow my feeling to dictate this, it’s acknowledging the neglected part, which is the heart. So I wouldn’t want to be all cerebral about it! Murray (principal)

³ Praxis (Ancient Greek: *πρᾶξις*), the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill – in this case, the mindfulness of seminaria – is enacted, embodied, or realized.

Gathering explications of seminaria experience

Research interviews (Moustakas, 1990, p. 47) were necessarily conversationally deep and exploratory, with questions arising conceptually and spontaneously in response to co-researchers' experience and the meanings that had evolved for them (and in some cases, continue to evolve) from their respective practices. Even after the formality of the last signed off transcript, co-researchers have sometimes contacted the primary researcher to share perspectives from their continued seminaria practice.

Co-researchers' findings from their lived experience, were in every case, thoughtfully contemplated. Heuristic research is designed to elicit finely nuanced data (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985; Hiles, 2001, 2008). Despite (and perhaps because of) the well-recognised limitation of heuristic inquiry being the sheer volume of data it generates, the descriptions were encouragingly 'thick' and finely nuanced. Each co-researcher's minimum of three interviews provided the basis for my compilation of individual depictions. From these, a composite depiction capturing the overall quality and the colour of the individual depictions, begins to articulate something of the phenomenon of the mindfulness of seminaria. The final phase, a creative synthesis is work-in-progress.

When we find meaning in art, our thinking is most in sync with nature –
Bateson (1972/2000, p. 51).

Seminaria as a self-rewarding process

All co-researchers were philosophically oriented in their approach to the mindfulness of seminaria. There was a unanimous surprise element too, that it could connect them so deeply with themselves. Gordon talked at length about a question it evoked in him concerning the 'effortlessness of effort' while Murray, through seminaria, explored the very *raison d'être* for schooling itself. On a practical level, Mikaela found it had calming effects between one demanding teaching task and the next, especially when travelling. Hope knows now how to dispel her 'writer's block' simply and effectively with a few minutes of seminaria. Gordon and Olivia found that seminaria facilitated student report writing. Rather than feeling they were taking on something extra, the effect of seminaria was to streamline and thereby speed up the time-consuming process of end-of-year reports. (By reports, they were talking about those that are evidence-based, meaningful, honest and encouraging for students and their parents – not simply the 'tick-box' statistics.) Speaking about their work, each teacher revealed a passionate commitment to making a difference to their students' lives as well as for a greater common good.

The poems lately are ... trying to penetrate to the heart of what a child's needs are. So, for example, last week lots of my recent poems are about a particular boy [of concern]. I've come again and again and again to the seminaria. Gordon (Year 3

teacher)

I'm trying to be more economical with the reports this time ... you go, 'Well, what needs to be said?' It feels like you're bringing something down ... 'What is it he's working with at the moment and where does he need to go?' Through writing the seminaria, you have the condensed version ... to ... expand into a report. Olivia (Year 5 teacher)

A summary of themes from aggregating the depictions

The following clusters of themes were formed by aggregating the co-researcher depictions and grouping together the units of meanings (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 1998). The themes with accompanying qualifying descriptions of their lived experience highlight the co-researchers' experiences of seminaria. These were that participants found seminaria:

- Surprising – delightfully unexpected
- Calming – peaceful, slows the pace
- Refreshing – enlivening, alerts awareness, energising, being in the flow energetically
- Transformative – supports wellbeing, a healing art
- Purposeful – significant, meaningful
- Creatively insightful – therapeutic witnessing
- Changes energy flow – body, mind and heart
- Container-like – accessible, simplicity of form,
- Opens me up to the unconscious – infinite possibilities
- Connecting – inter-subjective (connects me more fully with myself / students / Nature / my higher self / the Great Mystery)
- Fulfilling – brings completion, feeling resolved
- Suspends time – creates space, outside linear time
- Mysterious – with potency, presence

What it does, is gives us a tiny Velux window you can open to let some light in and close again once a day, or twice. – Murray (principal)

Self-realisation and meaningfulness

The data highlight a range of experiences with the mindfulness of seminaria that can

be categorised as self-realising and meaningful. The following vignettes from a colourful palette of co-researcher quotes, exemplify the extent, depth, and range of participants' seminaria experiences.

Mikaela: "The other really exceptional experience really early on ... I had to do three days ... full-on adult teaching. The first in the large auditorium of a hospital. It's a huge space; I don't have a microphone. I'm having to generate that voice ... which is exhausting ... just draining ... and you're standing for six hours, seven hours ... At lunchtime when everyone was away, I just sat on some chairs with my feet up and I did a seminaria on my I-phone and that was just brilliant ... it allowed me to actually ... I just went into such a peaceful state, I mean it was just so marked, so much so that I wrote another one, and again there was a lot of yawning – it felt like a lot of clearing of energy – and what happened was when a couple of people came back into the room, the energy was so still, they just sat quietly there and did something ... They didn't come and talk to me or chat so I was able to actually *have* half an hour of complete peace."

Maree: "Seminaria slows the pace of life, reminds me to see, to remember what has always been in front of me."

Murray: "When I've finished a seminaria a feeling I get is one of fulfilled satisfaction that I've done something very purposeful, significant and meaningful ... brought something to birth."

Joy and delight

Murray: "I really, really enjoyed doing them. I just love them!"

Olivia: "I love it; I absolutely love it! Because I've done other poetry in the past, I think I came to [seminaria] thinking, 'I love poetry'. But then, what *is* it about *this* particular form? Why does it work so *well*?"

Creative and reflective insight

Mikaela: "I enjoy the creative insights that come from reworking seminaria."

Gordon: "I have not previously [before engaging with the mindfulness of seminaria] been as mindful of the importance of refining the question that arises from my contact with a child, my contact with myself [and] my contact with other aspects of the world."

Transformative / Wellbeing / A healing art

Hope: "It's almost like seminaria takes on the quality of being a witness to you. You don't need anyone else ... to say, 'Oh, I really hear you; I see your struggle with that' ... seminaria when it's written, is reflecting that same ... quality back to you ... Having someone witness and be empathetic, ask you the right question, is healing and can be transformative. So if you're working on your own and you use seminaria ... it's ... that kind of witnessing."

Mikaela: "...that sense of having somewhere to go that stills me, so that my body becomes stiller, [and] my breathing."

Olivia: "When I'm in the writing of it, it's like time is suspended ... like stepping out of ordinary time, linear time ... and I think ... part of its gift [is] that it creates space, outside of linear time to whoever is doing it ... there's something very healing about that [reflectively] ... It's a healing Art."

Being 'in the flow' – Seminaria, an energising experience

Maree: I was able to relax and go inward a bit more ... allow it [seminaria] to flow really. And that's what happened."

Hope: "... with seminaria, it's almost like I stop thinking about what I'm writing and I just write it ... if I have time to read it back, either I get left with a feeling I don't need to ... because it's done something in me for having written it. It's that transformation. It's healed something within me, or I feel a sense of rightness, or [where] I'd felt stuck ... I can feel my energy flows so I can move on."

Gordon: "If I practise seminaria, they feel more fluid, and I can certainly see ... there could be a time [when] I've mastered it ... I ... can enter the flow [and] I don't have to leave it.

Mikaela: "... a shift in energy, often a release of tension and an opening up; a gut-feeling of satisfaction; increased energy in my head and heart."

Calming peace-provider

Mikaela: "I feel calm, more alive and alert; resolved."

Olivia: "[Through the mindfulness of seminaria] I can let go and there is a resolution to the day and a sense of calm that I have honoured something."

Realising – insight inducing

Gordon: "Seminaria [is] a form of inquiry that's leading me to recognise more fully, the children ... and their particular needs."

Murray: "Among all the utilitarian, pragmatic ... mundane, chore-like business [of running a school] you've brought something into the world for a moment that is truly, well ... spiritual, then metaphysical ... and then ... physical. I mean it's just like a little birth which is very satisfying."

Mikaela: "It opens up new and interesting insights."

Challenges, dilemmas

Mikaela: "I like the discipline of it. It makes me more aware of the habitual words I have and challenges me to think of new ones."

Gordon: “Many times I’ve engaged with insight practices where there’s a question but the thing that is different ... and I think the challenge that seminaria’s brought to my practice is: What are *my* questions? ...it’s affecting many things” [appreciatively].

Hope: “I started using seminaria to write about how stuck I felt and how there weren’t any words coming ... and then I could feel my energy flowing. Then I would either write another seminaria or I would then actually start writing one of my stories ... and that just created a different energy flow.

These contrasting examples of saying ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ – differently motivated, were contextually apt:

Maree:	Girl up	Murray:	Why not
	Way to go		Just say yes
	Teaching self-esteem		A little more often?
	Hold onto that so tightly		The capacity for fear
	No one can hurt you		Pervades all life now,
	Just say ‘No’		Just say, ‘Yes’
	‘Enough!’		It helps.

Simplifying complexity

Hope: “[Seminaria’s] also simplifying what feels too complicated, too big to unpick, ... too overwhelming ... reduces it to a simple form. It might get bigger and more complex again but I needed to anchor [my work] in a simple form ... to be able to move forward creatively ...”

Murray: “The limitation of the form is [its] freedom. You have to be very precise ... essential and distilled.”

Mikaela (quoting Dee Hock, VISA founder): “Simplicity on this side of complexity is banal; simplicity on the *far* side of complexity is profound.” “In my experience, Seminaria is the latter.”

Opening, presencing, and potency

Mikaela: “It opens me up to the unconscious.”

Hope: “Seminaria reflects back to me ... what I know is inside me, and then there’s a sense ... like between a mother and child ... of affirmation and ... attunement ... a meeting ... a sense of transformation.”

Gordon: “ ... lately they’ve definitely been ... helping me ... create a sense, or feel a sense of ... things that are beyond me, in a way that’s useful. I have come to see it as the process of residing at my personal edge (of what I know) and throwing a pebble into the unknown. The deeper the question, the further it penetrates ... and the deeper the answer.”

Maree: “It’s been an interesting experience. One page ... I’ll show you ... there ... was a whole page of diamond squiggles ... there was ... meaning to it, ... I was doing it like semi-lightning ... a lot of dimensions ... Who knows where this may lead? Like it absolutely flowed ... straight from the pen.”

Connectedness

Gordon: “One of the things I’m reflecting on a lot ... is the nature of connectedness within this experience ...” “I know when I’m there, and [conversely] when I’m not able to maintain connectedness and it becomes just a head experience. And ... I know when I’ve written something and maintained an openness and am happy with it.”

Hope: “When I use seminaria in a meditative ... rather than in an intellectual way ... I tap into that inner meaning ... inner resource ... the connection between the inner and the outer; it’s a spiritual thing ... like the vehicle for something ... where your mind becomes empty ... then the vision comes, whether it be words or picture.”

Hope: “Seminaria ... It’s like a hotline to my essential self.”

The seminar form of seminaria

How does the physical shape and form of seminaria as well as its theoretical construct, affect the process, the practice and the experience of seminaria?

Mikaela: “It’s like the form is so *restful*. I mean I have been surprised to be honest, how restful it feels. And how calm I get and how quickly I get calm, I think, if I look at [how] it’s been [such] a stressful time.” “I love the form, it sits well with me in my body, mind and heart.”

Hope: “About the form and the symmetry of the form ... there’s a completion about it that ... feels quite healing. That particular containment creates an opening rather than a restriction – creates infinite possibilities (like with a small child, creating a boundary for them actually gives them freedom).”

Gordon: “[In] the Tao ... of anything, there’s a form to master. ... You can’t practise ‘a way’ without mastering the form first.”

Murray: “It suits my need for simplicity and form. This diamond shape is so beautiful. The diamond it creates each time ... two triangles. It’s so satisfying a form ... The limitation of the form is [its] freedom. Again, you have to be very precise ... essential and distilled.”

Seminaria’s creativity encouraged continuity

Hope: “I know that I’ll keep using it. It has such value; it’s such a good tool for so many different things ... I enjoy it as well ... the ‘feel good’ factor. But essentially, it’s more than that. I will continue to use it now as part of my creative practices. It has huge potential.”

Post-practice ‘confessions’ – a reliability check

Both Maree and Murray confessed to falling asleep in the middle of the process sometimes late at night after a long school day. Both joked about how they’d awaken next morning and complete the seminaria with ease and insight. Olivia later too admitted, “Sometimes I fall asleep think[ing], ‘I have to find the resolution’. I might even write, ‘My eyelids are reamed with sleep’.”

Mikaela: I have not done it as religiously as I did during the research period and I find this reminder useful [meeting to verify the accuracy of a transcript] ... a great way to start a session on writing for example. I plan to fit it into my day again.”

Discussion

What might these findings mean for educators? It is pertinent to argue that when teachers are experiencing unhealthy levels of stress, the idea of being able to go agitatedly into a mindfulness space – and like the flick of a switch – regain equilibrium, is challenging. With seminaria, however, there is a difference. Evidence suggests that the uniqueness of Seminaria as a ‘container’ into which to express one’s agitation – ameliorates and transforms the feeling into a new realisation or feeling. That is, focusing attention into the practice of seminaria engages feeling, moving it to a new place. Interestingly, four of the co-researchers mentioned experiencing a crossing point (lemniscate) in the middle, seven-syllable line of the form. In other words, when they took a difficult feeling – through the movement of writing about it with the mindfulness of seminaria – a resolution was felt in the crossing (still-) point of the diamond form, and recognised through the words they had used. This middle point in the poetic form, I refer to as a crossing point of consciousness (congruent with what co-researchers identify as changing something in their understanding). Their lived experience of this effect was variously identified as ‘illumination’, ‘transformative’, ‘healing’ and so on.

Hope, for example, found that in reflecting on an incident in her teaching day, the practice of seminaria triggered a similar event in her own early childhood. Using a series of seminaria, she was able to get to the core of new understanding, explained (in part) by the following:

Let go
Of ego
Be in the moment
And watch self-consciousness fade
Like ghosts of the past
Surrender
To now.
(Hope)

Shifts in awareness were associated with renewed realisation or experience of

connectedness with self, other/s, Nature, or Source (Fisher et al., 2002). More than a head knowing, it was phenomenologically an ‘Aha’ moment when co-researchers had moments of existential profoundness which, from time to time, each of them did. This finding points to reconsideration of the poetic form and its theoretical construct (Linde, 2013). For example, Scharmer’s seminal work that Linde incorporated into his poetic form back in the 1980s, suggests that the co-sensing, co-presencing and co-creating elements of creative processing require further investigation in relation to the essential nature and being of seminaria.

As the diversity of mindfulness applications increases, a common definition of mindfulness has become elusive and generalised (Chiesa, 2012; Denford-Wood, 2016). Mindfulness in the context of this present study with Seminaria is defined as containing the three core mindfulness functions of intention (volitional will); attention (focused cognition) and attitude (openness, equanimity and positivity that some referenced, ‘heart thinking’) – all three simultaneously engaged. This state requires awareness characterised by a surrender to, and acceptance of, the happenings of the moment, a calm, sustained focus of attention inward and the writing of a particular poetic form (seminaria).

Therefore, the mindfulness of seminaria, as a simple poetic process inspiring educators to engage economically and differently with their personal and professional reflective practice, was affirmed by the participants. It is a contemplative inquiry that they claim can lead to inspired knowing and provides them with focus and direction, central to their personal-professional wellbeing (Jennings et al., 2012; Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Weare, 2014, and Zajonc, 2009). The mindful surrender to the process that co-researchers variously described, clearly led to more depth and breadth of experience than I contend it would have, were they not already established in some form of contemplative practice of their own. This substantiated my stance at the proposal stage, with reference to Shapiro (1992), of insisting on this as a criterion for participation.

Listen to the presences inside poems; let them take you where they will – Rumi (2004, p. 99).

Making Meaning of Seminaria

What does this study tell us about the meaning of seminaria? Engaging mindfully with it as a practice, involves movement, then inner stillness. It does not require beliefs, special breathing, body positions or mantras. Yet, claim these co-researchers, it opens up awareness of a new space. This space – between movement and stillness – between calm contemplation and the creativity caused through writing engagement and meaning-making, it would appear, has the capacity to heighten sensitivity with the ability to observe and name the contents of consciousness.

Meaning-making is key. Seminarina is experienced as both grounding, and heightening of awareness. The mirroring process i.e. reflecting on the poem in reverse order from the bottom up, in the syllabic line sequence: 2,2,3,3,5,5,7 appears to be significant. It highlights the importance of the middle space (line). When ‘brought to the surface’ in this way, the co-researchers reported that it often evoked an ‘Aha moment’.

“So, what I did was just start writing ... they just poured out, and then looking back, the accidental nature, the beauty, the coincidental nature, the synchronicity of the mirroring of the lines was amazing, just how obviously they were all mirroring each other, even without thought or plan” (Murray, Principal).

“Somehow that reversing does an enormous amount. It opens up all sorts of new connections ... almost neurologically. The patterning is the way it comes out the first time but when I reverse it, I get like, all these new brain connections, and so I never know what magic might happen in those. Why is it conscious or not? ... another pathway ... isn’t it? I think it just opens up new possibilities ... you’ve got no idea what’s going to pop up when you move the words around a bit. Well, given that at the heart of life for me, is the Great Mystery [laughs appreciatively] anything that gets me close ... is lovely! So I think what’s interesting about seminarina for me is that in saying something that’s important to me [and] by rearranging it, I get access ... to different insights into it and I never know ... [reads two examples aloud with the reversals to illustrate her point] and I just go, Wow! They are so powerful, why would I not want to keep accessing that sort of wisdom!” (Mikaela, Higher Ed. teacher).

Several participants expressed experiencing seminarina as a threshold of consciousness in the middle line – sometimes when writing it – and more profoundly presenced by reading the words back in the mirroring order of lines mentioned. The lemniscate (figure-of-eight, infinity symbol) – as was mentioned by co-researchers – appears to be a vital clue to the potency of seminarina’s effectiveness.

He[re]art
Poems called
Seminarina
Socio-poetic life
Soundings across space
Flow back through
Mid points.
(gdw)

The findings of this study appear to verify the presencing factor (Scharmer, 2009; Senge et al., 2005) inherent in the poetic construct explained earlier. The fact is that seminarina does not require complexity of anything nor the downloading of a digital app. Rather, it is linguistically available at and through our fingertips.

Hope: “It’s such a quick tool. It’s like a quick grounding exercise that you could ... do within that busy schedule; because you can’t necessarily go for a walk. You may be on duty. There are a lot of constraints to looking after yourself in the work you do in education.”

“I wrote one on my phone the other day when I got stuck in traffic ... so calming.”

Origin of wellbeing

Revisiting Antonovsky’s (1979, 1987) origin of wellbeing (salutogenesis) in relation to the findings of this study, it seems pertinent to argue that whilst there is resonance with all three of the well-researched roots of salutogenesis namely, comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness, a caveat may exist with respect to the first of the three. Comprehensibility is the belief that things occur in an orderly way and a sense that you can understand events and reasonably predict what is likely to happen. However, in this study co-researchers at times variously described their experience of seminaria as ‘a mystery’, ‘potent’, ‘energising’, ‘transformative’, and ‘healing’, that I contend does not fit the orderly, predictability of ‘comprehensibility’ as Antonovsky (1987) defines it. However, manageability, the belief that you have the capacity or access to the resources necessary to take care of these things that are within your control, was clearly pertinent to this study’s findings on the practice of seminaria. The final element, meaningfulness, is a belief that things in life are interesting, a source of satisfaction, worthwhile, and that there is good reason or purpose to care about what happens. According to Antonovsky (1987), meaningfulness, is the most important in that ‘salutogenesis’ depends on experiencing a strong sense of coherence, a predictor for positive health outcomes. The findings of this study, on the practice of seminaria were commensurate with definitions of coherence. What is clear from the data too, is that these traits of eudaimonic wellbeing – self-realisation and meaning in life that in many instances evoked vitality – also included the attributes of growth, authenticity and excellence (Gibbs, 2006; Giles, 2008; Ryan and Deci, 2001). These traits, highly valued in teachers’ and leaders’ professional learning and development, in turn, affect student wellbeing – an important measure of school climate.

Building a Bridge to the Theory while walking across it

In a phenomenological sense, Seminaria has shown itself to have currency for the social sciences beyond the context of ‘teacher as reflective practitioner’; beyond being a palliative for the stressed, overworked educator. Seminaria has a delicate yet robust intimacy. Its empiricism provides coherence for the authentic practitioner, suggesting success in simplicity, in the vein of ‘less is more’. Clearly, there is wider potential for this type of mindfulness. Continuing heuristic inquiry into its nature and being, is akin to bridge-building ontologically and epistemologically to other discourses whilst

walking across, one step at a time.

Limitations

Given that limitations are inherent within all research methodologies, risk was minimised by choosing a design congruent with the research question, aims and objectives, and informally piloting the study. Researching mindfulness experience relies on the assumption that it can be qualitatively and narratively assessed via declarative knowledge. In this study, a strong, participant/co-researcher sample provided finely nuanced data in a trustworthy manner, within a qualitative framework designed to fit a phenomenological “standard” of research for action sensitive pedagogy in the human sciences (Braud & Anderson 1998). Bias, an inherent limitation of qualitative research, should be revealed, for example, by the researcher’s worldview (in this case, holistic/integrative rather than positivist/reductionist) that has consequent influence on the way knowledge is constructed (Corbin and Strauss 2015). In this regard, balance is well provided by the wealth of co-researchers’ verbatim extracts. This study aimed to allow phenomena to be illuminated in their own right, rather than prematurely classified and abstracted.

As Gause and Coholic (2010, p. 17) contend, “Given the holistic nature of mindfulness, it is no wonder that researchers have had difficulty agreeing on one definition and consistently measuring its outcomes. [...] mindfulness from a holistic perspective might [rather] be concerned with helping people make meaning of their life situations.” Precisely this element is what, without exception, these co-researchers have highlighted.

However, it is not possible to generalize the findings from this project due to the small number of participants, although N=6 is considered an appropriate sample for a study of this kind where depth and quality of information, rather than quantity of data, is important.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to understand what experiencing ‘the mindfulness of seminaria’ might mean to a sample of teachers and leaders employed across education sectors in New Zealand and the UK. Heuristic Inquiry (HI) was employed, that Moustakas (1990, 1994) and Hiles (2008) contend is designed to elicit finely nuanced data, through deep conversation with co-researchers (rather than through conventional structured/semi-structured participant interviews). Designed to provide theoretically richer, more informed data on aspects of human functioning, I conclude that the study was successful in achieving this result.

The mindfulness of seminaria was found to be accessible, companionable and

energising. Not one of the co-researchers had difficulty establishing their practice of it nor sought support in the initial stages of their three-week research phase. The overwhelming response was positive. No one expressed disappointment in their results. The only disappointment expressed was in their own occasional lapses due to feeling exhausted in the fullness of the working week. Surprise was unanimous that a practice of its kind could yield such noteworthy and satisfying results. Consequently, five of the six co-researchers declared their intention to continue the mindfulness of seminaria as a personal-professional practice or at the least, in situations where it ameliorated their stress (e.g. travelling between distant teaching engagements; pressure of student reports; relational issues, and professional practice issues including ‘writer’s block’).

Collectively, the range and depth of lived experience with the phenomenon of this socio-poetic form, using OECD (2013) guidelines, yielded findings of eudaimonic wellbeing – specifically, through self-realisation and meaningfulness, with associated renewal of vitality. In the final analysis, the co-researchers’ experiences of self-realisation and meaningfulness were the main outcomes of undertaking this three-week inquiry into the daily practice of seminaria mindfulness.

Wellbeing, both central to learning and an outcome of learning, is multidimensional and characterised by feeling well and functioning well. In the process of enhancing student wellbeing, it is deserving that teachers’ and leaders’ own wellbeing is also enhanced. Seminaria mindfulness is poised to meet and support this purpose.

Finally, this study shows seminaria’s potential as a simple, poetic, tuning-in device – like an app. to which teachers and leaders could turn and re-turn for solutions when stressful feelings mitigate against their calm, concentration and creativity.

REFERENCES

- Albrecht, N., Albrecht, P., & Cohen, M. (2012). Mindfully Teaching In The Classroom: A Literature Review. *Australian Journal Of Teacher Education* 37(12): 1. Doi:10.14221/Ajte.2012v37n12.2.
- Albrecht, N. J. (2014). Wellness: A conceptual framework for school-based mindfulness programs. *The International Journal of Health, Wellness, and Society*, 4(1), 21-36. Retrieved from <http://ijw.cgpublisher.com/product/pub.198/prod.161>.
- Antonovsky, A. (1979). *Health, Stress, and Coping*. London: Jossey-Bass.
- Antonovsky, A. (1987). *Unraveling the Mystery of Health: How People Manage Stress and Stay Well*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Arrowsmith-Young, B. (2012). *The woman who changed her brain*. NY, New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Arthurson, K. (2015). Teaching mindfulness to Year Sevens as part of health and personal development. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 40(5), 27-40.

- Bacchus, R., Denford-Wood, G., & Hancox, B. (2002). *An Introduction to the context and history of Rudolf Steiner education*. Palmerston North, NZ: Massey University Department of Social and Policy Studies in Education.
- Bateson, G. (1972/2000). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Braud, W., & Anderson, A. (1998). *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences: Honoring Human Experience*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brown, E. (2005). MIT Sloan School of Management News Briefs — July 2005; Otto Scharmer: Theory-U: Presencing emerging futures. Retrieved from <http://mitsloan.mit.edu/newsroom/newsbriefs-0605-scharmer.php>
- Brown, K.W., & Ryan, M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84(4), 822-848.
- Burrows, L. (2015). Inner Alchemy: Transforming Dilemmas in Education Through Mindfulness. *Journal of Transformative Education*. February 8, 2015. doi: 10.1177/1541344615569535
- Burrows, L. (2013). Shadow play: mindfulness and reflection in Waldorf education. *RoSE, Research on Steiner Education* 4(1), 142-159.
- Burrows, L. (2011). Relational mindfulness in education. *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*, 24(4), 24-29.
- Chang, M.-L. (2009). An Appraisal Perspective of Teacher Burnout: Examining the Emotional Work of Teachers. *Educational Psychology Review* 21(3), 193-218. doi: 10.1007/s10648-009-9106-y.
- Chiesa, A. (2012). The Difficulty of Defining Mindfulness: Current Thought and Critical Issues. *Springer Science+Business Media, LLC* 2012. Doi: 10.1007/s12671-012-0123-4
- Colver, M., & El-Alayli, A. (2016). Getting aesthetic chills from music: The connection between openness to experience and frisson. *Psychology of Music*, 44(3), 413-427.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cropley, A. (2015). Transferable Criteria of Creativity: A Universal Aesthetic. Keynote address, NZ Creativity Challenge: Creativity crosses boundaries, 17-19 April, Lower Hutt, Wellington, NZ.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Flow: The Psychology of Happiness*. London: Rider.
- Denford-Wood, G. (2017). Meditating mindfully: Teachers go within to ensure their students do not go without. In T. Ditrich, W. Lovegrove, & R. Wiles (Eds.). *Mindfulness and education: Research and practice*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing: 125-149.
- Denford-Wood, G. (2016). A world in the word: Enhancing teacher wellbeing socio-poetically through the mindfulness of seminaria. Presented to the Symposium on Mindfulness and Education: Arising themes and issues. *Inaugural Conference, Student Wellbeing and Prevention of Violence (SWAPv)* 13-15 July, Flinders Educational Futures Research Institute (FEFRI), Tonsley Campus, S.A.
- Denford-Wood, G. (2014). *Teachers' Mindfulness Meditation: Investigating principles of a practice-based research*. Resource presentation of Mindfulness Research Poster. International Symposium for Contemplative Studies, Mind & Life Institute, Oct. 30 – Nov. 2, Boston, MA, US.

- Denford-Wood, G. (2013). To know its wave. In B. Curtis and Z. Meager (Eds.). *A Socio-Poetic: Poems and Some Thoughts. New Zealand Sociology* 28 (1), 117-147. Auckland University Press.
- Denford-Wood, G. (revised, republished, 2004). A paradigm for reflective praxis: An inner path of development. Part 3. *An Introduction to Steiner Education Theory*. Paper 184/187.368. NZ: Massey University College of Education, Dept. of Social and Policy Studies in Education.
- dos Santos, I. & Gauthier, J. (2013). Socio-poetics: for an esthetic perspective of nursing research/care/education (editorial), *Revista Eletronica de Enfermagem*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5216/ree.v15i1.15136>.
- Douglass, B, & Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic inquiry: The internal search to know. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 25(3), 39-55.
- Eliot, T. S. (1943). East Coker. In *Four Quartets*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt.
- Evelein, F. G. and Korthagen F. J. (2015). *Practicing core reflection: Activities and lessons for teaching and learning from within*. New York: Routledge.
- Fisher, M. H. (2011). Factors influencing stress, burnout, and retention of secondary teachers. *Current Issues in Education*, 14(1). Retrieved from <http://cie.asu.edu/>
- Fisher, J., Francis, L., & Johnson, P. (2002). The personal and social correlates of spiritual well-being among primary school teachers. In *Pastoral Psychology*, 51(1), 3.
- Frick, W. (1990). The Symbolic Growth Experience: A chronicle of heuristic inquiry and a quest for synthesis. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 30, 64-80.
- Frick, W. (1983). The Symbolic Growth Experience. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 23, 108-125.
- Gause, R., & Coholic, D. (2010). Mindfulness-based practices as a holistic philosophy and method. *Currents: New Scholarship in the Human Services*, 9(2), 1-23.
- Gibbs, C. (2006). *To be a teacher: Journeys towards authenticity*. Auckland, NZ: Pearson Educational.
- Gidley, J. (2007). Educational imperatives of the evolution of consciousness and the integral visions of Rudolf Steiner and Ken Wilber. *The International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 12(2), 117-135.
- Giles, D. (2008). *Exploring the teacher-student relationship in teacher education: a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Auckland: Auckland University of Technology.
- Grossman P. (2011). Defining mindfulness by how poorly I think I pay attention during everyday awareness and other intractable problems for psychology's (re)invention of mindfulness: Comment on Brown et al. *Psychological Assessment*, 23(4), 1034-1040.
- Hanh, T. N. (2013). *A Day of mindfulness with Thich Nhat Hanh*. Retrieved from <http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/> 2013/09/03/a-day-of-mindfulness-with-thich-nhat-hanh/
- Hart, T. (2014). *The Integrative mind: Transformative education for a world on fire*. London: Rowman & Littlefield. (16).
- Hiles, D. (2008). Heuristic Inquiry. In L.M. Given (Ed). *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 389-392). London: Sage.
- Hiles, D. (2001). *Heuristic inquiry and transpersonal research*, presented to the CCPE Conference, London, UK: October, 2001.
- Hölzel, B. K., Ott, U., Gard, T., Hempel, H., Weygandt, M., Morgen, K., & Vaitl, D. (2008). Investigation of mindfulness meditation practitioners with voxel-based morphometry. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 3(1), 55-61.

- Israel, I. (2013). What's the Difference Between Mindfulness, Mindfulness Meditation and Basic Meditation? Updated Jul. 30, 2013. Retrieved from www.IraIsrael.com
- Jennings, P. A., Roeser, R. & Lantieri, L. (2012). Supporting educational goals through cultivating mindfulness: Approaches for teachers and students. In A. Higgins-D'Allessandro, M. Corrigan and P. M. Brown (Eds.), *The Handbook of prosocial education* (pp. 371-397). New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2014). *Guided Mindfulness Meditation Practices*. Retrieved from www.mindfulnesscds.com
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full catastrophe living*. New York, NY: Hyperion Press.
- Kemmis, S. & McTaggart, R. (2007). Participatory Action Research: Communicative Action and the Public Sphere. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 271-330.
- Kyriacou, C. (2001). Teacher stress: directions for future research. *Educational Review* 53(1), 27-35. DOI: 10.1080/00131910124115
- Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers of Group Dynamics: Concept, method and reality in social science, social equilibria, and social change. *Human Relations*, 1: 5–41. doi:10.1177/001872674700100103
- Linde, J-P. (1988/89). *The Seminar Verse*. Unpublished works.
- Linde, J-P. (2013). *A Seminar on the 'Seminar' & The Pegasus form of poetry*. Author.
- Linde, J-P. (2014). Email research correspondence.
- Lips-Wiersma, M., & Morris, L. (2011). *The Map of Meaning: A guide to sustaining our humanity in the world of work*. Sheffield, UK: Greenleaf Publishing Ltd.
- Maslow, A. H. (1964). *Religions, Values and Peak-experiences*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.
- McCallum, F., & Price, D. (2010). Well teachers, well students. *Journal of Student Wellbeing*, 4(1), 19-34.
- McGilchrist, I. (2009). *The master and his emissary*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- McNiff, J. (2013). *Action Research: Principles and Practice, 3rd Edition*. NY: Routledge.
- McNiff, J. (1988). *Action Research: Principles and Practice*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Meiklejohn, J., Phillips, C., & Freedman, M. L., (2012). Integrating mindfulness training into K-12 education: Fostering the resilience of teachers and students. *Mindfulness*, 3(4), 291-307.
- Miller, J., & Nozawa, A. (2002). Meditating teachers: a qualitative study. *Journal of In-Service Education*, 28(1), 179-192.
- Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic Research: Design, methodology, and applications*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Nielsen, T. W. (2006). Towards a pedagogy of imagination: A phenomenological case study of holistic education. *Ethnography and Education*, 1(2), 247-264.
- OECD. (2013). *Guidelines on measuring subjective well-being*. OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264191655-en>
- Randall, W. L., & McKim, A. E. (2008). *Reading our lives: The poetics of growing old*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rapgay, L., & Bystrisky, A. (2009). *Classical mindfulness: An introduction to its theory and practice for clinical application*. Proceedings of the conference on longevity, regeneration and optimal health: integrating eastern and western perspectives. NY: Phoenicia.

- Riccio, M. (2000). *Rudolf Steiner's impulse in education: His unique organic method of thinking and the Waldorf school ideal*. Unpublished Ed.D., Columbia University Teachers College, New York.
- Rix, G. (2012). (Ed.). Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. Press release July, 2012. In *Mindfulness Works*: <http://mindfulnessworks.co.nz>
- Rumi, J. (2004). *The essential Rumi*. Coleman Barks (trans.). New York: Harper Collins.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2011). A self-determination theory perspective on social, institutional, cultural, and economic supports for autonomy and their importance for well-being. In V. I. Chirkov, R. M. Ryan & K. M. Sheldon (Eds.), *Human autonomy in cross-cultural context* (pp. 45-64). Netherlands: Springer.
- Ryan, M., & Deci, E. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 144-166.
- Sauer, S., Lynch, S., Walach, H., & Kohls, N. (2011). Dialects of mindfulness: Implications for western medicine. *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine* 6(1) 10 BioMed Central Publisher. Retrieved from <http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1747-5341-6-10.pdf>
- Scharmer, O. (2009). *Theory-U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Segal, J. (2015). (Ed.) Harvard Health Publications Help Guide. Adapted with permission from Positive Psychology: Harnessing the Power of Happiness, Personal Strength, and Mindfulness. Retrieved from <http://www.helpguide.org/harvard>
- Senge, P., Scharmer, O., Jaworski, J., & Flowers, B. S. (2005). *Presence: An exploration of profound change in people, organisations, and society*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Shapiro, D. H. (1992). A preliminary study of long term meditators: Goals, effects, religious orientation, cognitions. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 24(1), 23–39.
- Steinhardt, M. A., Smith Jaggars, S. E., Faulk, K. E., & Gloria, C. T. (2011). Chronic work stress and depressive symptoms: Assessing the mediating role of teacher burnout. *Stress and Health*, 27(5), 420-429.
- van Houten, C. (1995). *Awakening the will: Principles and processes in adult learning*. Forest Row, UK: Adult Learning Network.
- van Houten, C. (2000). *Practising destiny: Principles and processes in adult learning*. London: Temple Lodge.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: human science sensitive pedagogy*. London: Althouse Press.
- Vazi, M.L.M., Ruiters, R.A.C., Van den Borne, B., Martin, G., Dumont, K., & Reddy, P.S. (2013). The relationship between wellbeing indicators and teacher psychological stress in Eastern Cape public schools in South Africa. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology* 39(1) Art.1042. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v39i1.1042>
- Weare, K. (2014). Evidence for mindfulness: Impacts on the wellbeing and performance of school staff. Mindfulness in Schools Project in association with the University of Exeter. Retrieved from www.mindfulnessinschools.org

- Williams, M. (2012). Mindfulness lecture. *Science Oxford Live*, March 2012 Oxford University, – Uploaded by Oxford Mindfulness. www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAy_3Ssyqqg
- Williams, M. (2013). *The science of mindfulness*. Mindfulness at Work. <http://mindfulnessatwork.ie/mark-williams-science-of-mindfulness/>
- Zajonc, A. (2009). *Meditation as contemplative inquiry*. MA: Lindisfarne Books.