

The lived experience of teaching mindfully in tertiary education

A hermeneutic phenomenological study

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Abstract

This study explores the lived experience of teaching mindfully, as shared in the stories of tertiary teachers from two universities in Auckland, New Zealand. The project was informed by the hermeneutic phenomenological writings of Heidegger and Gadamer. This methodology was chosen in order to uncover potentially taken for granted and hidden meanings; and because it has resonance with teaching mindfully, the phenomenon under investigation. Seven participants, four women and three men, from mindfulness special interest groups in tertiary education and health-related contexts were purposively recruited. The participants were already bringing their own informal mindfulness practice from various backgrounds into their teaching; their experience with mindfulness practice ranged from two to 42 years. Research information was gathered through in-depth conversational interviews which focused on specific everyday experiences of, and participants' own reflections on, the phenomenon of teaching mindfully. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Distinct anecdotes, which became the research text, were identified from the transcripts. Interpretive data analysis was guided by a parallel process of dwelling deeply with participants' stories, alongside readings of Heidegger, Gadamer and van Manen, and through the researcher's own mindfulness meditation practice, at times via the emergence of poetry. The interpretive findings in this project revealed three main themes of meaning. Teaching mindfully showed as reflectively attending to 'noticing', 'being open', and 'being caring' within the educational relationship with students and with the teachers themselves. The subthemes were that teachers responded to 'what is needed' in the teaching context, that teaching mindfully is a multidimensional relational practice, and that teaching mindfully supported teachers to grow into 'authenticity'. While most of the multiple layers of meaning of teaching mindfully point to it being a positive relational education experience, the challenge of turning towards, and working with, students' and teachers' own emotional vulnerability during teaching are also evident. The conclusion of this research is that a teacher's own informal mindfulness practice may assist in developing a relational approach to tertiary teaching and that the meaning of teaching mindfully in its depth, multidimensionality, and relationality is hidden from external observation and can only be known from within in a teacher's own everyday practice.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marlies Dorrestein', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marlies Dorrestein

Date: 20 August 2015

Teaching mindfully

Call from within and beyond

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

[...] that is probably the best thing about mindfulness: it creates magical space. [Ivanka, Research interview March 10, 2014]

[...] having done that preparation made me more likely to stop in the moment and reflect on what I needed to say. And that actually softened the whole encounter with that person. I think it has even softened my whole mood towards that person as well. I don't feel that this person is that negative anymore; the relationship is more positive. I enjoy going to that class a lot more. [Bruce, Research interview October 30, 2013]

The quotes at the start of this chapter are two examples of how participants in this study experience the phenomenon of teaching mindfully in tertiary education, which is the focus of this study. I used hermeneutic phenomenology as the underpinning methodology, seeking to uncover and interpret the meaning of the lived experience of the phenomenon being explored. The research is guided by the question: “What is the experience of teaching mindfully for tertiary teachers who integrate their personal informal mindfulness practice into their everyday teaching?” Seven tertiary teachers from two universities in Auckland, New Zealand were the research participants.

The notion of mindfulness is receiving much attention in so many everyday domains in society that the popular press identifies a “mindfulness revolution” (Boyce, 2011; Pickert, 2014; Sun, 2014); as if mindfulness is revolutionising life as we know it. Likewise, the number of scholarly articles on mindfulness has burgeoned in the last 30 years in areas, for example, health, neuroscience, parenting, finance, photography, art, law, education, social work and business (Boyce, 2011). Proponents of mindfulness, in a Western context, see the increase in interest and access to knowledge of mindfulness as a positive development; yet, many authors also acknowledge that this rapid and expanding interest poses challenges for understanding what mindfulness actually is (Schmidt, 2011) and how it can be defined for experimental scientific purposes (Chiesa, 2013; Davidson, 2010; G. Dreyfus, 2011; Grossman & van Dam, 2011).

The origin of mindfulness is most often attributed to Buddhism, according to Maex (2011), in which it is a central meditation and mind training practice (Kyabgon, 2007; Thera, 2001), and in which mindfulness has been practised and studied from an experiential and first person perspective for 2500 years (Bodhi, 2011).

Mindfulness is a complex notion, evident from the number of publications endeavouring to define what it is. Brown and Cordon (2009) asserted that no matter how it is defined or conceptualised, mindfulness is essentially an experiential practice and, as such, it is suggested that the experience of it can only be understood from a subjective experiential perspective (Grossman, 2010; Kabat-Zinn, 2011). Despite the experiential nature of mindfulness practice, little research to date has focused on this experiential aspect.

The use of mindfulness practice by teachers and students in tertiary education is a relatively recent focus in the literature (Bush, 2011). In education, in general, researchers' interest in mindfulness has predominantly focused on benefits for students. There is some literature on contemplative practices for educators in terms of reducing their stress (V. L. Anderson, Levinson, Barker, & Kiewra, 1999; Franco, Mañas, Cangas, Moreno, & Gallego, 2010). In contrast, little research has been conducted into the experience of educators' mindfulness practice within their own teaching practice (Bernay, 2012). Foreman (2012) and Walsh (2014) focussed specifically on their own experience using a contemplative approach to teaching in a tertiary education context. A few first person accounts of tertiary teachers' experience of teaching mindfully have been published in recent years, for example by Kahane (2011) who described his journey into greater presence and joy in his teaching. Chan's (2013) chapter on "*Mindfulness to enhance teaching and learning*" includes brief notes from his own experience of teaching mindfully. Similarly, Falkenberg (2012) used personal experience to introduce his conceptual thinking about "teaching as contemplative professional practice" (p. 23).

In this study, I present the processes of engaging with the research on teaching mindfully in tertiary education and engaging with the philosophical understandings that inform and underpin it. Additionally I present the meanings that I have drawn from the participants' stories in relation to the literature that I have explored.

This introduction presents the context of the topic. I discuss the value of the research. I share how my own journey and pre-suppositions contribute to the process and

content of this research, as part of the study's trustworthiness (Standing, 2009) and I discuss my reason for choosing its methodology. I explain some of the words and phrases I use, which is important in offering a work that is easy to understand (Annells, 1999). I provide an overview of the chapters which give the project definition. I conclude the chapter with a reflective poem expressing something of the meaning and wonderings of my own journey into teaching mindfully. This journey forms part of the fabric of this thesis.

Why is this study important?

One of the criteria for evaluating the quality of phenomenological research is its usefulness (Annells, 1999) or significance. Given the plethora of literature on mindfulness in general and the expanding interest in mindfulness in education, the question of significance is important. Mindfulness is essentially an experiential practice (K. W. Brown & Cordon, 2009), but there is very little research evidence of what the experience of teaching mindfully is like. This study aims to explore the meaning of informal mindfulness practice in tertiary education from the perspective of a teacher's lived experience. I considered it worthwhile to conduct this research in order to get an indication of whether informal mindfulness practice may assist in developing and maintaining the educational relationship, which is recognised to be an important element in students' learning (Giles, 2008). My own experience with teaching mindfully was the impetus for starting this research journey.

What brings me to this study?

I am writing this thesis as an occupational therapist and lecturer in an undergraduate occupational therapy programme. My personal interest in mindbody healthcare led me to postgraduate study in this topic. This whole-person approach to health includes actively acknowledging and working with the inseparable dimensions of a person (mind, body, language and story) and within the container of the interpersonal relationship (Broom, 2013b).

It is difficult to pinpoint one specific time or event as the beginning of this study. I tend to see the world as described by John Muir: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe" ("Discover John Muir," n.d., para. 1). This reflects the multi-dimensional or even essentially non-dual world we are part of, named by Bohm (1995) as the implicate order. However, I identify a significant 'threshold moment' when I attended a colleague's presentation

on “*The potential of meditation to inform teaching practice*” (Foreman, 2012). I was finding my feet as a teacher in tertiary education, while doing postgraduate study in mindbody healthcare. The presentation was the start of bringing my own informal mindfulness practice into my teaching. This led me to wondering about the potential of mindfulness practice as a vehicle or approach for developing a whole person approach to tertiary teaching; I wanted to gain greater understanding of the experience of teaching mindfully outside of my own personal experience, given that little has been written about this phenomenon.

I have had an interest in meditation since my late teenage years. I learnt about mindfulness in the early 1990s, have been on many mindfulness meditation retreats of varying duration; and have been practising mindfulness meditation over the last 25 years. I endeavour to practise formal and informal mindfulness on a daily basis. Over the years this has provided a vehicle for me, initially to help manage my life as a mother who wanted to maintain a professional role while caring for two young children. Mindfulness meditation brought many challenges, which are inherent in the practice. Nevertheless the overall benefits called me to continue the practice as part of my individual personal and spiritual journey and growth. In 2003 I started drawing on mindfulness practice for increasing my own health and wellbeing and learnt that mindfulness had been introduced into healthcare by Kabat-Zinn (1996). Following that I started purposely bringing mindfulness into my work as an interpersonal practice with people with dementia and the staff caring for them. My mindfulness practice helped me to become more grounded and at ease in tertiary education (see Broom, 2013b; Dorrestein, 2012).

My work experience, life experience and study in mindbody healthcare, taught me the importance of the interpersonal relationship in bringing professional skills and knowledge to any healthcare interaction. In whole-person mindbody healthcare, Broom (1997) described relationship skills as “intimacy skills” (p. 62). These intimacy skills include being authentically present, being aware of one’s own and the client’s non-dual multi-dimensionality impacting each other, listening deeply for the emotional meaning of the client’s experience and bringing compassion to the relationship (Broom, 1997). In order to translate this healthcare notion into a health education context, and for something of this level of connection with a large group of students to occur, I concluded that I needed to be aware of and comfortable with my own feelings and emotions, be comfortable with “liv[ing] the questions” (Rilke as

cited in Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 113), not necessarily knowing the answers, and being able to hold multiple perspectives.

I started consciously bringing informal mindfulness practice into my lecturing about four years ago. It opened up a whole new way of “being a lecturer”. This involved bringing a whole-person mindbody dimension into lecturing and in my relationship with students, connecting with students in a more congruent, authentic, person-centred and compassionate way, as well as finding new ways of approaching, preparing and presenting education sessions (Dorrestein, 2013). I also started exploring the literature for links between mindfulness, relationship and education, which eventually led to the start of this study. All of the above are aspects of my interest in this topic. On a deeper level, and resonant with a hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy, I find it easier to express the meaning of my journey into this thesis through the poem I have included at the end of the chapter. It is a creative response to the question at the start of this section.

My own experience has stimulated my interest in exploring other teachers’ experiences of mindfulness in a tertiary education context, as this is a gap in the literature and I believe it is an approach that “matters” (Smythe & Giddings, 2011, p. 26). Finally, my worldview and how I understand human “being”, fit closely with hermeneutic phenomenology, which links my interest in the topic with the choice of underpinning philosophy and methodology. While my experience with the topic is likely to be one of the strengths of the research, it is likely to be one of its limitations as well. My pre-knowing may colour my interpretations of the participants’ stories. For this reason I include the following section in this chapter.

My understanding of terms used

According to a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective, I cannot help but be shaped by a horizon of experience, culture and historicity (Gadamer, 2004). This horizon contains my pre-suppositions and fore-knowings about mindfulness practice in general and how I used this in my teaching, as described in the previous section. In order to demonstrate methodological trustworthiness (Wright-St Clair, 2015), I explain how my knowledge and experience may have influenced the way in which I gathered and synthesised the information for this study.

I have already indicated that I understand and believe in the impact and significance of the interpersonal relationship. This notion has been demonstrated in research both in teaching (see for instance Cornelius-White, 2007) and in healthcare (see for instance Paddy, 2001). Due to my long journey with various forms of mindfulness and other meditation practice, and an interest in wider reading around this domain of life, I needed to be alert to letting the participants' meanings of their mindfulness practice during teaching arise from their stories, while acknowledging that my experience may have allowed me to hear or see things that others might not.

I acknowledge that my horizon is not a static background, but an ever moving and evolving context (Gadamer, 2004), as has been my experience along the journey of this project. In the discussion chapter I will give a brief description of how my horizon has changed.

Another element of this horizon is the choice of words and phrases that I use and what I understand them to mean. I provide the next section which explains the words and phrases that may otherwise not be clear.

Explanation of chosen words

Tertiary education – this study is situated in tertiary, or university, education. The term higher education is often used in the literature on mindfulness in this domain. I have included tertiary or higher education interchangeably, or as used by authors cited.

Anecdote – an example of an aspect of a participant's particular storied experience that illuminates the pre-reflective or lived meaning of an experience, in this case of teaching mindfully. In its very specific nature something of "the general or the universal" meaning (van Manen, 2001, p. 120) of a phenomenon is revealed.

Authenticity – the quality of being or becoming more real in terms of awareness of and acknowledgement of "the whole of who I am" (Palmer, 1998/2007, p. 14). Hunt (2006) added being coherent or congruent with one's internal and external "mores, structures, and constraints of the situation" (p. 52). Heidegger's notion of authenticity is similar, yet slightly different, in that he indicated authenticity as "the ability to take responsibility for choosing our own way to be" (Wrathall, 2005, p. 61). The difference lies in Palmer's recognition of the importance of also accepting the aspects of ourselves as when we may not be quite as fully how we would choose

to be, but simply find ourselves to be however we are, including “our shadows and limits, our wounds and fears, [as well as] our strengths and potentials” (Palmer, 1998/2007, p. 13).

Mindbody or mindbodyspirit – these words are written as one, indicating the notion that on a fundamental level a person is multidimensional, whole and non-dual, there is no separation between mind, body (Broom, 2013a) and spirit (Broom, 1997).

Mindfulness – this needs a somewhat longer explanation than the previous words, because it is used variously in the literature to describe a formal and informal meditation practice that may include a variety of practices or exercises (secular or Buddhist), a mental state, an intervention or technique, or an outcome of these practice(s) (Davidson, 2010). Additionally, Kabat-Zinn (2011), considered the originator of the current interest in mindfulness in healthcare, used mindfulness as “an umbrella term” for “a universal dharma” (p. 283) that he saw as representative of the teachings of the Buddha but in a Western secular context. In this thesis I do not use mindfulness to mean a mental state, intervention, technique or outcome. I will provide a description that reflects some of the descriptions in the literature, alongside my own experience of mindfulness practice and teachings from mindfulness teachers. I refer to mindfulness as an overarching practice of developing the ability through remembering – translation of the Pali word “sati” (Bodhi, 2011, p. 21) – to deliberately and consciously turn towards one’s experience as it occurs. Additionally the intention is to do this with attitudinal qualities like kindness, openness and patience; and, finally, with an intention to contemplate and discern the significance of what has been observed or noticed, the meaning of the experience.

Mindfulness practices – this term will be used at times in the thesis to indicate the different ways that mindfulness practice can be done as a way to practise developing a mindful way of being. Most frequently used practices are pausing, turning attention to and noticing one’s breath, body, feelings, sensory based experiences (e.g. what can be heard, seen, tasted, touched, smelled), or thoughts. Furthermore, it is useful to be aware of the distinction between informal and formal mindfulness practice.

Informal mindfulness practice – this study focuses on the experience of teachers bringing informal mindfulness practice into their teaching, so wherever I use the phrase mindfulness practice, I refer to informal mindfulness practice: remembering

to bring awareness to one's own breathing, feelings, sensory based experience, and thoughts, and the attitudinal qualities of mindfulness to everyday being and doing in life; in this case, specifically the everydayness of being a tertiary teacher.

Formal mindfulness practice – time set aside regularly for a designated period of sitting mindfulness meditation or walking mindfulness meditation. In a Buddhist context informal mindfulness practice is supported and enabled by a person's regular formal mindfulness practice.

The phenomenon of interest in this study is 'teaching mindfully'. Three ways of describing the phenomenon presented themselves before and during the study: first, teaching mindfully, which is where I started; second, practising mindfulness while teaching, which was part of my explanation for recruitment purposes of this study; and third, being mindful while teaching, to which some of the participants referred.

The phrase 'practising mindfulness while teaching' describes what participants were *doing* while teaching, and thus does not best reflect the ontological (*being*) nature of a phenomenon of interest for a hermeneutic phenomenological study. For this reason I did not use this phrase in describing the phenomenon.

The phrase 'being mindful while teaching' appears to point to a separation between the being of the teacher and the doing of teaching. In that context 'being mindful' could be understood as the teacher being separate from the teaching and the 'being mindful' as being solely self-focused. For some of the participants this was one of the starting points of mindfulness practice: becoming aware of one's own internal, mental and physical processes, in order to reduce suffering (Bodhi, 2011). For this reason this phrase will only be used where it is stated by a participant.

The phrase 'teaching mindfully' points to the quality of teaching and the way of being of the teacher combined in one notion. Through engaging in a hermeneutic phenomenological research process, my interpretation of participants' stories points to an integration of the many dimensions of a tertiary teacher's teaching experience resulting from bringing his/her informal mindfulness practice into his/her everyday teaching practice. This is the reason I prefer to use this phrase in this thesis.

Having introduced this study, its context, my background in relation to it, the reason for the choice of methodology, and its specific words and phrases used, I now provide an overview of the thesis.

Guide through the thesis

In this chapter I have summarised the focus and context of the study, I have indicated the value of the work and have explained what I bring to it, my choice of methodology and the terms and phrases I used. I start all, except the findings chapters, with one or two quotes, which I found to be reflective of the tone or content of the chapter. I wanted to let the findings chapters speak for themselves as they represent the unique experiences of the participants. As with each of the other chapters, this introduction is concluded with a reflection and a poem.

In Chapter Two I describe and discuss the literature that forms the context of this study. I synthesise what is already known and discuss the gap that this study explores.

I provide my understanding and interpretation of the methodology that underpins the research in Chapter Three and indicate how I made sense of it in relation to the topic of investigation. Additionally, Chapter Three contains the methods I used along the way, demonstrating how I worked within the philosophy guiding the research process. Within this chapter I also share some of what I experienced as a novice researcher grappling with the process of doing hermeneutic phenomenology, finding ways to reach the ‘clearings’ in understanding, and finding ways to express my understandings in writing; recognising that these are my understandings during this period of exploration and that they are not finite, nor static, nor definitive. At the end of Chapter Three I introduce each of the participants by way of a poem that emerged in contemplating the whole of each person’s stories of teaching mindfully.

Chapters Four, Five and Six are the findings chapters. They are titled according to the essential themes that emerged of the meaning of teaching mindfully, the phenomenon of interest. The chapters contain the particular anecdotes that reveal something of the deeper and universal meanings I recognised, illustrated by examples from individual participants. These chapters also show how I arrived at understandings on a deeper level, which is the purpose of hermeneutic phenomenology.

Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter, in which I have brought together and discussed the understandings from the preceding chapters as a whole. I interpret the themes of meaning across all participants, situate the findings in the context of pertinent published literature, and show how I found a deeper meaning that revealed itself in the integration of the three main themes. I highlight the limitations and strengths of this study, identify implications for practice, potential areas for further research. I finish with a reflection, a final poem, and a conclusion to the research.

Reflection

Through poetry I often find a way that allows me to “grasp the essence of some experience in literary form” (van Manen, 2001, p. 97) and that I find difficult to achieve in prose. For that reason I present the following poem, as a way of revealing some of the wonderings and questions that prompted my journey into “the meaning of teaching mindfully in tertiary education.” These questions continued to pull me along in the research and writing journey and continue to draw me into what seems to be a lifelong path of enquiry into my experience.

Journey

Come walk with me
I'll show you, a glimpse.

Small, lost and solitary
amongst the beech trees
in wispy childhood memories

Soulful connections in adolescence
through mentors, companions,
music and contemplation

Abruptly severed,
cut loose,
tossed into the
unpredictable
ever changing
ocean of life

Personal and professional
are they really all that different?

Fearsome wildness
stunning beauty
surface tumult
deep stillness
through all weathers
and atmospheric conditions
of love, new life, heartache
searching and resting,

of uncovering pain
discovering joy
are they really all that different?

Ever deepening sense
of the importance of
human connection
of the meaning in
human being
Me You
Mind Body Spirit
Internal External
Are they really all that different?

Some soulful connections
amongst the whirlwinds of academia
Crushed Enlivened
Health Education
Personal Professional
Rest Ongoing exploration
Opposites Paradoxes
Unity at heart

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

It's easy if you just dance and get the feeling of the process from within the process itself. (O'Reilly, 1998, p. 14)

It is through the practice of meditation that we discover which states of mind, emotions, thoughts, and attitudes are beneficial and which are harmful to ourselves and others, and also how these states influence our interactions with other people and the way we live our lives. (Kyabgon, 2001, p. 23)

Introduction

I undertook the detailed, and depth of, reading for this literature review chapter after I had completed most of the interpretation process, in keeping with the hermeneutic phenomenology methodology (Smythe & Spence, 2012). This was to ensure that my findings from participants' stories were influenced as little as possible by my reading of related literature. In this chapter I discuss what is already known about the experience of teaching mindfully in tertiary education. I do this from a hermeneutic perspective, by exploring meanings that I became aware of through "stepping back to see from a distance" (Smythe & Spence, 2012, p. 23) during and after reading the literature. Since very little has been written about the lived experience of teaching mindfully in tertiary education, I accessed a broader context for the topic. First I introduce my approach to searching the literature in the next section.

Searching the literature

The focus in this chapter is on teaching mindfully in tertiary education. I used the following search terms: mindful* OR contemplat* OR meditat* AND teach* OR educat* OR lecturer OR faculty, AND higher education OR tertiary education OR university OR college, AND lived experience OR phenomenolog* OR meaning. I chose a variety of databases: Scopus for its broad spectrum of literature; ERIC and ProQuest Education Journals for their focus on educational literature; and A+ Education for its Australian content. The reason for including meditate* and contemplat* is that teaching mindfully entails tertiary teachers bringing their own mindfulness practice into their teaching. In its simplest form, mindfulness practice is

described in terms of formal or sitting meditation and informal mindfulness while engaging in everyday activities (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Within tertiary education mindfulness is often included under the umbrella term ‘contemplative practice’ (Barbezat & Bush, 2014), due to its contemplative dimension.

In addition to searching within these databases I manually searched the reference lists of articles and books for relevant titles that did not show in the above searches. I found some texts through my membership of the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE). After some time of searching and reading I realised that the authors of books on mindfulness in higher education were probably writing, at least in part, from personal experience, so I also searched within these books for examples of personal practice and experience of applying mindfulness in teaching. Finally, I included literature on the lived experience of teaching mindfully from teachers at other levels of the educational spectrum when I discuss the themes, in order to broaden the exploration of the phenomenon and to compare and contrast the findings in different teaching contexts.

To start the body of this literature review I first turn to a brief exploration of what mindfulness practice is. I present a short overview of the two strong sub-themes that I found in the literature: the ‘how to’ and the benefits of mindfulness in education. Following that, I present an analysis of what little writing is available on the topic of my thesis. I explore in depth the themes related to the lived experience of teaching mindfully: teaching mindfully as contemplative practice, teaching mindfully as being present, teaching mindfully as being relational, teaching mindfully as opening to non-duality, and teaching mindfully as love. I finish with a summary and a reflection in the form of a poem.

The necessity of discussing mindfulness and mindfulness practice

I have explained my use of “teaching mindfully” in Chapter One as a holistic integration of the many dimensions of a tertiary teacher’s experience through bringing his/her informal mindfulness practice into his/her everyday teaching. In this understanding of teaching mindfully I assume the teacher’s personal mindfulness practice. Before embarking on an exploration of the already existing meanings of teaching mindfully in the literature, and due to the phenomenological focus of this thesis, the theoretical and philosophical background to the mindfulness discussion in

the literature will be brief. This is followed by a similarly brief overview of the literature on the practice of teaching mindfully in education.

The writing on mindfulness covers many different and widely divergent polarities, for example: from popular magazines (Pickert, 2014) to high impact factor academic journals (Epstein, 1999); from academic endeavours to identify the most fundamental effective psychological component of the practice (Carmody, 2015), to in-depth analysis of its historical and philosophical Buddhist context (Grossman & van Dam, 2011); from online newspaper content that reports on mindfulness practice as equivalent to medication for depression (Boseley, 2015), to content that dismisses it as the latest relaxation fad that does not work for mental health (Patterson, 2015); from being hailed as a way to find true inner peace (Francis, 2014), to discussion about the dark side of mindfulness by neuroscience researcher Willoughby Britton (Mindful Direct, 2014); and, as a final example, from the objectivist materialist laboratories of neuroscientists (Desbordes et al., 2012), to a smattering of lived experience accounts (see below).

Within this range of interests there is much debate about mindfulness in the academic domain. It is outside the scope of this thesis to analyse the details of this debate. Nonetheless, some of the challenges identified are relevant. The transition of mindfulness from an Eastern spiritual domain into a Western scientific paradigm comes with challenges. While in the healthcare literature the Buddhist roots of mindfulness are acknowledged by many authors (Grossman, 2010; Maex, 2011), the word mindfulness is used in a number of different ways (Davidson, 2010; Grossman & van Dam, 2011) by different disciplines, each with their own set of assumptions and questions. The term mindfulness can be used to denote a quality of mind, a practice, or an outcome (Davidson, 2010; Kabat-Zinn, 2011; Pool, 2014) or, in a Western healthcare context, an intervention (Davidson, 2010). As a result there are many different descriptions, definitions, and explanations of what mindfulness is. This has been identified, discussed and analysed by numerous authors (see for instance Awasthi, 2013; Bishop et al., 2004; Bodhi, 2011; Chiesa, 2013; Davidson, 2010; G. Dreyfus, 2011; Gethin, 2011; Grossman & van Dam, 2011; Pool, 2014; Purser & Milillo, 2015; Williams, 2010), many of whom are concerned about the confusion that is evident. From a hermeneutic perspective this variety of understandings is to be expected, as meaning is always situated in a historical and

cultural context (Gadamer, 2004), which is also acknowledged by Bodhi (2011) in his exploration of Buddhist mindfulness.

What most of the various descriptions have in common is the element of attention-training for the mind: to enhance the ability to stay focused on an experience of choice. Some descriptions include a contemplative dimension or discernment about the content of that experience, with the purpose of creating more choice in how to respond to that content

Amongst the plethora of literature discussing what mindfulness is, several authors raise the concern that the various versions of mindfulness may not be able to be considered the same construct (Dorjee, 2010; Grossman & van Dam, 2011; R. Hart, Ivztan, & Hart, 2013). Djikic (2014) underpinned this argument by identifying differences in Western and Eastern perspectives on the fundamental problem that mindfulness practice addresses, and the perceived underlying causes of this problem. Many of the concerns identified above are of a theoretical or philosophical nature. In contrast historical Buddhist texts, on which some of the modern debate is based, were orally transmitted teachings by the Buddha for the first 400 years after his life (Bodhi, 2011). Thus, some of the words used in the printed texts may have been situation-specific and “operational demonstrations” (Bodhi, 2011, p. 23) rather than theoretical definitions of the terms used. Moreover, mindfulness teachers often remind practitioners that the Buddha encouraged people to engage in the practices in order to experience for themselves the results and understandings that would arise from it; rather than predominantly gain a theoretical understanding of the teachings (Maex, 2011). For these reasons, and because the question at the centre of this thesis is about the experience of tertiary teachers when they apply their own mindfulness practice in their role as teachers, this introductory section will finish with an overview of what constitutes mindfulness practice.

Mindfulness from a Buddhist perspective

Within a Buddhist philosophy, mindfulness is deeply embedded in a complex world-view founded on the “four noble truths” (Bodhi, 2011, p. 20) in which firstly, suffering is seen as part of the experience of being human; secondly, the causes of this suffering are recognised; thirdly, the end of suffering is possible; and finally, the means to that end are given in the form of the “noble eightfold path” (Bodhi, 2011, p. 20). Both the mental quality and the method of mindfulness are an integral and

pivotal part of this eightfold path of Buddhist ethics, which consists of right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration (Bodhi, 2011; Maex, 2011). ‘Right’ in this context does not mean correct in relation to a particular doctrine or belief system (Grossman, 2015), but in the context of contributing to alleviating suffering (Amaro, 2015; Grossman, 2015). While the above principles are foundational in all Buddhist teachings, different streams have different emphases. The focus for mindfulness practice in Theravada Buddhism is reduction of suffering and liberation for one-self. Pool (2014) asserted the Theravada teachings have “heavily influenced and limited western psychology’s perspectives on mindfulness” (p. 34). In contrast, within the Mahayana Buddhist tradition, the goal of meditation is the liberation from suffering for all sentient beings including oneself, through mindfulness and “loving kindness” meditation practice (Kyabgon, 2001, p. 28).

Notwithstanding some differences, mindfulness practice in Buddhism involves intending and remembering to live life in a way that contributes to the reduction of human suffering (Maex, 2011). In order to achieve this the practitioner needs to remember the two elements of mindfulness practice, to observe and contemplate the content of the following four domains of our experience as it is happening: what is happening in the body, feelings, thoughts and experiential phenomena (Bodhi, 2011), both in meditation and in everyday life. Through paying attention to and then contemplation on these four domains, it is possible to develop insight into the causes of suffering. Two of these causes, identified by the Buddha, are impermanence (everything changes) and human beings’ tendency to want to either hold on to what one likes or push away what one does not like. Once a person experiences some of this for him or herself, and learns to turn towards and simply be with those experiences, it is possible to gradually learn to make choices that enable suffering to be alleviated.

The practice of mindfulness as observation may be focused on something specific in order to develop concentration, or “sustained attention” (G. Dreyfus, 2011, p. 43), with the purpose of contributing to a more settled and peaceful mind with practice and commitment. This greater equanimity (Desbordes et al., 2014) can be developed, for instance, through turning attention to one’s breathing, whenever this is remembered.

Mindfulness as observation may also be “open and undirected” (Bodhi, 2011, p. 28), such as in noticing and evaluating (G. Dreyfus, 2011) whatever arises in awareness in order to gain insight, for instance into habitual patterns of thinking or behaviour, or into the continually changing nature of reality. The practice of mindfulness as contemplation serves to distinguish whether what has been observed contributes to wellbeing or suffering, in order to provide opportunity for a choice in how to respond to what has been observed. Since the focus of the eightfold path is to reduce suffering, another domain of practice is to develop kindness and compassion for self and others (Kyabgon, 2007).

Mindfulness from a Western psychology perspective

In a Western context a psychology-focused understanding of mindfulness was introduced from two different perspectives around the same time in the 1970s.

First I turn to Jon Kabat-Zinn’s (1996) introduction of a secular approach to mindfulness practice in the form of an eight week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme. This approach to mindfulness was extrapolated from his experience and practice of Zen Buddhism, because he saw its potential to alleviate health-related suffering for people within his work environment, the University of Massachusetts Medical Clinic. Therefore many of the Buddhist notions around mindfulness practice, such as the alleviation of suffering, are very recognisable in Kabat-Zinn’s work. Kabat-Zinn (2011) acknowledged presenting a secular version of mindfulness practice in order to make it accessible and acceptable to Western society, while asserting retention of the meanings and essence of mindfulness in a Buddhist sense. His description of mindfulness as “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 4) guides mindfulness practitioners in becoming more aware of the four foundations of mindfulness (body, feelings, thoughts, and sensory experiences) without holding on to their interpretation of the experience, which is often one of the causes of suffering.

In contrast, but still related to the Buddhist notions, instead of referring to the ethical dimensions of the Buddhist eightfold path, Kabat-Zinn (1996) referred to “attitudinal qualities of mindfulness” as being “non-judging, patience, beginner’s mind, trusting, non-striving, acceptance and letting go” (p. 32). From MBSR’s beginnings Kabat-Zinn has acknowledged its Eastern heritage, but his focus was on taking a Western

psycho-educational approach (Kabat-Zinn, 2011), instead of a spiritual path. Kabat-Zinn's often-used description of mindfulness practice does not include a contemplative element of mindfulness practice. Possibly as a result of this, the contemplative dimension does not get much attention in the health related literature on mindfulness.

The second Western approach to mindfulness contrasts with a Buddhist philosophical foundation as well as with Kabat-Zinn's approach. Psychologist Ellen Langer's form of mindfulness was derived "almost entirely within the Western scientific perspective" (Langer, 1989, p. 78). Langer's interest in mindfulness and her subsequent research in health, business and education (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000) stems from her observations of people's mindlessness in everyday life (Langer, 1989). Her work points to a predominantly psychological understanding of mindfulness as "the process of drawing novel distinctions" (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000, p. 2). This is in contrast to what she observed as the more prevalent process of mindlessness, which tends to occur when behaviour is determined by "rules and regulations ... irrespective of the current circumstances" (p. 2). Langer (1989) acknowledged recognisable similarities between the outcomes of the Eastern contemplative and Western scientific approaches to mindfulness, for instance "greater sensitivity to one's environment, more openness to new information, [and] experiencing a greater sense of being in the present" (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000, p. 2). On the other hand, she also identified some significant differences with Buddhism informed mindfulness, such as the lack of a meditation or contemplative component. While Langer's work has a strong link with education, for this study the starting point was a Buddhist informed mindfulness practice.

As indicated, there is ongoing debate amongst scholars about the differences in the various backgrounds and approaches to mindfulness (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011; Dorjee, 2010; R. Hart et al., 2013). However, there is also recognition and acceptance that Western spiritual and secular interpretations and applications have come about and have evolved from the ancient teachings (Batchelor, 2004; Bodhi, 2011), with Maex (2011) asserting, for instance, that Kabat-Zinn did "nothing else but continue" (p. 167) the Buddha's tradition of making his message relevant to the context of the audience. Some authors have come to the conclusion that while the Eastern and Western constructs of mindfulness may be quite different, there is benefit in accepting and working with, rather than arguing the heterogeneity of the

theory of mindfulness (McCown, 2014; Schmidt, 2011). I have chosen to focus this research on mindfulness as a practice, because the only way to know what it means to engage in mindfulness practice is to actually do it. This was one of the reasons for deciding on a phenomenological exploration of the experience of mindfulness practice while teaching.

Within the healthcare context of mindfulness literature the contemplative element of mindfulness practice is often not identified alongside the attention/concentration element. In contrast, the contemplative element of mindfulness is strongly represented within the education domain of mindfulness literature. I next address my reasons for including literature on contemplative education in this chapter.

Teaching mindfully as contemplative practice

After the introduction of mindfulness practice and research in healthcare contexts, educators recognised the relevance of mindfulness to education; both in relation to reduction of stress for students and staff, and in relation to developing new meanings, new insight and ultimately wisdom (Bush, 2011; T. Hart, 2001). This interest resulted in the development and discussion of contemplative education, practice(s) or studies (Morgan, 2015; Roth, 2006), and in the foundation of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society in 1997 (Bush, 2011). Within that Center the Association of Contemplative Mind in Higher Education was started in 2008 (The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, 2015).

The link between mindfulness and contemplative practice is evident, considering the concentrative and contemplative dimensions of mindfulness practice (Bodhi, 2011; Wallace, 2008; Zajonc, 2014). The broader umbrella term ‘contemplative practice’ recognises that mindfulness is one of many contemplative practices which has roots in “all major religions and spiritual traditions” (Barbezat & Bush, 2014, p. xi; see also Bernay, 2014; Miller, 1994/2014), as well as in the history of psychology, with reference to William James’ quote, famous within the contemplative education domain, on “the education par excellence” (Bush, 2011, p. 185). The notion of contemplative educational practice allows teachers, from a variety of religious, spiritual and secular backgrounds, to meet on common ground (see for example Bright & Pokorny, 2013). For this reason I have included writing on contemplative education in this literature review.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse and discuss the attentional and the contemplative dimensions of mindfulness in tertiary education. I use the terms interchangeably or, as referred to by authors in this chapter, as appropriate.

Mindfulness and tertiary education

As discussed, mindfulness is a recent interest within the tertiary education sector. The majority of books on mindfulness and contemplative practice in tertiary education have been published in the last six years (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Gunnlaugson, Sarath, Scott, & Bai, 2014; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Simmer-Brown & Grace, 2011; Zajonc, 2009). A few exceptions to this are Parker Palmer's (1998/2007) seminal book "*The courage to teach*", and Miller's (1994, 1994/2014) work, both of which are often cited in the literature on mindfulness and contemplative practice in tertiary education. As a result of this surge in interest a number of universities have made contemplative education and/or mindfulness an integral dimension in their programmes and philosophy, see for example Brown University (n.d.) and Naropa University (2015) in the USA, Monash University (2015) in Australia, and Bangor University (2015) in the UK.

The literature on mindfulness in tertiary education is highlighting different domains of interest within that sector. Most of the literature comes from the USA. A considerable portion of the literature focuses on measurable outcomes of mindfulness practice in terms of students' cognitive and academic performance, such as concentration, attention, information processing, academic achievement (see de Bruin, Meppelink, & Bögels, 2014; Helber, Zook, & Immergut, 2012; Mapel, 2012; Ramsburg & Youmans, 2014). Only one of those studies is New Zealand-based (Mapel, 2012).

Other work has identified the stress reduction and health benefits for students (Conley, Durlak, & Dickson, 2013; Newsome, Waldo, & Gruszka, 2012; Shapiro, Brown, & Astin, 2011). Benefits have been identified for the development of the whole person (Miller, 2006), for example creativity, interpersonal relationship functioning (Shapiro et al., 2011), empathy, and (self-) compassion (Gokhan, Meehan, & Peters, 2010; Mamgain, 2010; Newsome et al., 2012).

Another area of interest focuses on the 'how to' of mindfulness in higher education. This interest has spawned a number of articles and books (see for example Barbezat

& Bush, 2014; Brady, 2007; Bright & Pokorny, 2013; Griswold, 2010; Haight, 2010; T. Hart, 2004; Levy, 2014; D. Orr, 2012; Schoeberlein & Sheth, 2009; Zajonc, 2013). These publications give examples of contemplative practices and exercises that support a whole-person, social-emotional way of learning and teaching. Many of these exercises are based on the Buddhist four foundations of mindfulness, mindfulness of body, feelings, thoughts and sensory experience; others are drawing on, and bringing in, other contemplative practices, for instance contemplative reading and writing practices (Barbezat & Bush, 2014).

Literature on the experience of mindfulness or contemplative practice for tertiary educators is elusive. The remainder of this chapter will be the main focus of the literature review and includes literature on the experience of mindfulness in higher education and the themes I saw in and around this topic.

Phenomenology of mindfulness for tertiary teachers

Many authors on mindfulness and contemplation in tertiary education acknowledge the importance of teachers being familiar with practising mindfulness themselves before bringing it, or other contemplative exercises, into the classroom for students (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; R. C. Brown, 2014; Schoeberlein & Sheth, 2009).

Therefore it seems surprising that there is little research literature on the experience of mindfulness and other contemplative practices for teachers, both in primary (Albrecht, Albrecht, & Cohen, 2012; Bernay, 2012, 2014) and tertiary sectors of education. Within tertiary education, Beer et al. (2015) identified this lack as possibly due to the “unyielding, fast-paced [practice] environments” (p. 162) within higher education settings in the USA, as well as New Zealand, Australia and the UK (Chalmers, 1998; Winefield & Jarrett, 2001). Webster-Wright (2013) suggested this gap may be due to the greater emphasis and value placed on critical, as opposed to contemplative, thinking within the academy. In addition, the paucity in phenomenological research could be related to the Western scientific imperative to conduct experimental studies to provide evidence of the effectiveness of this approach in higher education. A phenomenological approach does not answer questions of that nature, which may be an additional factor in the limited writing in this domain. An overview of relevant articles addressing the experience of teaching mindfully in tertiary education follows.

I found only one research article specifically exploring the experience of mindfulness or contemplative practice in higher education (Beer et al., 2015). Another qualitative study, by Miller and Nozawa (2002), explored the participants' meditation practices, what effect these practices had on their "personal and professional life" (p. 184), and whether they experienced any challenges with their overall practice. Other studies presenting (some) qualitative data on mindfulness for teachers focused solely on primary or secondary level teachers (see Bernay, 2014; Burrows, 2011; Frias, 2015; Napoli, 2004; Solloway, 2000; Vorndran, 2009). The remaining studies consisted of a master's thesis using a self-study methodology, on "the potential of meditation to inform [tertiary] teaching practice" (Foreman, 2012); and an article presenting three tertiary teachers' reflections on their experience of aspects of their Buddhist meditation practices in their classrooms (Kernochan, McCormick, & White, 2007). Finally, I identified a number of articles, a book chapter and one book which were individual reflections on the authors' experience of their mindfulness or other contemplative practices brought into their teaching (Chan, 2013; Falkenberg, 2012; Kahane, 2011; O'Reilley, 1998; Vacarr, 2001; Walsh, 2003, 2014). Due to the paucity of research related to the topic of my study, the latter experiential writing has been included in this review. I will explore and analyse some of this literature in more detail next, starting with the two research articles.

Research on the experience of teaching mindfully in tertiary education

In a study presented as qualitative, Miller and Nozawa (2002) followed up 182 former postgraduate students in professional development courses which included meditative practice as a key component. Of the 21 participants only four were teachers in post-secondary education; others were a mix of primary and secondary teachers, administrators and consultants. The study has limited trustworthiness in terms of qualitative research, as the article contains little in the way of a decision trail (Koch, 2006). The findings are presented mostly in quotes from participants with little analysis evident. Additionally the findings are very general and limited in scope; therefore Miller and Nozawa's (2002) study has limited but, nonetheless, some value in being able to inform this literature review.

In the only other research pertinent to my study, 17 university academics' and administrators' personal and professional contemplative practices were explored using an interview-based questionnaire (Beer et al., 2015). This project was an

extension of the first author's earlier research (Beer, 2010), in which the impact of administrators' contemplative practice on the academic environment was explored. In the study being analysed here (Beer et al., 2015) seven out of 13 participants were educational administrators. The methodology and methods were clearly described and met standards for rigour and trustworthiness, with a degree of internal consistency of the process (Letts et al., 2007). Findings were presented as three themes of awareness, integration and interconnectedness, each with two or three subthemes.

Beer et al.'s (2015) article was situated in the context of transformative learning. The authors identified the need for educators and administrators to have personal experience of contemplative practice in order to create an appropriate environment for transformative learning by being "engaged in activities which nourish their own growth, creativity, and stability" (Beer et al., 2015, p. 162). The overall tenet of the findings, however, was related to dealing with stress and how that impacted participants' work identities and their sense of interconnectedness within their work place; students were not included in this study. Additionally, out of all examples provided, only one instance was presented of a faculty member relating her contemplative practice to interactions with students. Since only four out of 13 of the interview questions were included in the article, and none of those were specifically related to contemplative practices within the teaching environment, it is not known whether any of the other questions addressed that domain and to what extent the findings relate to transformative learning.

The one in-depth research project that specifically explored the experience and impact of contemplative practice on higher education teaching practice is presented in Foreman's (2012) master's thesis in New Zealand. Using a self-study methodology, Foreman conducted a rigorous process of reflecting on her own committed spiritually-oriented meditation practice in the context of her teaching role. Additionally she reflected on her experience in relation to the teachings of her meditation practice, pertinent literature on integrative teaching and learning, Parker Palmer's work, authenticity, and contemplative practice. Furthermore, she engaged in a shared reflective process with other professional educators who had the same meditation background, in order to corroborate her findings. The study's findings show the following four key themes: "concealment", described as the mystery of unknowing at the centre of all individuals; "awareness of self", through "meditat[ion]

on heart and mind”; and “relationships with others” (Foreman, 2012, p. 107), as an understanding of fundamental unity of all people, which generated a greater compassion for others and herself. An additional theme was the positive impact of her meditation on the teacher-student (Foreman, 2012).

In summary, the research literature on the lived experience of teaching mindfully is limited, but does provide some opportunity to inform the themes I identified within the literature overall. Next I turn to non-research publications that provided insight into the experience of teaching mindfully.

Non-research publications on the experience of teaching mindfully

Mindfulness practice is usually, and in the first instance, seen as an individual, internal process that can be difficult to describe, as demonstrated by the plethora of literature trying to describe what it is from an external, objective perspective. The instructions for practising, while apparently simple, are often paradoxical in nature and subtle shifts in awareness and experience may result, sometimes as an immediate insight, sometimes as a more lasting way of being over time. Additionally, from a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective it can be expected that individual articles reveal the particular horizons of the individual authors. This is the case with most of the writing in this section.

The following three authors shared their understanding of, and some of their experience with, mindfulness practice as a journey from the personal domain through to their academic teaching context. Chan’s (2013) experience with teaching and learning in a medical faculty in Hong Kong included being more aware of how his beliefs formed his horizon of experience within the classroom. He described the psychological benefits of being able to have more equilibrium through mindful breathing at the start of a class, allowing him to respond more appropriately and be more present in the moments of teaching during his interactions with students. In contrast, an integrative mindbody experience of mindfulness practice is the focus in C. Stanley’s (2007) article. She illustrated this through an example of the development of bringing her personal mindfulness and mindful reflection practice into an “intolerable” academic work situation. She acknowledged the need for commitment and perseverance in the practice before she experienced benefits, which she identified as significant. From a very different perspective again Falkenberg (2012) presented a meticulously constructed analysis of, and argument for, the notion

that teaching in and of itself is already a contemplative practice. Yet, similar to the above two authors, Falkenberg's lived experience of mindfulness practice formed the basis of his interest in developing this conceptualisation of teaching. He described a process of deepening awareness during this personal journey: from initially noticing the external environment more to developing greater awareness of his thoughts, to noticing the interconnectedness of mindbody, to noticing the automaticity of most of his behaviours, and to the realisation that this learning could be transferred to his professional domain as a tertiary teacher. There is some lived experience content in these examples.

More in line with a hermeneutic phenomenological lens, Walsh (2014) as a tertiary teacher in education, shared her contemplative lived experience journey of working towards teaching with an open heart. She demonstrated this process in relation to some students taking up a lot of "air time" (Walsh, 2014, p. 14) which she found particularly challenging. She included examples of "particular moment[s] of teaching" (Walsh, 2014, p. 15) and her reflective writing on these. Walsh's story of transformation shows the personal tenacity, trust, courage and openheartedness to herself that was needed to learn from the level of vulnerability uncovered in the process. She was supported in "being present, in the moment, open to direct (non-dual) experience" (Walsh, 2014, p. 19) by drawing on her theoretical understandings from feminist poststructuralist and Buddhist perspectives. However, ultimately she came to understand from a deeply lived realisation, rather than from a theoretical understanding, that being open hearted and non-judgementally present means to be so "with *whatever arises*" (Walsh, 2014, p. 20, original emphasis), whether this is experienced as a good, positive or peaceful experience or not. Walsh described the outcome of this process in terms of feeling more relaxed, more able to connect with humour in class situations, and being more able to actively use a compassionate approach for her students and herself when she feels challenged in her teaching encounters.

In a similarly in-depth reflective article, Vacarr (2001) shared her experience of mindfulness practice embedded in her teaching. She takes the reader on a journey into and through a "disturbingly vulnerable place" (Vacarr, 2001, p.286). This experience arose during a culturally challenging interaction in one of her classes. Vacarr described that moment as "preciously frightening" (p. 286), due to the potential for betrayal on many fronts: the African American student, the rest of the

group of White students, and her own “integrity, ... honesty and ... fundamental trustworthiness” (p. 287). She related the intensity of the situation to a number of factors, including her recognition of her own and all the students’ very real and deep human need for validation in the situation.

Similar to Walsh’s (2014) prior theoretical and experiential knowledge, Vacarr (2001) drew on Palmer’s (1998/2007) teaching philosophy, her professional practice training and experience with “being mindfully present” (p. 293) as a transpersonal psychologist, her desire for “healing dialogue” (p. 290) and to remain human rather than presenting an image of a knowledgeable and powerful academic, all of which underpinned her contemplative teaching practice. Vacarr demonstrated in the remainder of the article how she brought her mindfulness practice into being mindfully present in the situation at the centre of the article, fully empathic, able to “make important connections between the experiences of self and other” (p. 293). She stated that this, as well as “a reverential kind of listening” (Vacarr, 2001, p. 294), created the possibility that students feel safe to share, and learn from that sharing, of their own individual and different perspectives.

Both Walsh’s (2014) and Vacarr’s (2001) responses to the situations they addressed, have similarity to O’Reilley’s (1998) “radical presence” (p. 3) and “deep listening” (p. 19). Whereas Walsh and Vacarr shared their experience of teaching mindfully in relation to one specific teaching issue they grappled with, O’Reilley explored her way of being within the space between teacher and student, giving lived experience examples to illustrate this. She wrote as a contemplative educator and practitioner with Catholic, Buddhist and Quaker roots, drawing particularly on Palmer’s maxim “to teach is to create a space” (Palmer, 1998/2007, p. 92). O’Reilley was able to bring her radical presence into the space of her teaching, through realising the power of mindful presence, by paying attention and deep listening. This included listening to her own needs as well as her students’. It also included a commitment to ongoing practice that enabled the transformation in her teaching and personal life to take place.

The above overview and exploration of some of the relevant writing I found for this review pointed to some of the meanings I saw within and between the texts, including what was missing.

Meanings of teaching mindfully

Approaching this literature review from a hermeneutic perspective, I looked for what themes of meaning became visible to me within the writing that I identified, in an “ongoing process of still seeking meaning” (Smythe & Spence, 2012, p. 23). The application of mindfulness by teachers in higher education has been written about from a number of perspectives, which is reflective of the many different ways that mindfulness itself can be understood, and some of which were discussed in the previous sections. Themes that stood out for me were: the lack of the lived experience of teaching mindfully, teaching mindfully as being present, teaching mindfully as interpersonal practice, teaching mindfully as non-dual intersubjectivity, and teaching mindfully as love.

I start with exploring the apparently hidden nature of tertiary teachers’ lived experience of teaching mindfully, because it is not as hidden as the lack of research might indicate, and it sets the scene for the rest of this chapter.

Teaching mindfully: the hidden nature of tertiary teachers’ lived experience

The lack of research on what it is like to bring one’s own mindfulness or contemplative practice into tertiary teaching is intriguing, considering the quintessentially first-person, experiential, and intimate nature of mindfulness practice (S. Stanley, 2012a). When contemplating all the literature I had read, I experienced a sudden leap of understanding: much of the literature that *is* now available on contemplative education has been written by educators with a longstanding and deeply committed meditation practice. From a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective, and my experience of reading their articles, chapters and books, it is ‘hidden in plain sight’ that they have written that material based on their own deeply lived experience of contemplative education.

I refer in particular to the works of Palmer (1993, 1998/2007), Zajonc (2006a, 2006b, 2009, 2013) and Palmer and Zajonc together (2010), whose presence as contemplative human beings and educators speaks strongly through their writing. Other authors’ personal contemplative practice is also evident in their writing (see for instance Bai, Scott, & Donald, 2009; Barbezat & Bush, 2014; R. C. Brown, 2011; Bush, 2011; Gunnlaugson et al., 2014; Miller, 1994; Roth, 2006). To further illustrate my assertion I refer to Bush’s brief history of contemplative higher

education (2011). Academic fellowships were offered for developing courses with contemplative components for the first time in 1997. Not many, if any submissions were expected; however 136 proposals were received, “many of them extraordinary, creative and rigorous” (Bush, 2011, p. 187). It appears that until mindfulness became a “revolution” in society (Boyce, 2011) many contemplative teachers in tertiary education were indeed hidden and not visible. Now that mindfulness and other contemplative practices are becoming recognised for the benefits they may effect on many different levels, these teachers’ contemplative experience as a whole makes it possible for an enormous richness of material to become available as the foundation for the development of a contemplative pedagogy (Repetti, 2010; Zajonc, 2013). Many of the themes identified in this thesis are recognisable in their writing. I will refer to this as relevant in the following sections.

Teaching mindfully as being present

Several authors in higher education write about mindfulness in teaching as a way of being present in the teaching context. Kahane (2011) described his journey from being extremely anxious as a novice tertiary teacher, to realising that teaching could be a very different process if he was able to become more present in his teaching. Standing in the way of developing his sense of presence was the expectation to be high-performing and successful within the pressured and hierarchical academic world, the focus on security in knowledge and the perceived danger of being seen not to have all expected knowledge at his fingertips. Through his own mindfulness practice he found a way to:

be present to the nuances of the classroom in each moment, a sense of fundamental adequacy rather than lack, an open, non-judgemental curiosity about my own experience, and skilled ways of supporting others in this kind of learning. (Kahane, 2011, p. 20)

In Buddhist mindfulness and meditation Kahane (2011) found “a rigorous practice for cultivating presence” (p. 20). He went on to expand what he learnt by working with, and eventually transforming, a whole teaching team. In developing a culture of authentic inquiry, as part of active learning, they learnt to be more “[them]selves in [their] classrooms”, more present in their teaching. O’Reilly’s (1998) short but evocative book “*Radical presence: Teaching as contemplative practice*” is all about being present. Additionally, as indicated above, while not writing from a phenomenological perspective, the ‘presence’ of tertiary teachers like Palmer, Zajonc

and other authors is evident in their writing about contemplative education. Similarly, T. Hart (2008) wrote from the foundation of his own experience about the benefits of presence as part of contemplative teaching and learning.

Likewise, from a theoretical psychological and empirical scientific perspective mindfulness practice, in general, is associated with presence and being present, as identified by K. W. Brown and Ryan (2003). This is also evident in the healthcare and health education literature where mindfulness is recognised as a process for becoming more present in interactions with others (Childs, 2007; Epstein, Siegel, & Silberman, 2008; Hick & Bien, 2008; McCollum & Gehart, 2010; Siegel, 2010a).

It is not easy, in a phenomenological sense, to define or describe being present or presence and how it is discernible or experienced when teaching mindfully. I offer a few descriptions that convey a phenomenological perspective of something that is called the “mystery of being physically present” by Snowber (1999, p. 23).

Hart’s comprehensive description points to a multidimensional nature of presence:

Presence ... may be recognized by such qualities as nondefensive openness, flexibility of thought, curiosity and questioning, a sense of wonder, suspension of disbelief, leading with appreciation over judgment, an emphasis on contact over categorization ... and a willingness to really meet and, therefore, be changed by the object of inquiry, whether a new idea or a new person. (T. Hart, 2008, p. 236)

The last element in Hart’s quote is similar to Corradi Fiumara’s (1990) recognition of the potential for being changed by really listening to another person. O’Reilley (1998) saw this as requiring “a deep, openhearted, unjudging reception of the other” (p. 19). Similarly Miller (1994/2014) recognised “openness [and a] sense of relatedness” (p. 26) and depth as presence, represented by Emerson’s quote that “the depth from which you draw your life ... is the depth ... of your manners and presence” (p. 23).

In comparison, the findings of Solloway’s (2000) research with teachers “from kindergarten to high school” (p. 30) resonate with the discussion above. She showed teacher presence to arise from a mindful quality of attention that allows the “transformation of the [teacher’s] gaze” (Solloway, 2000, p. 42). The transformation occurs through the intention of non-judgement, the willingness to be open to clearing pre-conceived ideas, to “inviting imagination” (Solloway, 2000, p. 35) and to the

opening, widening and deepening of the relational experience between teacher and student(s) in the service of learning.

In summary, the main elements of presence point to a deep and open quality of “being with” (Walsh, 2003); which leads to the next theme of teaching mindfully as interpersonal practice.

Teaching mindfully as interpersonal practice

The burgeoning interest in mindfulness has predominantly focused on individual practice, the intra-personal elements of this practice (such as awareness of one’s internal processes that is the foundation of mindfulness) and its outcomes. Most of the definitions and research on mindfulness are based on this dimension. A more recent interest is the interpersonal dimension of mindfulness practice (Gunnlaugson, 2009; Gunnlaugson et al., 2014; S. Stanley, 2012b). Interpersonal is defined in the Oxford online dictionary as “relating to relationships or communication between people” (n.d.). Kramer’s (2007) introduction of “*Insight Dialogue*” was a novel way of bringing mindfulness into relationship. Similarly, literature about interpersonal mindfulness practice is also finding a place within the context of healthcare (Irving et al., 2014; Krasner et al., 2009; Singh, Singh, Sabaawi, Myers, & Wahler, 2006) and relationship services (Block-Lerner, Adair, Plumb, Rhatigan, & Orsillo, 2007; Gambrel & Keeling, 2010).

While the recent addition of this domain to the academic literature is evident, what needs to be acknowledged is that mindfulness practice in Buddhism is embedded within the context of the Noble Eightfold path; this includes “right speech” and “right action” (Bodhi, 2011, p. 26), as ethical components of Buddhist philosophy. Simply articulated, mindfulness is “bringing nonjudgmental present moment awareness to your interactions with others” (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010, p. 157). From a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective, the relational element of teaching mindfully is already present, ahead of it being identified in the literature, particularly in articles with lived experience content. For example White (in Kernochan et al., 2007) and Walsh (2014) used compassion and mindfulness practice as a way to improve their teaching relationships. In a similar way, Vacarr (2001) and Foreman (2012) clearly worked very deeply in an interpersonal domain with their own mindfulness or other contemplative practice.

In two other studies with pre-tertiary teachers the theme of interpersonal mindfulness practice is similarly reflected. The interpersonal domain between teachers and students and/or colleagues was the main focus in Burrows' (2011) research with six participants. Her emerging findings indicated that participants experienced benefits in their ability to maintain openness and calmness during emotionally charged interactions. In contrast, Bernay's (2014) study with 43 student teachers, who were followed up in their first year of professional teaching in the primary education, had a broader focus. However, one of the findings identified that beginning teachers became more authentic in their teaching, which in turn made it easier for them to engage with their students.

Intersubjectivity is another dimension of being relational that shows in the literature on both teaching mindfully and on contemplative higher education. While Gunnlaugson (2014) and Scott (Scott, 2014) use "intersubjective" in the context of what I described above as "interpersonal", there is nonetheless a specific interpretation of intersubjectivity that also shows in the literature on teaching mindfully and contemplative education, which I address next.

Teaching mindfully as a non-dual intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity is hailed by Gunnlaugson, Sarath, Scott and Bai (2014) as one of the "new frontiers of contemplative learning and instruction" (p. 303). The Oxford online dictionary (n.d.) identifies intersubjectivity as "existing between conscious minds" or "shared by more than one conscious mind." An in-depth exploration and analysis of this phenomenon is outside the scope of this literature review. For this reason I am pointing to statements and descriptions from educators that jumped out for me and that allude to the possibility of this kind of experience when teaching from a mindfulness or contemplative practice perspective. Intersubjectivity in this sense is described by Coburn (2011) as a "contemplative space" that exists as "in-between" or "liminal spaces and moments: between student and teacher, between head and heart, between intellect and intuition It honors all differences, but with the spirit of nondualism" (no page numbers, section II).

When reading both of Walsh's (2003, 2014) accounts, one a theoretical exploration interwoven with reflective writing on this topic of non-duality and mindfulness practice (2003), the other a reflective journey into her experience of bringing mindfulness practice into a challenging teaching situation (2014), it becomes clear

that teaching with an awareness of the intersubjective, nondual dimension is no easy undertaking.

By dwelling in the “liminal spaces” (Coburn, 2011, section II) that were present in the interactions in the classroom, Vacarr (2001) noted that she was able to contribute to significant “transformation and growth” (p. 294) within the student group. She described this as the process of transforming the perception of boundaries and separateness into seeing where we are deeply connected as human beings, and that this process “is contingent upon our willingness to experience the fear of being seen and known” (Vacarr, 2001, p. 294). This fear is recognised as the foundation of the “self-protective split of personhood from [academic educational] practice” by Palmer (1998/2007, p. 18) and forms the basis of the title of his book “*The courage to teach*.” In accord with this notion of deep connection, duality falls away when teachers “see part of [them]selves in [their] students” (Miller, 1994/2014, p. 26). Likewise a deep exploration of the impact of “9/11” on the actual day it happened, allowed the usual boundaries between teacher and student to diminish, and a deep sense of shared being to arise (Kernochan et al., 2007). The authors called this a process of “dynamic synthesis” (Kernochan et al., 2007, p. 69), in which a non-dual, shared learning takes place between the teacher, the students and the material. The philosophical understandings from “the Tao, Jung’s collective unconscious, and Bohm’s [shared dimension of the] implicate order” (Miller, 1994/2014, p. 23) assist in explaining this experience of connecting with a larger reality. From a different perspective, but in the same domain of intersubjectivity, the teaching space can be identified as a “group field of collective consciousness” in which the teacher’s own “subtle energetic self” (Bache & Gunnlaugson, 2014, p. 381) impacts on the learning space. A skilled teacher with a committed and strong meditation practice can purposely work with this dimension. This is not something that can be orchestrated “through a set of techniques” (Bache & Gunnlaugson, 2014, p. 383). This experience always comes from a place of compassion (Bache & Gunnlaugson, 2014), which takes me to the next section on teaching mindfully as love.

Teaching mindfully as love

The literature on teaching mindfully points to the possibility of a way of knowing that is complementary to the current epistemology underpinning education in the modern world, at all levels of education. This epistemology has a narrow focus on

the development of critical, analytical thought (Barbezat & Bush, 2014) through a “rational-empirical approach” (T. Hart, 2004, p. 28) that is mostly interested in outcomes, within a single discipline or domain of interest (Langer, 1989; Zajonc, 2014). This focus is similarly present in pre-tertiary education (Albrecht et al., 2012). The complementary epistemology I address next encompasses the meanings already discussed in previous sections, alongside what Zajonc (2006b) called an “epistemology of love”. Zajonc (2013) identified this knowing “not as a romantic sentiment, but as the most profound form of knowing by identification” (p. 92), by coming to deeply know something so that love becomes the way of knowing it (Zajonc, 2009). An example of this kind of knowing as love is given by Palmer and Zajonc (2010) in the story of Nobel-prize winning scientist Barbara McClintock. McClintock attributed her discoveries in genetic transposition in maize to taking the time and patience in loving and opening herself up to the plants and to the meanings that would present themselves to her in her quest for answers.

Several of the authors accessed for this literature review on teaching mindfully link their practice with love from another perspective. The importance of being clear about the intent of that love was also identified by Hinsdale (2012), whose article was an expression of her desire to “articulate a pedagogical ethic of love” (p. 37). Through her own journey with bringing her meditation practice into her teaching, she described love as “remember[ing] to drop our defences, to stop our inner dialogue so that we can listen fully and deeply – to truly hear what a student is saying” (Hinsdale, 2012, p. 43). Similarly O’Reilley’s (1998) radical presence incorporated “listening with what love [she] can muster” (p. 28) when finding herself in sensitive interactions with students.

O’Reilley’s (1998) and Hinsdale’s (2012) writing point to a deliberate effort to bring love to their teaching through their contemplative practice. In contrast, Seidel’s (2006) reflections on her practice in primary education show that her heart opens to the children when she gets a sense of the fragility of life connecting her to her students. While she acknowledges that contemplative teaching is a deliberate practice, her love arises spontaneously from the practice, and she allows it to be there.

Summary

This chapter traverses a breadth and depth of the relatively limited literature on mindfulness and contemplative practice in higher education. Within the scope and limits of this thesis, I have provided a necessarily brief overview of understandings of mindfulness practice in general, the complexity of what it is, and how it is used by teachers as they bring it into their work in tertiary education. I discussed my choice to include literature on contemplative education in this review. I identified and explored the phenomenological and other experientially focused writing I was able to find. In addition, I chose and highlighted themes of meaning already in the literature which stood out and spoke to me. Following a poetic reflection on my experience of exploring the content for and writing this chapter, the next chapter provides the methodology and methods used in the research.

Reflection

I share my reflection, once more in the form of a poem, on the journey into the mass of material and finally “out the other end” with this chapter now written.

The meanings of teaching mindfully

Many learned words in print
on the practice of mindfulness in tertiary education
What do the words reveal?
What are they pointing to, hinting at?
What lies waiting to be seen?
What is already known about the phenomenon
of teaching mindfully?

Articles, books, chapters, paragraphs
videos, interviews, courses, conferences, poems, theses,
experts on the 'net', in emerging organisations.

Many voices
building on the foundational work
of secular mindfulness in healthcare
extrapolated from ancient
and contemporary Buddhist

and other wisdom traditions

each describing, explaining, exploring a piece
of the field of mindfulness,
including in education.

Grappling with ‘notions of’
trying to...

create a tidy op.e.ra.tio.nal definition
work out THE active ingredient
describe the way mindfulness works
and identify the minimum DOSE for best effect

explaining
providing instructions
on the "how to" of
bringing mindfulness into teaching
from kindergarten
to university

exalting the many benefits
for students,
especially students,
occasionally of stress relief
for pressured teachers

exploring ways to
relieve the discomfort
acknowledge
and build an acceptable bridge
between the spiritual
foundation of mindfulness
and the secular
imperative of education

arriving at the door of
being human
in an increasingly
challenging-for-humans world

arriving at the door of
transformative
whole person
integrative
contemplative
education

recognising and recommending
the importance of personal
mindfulness and contemplative practice
of the teacher
while there is only
a smattering of stories
sharing
points in time,
parts of a journey,
some of the experience
and sense-making
of what it means to teach mindfully.

But wait...
hidden amongst the great volume
of words on paper and screens
can be sensed
the heartfelt searching
for meaning
the long roads of practice
from various contemplative
and wisdom traditions

the rich experiential knowing
the deep humanity and compassion,
and love,
the willingness
to see, turn to
and be with complexity and multi-dimensionality,
to be present with unknowing and vulnerability
in the interpersonal
intersubjective relationship
and beyond
between students, self and the topic.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Methods

*To think is to confine yourself to a
single thought that one day stands
still like a star in the world's sky.*

(Heidegger, 1971/2001, p. 4)

Methodology

Introduction

The methodology I used to guide this study is a hermeneutic phenomenological “reflection on the nature of reality” (Koch, 1999, p. 22). I applied this to researching the experience of teaching mindfully for teachers in tertiary education who bring their personal mindfulness practice into their everyday teaching role. The methodology is underpinned and guided by Heidegger’s ontological philosophy of being (in life) and Gadamer’s understanding of interpretation of text, that is, the stories of the lived experience as told by participants and deeply explored for understanding by the researcher (van Manen, 2001). Since the philosophical underpinnings refer to the human condition as a whole I will use the words ‘we’, ‘our’ or ‘us’ in this chapter to represent an often shared human experience amongst ‘us’ as human beings, where I think this is likely to be applicable. Both Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s work are part of a relativist paradigm in which interpretation is not definitive (Annells, 1996). Thus the understandings about the meaning of teaching mindfully in this thesis are not offered as definitive, but as emerging and ever changing; yet, nevertheless, of value and an addition to understandings that may already exist.

Why a phenomenological approach?

As described in Chapter One my interest in mindfulness practice being used by teachers in a tertiary education context stems from the transformation I experienced as a result of starting to use informal mindfulness practice in my own teaching. The mindfulness I brought into my teaching enhanced my confidence as a tertiary teacher, it improved the relationship I had with students, even when the context was a large group of students in a lecture theatre, and the student feedback on my

teaching improved. I was interested in exploring other tertiary teachers' experiences in order to come to a deeper understanding about the phenomenon of teaching mindfully in tertiary education. Additionally, I saw similarities between a mindful way of being and a phenomenological way of being, and I was intrigued to explore this dimension of the study as well.

In the next section I will address my understandings of the underpinning philosophy of this study, in order to demonstrate how it has guided and supported the research process.

Underpinning philosophy

Heidegger's understandings

Heidegger's philosophy is an existential philosophy (Koch, 1996); it is focused on the lived experience of human existence which always exists in a way that is inseparable from a lived context. Heidegger saw human 'being' as no different from a human being, indicating that being only exists as a 'being-in-the-world' (Harman, 2007) or 'being there', which he called Dasein. Heidegger also saw Dasein as "always already" a 'being-with' (M. King, 2001, p. 99), within a historical context and with an inherent, albeit tacit or hidden, meaning (Harman, 2007). Additionally, the meaning of lived experience is shaped by our "fore-structure of understanding" (Heidegger cited in Greatrex-White, 2008, p. 1843); the understandings we always already have from our cultural and social background and personal relationships, which guided the inclusion of my pre-suppositions interview. Van Manen's (2001) interpretation of the historical context is that the meaning of the lived experience can only be understood in the context of a person's lived time (temporality): the notion that the past, the present and the future are always present within us through the meaningful experiences in which we find ourselves "thrown into a world" (M. King, 2001, p. 36) of everyday activities.

Although the "objects of experience" (Greatrex-White, 2008, p. 1843), or phenomena, always already have multidimensional layers of meaning, this meaning is usually covered over, "half-hidden, disguised or forgotten" (M. King, 2001, p. 112) and unnoticed, hidden in our "everydayness" (M. King, 2001, p. 42). This hiddenness is due to the taken for granted nature of our experience (Parsons, 2010); for instance the meaning of our everyday activities (Reed, 2008) and our relations with others, described by Heidegger as "fallenness" (M. King, 2001, p. 37). As

human beings we tend to fall into being lost to the world, through getting caught up in the world's endless possibilities and everyday occupations, activities and interactions; we tend not to see or look at the complexity and mysteriousness of the "everyday mode of existence" due to its nearness and familiarity to us (M. King, 2001, p. 42).

Therefore, if the meaning of our experience is to be revealed, a conscious effort needs to be made to uncover it or bring it to light, in order for us to become aware of it (Harman, 2007). Consistent with the above philosophical understandings and perspectives, in this study I sought to uncover the meaning of teaching mindfully through asking participants of specific moments of mindfulness in the everydayness of their teaching. Heidegger saw this as the ontological nature of understanding: we only understand the nature of being from a position of having pre-suppositions, i.e. that "we understand in terms of what we already know" (Heidegger cited in Geanellos, 1998, p. 160). Additionally, the ability to gain understanding about our being is through our ability to go beyond our immediate experience of being in the world through being able to look deeply into the depths of a specific experience (Harman, 2007).

This is another reason why I am interested in this methodology. Heidegger's understanding of 'fallenness' is not unlike the Buddhist philosophical perspective on human suffering. Mindfulness practice is one way to start becoming more aware of our fallen-ness, and to start recognising our historicity, our thrownness, life's complexity and mysteriousness and human beings' interconnectedness. Being able to recognise this contributes to relieving our suffering, which could be identified in Heidegger's terms as our "Angst" or "anxiety" (Harman, 2007, p. 55)

Consistent with the methodology I decided to use in-depth individual interviews with mindfulness practitioners. The mode of questioning used in these interviews was congruent with exploring specific experiences, by asking about particular moments and events that participants knew to be examples of mindful moments in their role as teacher.

Gadamer's understandings

While Heidegger saw Dasein as primordial, albeit in relation to the being's cultural and social background, from a philosophical perspective Gadamer placed great

emphasis on understanding and interpretation of language. He identified language as the “acquir[ed] familiarity and acquaintance with the world itself and how it confronts us” and described it as an “enigmatic and profoundly veiled process” (Gadamer, 1976, p. 63). Gadamer saw a speaker as generally not being aware of deeper meanings of the language he or she uses. Van Manen (2014) explained this as follows: when we use a word in our everyday language there is a shared immediate pre-reflective understanding of the meaning in the context of the whole. This meaning is already an interpretation and is situated within the ‘horizon’ of a person’s past and present through his or her tradition and background (van Manen, 2014).

Additionally, Gadamer recognised understanding not as a unique ability to enter into the subjectivity of a speaker or author. He indicated that we can only understand another person (or text) when we can see how the person (or the text) can be true and understood from the perspective of the speaker’s context and perspective, “within which he has formed his views” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 292; see also van Manen, 2014, p. 132). However, for real understanding to occur there is a need to “overcome the particularity” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 304) of both parties present in the interpretation process, and to arrive at a new understanding that transcends both parties’ horizons.

Furthermore, once a word is written down and its deeper meaning(s) are contemplated, the taken for granted nature of its surface meaning appears to have suddenly “fallen away” from the interpreter (van Manen, 2014, p. 21). Once written, a word becomes separated from the original context in which the author has written it; and a new relationship of understanding can be formed (Gadamer, 2004).

Gadamer saw understanding of the lived world as a linguistic and conversational “fusion of ... horizons” (cited in Geanellos, 1998, p. 160) between an interpreter and the language (or text) of the interpreted. Here the meaning of the language is mediated and co-created by both the listener (interpreter) and the speaker (the spoken or text). This occurs as the “hermeneutic circle” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 291) in which there is constant movement of interpretation from the whole to the part, and from the part back to the whole until a harmony of understanding has occurred.

Gadamer (2004) identified that horizons are always changing as new understandings develop (Koch, 1996), that the true meaning of a text is never complete (Gadamer, 2004) and that multiple understandings can be derived from a text or story (Annells, 1999). Additionally, Gadamer asserted that in order to arrive at understanding

beyond our own pre-understandings, we need to find a way to break away from our own fore-meanings, and develop a sensitivity or be prepared to be “pulled up short by [elements of] the text” (p. 270) that alert us to a potentially different meaning to what we are expecting. This requires a different way of listening; not a listening for what is already known, as in our “tendency ... to perceiving [our] own mirror image in others” (Corradi Fiumara, 1990, p. 163), but a listening from a place of receptivity and vulnerability that allows not for better understanding but for new understandings to arise (Corradi Fiumara, 1990; Koch, 1996). If I do not explore what my pre-understandings are, I would “fail to see what manifests itself by their light” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 354) and this would limit the value of the findings of the hermeneutic approach to this study. For this reason, in congruence with the methodology, I engaged in a presuppositions interview prior to data gathering, consisting of being interviewed by my supervisor about my own understandings of teaching mindfully.

My pre-understandings and rationale for choice of methodology

Consistent with the methodology, I now turn to my own beliefs (ontological and epistemological) that I bring to this research and why I consider a phenomenological methodology as the most appropriate for it. Through my life-world experience, as described in Chapter One, I see, and at times have an experiential sense of, the non-dual nature of human existence, both within ‘my own’ mindbodyspirit and through my interconnectedness with other human beings and life in general. Mindbody theory draws heavily on phenomenological philosophy, epistemology and axiology (see for instance Broom, 1997, 2007), thus there is a resonance with Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s work as they assumed the interconnectedness of mind and body and the deep connectedness between the beings in this world (1953/1962).

Furthermore, as a result of my own mindfulness practice, I see a connection between mindfulness practice, Heideggerian phenomenology and Gadamerian hermeneutics, in exploring and understanding lived experience. Van Manen (1990) cited Heidegger when providing the most apt description of phenomenology itself as “thoughtfulness ... a minding, a heeding, a caring attunement ... a mindful wondering ... of what it means to live a life” (p. 12). This description has similarities with a mindful way of being through mindfulness practice as identified in Chapter One. In addition, Siegel

asserted that by using mindful attunement we come to know and understand ourselves through our interactions with others (Siegel, 2010b).

My choice of Heideggerian phenomenology was not without its emotional and philosophical challenges in terms of Heidegger's Nazi connections. I had, and still have, great difficulty in seeing how someone with such sensitivity and receptivity to what it means to be human, could align himself with the actions of the Nazi regime. In the end I decided I had to let this dichotomy be, in keeping with my own mindfulness practice, and allow Heidegger's thinking about Being at least to take me to where it would.

Having gone through my own experience of a longstanding meditation practice and of working with informal mindfulness practice in my teaching, I have a "bond to the subject matter" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 295), needed for a hermeneutic enquiry. This means I was able to recognise a degree of common understanding that I share with some of the experiences of participants in the study. In contrast, while this common understanding is important in order to develop a 'fusion of horizons', in terms of the meaning of teaching mindfully, I needed to remain open to new understandings that may reveal themselves in the participants' stories and anecdotes (van Manen, 2001). According to Gadamer (2004), the work of hermeneutics lies within the tension of the "fore-understandings" (p. 294) and familiarity with the phenomenon from the perspective of the tradition of the listener. From that familiarity strangeness, new understandings and meanings emerge from the ongoing conversations, the 'fusion of horizons' with the individuals involved in this project and with the stories as a whole.

Research design

Congruent with hermeneutic phenomenological research the design of this study was emergent in nature. The specific description and exploration of mindfulness as experienced by the participants emerged as I progressed through the process of information gathering and analysis, as I became aware of further questions about the phenomenon of interest, "teaching mindfully", that emerged from the interviews and as my understanding of the phenomenon grew (Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, & Spence, 2008).

Ethics

This hermeneutic phenomenological project draws on gathering information from human participants. Therefore I sought ethical approval for the project, which was granted by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) (Appendix A). I did not start to gather information until I had received ethics approval.

Social and cultural sensitivity

Under New Zealand's commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi¹, I adhered to the principles of partnership, participation and protection (AUT University, n.d.). I sought consultation with a Māori advisor within the occupational therapy community regarding the cultural appropriateness of the research processes. In the end none of the people who volunteered to participate in this research identified as Māori².

Methods

In order to ensure the internal consistency of this study I worked consistently to make certain that all aspects of the study were congruent with hermeneutic phenomenology.

Identifying and inviting potential participants

Inclusion criteria and recruitment of participants

I describe inclusion criteria next, in order to demonstrate that transferability of the study's outcomes can be evaluated (van Manen, 2014). The study's purpose is exploring the lived experience of tertiary teachers' informal mindfulness practice integrated into their teaching. I sought participation from teachers working at tertiary education institutions, who practised informal mindfulness – through a past or current formally taught mindfulness meditation practice – and who were purposely applying these informal practices in their role as teacher. I considered such teachers to have experience of the phenomenon of teaching mindfully and could thus inform the study (van Manen, 2001). I welcomed participation from diverse professional backgrounds and of any age as I considered such variation would facilitate “disclosing the [phenomenon under investigation] in its full richness and in its greatest depth” (van Manen, 2001, p. 20). Of these potential participants, I sought those who were willing to share their stories of what it is like for them to teach

¹ New Zealand's founding document

² The original Polynesian settlers in New Zealand

mindfully. Interested people who had a supervisory relationship with me would have been excluded from participation in this research in order to minimise any risks of coercion.

In qualitative research it is important to clearly identify recruitment strategies in order to increase the appropriateness, adequacy and clarity of the study's focus and aims (Annells, 1999). I sent out an advertisement (see Appendix B) for the study to members of two Mindfulness Special Interest Groups via the administrators of these groups: one university based group of approximately 160 members, and one health services based group of approximately 120 members. Eight volunteers responded to these two mail-outs and a ninth made contact with me via a member of one of these groups. Of these nine, two volunteers did not meet the inclusion criteria.

As the research progressed it was decided that I did not need more than seven participants, because I was gathering a sufficient volume of data required for phenomenological research through the in-depth and rich lived experience descriptions of the phenomenon of interest (van Manen, 2014). The participants shared many experiences of the everydayness of teaching mindfully, in a variety of contexts that were related to their role as teacher in the tertiary education environment. This variety is congruent with the methodology, which aims to gather "examples of *possible human experiences*" (van Manen, 2014, p. 313). For this reason I did not send out any further advertisements or adopt any other recruitment strategies.

Informed and voluntary consent

I sent interested people a participant information sheet (see Appendix C), so that they could make an informed decision about participation. The information sheet provided full descriptions about the purpose and process of the project, their role in it and how and where findings will be published. I made it clear that participation was entirely voluntary. I sought written consent for participation and recording of the interviews via the consent form approved by AUTECH (see Appendix D).

Respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality.

While reflecting on the recruitment processes, I considered that there may not be many lecturers in tertiary education who practise mindfulness. Since participants could know each other, confidentiality throughout the process would be essential.

Meetings for interviews occurred either in my workplace or in the participant's workplace, as determined solely by each participant.

I stored consent forms and digital recordings in separate, secure locations and have taken care not to identify the educational institutions and their geographical locations in this thesis. Any names used are fictitious, either chosen by me and approved by the participant, or selected by the participant. I have changed any other potentially identifying information to avoid recognition by anyone other than the participants themselves.

Minimisation of risk

I knew four of the participants superficially through our shared involvement in one of the Mindfulness Special Interest Groups. I did not know the other three participants prior to their participation in this study. The nature of this study carried low risk of psychological and physical harm for participants, as they are not considered a vulnerable group. Nevertheless, mindfulness practitioners endeavour to become aware of their internal processes as they occur (Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, & Freedman, 2006), teaching at tertiary level can be challenging (R. M. King, n.d.), and the phenomenological researcher probes for deep understanding of the phenomenon of interest (van Manen, 2001). Consequently I prepared for the possibility that examples of uncomfortable lived experience or vulnerability might arise during the interviews. Part of the minimisation of risk to participants was to ensure that they were aware that counselling support would be available to them should they feel the need or wish to use it.

The participants

In order to ensure that participants' privacy is protected, I only provide general information. Participants' ages ranged from 30 to 40 years (one), 50 to 60 (four), and 60 to 70 (two). Four women and three men participated in the study.

Participants came from diverse professional backgrounds. Three participants had an education background: one from early education, one from adult education, and one from Steiner education. The remaining four participants came from an English language background, a psychotherapy background, the conflict resolution domain, and psychology.

The length of time participants had used mindfulness practice varied from 2 to 42 years; the person with the shortest time using mindfulness (2 years) had been a meditator in a different tradition for 25 years. Moreover, the meditation backgrounds were varied. All participants self-selected to be part of the study and identified that they used mindfulness practices as described in the participant information sheet. This included Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (2), Buddhism (3), Steiner meditation (1), and Vipassana (1). This was considered appropriate in the context of this study as mindfulness is “implicit in many philosophical and spiritual traditions” (Hick & Bien, 2008, p. 35).

Participants’ cultural backgrounds were varied, representative of New Zealand’s multicultural society (Wilson, 2014): one American, one German (with strong Asian links), two English, one Dalmatian/New Zealander and two Pākehā³ New Zealanders. I did not receive any expressions of interest from tertiary teachers of Māori, Pacific Island and Asian cultural background.

Gathering and analysing the information

Within hermeneutic phenomenology the processes of gathering and analysing information from the participants are not separate, but occur simultaneously (van Manen, 2001). This happened naturally through the interview process as I started to contemplate what participants’ words might be pointing to or revealing, and started to notice similarities and differences in participants’ stories amongst themselves and in relation to my own understandings. Additionally, I kept a reflective journal throughout the process, recording my thoughts, observations, musings and poems, which supported the emergence of the meanings of teaching mindfully.

I use the term ‘gathering information’, as opposed to the more clinical term ‘data collection’, to honour the participants’ sharing of their experience and stories. This language is in keeping with hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy which values and respects people’s lived experience as a deeply human existential experience (van Manen, 2001).

Before, and throughout, gathering information and interpretation, I engaged in a process of self-reflectivity; for example, having a pre-suppositions interview with my supervisor and keeping a reflective journal. Writing and drawing in this journal

³ White non-Māori New Zealander

assisted me to explore and make explicit my own biases, assumptions, questions, and my own values and way of being in relation to the phenomenon. This is an essential component of a hermeneutic phenomenological research process (van Manen, 2001) since we are, by nature, already under the “spell of our own fore-meanings” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 270), and since we are often unaware of the fore-meanings that underpin our understanding (Gadamer, 2004). In this study my own experience and understandings of mindfulness in tertiary teaching will influence the epistemology of the study (Koch, 1999). On a regular basis during the interpretation process, I referred to my pre-suppositions, as they are integral in the process of interpreting participants’ stories (van Manen, 2001), for example through reflective writing in my journal. I used this process to ensure trustworthiness (Koch, 1996).

I started arranging the first interview as soon as the first four participants had come forward. I invited participants to determine where the interviews took place in order to ensure that they felt comfortable to share their experience. I checked that privacy could easily be maintained. One requested my office for this purpose. All other participants chose to meet in their own office. I recorded the interviews using a digital voice recorder.

The objective of the information gathering process was to elicit the participants’ stories of the experience in specific moments or events on a particular day, as they unfolded in their everyday lived experience. Sufficient time was allowed between the initial interviews to provide opportunity for me to reflect on the process and discuss it in supervision, in order to increase my skills in phenomenological research interviewing. Changes in interview style over time consisted of, for example, greater ability to keep my questions uncomplicated, and using a participant’s words to probe for further clarification.

Engaging in the research interviews

Once a meeting had been arranged, I invited the participant to engage in the main process of gathering information; that is, in a face-to-face individual semi-structured research interview, aiming to gather “prereflective experiential accounts” (van Manen, 2014, p. 311), accounts that reveal the phenomenon before the person has thought about it, the primordial experience (van Manen, 2014). One example of such a question was: “Tell me about what stands out as a mindful moment in your teaching.” For more details see the indicative questions guide (Appendix E). This

kind of interview is congruent with the methodology, as the phenomenon being explored is hidden in specific examples from the everydayness of participants' experience (M. King, 2001) of teaching mindfully.

I used an interview guide to support a relaxed, open and conversational interaction, while focusing the exploration of the topic, maintaining a sensitive openness to participants' words, and probing for depth and richness (van Manen, 2014). While I framed questions in a way to elicit as much detail as possible about the experience (Kahn, 2000), I also kept them "really open to allow for the conversation to go to places I could not have anticipated" (V. Wright-St. Clair, personal communication, June 11, 2012).

Other than the open guiding questions, I was not asking about expected outcomes, because each question needs space for all possible meanings to show themselves in the phenomenological research process (Smythe, 2011b). The findings of the study may serve to provide insights about benefits of mindfulness practice for lecturers in developing their relational qualities in the teaching context.

In broadening the scope of the interview, I also asked about the opposite of the experience, which assisted in illuminating the phenomenon of mindfulness from another perspective, that is the meaning of mindfulness becoming evident in the sudden realisation of its absence: "Tell me what it is like not being mindful as a teacher?" As I developed my way of being a hermeneutic phenomenological researcher, I learnt to call for deeper storied accounts and/or interpretations of lived moments. Likewise I asked probing questions using participants' words as much as possible to facilitate more in-depth description of particular aspects of the experience, such as "tell me more about stopping" in Bernadette's interview.

In the process of gathering the stories I learnt to trust that the experience and the meaning of teaching mindfully would reveal itself as itself through the words of the participants. Participants often started talking about teaching mindfully in general, rather than identifying specific moments or anecdotes. When this happened, I would gently remind the participant to recount a specific time, or example of his or her experience, rather than share their understanding of teaching mindfully. This is an important element of hermeneutic phenomenology because the meaning of lived experience lies hidden in the pre-reflective language of everyday moments (van

Manen, 2014). However, at times, I also asked participants' understandings or their interpretations of things, congruent with Gadamerian hermeneutics, for example:

“Can you tell me how your teaching is different when you are mindful?”

The conversational style interviews were between 70 and 83 minutes long, as identified in the participant information sheet (up to 90 minutes).

Generating coherent stories

Following the interviews I transcribed each recording, in order to start to become thoroughly familiar with the content. Due to the iterative nature of a conversation, discrete stories or anecdotes were generated from the information in the interview transcripts. I selected examples from the transcripts that were rich in detail of participants' lived experiences of classroom situations in which their mindfulness or lack of mindfulness directly impacted on their relationship and communication with students. I made a distinction between examples of lived experience stories and examples of the participants' understanding of their experience. I returned a draft document containing the anecdotes and the examples of participants' understanding of their experiences to each participant for validation. This process is in line with the methodology (to ensure trustworthiness) (Koch, 1996), with the philosophical underpinnings (van Manen, 2001) (to ensure my pre-suppositions had not altered the stories), and with ethical considerations (to ensure that participants were satisfied that their stories were accurately re-presented).

This process was another step in my journey to becoming an emergent phenomenological researcher. In spite of more literature being available at this time on how to do phenomenological research, my experience of starting to work with the material felt challenging, in a similar way as described by Caelli (2001). For instance, when faced with a lengthy and somewhat meandering transcript from one of the participants, in which discrete anecdotes were not easy to identify at times, I struggled to bring coherence to the stories and noticed my irritation with its meandering nature. It was not until I came to a 'clearing' in this experience that I realised and understood that it was my responsibility as a researcher to draw the individual anecdotes into coherence from the transcript, difficult as this process might be due to the free flowing nature of a conversation. As a result of experiencing this clearing I was grateful to have had the privilege to get a glimpse into the

participants' life-worlds and I felt honoured that they had trusted me with their experience of teaching mindfully.

Analysis – working with and interpreting the stories

Having gathered the information of the participants' experiences, it was my role, as the researcher, to uncover the meaning of the phenomenon of teaching mindfully, within the stories of the individuals and across all texts as a whole (van Manen, 2001). According to Heidegger we always already have a pre-reflective understanding of a phenomenon (Heidegger, 1953/1962). The purpose of the hermeneutic process of interpretation is to explore and challenge our fore-understandings to come to new understanding (Finlay, 2003; van Manen, 2001). In light of the hermeneutic phenomenological underpinnings of this research, the semi-structured interviews described above can be seen as the researcher, the participant and the phenomenon being in a constant flow of "being-there, being-open, being in-the-play, going with what comes, [and] awaiting the moment of understanding" (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1392), or the moment of a 'clearing' as it is described by Heidegger (van Manen, 2001, p. 29). In my research this occurred in a limited way for some of the participants, because only one interview and the verification of the anecdotes took part. Even so, sometimes a participant came to a new understanding for themselves during the interview, such as when participant Bruce suddenly realised that he spoke of "task focused mindfulness" a lot. I gained some of my understanding as a sudden moment of illumination of another person's being-in-the-world, because of a familiarity with a shared background (Harman, 2007).

The stories already contain an interpreted meaning of participants' experience (Kahn, 2000). Several participants indicated that their experience of teaching mindfully had become a way of being and many instances of the phenomenon had become blended in their memory. Additionally, they had already formed their own understandings of what 'happened a lot' and what their mindfulness practices in teaching meant to them. This hermeneutic component arose spontaneously and quite frequently for most of the participants. This was familiar to me as the researcher, as I had a similar experience during my pre-suppositions interview.

I had limited awareness of clearings during the interviews. For me understandings started occurring during the more formal interpretation process, once I had a sense of how to gain or access a deeper meaning, rather than simply describing a participant's

“subjective experience of” or “their particular view [or] perspective” (van Manen, 2001, p. 62) on the phenomenon.

I used Gadamer’s process of “hermeneutics of text interpretation” (Grondin, 2002, p. 49), such as reflective listening to the text, analysis and interpretation, and applied this to parts of the text in relation to the whole, and the whole text to all of the texts and vice versa and back again. The first stage of the interpretation process was to work with the individual anecdotes of lived experience of teaching mindfully for each of the participants. During the process of interpretation, I was listening closely to, and dwelling with, the participants’ examples of their lived experience of teaching mindfully, in order to gain insight into and understanding of what the meaning of this noticing experience might be. This included paying attention to individual words and sentences within each anecdote, in relation to the whole anecdote. Additionally I was opening myself up to hearing or seeing deeper layers of meaning in those stories.

One of my challenges was to “trust my own seeing” (supervisor comment), as I was concerned that I would not know how to differentiate between my own pre-understandings and a deeper insight. With time I became more comfortable and confident in that process.

Further along the track of interpretation, I checked for those meanings in relation to all of one participant’s anecdotes and finally amongst all of the stories of all participants. For each of these levels of text interpretation, I engaged in a process of “phenomenological reflection” (van Manen, 1990, p. 77), a “circling discipline of reading, writing, talking, mulling, re-reading, re-writing and keeping new insights in play” (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1393), identified as being in the “hermeneutic circle” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 291).

Two specific approaches assisted me in coming to a deeper sense of understanding of and meaning lying within the lived experience stories. Firstly, my supervisor suggested a number of questions that could guide me in dwelling with the story in an interpretive way (V. Wright-St. Clair, personal communication, December 15, 2014). These questions were: “What is this story saying, pointing to, hinting at?” “What is being mindful calling him/her to?” “What do the words reveal?” and “What understandings lie behind the words?”

Secondly, I found a way to come to understanding outside of a cognitive domain, an embodied mode of understanding (see for example Todres, 2007). From my world of experience, this involved adopting a mindful open receptivity. It included directing my attention to the totality of my relationship with the text, at the moment of working with a particular anecdote, as well as paying attention to the felt sense (Gendlin, 1981; Todres, 2007) of what the story touched and generated in me. At times it seemed that no thoughts were available to me (van Manen, 2002), at other times short episodes of ‘just writing’ in my journal assisted the process of thinking. This experience related to Heidegger’s writing on thinking as a creative process, as immersing myself in the material and receptively listening for the things as they were showing themselves to me (Heidegger, 1954/1968). At other times again, what presented itself was a poem that captured more fully and fittingly, even though still incompletely, what seemed to stay elusive in numerous sentences of prose (see for example Appendix F). Creating mind-maps (several renditions of them – see for example Appendices G and H) assisted in staying connected with an overview of the many and varied meanings I saw. All of these approaches supported my journey to come to a place of deeper understanding of meaning of the experience (Lavery, 2003) of informal mindfulness practice in tertiary teaching as experienced and described by the participants.

During this process I was always well aware that my understandings or insights were by necessity firstly a *meeting* of horizons, which subsequently seemed to become a *fusion* of horizons (Gadamer, 2004), something beyond their meaning and mine. After dwelling some considerable time with the information in this hermeneutic circle of interpretation, at any of the levels, I started to experience ‘clearings’ (van Manen, 2001, p. 29), sudden moments of illumination, and moments of being able to see and hear deeper meanings, both in the individual stories and across all the stories of each individual participant. Each of the participants had a unique way of being and of living their mindfulness practice while teaching. My responsibility as the researcher was to explore the participants’ anecdotes, to dwell with the question of what meaning their experiences might be revealing on a deeper level, and to pay careful attention to “the living sense of the experience” (van Manen, 2014, p. 39). Contemplating across the stories of each participant, I saw that each of the participants had a unique way of being and of living their mindfulness practice while teaching. I allowed myself to listen for a poetic expression of the meaning of

teaching mindfully for each person. This resulted in seven short poems. I present these poems as a way of introducing the participants, and as a bridge between the end of this chapter and the findings chapters.

Starting to see links between stories

Over time I moved from dwelling with the subjective storied text to thinking across the whole of the research text, that is all the anecdotes, within a bigger hermeneutic circle. Slowly a process of “insightful invention, discovery or disclosure” (van Manen, 1990, p. 79) allowed me to grasp some essential “structure[s] of meaning of the lived experience” (van Manen, 2001, p. 77), or themes of meaning to work their way to the surface of my understanding.

Understandings across all the text came about through various ways, such as an embodied felt sense (Schuster, 2013; Todres, 2007) generated by contemplating a number of poems; or through inviting my thinking; or contemplating the anecdotes alongside the interpretations I had written; or in reviewing the anecdotes to remember examples of a particular theme I had identified. An example of this is when I was reading once again through all the anecdotes and interpretations of all the participants revisiting examples of ‘noticing’. During that process one phrase in the following anecdote from Bernadette created a “harmony of [this] detail with the whole” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 291), and took me to understanding a new and essential dimension of a theme that I had already identified:

*... my ability to be mindful of what's happening in me and how that relates to what's happening in her and what's happening in the rest of the group. How that occurred was **my attention to those little moments of noticing** [emphasis added]. [Bernadette]*

“Attention to ... noticing” resonated as a pivotal meaning. The goal of analysis is to describe and communicate through “thick description” (Kahn, 2000, p. 72) the meaning of being mindful as a lecturer as experienced by the participants. This occurs while staying close to the words in the text and, at the same time, coming to a deeper, more essential understanding. The above example demonstrates this process. When writing the discussion chapter I returned to my initial meanings documents (see for example Appendices I to K), which assisted in bringing some significant nuances of the essential themes (van Manen, 2001) into the light.

Merging understandings

In order for the study findings to be a useful product I finally brought together my deepened and embodied understanding of the phenomenon in the discussion chapter of the thesis. These findings are discussed firstly, in relation to already available tertiary education literature relevant to my findings, in order to ensure that this project finds a place in relation to “the common conditions of human life” (Schuster, 2013, p. 203), in this case teaching in tertiary education. Secondly, I sensed, explored and discussed deeper layers of meaning, which emerged from the essentially inseparable nature of the individual themes of meaning. One of those meanings found its voice through a poem, before I was able to discuss it; this was my understanding of the process from self-management to authenticity.

Returning to the beginning – the literature review

Having uncovered coherence and meaning across all the findings, it was then time to situate the study within the wider context of pertinent literature on teaching mindfully in tertiary education. I returned to the literature to search more widely and deeply than my initial scoping review of the literature for the purpose of the research proposal. The literature review is still presented in Chapter Two as this is customary in a thesis. I explored a breadth of literature in order to understand the broader discussion in the literature of mindfulness and mindfulness practice in tertiary education, and to situate this research within that context. Following that I used a hermeneutic approach to presenting the literature review on teaching mindfully in tertiary education, in keeping with the methodology (Smythe & Spence, 2012). This meant providing an overview of the main themes of meaning that had become apparent to me in that process. I had to approach the literature review from a broad perspective and look for deeper meanings, due to the paucity of phenomenological research on the topic of interest of my project.

Ensuring rigour

Integrity in qualitative research is paramount in order for results to be useful for informing and improving practice (Annells, 1999) as well as to honour participants who have shared intimate details of their lived experience (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). There is much debate about the details of what constitutes rigour in qualitative research (Polit & Beck, 2010; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). Following Smythe’s (2011) assertion that trust needs to be engendered in phenomenology, I will

use Annells' four criteria specifically generated for evaluating phenomenological research to guide the trustworthiness of this study (1999).

Firstly, I have particularly enjoyed the process of using language that created "an understandable and appreciable product" (Annells, 1999, p. 10). The decision about whether the study is believable (Koch, 1996) lies with the reader; hence clear and interesting writing is important. To assist me with developing a phenomenological style of writing I have read other phenomenological writing such as other theses and articles from van Manen's "textorium" (2011). I have written to generate recognition in reader(s), appealing to a sense of shared experience of the phenomenon of being a mindful while teaching in tertiary education.

Secondly, I have clearly set out how I made methodological decisions in order to demonstrate "an understandable process of inquiry" (Annells, 1999, p. 10). I have presented my early plan for the research to a mindbody practitioners' interest group. I have regularly sent drafts of my work to both my supervisors in order to generate discussion and feedback on the processes as they developed. I presented small sections of my writing to a departmental writing support group. Additionally I brought reflexivity to the process of the interviewing and responding to participants' stories in order to ensure that I was sensitive to the words they used and privileged their knowledge (Fossey et al., 2002).

Thirdly, the research outcomes are anticipated to be "a useful product" (Annells, 1999, p. 11). In Chapter One I identified that the expected usefulness of exploring the meaning of teaching mindfully is to gain understanding of the lived experience of teaching mindfully, given the paucity of literature on this phenomenon. Secondly, I anticipate that bringing informal mindfulness practice into tertiary teaching may be a useful and practical approach to developing and maintaining a good educational relationship between teacher and students.

Finally, I have provided evidence of an "appropriate inquiry approach" throughout the thesis (Annells, 1999, p. 11). This evidence consists of the following three examples: I have ensured internal consistency or "methodological congruence" (Smythe & Giddings, 2007, p. 56); the words used are congruent with hermeneutic phenomenology demonstrating the ontological underpinning philosophy, for example "the lived experience" and the ontological notion of "teaching mindfully" as

explained in Chapter One; and I have taken account of the potential influence that my pre-understandings may have on my interpretation of the participants' stories, which is congruent with a Gadamerian approach.

The process of interpretation finally allowed me to get a sense of coherence across all of the text. I represent this sense of coherence in the three main themes of meaning, or "experiential structures" of the participants' lived experience (van Manen, 2001, p. 79), of teaching mindfully that form the following three findings chapters.

Introducing the findings

What is real is almost always to begin with, hidden, and does not want to be understood by the part of our mind that mistakenly thinks it knows what is happening. What is precious inside us does not care to be known by the mind in ways that diminish its presence. (Whyte, 2014, p. 114)

Creating the individual participants' poems allowed me to honour participants' stories and to minimise the risk of diminishing the presence of "what is precious inside [them]" (Whyte, 2014, p. 114). It was also one way that assisted me to start gaining a deeper understanding and seeing "something that mattered significantly" (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1392) amongst all of the text, namely some essential themes of meaning. Van Manen (2014) identified an essential theme as one "without which the phenomenon could not be what it is" (p. 107).

From my endeavour to "let speak that which wishes to speak" (van Manen, 2014, p. 224), I identified the following essential themes in this study: Teaching mindfully as Noticing, Teaching mindfully as Being Open, and Teaching Mindfully as Being Caring. Each of these themes will be addressed in the following three chapters. Some incidental but nevertheless important themes will be addressed as subthemes within the same chapters. Of necessity the chapters are presented in a particular order. This order does not reflect any hierarchical or temporal order amongst the themes of the phenomenon of teaching mindfully. Furthermore these themes of meaning are essentially intertwined (Greatrex-White, 2008). I will reveal and discuss this merging of meanings in the discussion chapter.

In the following chapters I use quotes from participants' anecdotes. At times during the interviews participants emphasised certain words or phrases. In any examples in

the text where I have used words that were the original emphasis by the participant, I identified them by using ***bold*** font.

Reflection

Re-reading the content of this chapter makes me realise how much I have learnt about ‘doing hermeneutic phenomenology’, the underpinning methodology and the methods. I could not have done it without the guidance from my supervisors and without reading all the books, chapters and articles I accessed (such as Caelli, 2001; Schuster, 2013; Smythe, 2011a; Smythe et al., 2008; van Manen, 2001, 2007; Wright-St Clair, 2015). At the same time, it was only in the ‘doing’ of it, in taking each next step as guided, in sitting with my uncertainty and lack of confidence, in initially only believing my supervisor’s and later my own trust in the process, in trying out new ways of being in a post graduate study and academic context, in leaping into creative processes I had until then only accessed in my private and personal life-journey, that I got a sense of what hermeneutic phenomenological research and writing ‘is like’. I could only ‘know it’ in experiencing it. I continue to see the similarities between a mindfulness approach and a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to being in life, and will discuss this further in the discussion chapter.

I conclude the methodology and methods chapter with a poem that formed when I was contemplating what it had been like ‘doing hermeneutic phenomenology’. Following that and forming a bridge between this chapter and the findings chapters are the poems introducing each participant and a poem that depicts the sense of meaning across all participants’ stories.

Doing hermeneutic phenomenology

Doing hermeneutic phenomenology

incomprehensible words

painfully and

painstakingly

inching my way

through stories

discombobulating language

paralysing impasse

opening to faint but definite sense

of something

slowly forming into words

and greater understanding

Feeling a joy and freedom

of where this is taking me

within myself

Introducing the participants

Andrea

*Being here and open
being real, kind,
focused;*

*seeing needs
holding
paradox
hearing stories
being and doing
together.*

Bernadette

*Deeply committed
to immersion
in being with*

*multifaceted
multi-layered
multidimensional
world of being,
with self
with people*

*rich
full
done*

Bruce

*Precise and committed
living values
moment to moment unfolding*

in kindness

*responsible and flexible
welcoming vulnerability
fallibility*

*travelling the
learning journey
together*

Ivanka

*With flame
and compassion
truth
flows from
a potent
and
open
centre
now*

Laura

Aware

*Aware
my needs
your needs
feelings
engaging, not withdrawing*

*remembering the context
remembering
to notice my thoughts*

*being agile
doing what is needed
right now
being free*

Norman

*Being
in the fullness
of the moment
allows
presence of knowing*

real meeting

*invitation
revelation
of shared learning
and transformation*

Roger

*Noticing the ever-changing weather pattern
of feelings and thoughts of any nature
in me and others,
I remember:
breathing*

*connecting with what is happening
in the ever-changing
learning space
between us.*

Teaching mindfully

Feeling the aliveness
of now this here
a word received
in its raw-ness
heard as if
standing at the
source of the stream of experience
in the shared space of being

Sensing the spark
of passion
here now
this passion
shooting across
the divide
no longer there
in the shocked flesh
that soon enough
drops back into
a shared calm
of sorts

Seeing the brilliance
of mind
this
covering fear
of presence, connection
allowing to soften
both hearts
for a gentler
concluding repose

Noticing
the passage of change
forever now
in all that occurs
within
between
amongst,
accepting and
generating,
finding
a returning core
of rest
again and again
always

Opening
learning
transforming
one with the other
me and you
moment to moment
together we journey
leading each other
to oceans of new experience
through the space
of
relating
being
and learning
together

CHAPTER FOUR

Teaching mindfully as Noticing

Introduction

Central to teaching mindfully is noticing, being aware of what is going on in the teaching encounter, within the teacher's thoughts and feelings, and between the teacher and the student(s). Bennett and Hacker (2012) argued that noticing is "a form of cognitive receptivity" (p. 45) which cannot be achieved on purpose; yet, Roger frames noticing as the *mantra* for teaching mindfully:

*What I say to my students, who are studying to be teachers, about being mindful is that our mantra is the word "noticing" and that we're aware of things. Being more aware of where [their] student is academically, more aware of where the students' emotions are at, more aware of things that could create a situation for a student. It is easier for me to give an example of what a student has said to me about that [She] was working in an early childhood centre. I noticed that she got so focused on an individual child, she wasn't seeing the greater needs [of the group]. She particularly focused on one child who was causing a lot of difficulty for everyone else in the centre. And so she consciously worked on being able to provide that child attention **and** be aware of everything else that was happening around her. What happened as a result of her making that effort to do that was that she was promoted. She was quite surprised and she said "everyone else in this area of the centre has been working here longer than I have. I'm happy to take the promotion, but why? What was it in me that you saw?" And the answer was her ability to notice what's going on with the students. ... The main quality for mindfulness is noticing. I would like to say it is compassion, because I think that's a big part of mindfulness, but I don't think we can be compassionate until we notice. [Roger]*

Not only does Roger indicate that noticing means *being aware of things*, he repeatedly states that while teaching mindfully, teachers are *more aware* of a variety of elements in relation to their students. Additionally his story gives even more weight to this quality, because the student's *ability to notice what was going on with the students* was such that it made her stand out amongst more senior colleagues. More significantly, it was the factor that was instrumental in her promotion over these other staff members. Clearly this did not come about spontaneously or simply only receptively, but only after *making an effort* and *consciously working on* her ability to notice in a sustained way during her teaching. This effort made her

mindfully aware of what was happening with not just one student but all the students. In order to develop and achieve mindfulness in everyday life (in this case the teachers' everyday teaching), an effort needs to be made. This teacher intentionally brought her informal mindfulness practice into her teaching: she developed and increased her ability to notice as part of teaching mindfully.

The anecdotes shared in this chapter reveal the noticing of teaching mindfully as an interweaving of several layers of meaning. In the following sections I discuss 'attending to noticing', followed by 'recognising mindfulness lost' and 'regaining mindfulness'. Finally in this chapter I address some ontological challenges that become apparent with the commitment to noticing mindfully in the teaching context. The chapter concludes with a reflection and a poem.

Attending to Noticing

Roger's example in the preceding section shows the significance of noticing in teaching mindfully. The significance is both in the focused noticing of how things are with one child *and* the open noticing of how things are with all the children all at the same time. And there is *more* to the noticing in Roger's story. In Chapter Three I described my experience of seeing another level of noticing in teaching mindfully. When re-reading all the 'anecdotes' and checking the examples of noticing once more, I suddenly realised the significance of a short phrase in one of Bernadette's anecdotes:

*... my ability to be mindful of what's happening in me and how that relates to what's happening in her and what's happening in the rest of the group. How that occurred was **my attention to those little moments of noticing** [emphasis added]. I guess my therapy training was an additional factor: noticing what's happening between us, recognising a moment when she was needing to take some space, or to ask her something, or me being willing to stop and also to include her process.*
[Bernadette]

Operational definitions of mindfulness, in much of the current Western mindfulness literature, emphasise a present-focused, non-judgemental quality of paying attention in mindfulness practice (Bishop et al., 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 2005)

For Bernadette, however, as shown in the example above, teaching mindfully includes her paying *attention to ... noticing* the multiple dimensions of her interpersonal interactions, what is happening between her, the individual student and

the group, *as well as* her intra-personal reactions, the thoughts and feelings occurring within her. She knows it is not sufficient to just notice the nuances of interactions “on purpose, in the moment, non-judgementally” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 4) as they arise and ebb away. She knows that she also intentionally and actively engages in an act of *paying attention to those little moments of noticing* in order to facilitate a good process for the student within this teaching encounter. Directing one’s attention to what is being noticed is something that can be developed (Bennett & Hacker, 2012). Bernadette has noticed her noticing. She then intentionally attends to the noticing, and is able to make decisions about her actions that will be most helpful for the individual student and the group as a whole. Attending to the noticing is crucial here. It is a commitment to becoming aware of, and contemplating the significance of, what has been noticed, keeping in mind what is important in relation to an intention (G. Dreyfus, 2011), and finally being able to respond mindfully to the need of others. This element often gets overlooked in the Western mindfulness literature, but is an essential element of the Mahayana Buddhist philosophy of reducing the suffering of others; thereby automatically doing something for oneself as well (Kyabgon, 2001). This difference may be due to context and purpose: a teacher’s role is to attend to and facilitate the development of others, whereas a person visiting a health provider seeks a reduction in his or her own suffering.

In hermeneutic phenomenology the multiple dimensions of meaning of a phenomenon are recognised and acknowledged (Gadamer, 2004). In relation to noticing, human beings are always already noticing. Heidegger identified this as an ontological understanding of “being ahead of oneself” (Inwood, 1999, p. 155). In the above anecdote, the noticing is already happening when Bernadette becomes aware of it. Noticing occurs on many different levels in everyday life. Some of the noticing is conscious, such as in becoming aware that we are hungry or thirsty, some of the noticing may be more like being on automatic pilot, for example when we are driving a car along a familiar route. Without noticing we would not be able to function in the world.

Andrea’s story, in the context of her role as tertiary teacher who brings her informal mindfulness practice into her teaching, reveals examples of greater depth of noticing; similar to the student in Roger’s example, as well as attending to the noticing from a slightly different perspective than was shown in Bernadette’s story above:

It was the first session and I didn't know the personalities and the challenges that would come up. My learning was that there were three out of six people from that class, for whom I will have to be careful or just aware to use different approaches. It's quite a challenging group! The senior lecturer had said to me "that's a lovely class". Well to me it's much more than that! They're all individuals. After that first class I became conscious that [out of six people] at least one person had some personal issues, just in the way she interacted with me and the amount of space that she took up, talking about her own personal issues in the classroom. I had another person who had significant impairment difficulties and a lot of family issues too, with an autistic child. Plus two people in the class have a lot of experience from a different dimension of dealing with interpersonal conflict. So I am addressing quite a few different levels in class. [Andrea]

When Andrea starts teaching halfway through the year, she is told by a senior colleague that she will be working with *a lovely class*. The colleague had noticed the group as a whole and she found it to be a *lovely* group. That comment refers to her experience of the characteristics of the group as a whole. Andrea discusses how much *more than that* she has noticed on her first day of teaching. She notices that more than half of the students in that small group bring a variety of *personal issues* into the learning environment. She also recognises that this is relevant to her role as a teacher. She notices and recognises that she needs to work with and *address* these students' issues at their own *different levels* of learning.

Dreyfus (2011) provided an analysis of mindfulness that points to what can be seen in Andrea's story. He argued for essential features of mindfulness beyond the contemporary emphasis on "present-centred and non-judgmental" elements. In Andrea's situation this means that her noticing is not simply a bare attention to the facts of these students' lives, without relevance to the teaching and learning context or without reference to what that may mean for her own role in that context. In the noticing, Andrea is discerning the significance of what she has noticed; she attends to her noticing and recognises that what she has noticed has implications for how she wants to teach to the needs of these individual students within this group.

Participants in this study demonstrated that they already have their own interpretation of the meaning of teaching mindfully, which arises from the 'horizon' of their past and present (Gadamer, 2004). Bruce showed this in sharing his experience of teaching mindfully: he is very aware of the discrepancy between his own, Buddhist informed, and a Western psychological perspective of mindfulness practice, similar

to Dreyfus' (2011) perspective. In talking about teaching mindfully Bruce highlights his understanding as follows:

The way I understand mindfulness in practice is that it is embedded in the wider scheme of things or related to what your goals are. ... I can see advantages of mindfulness as exercise: just going for a walk and looking at the tree and the birds. I've got free time and I do that as well, trying to enjoy or cherish the moment. But in many situations you need to know when to shift the attention back, so I can see what the need in a situation is. For example you sit at a bus stop and you observe people who walk past, you are observing mindfully and without judging: a boy walks past, bicycle drives past, an old lady walks past, someone snatching her hand bag... And you would stop there immediately, right? You wouldn't 'just notice' she's getting robbed! Yes, so there is a judgement there, even though it is supposed to be non-judgemental awareness, there needs to be judgement there. This brings me to Buddhism, where ethics is a clear and important dimension. It is not simply curiosity and exploring with open mindedness – [that] needs to stop somewhere. That is probably where I see the task focus of mindfulness. [Bruce]

For Bruce informal mindfulness practice in his everyday teaching does include *judgement*, in relation to what he calls the *task focus of mindfulness*. Here the judging does not mean being judgemental, or being harshly critical of what has been noticed. Rather, the judgement Bruce refers to has the quality of discernment: being able to appraise what has been noticed in relation to, in his case, the *ethics of Buddhism* and the ethics of teaching. This enables him to make an appropriate choice of action, “right action” in a Buddhist context (Kyabgon, 2001, p. 8), because he has noticed what the situation requires and what is in the best interest of his students.

In the above examples, the participants shared examples of teaching mindfully and their understanding of the importance of attending to their noticing while teaching mindfully. Moreover, as Dreyfus (2011) argued, these examples show how the use of mindfulness practice contributes to participants' ability to “retain and make sense of received information” (p. 46). In contrast and congruent with the methodology, I also asked participants for instances of lack of mindfulness in their teaching. The absence of a phenomenon may assist in illuminating the meaning of it from a different perspective, in the sudden realisation of its absence or “obtrusiveness” (Heidegger, 1953/1962, p. 103). It was not difficult for participants to recall instances of not being mindful during their teaching.

Recognising Mindfulness Lost

It is widely recognised that people are often lost in thought, caught up in their activities, their emotions, or caught in habitual reactions to inner or outer experience, in other words people are often not present to their current experience or the experience of others. This mindlessness is recognised in Buddhist teachings (Kyabgon, 2001), as well as in contemporary psychological research (see for instance Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010; Langer, 1989). Heidegger also recognised this human tendency, as evidenced in his writing on ‘fallenness’ (M. King, 2001); the tendency to get lost in the “everyday” (p. 42) way of life. Bernadette recognised the importance of noticing when she is not teaching mindfully, when she has got lost in her teaching:

It is interesting to think about when I am using my centring process, because in a way it is just ordinary. It is about catching myself doing something that I may think is not the best thing to do; like today I noticed myself looking at my paper, because I felt the student’s contribution was not helpful. In that moment of mindfulness or noticing, I have opportunity to find a way not to do that. [Bernadette]

Bernadette muses that what she calls her *centring process*, her noticing what is going on inside herself, *in a way is just ordinary*, it has become part of her “usual routine” (Merriam Webster online dictionary, n.d.), or in Heidegger’s words part of the “everyday” (Heidegger, 1953/1962, p. 422) for her. After 30 years of practising mindfulness it has become a way of being for Bernadette. And yet, in spite of that, mindfulness while teaching can just as easily suddenly slip away. Bernadette shows here that mindfulness practice is also *about catching [herself]* not being mindful during teaching, in this case noticing her action of not looking at a student with a disability who is talking. She actively pays attention to what she notices and is therefore ready to recognise actions that *may not be the best thing* for the student’s learning. Attending to the noticing creates a gap or space between the noticing and subsequent acting. Bernadette knows she *has opportunity* to change her actions, because she notices that she has lost her mindful awareness of the student’s needs in that moment.

In this exploration of mindfulness lost, a paradoxical element of the meaning of teaching mindfully became apparent: in suddenly realising they were **not** mindful during a teaching session, in recognising that they had lost their mindful attention to what was going on within themselves and the students, participants suddenly ‘woke

up' to being mindfully aware of what was happening right then, and were then able to continue teaching mindfully again.

In the following example Bruce shared an experience which demonstrates the interconnectedness of these four dimensions of teaching mindfully: noticing, attending to the noticing, recognising mindfulness lost and regaining mindfulness. He suddenly realises he has lost his mindful awareness during a class:

There is a kind of automatic aspect to teaching, as I've taught the courses that I teach before, so ... I remember certain stories [I want to share] and I've got a reminder in the power point. ... I brought up the example [that usually works and] I asked the students what a snakebite drink is. I heard a male voice behind me say "it is beer and cider". It was a male voice but I didn't quite know where it was coming from. There aren't many males in my class, so I unfortunately looked at the person with the previous history of alcoholism. This was where my mindfulness slipped. And just after I said it I realised that this was a mistake and not very wise. That was quite challenging. I thought "Why did I look at this person?" He had a blank look on his face and then it turned out to be someone else who said it. It is prejudice! I assumed that this voice and the answer were coming from that person. [Bruce]

Bruce recognises the somewhat routine-like, *automatic* process of teaching as an experienced teacher. He can be absorbed in his teaching, and unaware of the larger context of that session in that particular time and space, with those particular students. In this example, while he is following the usual lecture content, he suddenly becomes aware of having lost his mindful awareness: he notices that his *mindfulness [has] slipped*. His teaching at that particular time has become teaching routinely instead of teaching mindfully.

After he makes his particular comment in the lecture, Bruce suddenly recognises the state of 'mindfulness lost'. The retelling of this experience points to him also being aware that teaching mindfully does not necessarily mean having an ongoing and enduring sense of "being in the moment", always holding an awareness of the larger context at the same time as being aware of the particular teaching moment that is occurring. Teaching mindfully encompasses recognising when being aware has taken on a less acute and alert dimension; it includes recognition of having become lost in the experience of the everyday, in our habitual responses, and then remembering to return, kindly, again and again, as many times as needed, each time a distraction has been noticed to an open and receptive mind, aware of one's present experience. In

attending to his noticing of mindfulness lost, he is then able to make a choice to respond in the most helpful way for the context.

Laura specifically stated the importance of teaching mindfully as “*knowing or recognising when [she is] not mindful, for instance when ... taking things for granted, making assumptions and having expectations that a student will know something.*” She gave an example of a bright student sometimes *asking the most obvious, inane questions* and she remembers thinking:

If I was being mindful, that thought “Why are you asking that question?!” wouldn’t come into my head. If I was being mindful I would just be in the present, and respond, without question. ... Why question any question? You know, the question is as it is: answer it! [Laura]

Laura reveals how important it is to her to realise or recognise when she has lost her mindfulness, i.e. when she takes things for granted, makes assumptions, has expectations of students, or has an internal reaction to a student. She realises she wants this student to live up to her own expectations. Laura talks about even *a split second of energy wasted* in this manner, is a significant missed opportunity to be mindful, to be in the present, to let the question be (Heidegger, 1953/1962). That energy could be better used for being available to what is actually needed right at that moment, rather than going into an internal dialogue about the value or quality of this particular student’s questions. In the moment Laura realises that the real need at the time of this student asking a question, is for her to listen to the question, recognise that the student is asking from a different horizon (Gadamer, 2004) to hers, and respond to the question, in whatever way may be the most appropriate response at the time. This might not only benefit that student but potentially others in the class as well, who may also have the same question. Laura is referring to her knowledge of right effort in Buddhism, which is the effort to limit unhelpful and cultivate helpful thoughts, with the intention to reduce suffering (Bodhi, 2011; Kyabgon, 2001).

Regaining mindful awareness

All the anecdotes above reveal that teaching mindfully involves an intention and commitment to returning to a state of mindful awareness in the teaching context, whenever mindfulness has slipped or been lost. For some of the participants noticing that they have slipped out of teaching mindfully shows that they have already returned to a state of teaching mindfully. Others use specific mindfulness practices

(see for instance Chapter Two) to facilitate them to regain their mindfulness again.

Roger demonstrates, through his stories, how he actively uses a specific mindfulness practice, in his case breath awareness, as a bridge to re-gaining mindful awareness.

In his words:

Last semester, when I was teaching reading ... there were times when I would be working on other stuff in my office; and answering that last email, and I [really] needed to be focused on the lecture and the topic. What happens is that as I'm walking somewhere I'll notice "I'm in a hurry". I can remember specific lectures ... where I'm late. Then I become aware that I'm rushing and I catch myself being anxious. And then I stop and tune into the breath. [Roger]

It sounds like the busyness of trying to get *other stuff* done and just finding time to *answer that last email* before rushing off for a lecture happened more than once for Roger, this may point to a pattern or habit. At the same time his words *what happens* also point to something else occurring regularly in response to the rushing. He is used to that feeling, yet he is now also used to *becoming aware* of this, used to noticing or *catching his anxiety* and his *rushing*, which gives him opportunity to return to being mindfully aware again. He stops the rushing, stops the anxiety by *tuning into the breath*; according to Carmody (2015) an “arousal-neutral object of attention” (p. 70).

The realisation that he *needed to be focused on the lecture and the topic* indicate that Roger's energy that was used for *other stuff* and *that last email*, had not been 'ready to hand' (Heidegger, 1953/1962) for him and for preparing himself for his lecture and the topic needing to be addressed in the lecture, contributing to his anxiety and rushing to the lecture or the meeting.

There is a general sense of rushing, anxiety and a degree of agitation, due to a lack of attention where it needed to be, a lack of pacing himself. Yet, in the act of becoming aware of the rushing and the anxiety, and then tuning into the breath, something has already changed. The earlier sense of rushing seems to have given way to more spaciousness, the rushing has stopped, the anxiety reduced and just being aware of breathing, just being with the breath has brought Roger back to being mindfully aware of the specific **and** broader context of this particular moment: being on his way to a lecture and feeling more prepared and available for it.

As can be seen from the above, these apparently separate elements of remembering mindfulness, recognising mindfulness lost, regaining awareness are in reality difficult to separate. With regular practice these aspects often all come into play in any one moment. Yet sometimes, even being an experienced practitioner, even when a participant has noticed that they have lost their mindful presence in a teaching related situation, it can be very challenging to stay with, and attend to, what has been noticed in themselves in a particular moment and it can take some time and considerable commitment to do so.

Ontological challenges of being aware

Norman demonstrates this challenging dimension of the dynamic of noticing, mindfulness lost and mindful awareness regained. He recounts an experience during an open feedback session with a group of Japanese students at the end of a course.

One of the students is very negative and critical in his comments:

*Until this student spoke I had only heard “wonderful, wonderful, wonderful” and I’d had a really good time myself. I was actually quite curious about what he would say at the end, but I wasn’t expecting he was going to say **that**. Japanese people are terribly polite normally, so when you just take all the over-politeness away, even if the words are quite nice, it is already **devastating!** Just by the absence of politeness people are automatically very rude, so it was relatively devastating for me. When he spoke, he really meant it! I think he was speaking out of great hurt. He was challenged to an **abnormal** degree. I did have an initial reaction of shock that he was talking to me like this and I have to own that my immediate thought was “stupid man, haven’t you got beyond **that** yet?!”; and another immediate thought, as all these things come within a split second, was “Damn academic, no hope!” but then I realised it was actually nothing to do with me or with what I said; it had just touched a very raw nerve in him. My next thought was that he needed to let this information sit for a while. All those steps had happened in no more than a few seconds for me. When he finished speaking, he went right back to being polite Japanese again. And I had come back to myself again, as it were*

I honestly think that whatever I would term mindfulness, helped me keep some perspective, and some distance and calmness in that second when I realised that this was not going to be just another wonderful feedback session. I think I have an inner core, which is relatively difficult to put out of kilter. Mindfulness practices do help keep me centred, for instance in severe situations, you maintain your presence of mind. [Norman]

Norman acknowledges that he notices feeling significantly challenged by this one student who has struggled with the deeply philosophical content of the course. This feedback has a *devastating effect on [Norman]*, because of the particular cultural

context, the way the feedback is expressed, and because the content of the course is deeply meaningful to him, as he explains in the earlier part of this story.

This anecdote demonstrates how challenging mindfulness practice can be, also when incorporating it into teaching practice with adults within a tertiary education context. In sharing this particular story, for the purpose of this research, he opens himself up to being vulnerable once again, sharing part of his internal dialogue that sounds quite judgemental and defensive and which appears to be quite contrary to the underlying philosophy of mindfulness practice. During that encounter he is aware of the emotional effect the student's feedback has on him, as well as some of the thoughts that are rapidly coming and going in his mind. He communicates the experience of his internal process as *happen[ing] in a split second*: he reacts, he recognises his lack of mindfulness and after a brief time he is able to regain his composure, he *return[s] back to his centre, back to himself, maintaining his presence of mind*; however, he indicates that *mindfulness helped [him] keep **some** perspective, and **some** distance and calmness in that second* (emphasis added). His words point to this being a challenging interaction, during which it is difficult to stay centred, and stay closely attuned to and be with the student's experience in the interpersonal space. Norman is significantly taken aback by the student's response, and as a result he is grappling with trying to find a way to manage his reactions in the situation.

At the conclusion of the session he responds to the student from a more centred place and in a way that preserves her dignity and respects her perspective and experience. He ascribes this to his longstanding experience with mindfulness practice. However, laying the responsibility for being open to such ideas as entirely with the student is more likely to be an example of a moment when mindfulness is lost for Norman. In this situation the meeting of horizons of two people with completely different historicity and fore-structures did not transform into a fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 2004), where there is a mutually shared experience with the possibility that new understandings may arise.

Norman is not alone in this experience. Several other participants also shared stories which challenged their ability to remain fully aware, open, and authentically present to themselves and the student(s) in challenging moments in their teaching. All of them are experienced tertiary teachers who care about their students and who are committed to integrating mindfulness practice fully into their teaching. As will be

discussed further in the next chapter this process is “no simple task” (Wrathall, 2005, p. 61). Bernadette’s story illustrates her awareness of this challenge. In spite of her longstanding mindfulness practice she indicates that she is still, at times, tested by what she notices within herself in a situation.

*I can remember the discomfort of feeling like I didn’t really want to **have** that centring time, because I felt so tired. The person I see at that time is quite a challenging woman and I have to be quite aware of myself. I could feel my legs were a bit irritable. I could feel that irritability and I wanted to **not** be aware and **not** be mindful. I wanted rather to just focus on [the person] and not be aware of myself, but it **actually** goes against my ethics to do that. In those moments it feels like I have to bear my own discomfort. That happens **sometimes**. [Bernadette]*

Bernadette expresses her *discomfort* at noticing and *feel[ing her] irritability*, which manifests in her legs. She recognises that this is not a physical or mental experience, but a combination of both, a unified mindbody experience. She does not like the feeling and wants to turn away from feeling its unpleasantness in herself; she would *rather just focus on* something outside herself, namely the other person. At the same time she is aware of needing to take responsibility for her own uncomfortable feelings and the challenge her mindfulness practice brings at that time; she commits to the effort to *bear her own discomfort*, to acknowledge her own feelings. Remaining aware of her feelings of irritability, thus attending to her noticing, allows Bernadette to maintain “composure of mental and emotional functioning” (Grossman, 2015, p. 18) and stay fully aware of how this may impact on her interactions with the person sitting with her in the room. This staying with challenging feelings creates opportunity to have greater choice in how to respond to the other person in order to best meet their needs and in order to maintain one’s own authenticity. I will address authenticity as part of teaching mindfully in Chapter Six (teaching mindfully as being caring).

Reflection

Having seen these meanings of being aware, recognising mindfulness lost and regaining mindfulness emerge from the stories, I eventually decided to highlight them individually and separately. As became apparent in the writing, often these headings did not have a distinct individual dimension. They seemed to be intricately interwoven in one ‘noticing-recognising-regaining’-dynamic within teaching

mindfully, only able to be “differentiated but not separated” (van Manen, 2001, p. 105). Once one is happening, the others have already shown themselves.

One dimension that was not difficult to identify and address separately in this chapter, is the challenge of attending to noticing that is part of the commitment to teaching mindfully. Contrary to much of the current literature on mindfulness within an education context, that extols mainly its benefits and positive outcomes, it is essential that challenges of this practice are also identified and described in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of teaching mindfully.

I conclude this reflection with a short poem on noticing. Having explored the complexity of meaning of teaching mindfully as noticing, I now turn to the next essential theme of meaning in Chapter Five: Teaching mindfully as Being Open.

Noticing

Mind in open mode

I see the whole and the parts

Know what is needed

CHAPTER FIVE

Teaching mindfully as Being Open

Attention without feeling ... is only a report. An openness, an empathy, was necessary if the attention was to matter. (Oliver cited in Popova, 2015)

Introduction

Another “essential theme” (van Manen, 2001, p. 106) that showed in this study was teaching mindfully as ‘being open’. The following anecdote from one of Laura’s teaching sessions is an example of being open, receptive and welcoming to what is happening for herself and the students as a group.

I don’t use PowerPoint presentations in my classes. One day recently [however], I did use six power point slides in one class, because the students particularly asked me to talk to them about students with dyslexia. ... I decided to put some basic facts about it in a PowerPoint presentation, so I could also put it in the online learning community. Those six slides were pretty good: they were informative and they were clear, and yet those were the flattest 10 minutes in the class! Around slide four the classroom went deathly quiet, and I was talking. Here were my words on the slides, because I put them there, and I was explaining the content as I went through the slides. But this just didn’t feel like me! Then I recognised what was happening and I said that I thought the session went flat. They told me that it felt like they just received the information, and while there was nothing wrong with that, the session was not stimulating. The PowerPoint slides were good for the visual learners, but I could have equally put pictures up. However, it was useful for them afterwards. I recognise that had I not been mindful and in the moment, I would have carried on, regardless of what was happening in the room. [Laura]

Laura continues the discussion without focusing on the power point slides. Laura’s regular mindfulness practice fosters an openness that enables her to adjust her teaching approach in the moment to something that is more beneficial for the students’ learning. When Laura holds an open receptivity to the multiple dimensions of what is going on in the classroom, she notices that the students have gone *deathly quiet* and appear to be closing down and losing interest. While she is talking she recognises that her teaching mode at that time is different from her usual way of being a teacher, *it just didn’t feel like [her]*. Rather than carrying on as planned, or simply changing her approach, she is also open to and able to discuss the issue with

the students, making the situation a shared experience and a shared responsibility. As a result she is able to return to teaching and, feeling like herself again, the classroom situation opens up and students are once more engaged in the learning.

Teaching mindfully as being open shows itself as a phenomenological attitude during teaching, being “open or receptive to what gives itself” in human beings’ lives, and being “sustained by wonder [and] attentiveness” (van Manen, 2014, p. 220). I explore the following dimensions of being open, because they appeared to be the most significant within the context of this study: being open to the students and to participants themselves as teachers; being open to different ways of knowing; and being open as stopping.

Being open to students

Andrea also spoke of becoming aware of what is going on in the student group:

There was [this] moment when I felt really calm, because I was completely focused and in the moment. In those moments nothing else matters. Anyone who is not attending drops away, because they have chosen not to attend and I'm not going to be distracted in that moment. So my entire focus is on the people who want to listen. That's how I'm reading them. I am really reading them, their body language more than anything else. [Andrea]

Andrea's example shows her openness to the need of the majority of the students in a moment of noticing that there is a high level of anxiety in the class. Andrea is open to the whole and the parts of a teaching situation: she is aware of the session content, and she *really reads* the students (those who are and those who are not involved), the emotional state of the group and individuals within the group (visible thought *their body language*). In this session most of the students are feeling anxious about not being able to achieve in the assessment, while one student is not paying attention. Being open to everything that is happening allows Andrea to choose where she focuses her attention. As a result of her openness she decides to attend to benefiting the majority of the group, *the people who want to listen*.

The examples in this chapter show how the participants endeavour to teach in a welcoming and open way. They turn towards their students, whether individually or as a group in class, and open themselves to the complexity of the situation, to being present and trusting themselves to respond to students' needs at the time.

Being open to students and self

Another example demonstrates how mindfulness practice supports Bruce to remain open to a small group of students, rather than pre-judging them based on his previous teaching experience. Bruce achieves this by being aware of, and receptive to, his own internal processes:

I really try to apply mindfulness when it comes to my tendency to want to pre-judge people at first meeting. I have been teaching numerous years now and as experienced lecturers we may like to think that we can look at a student as they come to the first class and predict who is going to do well and who is not. And while every year I catch myself being reasonably right, there are too many exceptions for me to really be able to rely on that prejudgement. I like to observe how my initial impression is proven wrong by the students themselves. This means I really try not to categorise them too early. For example I had a couple of students who didn't appear very studious; they didn't appear very keen or motivated; they were sitting in the back row and were chewing gum, and they were not really alert. ... It turned out that they were actually getting great marks! [Bruce]

Bruce describes how he knows his tendency or temptation to make judgements based on outside appearances, manifestations of behaviour that might point to students *not being studious, motivated* or engaged in the learning or not being able to do well in their study. His experience as a lecturer has shown him that the phenomenon of doing well in study cannot be fully uncovered by drawing conclusions from outside appearances only. Bruce recognises and acknowledges his fore-knowings or fore-structures (Gadamer, 2004), or his “own bias” (p. 271). He creates a willingness to let these be through a mindfulness approach of just noticing both the students’ behaviour and his own internal processes. He “open[s] up a space in which beings can be themselves” (Inwood, 1999, p. 117), in order to create the openness and welcome he wants to offer his students. This allows him to reserve his judgement and maintain the mindful attitude that he aspires to. It is part of the intention and the ethic of his mindfulness practice.

In terms of hermeneutic phenomenology Bruce is aware that the students’ behaviour could be a “semblance” (Inwood, 1999, p. 159) of lack of interest; the behaviour *appears* to indicate students’ lack of interest in the topic. It becomes evident that this is not the case. Bruce’s mindfulness practice allows him to let the behaviour be. He reserves his judgement of the students’ abilities and potential outcomes, until there is

evidence of it which is the true appearance (Heidegger, 1953/1962); the actual level of learning that has taken place announced itself in the students' results.

In the following example Ivanka is open to the potential of an individual instead of a group of students and invites him to step into a challenge that will take him to a new way of knowing himself:

This morning I had handed out notices about students' bus passes just before the lecture. The notice apparently has instructions about what to do. A student came up to me and he said: "Oh, look, they've got these instructions wrong. I've done this and it doesn't work, you've got to do this instead. Everyone else needs to know." I said, "that's really interesting" and I was thinking that I did not want to tell the students, because I'm the lecturer saying do this, do that, and besides there are too many things for me to do, so I said: "Would you like to tell everyone?" He immediately went "Oh no, no I can't." So I said: "Hey, you just said it to me really well. This is your chance to claim this space and be an academic person who has experienced standing up in front of a group of people in week two. Wouldn't that be fantastic?" And he just did it! He did it beautifully. [Ivanka]

In this teaching moment Ivanka demonstrates her openness to multiple dimensions going on in the teaching space, while responding to one student. She recognises her own needs: she has too much to do already. She is open to the group needs: the students already receive so many instructions from her as the lecturer, and this extra one would probably not receive the attention it and the group deserve. Ivanka also notices and is open to this particular student's developmental needs: she wants to give all students, and specifically this student who presents himself at that moment, the opportunity to experience themselves in a different, more expansive and deeper way; more than what they might be aware of in themselves at that time.

Expanding on these examples, Roger's anecdote shows teaching mindfully as being open to a student and what is going on for her on a more pragmatic level, as well as for himself at the time of an individual interaction with a student.

I guess what makes an encounter with a student a mindful encounter, is that I take the time to be focused specifically on them and what's happening without taking it on personally. I think that if I'm not mindful of my emotions at that time, it only escalates it for them. I am thinking of a student who didn't attend a workshop and was supposed to do an essay instead. This student was not happy about that fact. That did make me a bit angry, as I am not perfect. I did notice the anger, but instead of just checking it and then dealing with the student, I gave the anger back basically. And I was kind of saying, "well, actually, you've got to do it! So don't complain to me". I didn't say it that way, but I try to

be mindful of my own emotions and body sensations, such that I'm not taking on their anxiety or their frustrations or other emotions, and then I am able to deal with it in the moment, without engaging in that same emotional way. I think those things can happen subconsciously and we don't have control over that really, until we notice them. I guess the thing is not trying to be hyper-vigilant, which isn't mindful, but just trying to be aware of those things so that if there are subconscious reactions to a student, I can be aware of that as quickly as possible. [Roger]

As Roger describes his experience, he talks of being aware of his own emotional state in order to be more available to a student when they meet. He does this through *taking the time to be focused specifically on the student and what is going on for him or her*. At the same time he is open to what he is aware of in his body, his *body sensations*, which are indicative of an embodied way of knowing (Todres, 2007) about himself. His body sensations give him an indication of his feelings and emotions. When he is open to and aware of all of this without getting caught in the experiencing of it, in other words when he is mindfully aware of this, he is fully available for the student *without taking on their anxiety or frustrations or other emotions*, and without responding to the student in the same emotional way that the student is expressing to him.

Mindful awareness and being open to his own potentially subconscious reactions that stem from habitual patterns, allow him to choose his responses in the encounter with the student. Perhaps, if he were to get caught up in his own reactions, he would not be able to clear an opening for creating a joint experience, a place where he and the student can meet, and journey together in whatever needs to be addressed in that moment. This creates opportunity for Roger as the teacher to facilitate the learning process for the student and to facilitate a relationship that contributes to that learning. Roger's words "*taking on the student's emotions*" are pointing to something that he considers to be unhelpful; something that may blur the professional and/or ethical boundaries between the student and the teacher.

Roger's recounting of this story uncovers his recognition that while noticing is a foundational element of teaching mindfully (as discussed in Chapter Four), he indicates that hyper-awareness is not desirable either. Hyper-awareness suggests an over-involvement in the process that is occurring within himself, and between student and him. Mindful awareness is *about just trying to be aware*, just noticing, resting the attention lightly on the object of interest. The intention is to do this with an open mind and with kindness and non-attachment to whether something is

deemed good or bad, appropriate or not appropriate, liked or not liked. Mindful awareness is about not resisting whatever happens in the moment, taking note of its presence and allowing it to teach or show something about the thinking and emotions that may be underpinning the experience (Carmody, 2015; G. Dreyfus, 2011). This letting things be as they are occurs in relation to Roger's awareness of himself and of the student, which allows him to "enter the open space [that has thus been created] and there engage with beings as beings, as independent entities" (Inwood, 1999, p. 117). In being open to his internal reaction and letting it be, Roger notes what it tells him about the meaning of the situation he finds himself in. He makes use of it to inform his actions for the greatest benefit of the student.

The above anecdote from Roger's experience also points to teaching mindfully as becoming aware of more than what he knows intellectually, the usual acceptable epistemology in an academic context (Palmer, 1998/2007). He also makes use of the information that is accessible and retrievable from his body sensations, from emotions, feelings and from what is going on in the environment. He responds from this embodied knowing, from his intuition and his integrity, in relationship with the student, all of which Palmer indicated is essential for good teaching (1998/2007). This is a unifying process that acknowledges the teacher and the student each as a whole, multidimensional, and historically situated person in relationship and in a shared space with another.

Being open to different ways of knowing

Ivanka is also familiar with this embodied knowing. She is open to it and actively draws on it. Ivanka gave an example of addressing a group of students who were planning to take drastic public action after finding themselves very distressed at a beloved teacher's situation.

What came out was very quiet, and I got quieter and quieter and I said: "What Julia [pseudonym] would want is for you to honour the contract that you have made with yourself, to do the best you can this year in your study. Taking these actions is not going to get you any further. It would only distress Julia to hear that you are responding to her dramatic news in such a dramatic way; please return to your knowledge of doing the best you can for yourself. Julia would most benefit from hearing that you are true to your purpose." It just came out like that. And they went completely quiet and then I just walked out, and they didn't do it. This is how I use my mindfulness, I just trust. I think perhaps the mindfulness has given me more trust, because I don't get nervous now when I'm going to

be saying anything to anyone! I don't have to be nervous, because there's always the voice of truth when you have returned home. [Ivanka]

This story reveals that Ivanka has come to trust that place as a felt sense (Gendlin, 1981) of embodied knowing. She calls it her “*inner centre of strength and knowing*” (her “*home*” and her “*true self*” in another story) and returns to it as “*an essential humanity inside me, in my core, which I trust*”. Ivanka’s trusting of this *core* allows her to access language that is fully appropriate to lived experience in the moment (Todres, 2007). This has become a way of being that she can now rely on, due to her regular mindfulness practice and due to having had similar experiences before. She feels secure in that knowing and as a result does not need to be nervous in her interactions with anyone. The words Ivanka uses indicate that her experience of this core inside herself is a core that she shares with the students through their shared humanity, simply through being human, as well as through Ivanka’s words and authentic presence in that space at that moment.

In another example Roger described using his mindfulness practice when he finds himself *hanging from a rafter* by his hands. With this anecdote he also demonstrates his willingness to be open to intuitive, embodied knowing (Todres, 2007), in a different way to Ivanka’s example above. At the same time this openness to intuition also ensures that the students really understand something he considers very important for them to know.

I can think of a specific example of my mind sitting [on my shoulder], watching me do the lecturing: I was trying to explain to the students that they could be really stressed as teachers - and for some reason, before I knew what I was doing, I was hanging from a rafter. I was demonstrating what it can look like physically to be stressed out! So there I was and I was hanging, and there was this part of me outside of me going “is this actually what’s needed in the moment?” and it turned out to be ‘yes’, because I looked around and saw that the students really got what I was talking about. But it made me think that it is really important to actually be aware of what you’re doing! I do tend to be dramatic, or try to illustrate things, but that can go too far or be inappropriate and you just don’t want to do that. [Roger]

Roger tells this story of how he gets caught out by his spontaneity, *before he knows what he is doing*, an example of what Heidegger calls Dasein “being ahead of himself” (Inwood, 1999, p. 155). Roger suddenly finds himself in quite a *dramatic demonstration* of what being stressed as a teacher may look like; however, rather than getting fully caught up in the theatre of that moment, *mindfulness kick[s] in*

immediately, as if it is *his mind sitting on his shoulder, watching him doing this*, and asking him whether this demonstration was actually *what was needed in this moment*. While this generates some anxiety, it also gives opportunity for Roger to internally stop the flow of his demonstration and evaluate the situation in that moment. It allows him to respond in a way that is needed right then, whether this is to continue (as in this example) or to change direction. With mindful awareness the decision about what needs to be addressed in class occurs in a mindful moment. In that moment Roger is responsive to internal and external cues as they are happening while he is teaching, to a call from within and from beyond him (Heidegger, 1953/1962). The call is from within himself, from his intention to teach mindfully, from the students (seeing on their faces that they got what he was meaning), and from beyond himself, from what is available within the environment (in this case the beam in the room).

The above examples show different nuances of teaching mindfully as ‘being open’: creating openness to oneself, to the students and to what is occurring in the space of teaching and learning.

A very significant, if not fundamental, element that appeared to be intimately linked to openness in teaching mindfully is the impulse to stop. I was curious about this notion of ‘stopping’ that emerged many times in participants’ stories. Roger *stopped [his] rushed walking and his anxiety*, he *stopped the whole class* in what they were doing in order to open students to the learning situation; Laura stopped and changed the *direction of a conversation* and a teaching session; Andrea stopped the negative effect of her ‘*monkey mind*’ (see for instance Ferguson, 2013; Johnson, 2001), her busy internal dialogue, and indicated adopting a different approach to work with her students; Bruce stopped his stream of thought in class to consider a *student’s challenge* of what he said; he identified that mindful preparation made him more likely *to stop in a moment to reflect on what he needed to say*, and on another occasion he *wanted to stop thinking about* a challenging situation coming up in order *to bring himself back to focus during [a] class*; Ivanka’s mindful response was instrumental in stopping a student who *was all over the place*, creating an opportunity for him to be more aware of what was going on for him in that moment; Norman talked about *mindfulness stopping the pendulum of [intense] emotions*, allowing *greater intensity of feelings* and thus *greater awareness of feelings*.

The number of times stopping was identified by participants raised questions: What is this stopping? What do they stop? What does stopping create? What makes them stop in the first place? What is the meaning of stopping while teaching mindfully?

Openness as stopping

I wanted to gain deeper understanding and therefore more in-depth and rich descriptions of the lived experience of the phenomenon being explored (van Manen, 2001). Therefore, and in keeping with the process of hermeneutic phenomenology, I specifically asked Bernadette to tell me more about the stopping. She shared the following experience.

*Stopping seems to be something **in me**. I think it is my automatic, habitual mindfulness practice, and also my knowledge that we become **immersed** in experience. As a clinician and as a teacher, it's important that I notice what's going on, so I **stop**. I couldn't say what makes me do it when I do it. It is like that intuitive knowing; something that comes from deep inside me; something that calls out and says 'stop' inside and I just **do** it. Just today I noticed a moment when I was reading the vignette out loud and I lost myself. I was trying to pay attention to too many things and I wasn't attending to what I was reading. I noticed that I wasn't **in** my words and so I stopped. These are little things, but they make a difference to what happens in other people. It is easy to just read words, but not so easy to stay with the words. Somehow or other I just noticed that I was not in the experience. I was reading and I was attending to other things: wondering about what next; I was trying to see what am I doing, where am I going, where the students are, what's going on, how is my colleague going, I was not with what I was doing, I wasn't present to reading out loud, and you can't afford to do that! So then I stopped reading; I just stopped in myself. There is a moment of mindfulness, of checking, of going in and feeling, and that's when I become aware of those periphery things, I'm hot, I'm tired, I'm uncomfortable; it felt like I was **full** of so much **session** and so much material. ... I don't think I said anything at first. I just stopped. [Bernadette]*

In this anecdote Bernadette actually stops what she is doing: she is *reading a vignette out loud* and realises or recognises that she *has lost herself*; she is not attending or present to what she is reading, so she stops the reading. The stopping is a way for her to come to know what is happening when she realises she *is not in the experience*. In *becoming immersed* she is caught up in the “everyday-ness” (Heidegger, 1953/1962) of her teaching activities. Dreyfus (1991) interpreted Heidegger's notion as being caught up in the “general situation”, doing almost automatically what she is there to do, doing “what typically makes sense” (p. 320), but without awareness of what she is doing, without *being in the words* she is reading. Losing herself in the reading reveals a sense of not only being lost to the words, but also being lost or closed to the

meaning of the teaching session. The stopping allows her to open up, enables her to become available, to be authentically present, to what Heidegger calls the “unique Situation” (H. L. Dreyfus, 1991, p. 320). Stopping lets Bernadette become fully aware of herself, the students, what is happening *in [the] space* and what she is doing *in [that] moment*. Only then is she able to continue speaking in a way that meets her expectations of herself as a teacher who teaches mindfully.

This anecdote shows that in the stopping Bernadette has already created the opening, the stopping shows itself to already be the opening that allows for a different experience to flow from the opening. Having explored the meaning of stopping within the phenomenon of teaching mindfully, I now turn to address my next question: what calls these teachers to stop?

Being called to stop

Bernadette talks about stopping as arising from a number of factors that come together in her teaching. Firstly her *automatic and habitual mindfulness practice* that she brings into her teaching has become a way of being during teaching. Secondly her knowing about *becoming immersed in experience*, in doing, in activities, keeps her alert. Thirdly, her sense of *importance of knowing what is going on [in her work with students or clients] as a teacher and clinician* calls her to stop when she realises she is *not in the experience*. Bernadette’s experience is a good example that points to ‘being called to stop’ during a moment of being in full flight with something else. She cannot say what makes her stop, but she has a sense that this impulse arises *from deep inside* her.

Bernadette’s words are pointing to Heidegger’s (1953/1962) notion of the call in relation to “Dasein’s lostness in the “they” ...: the tasks, rules, standards, the urgency and extent of concerned and solicitous Being-in-the-world” (p. 312). The lost-ness resolves only when Dasein makes a conscious choice to bring itself back from this fallenness and into one’s “ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self” (p. 313). Interpreted within the context of this study, the participants have already made a commitment to practicing mindfulness in their teaching, and bringing attention and awareness back again and again to what is occurring, what is needed in the moment. The “choosing to make this choice” (Heidegger, 1953/1962, p. 313) enables the person to ‘hear the call’, that wells up from inside, and at the same time from beyond.

Being called from beyond can be seen as being called from the person's being-in-the-world. In other words the trigger may come from cues in the environment. For example Bruce specifically indicates the latter when talking about mindfulness during teaching:

When I pick up the whiteboard marker I try to be aware where I place it and when I wipe the whiteboard, I mindfully wipe off what I'm writing, and considering whether I will wipe something off or not. Another example is when I start the computer; that's an action that only I do. I use these kinds of moments as landmarks or as signposts to remind me of staying mindful. All of this seems to work for me; it brings me back into mindfulness. [Bruce]

In this anecdote Bruce “chooses to make [the] choice”, or in mindfulness terminology he sets the intention (Shapiro et al., 2006), to be reminded to be fully present and not caught up in “the they” of the teaching. He does this through the presence of some specific items in the room which he has to use or actions he has to perform, as part of his teaching. While he links his intention to something concrete and “ready-to-hand” (Heidegger, 1953/1962, p. 104), there is still something that calls him to remember when he picks up the marker or starts the computer. A characteristic of the call is that it shows itself as “the momentum of a push” or “an abrupt arousal” (Heidegger, 1953/1962, p. 316). This is evident in several of the anecdotes discussed, in the way that participants suddenly became aware of their ‘lostness’ in the situation.

Stopping and opening into lived space and time

For other participants teaching mindfully included, at times, using a specific mindfulness practice that involves ‘stopping’ together with the student group. In these situations the stopping is used with a particular purpose in mind, as a result it has a specific meaning. One of Roger's anecdotes points to how stopping creates openness to a shared space of engagement and learning that is not present at the start of the session:

The first time that I became aware of not being cognisant of where the students were at (and nor were they themselves), would have been in 2007, when I was in a lecture theatre with a group of students. ... So I actually stopped and I did a mindful breathing exercise for the whole class: two hundred or so students were in there. I was just taken aback at how calm the whole room became. ... And yes there were one or two students who were talking, but out of 200 students most were doing mindful breathing. And then what I noticed once we stopped, was the sense of engagement that happened immediately after that. They were

really into it and I was more taken aback by how engaged they were in the topic than anything else. That was a specific incident where that happened, and actually, someone else was doing their research and they recalled that incident. That was the very first time I noticed that, and after that it is difficult to think of other specific ones as it sort of happens all the time. [Roger]

Roger's commitment to his mindfulness practice as a teacher, allows him to develop awareness of what is going on for him and the students. In this instance he realises that he is not aware *of where the students [are] at*. He realises that the students are not focused or engaged either. This lack of engagement seems to foster a sense of separation, even though they are in the same physical space, the lecture theatre. Within the "lived space" (van Manen, 2001, p. 102) Roger feels his separation from what is going on for the students; and the students are separate from what they are meant to be doing. They are all involved in their own Being-in-the-world and doing their own thing, not working or being together in the journey of learning. Roger talks about teaching mindfully here as *actually stopping* what is going on and takes the *whole class through a mindful breathing exercise*.

Once again, in the moment of responding to the call of stopping, an opening occurs. There is a pause, an interruption in Roger's experience of the separate space. The opening touches the students. This opening within the teaching is a joint space, as both the students and Roger himself are now fully engaged in what is happening in the room. Roger is now conscious of where the students are at, and the students are now conscious of where they are at. They are fully engaged in the topic. They are now engaged in a shared experience, a oneness of purpose and action within one space that no longer appears to be divided into Roger's space and the students' space. In another anecdote, discussed in Chapter Six, Roger indicates he intentionally makes use of stopping with the whole student group in order to create this lived space for learning.

In an example that sheds light on another dimension that stopping may generate, Bernadette shows that stopping creates an experience in which her sense of time changes:

I thought: we've actually got a limited time to test this [person] for her practice and she's not giving us what we need. So I stopped and I did the whole thing, I suppose I took a bit of time to bring my experience into the light. It probably took me five minutes before I spoke, so I wasn't fast. Maybe it was less time, but it seemed like a long time. [Bernadette]

In this anecdote Bernadette describes a high pressure environment, where she becomes aware through her mindfulness practice that something is not as it needs to be for the context. She internally stops how she is responding and turns her attention inward to *bring her experience into the light*. While she is aware of the *limited* [*‘clock’*] time available for the situation, privately she takes the time she needs to check her internal experience. Bernadette is not sure whether this is *five minutes ...or less*, although *it seems like a long time*. Lived time is a construct that stretches and shrinks according to the meaning of the lived experience of a situation (van Manen, 2001). Bernadette’s experience of mindfully paying attention to what is happening allows the experience of time to take on a more spacious quality.

Reflection

I acknowledge that the understandings I have discussed in this chapter, are a ‘being on the way’ of seeing “being open” as a theme of meaning in teaching mindfully. Seeing this theme emerge from the multiplicity of elements of meaning of the phenomenon was the result of a process I decided to embark on, using my own mindfulness practice. Opening myself up to being with the poems that had emerged for each of the participants in a contemplative way (see Chapter One), I recognised the theme of being open in a sudden clearing of understanding. This clearing came with a sense of relief and resolution after engaging in a “circular movement” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 293) of being with the anecdotes individually and collectively, the parts and the whole, including several side-roads of exploration and “run[ning] backwards and forwards along the text” (p. 293). In further dwelling within this clearing, being open revealed itself in different ways and on different levels, as fits with the underpinning philosophy. It was tempting to try and bring all of these meanings into this chapter, harking back to my tendency to resort to a complexity view of the world. I decided to limit this content to what now makes up this chapter as essential elements of being open in teaching mindfully: being open to self, to students and the group; being open to different ways of knowing; stopping as an integral element of opening and as a way to create a shared space and time in learning.

I close this chapter with another short poem on Being Open, before moving onto the final findings chapter: Teaching mindfully as Being Caring,

Being Open

Extending a welcome
To my ever-changing world
Supported from within and beyond

CHAPTER SIX

Teaching mindfully as Being Caring

Introduction

Having identified the themes of teaching mindfully as attending to noticing and being open, another essential theme that I saw in the multiplicity of elements of meaning was being caring. I was struck by participants' depth of caring about students. Participants' stories point to teaching mindfully, supporting a caring attitude. Their mindfulness practice while teaching supports these teachers to consciously and repeatedly return to caring, for the students and for themselves.

Andrea talks of a moment in practice when she realised an element of being mindful was missing. She had been told on several occasions, both in teaching and life in general, that she comes across as peaceful.

*I realised after a while that I wasn't necessarily being **kind**. I might be peaceful, but I might be a little bit ... cut off. It is possible too within Buddhist meditation that you are completely cut off. To me that is **disengaged** and not transformative. That is not the transformative model that I enjoy so much. If you are distant, then it's going to be impossible, whatever you say and however you look, for [the students] to feel that you're actually connecting. [Andrea]*

Andrea uses meditation practice to help her prepare for her teaching. Over time she *realised* that the particular words she used in the practice may support her to be *peaceful*, but *not necessarily kind*. She also realises the importance of kindness to be able to *connect* with her students. This insight, provided by Andrea, refers to her background in mindfulness practice, which is based on Theravada Buddhism with its focus on self-liberation (Kyabgon, 2001). She could have applied her mindfulness meditation to increase her own happiness and wellbeing as a teacher. Instead, she has come to a different understanding that she wants to apply in her teaching. She wants to develop her ability to be peaceful **and kind**.

Throughout the participants' stories the theme of caring was very strong. All these teachers were committed to caring, for themselves, for the students and for the importance of teaching to what is needed in the moment within the session.

Therefore, in this chapter, I explore teaching mindfully as being caring in those domains, guided and supported by Heidegger's thinking of Dasein as care. The chapter again concludes with a reflection and a poem.

Caring for students

One of Ivanka's examples from an English literature class shows her caring while teaching mindfully:

*The student said: "well, I think he's trying to... I think he thinks Celia's his lover" and like always when he said something, he played with his shirt. I knew that was because he was nervous. Without my mindfulness teaching I could say, "oh no no, he's not saying that or no, no that's completely wrong or I don't think that's right"; but with mindfulness I look him straight in the eye and I take a moment and I might take a breath and say, "In what way do you think Paul is doing that?" As if we are having a little conversation. "Can you give me another example of that? What does that feel like?" and so he hesitates and he is thinking. It's like this: a **conversation** is a **safe** place to be. The mindfulness produces an exchange space that's not threatening. [Ivanka]*

Ivanka recognises that it is important for human wellbeing that someone cares about us, that we matter, that we belong and feel safe, as shown in Waldfogel's (2006) work. She invites and engages this one student in the middle of a lecture *as if in a little conversation*. She has found a way to convey this conversation as an intimate exploration of an idea between the two of them, quite informally, almost casually, and quite safely. Through her mindfulness practice during teaching, Ivanka has created *a safe place* for this student, a space of mutual respect, exploration, and acknowledgement. In this space he will not be made wrong or be shamed. In this space he will be facilitated to contact his own knowing and his own thinking. Through teaching mindfully Ivanka she has a way of showing she cares. Next I turn to Heidegger for a deeper understanding of this notion of caring.

Heidegger considers that by Being-in-the-world Dasein's ground of being *is* Care; care as "essentially concerned about itself, other people and things in the world" (Zimmerman cited in Todres, 2007, p. 116). Human 'being-in-the-world' is always concerned about something, particularly our very survival, and thus this concern or care is always already essentially embedded in or integral to each Dasein according to Heidegger (1953/1962). Teaching mindfully as a way of caring illustrates this understanding. Furthermore, the above is an example of what Heidegger calls one of three different forms of care or 'Sorge' (Inwood, 1999, p. 35). Ivanka demonstrates

‘Fürsorgen’: she attentively “leap[s] ahead” (p. 36) in order to help the student to stand in his own authenticity (Inwood, 1999). I further explore authenticity in the context of teaching mindfully in the next chapter.

In the next sections I consider the understanding of teaching mindfully as care with examples from the participants, all highlighting slightly different aspects of teaching mindfully as caring.

I am really proud of what we did that day. It seems to me that the keys to all of that were first of all [the student's] bravery to stay with the feeling of her experience, her openness about it, and our openness together, but secondly my ability to be mindful of what's happening in me and how that relates to what's happening in her and what's happening in the rest of the group. How that occurred was my attention to those little moments of noticing. I guess my therapy training was an additional factor: noticing what's happening between us, recognising a moment when she was needing to take some space, or to ask her something, or me being willing to stop and also to include her process. She was able to come to a place of acceptance and felt quite happy in the end. She thanked me for my holding the boundary in front of the whole class. [Bernadette]

The first time I used this story it illustrated attending to noticing, in Chapter Four. This time the same anecdote points to Bernadette's mindfulness practice as care: the utter care she takes, the level of commitments she shows, and the deep compassion she has for the student, in deciding on what action to take that will be in the best interest of the student. This is evident in the immediacy of Bernadette's teaching, as the moments of the situation arise and ebb away. It was also evident in her description of a similar level of care, concern and consideration in the days leading up to this teaching session. In this anecdote the close link between noticing and caring is evident. I will address this link in more depth in Chapter Seven.

During the interviews participants were asked and often spontaneously gave their own interpretation of the meaning of using their personal mindfulness practice during teaching, congruent with the methodology (van Manen, 2001). Ivanka shared the following thoughts, which she indicates underpin all her teaching:

I honour all my students and I think that's where my teaching shines. I get very high evaluations in my teaching. My philosophy is that each one of my students has something amazing and beautiful and pure to offer. My belief is that I'm helping them to reach inside themselves and bring out this diamond; they've just had it tarnished or it is perhaps covered in a whole lot of acid, actually, or they've lost connection with it, but it's there. I believe the only way you can do that is by being mindful. ... Qualities of being a mindful teacher are: number one intuitive, always

*intuitive; number two always lovingly responsive. I often say that I'm in love with all my students. I think you have to be. I don't normally tell people other than my best friends that! You have to love the students and you have to love yourself! I think it is very mindful to **accept** what is; not to be happy with all your flaws necessarily, you do want to change things, but to love yourself so you can love all the students. Being strongly empathetic has to come first as well, and responsible. Not responsible **for** but responsible in my every utterance. [Ivanka]*

It is clear from Ivanka's story that she 'lives' her caring about the students she works with. For her, mindfulness practice in teaching is clearly not just a technique or a tool, as mindfulness is sometimes described. Ivanka has been teaching mindfully for some years now and it has become a way of being. She calls her caring *love* and recognises the importance of loving herself as a person so that in turn she can love her students. She comments that this includes *being responsible in [her] every utterance*, pointing again to Heidegger's notion of "attentively leaping ahead" as "solicitude" (Heidegger, 1953/1962, pp. 158-159). This solicitude "helps the Other to become transparent to himself" (p. 159). In Ivanka's words, her love supports students to *reach inside themselves* to discover and uncover their own *diamond*, their beauty and gifts that may have got covered over through their life circumstances. In this way, caring is closely linked to being open, as well as attending to noticing. The latter was shown in the previous chapter, in Ivanka's anecdote of facilitating a student to speak in front of the whole group.

The following anecdote shows a different dimension of Ivanka's attitude of caring:

I have had one student in particular, who had been in prison, had drug issues, and he saw me as 'the man'. He was combative with me at every turn; this is 20 times in a class of 50 minutes, undermining me, criticising what I was doing and tearing apart the contract of mutual respect that was in the class. I tried to be mindful in my responses to him. However, in the end I had to remove him. He was the rotten apple and he was rotting the box. I gave him a separate programme. My mindful response to this student was in fact to be mindfully looking after myself and all the students at the same time, including him. [Ivanka]

In *trying to be mindful*, Ivanka acknowledges that mindful responses do not always have the wished-for effect. In this situation being mindful and caring includes taking someone out of a class situation, using her discernment about what is needed for the greatest benefit for all. She still conveys her caring in that the student in question was not expelled from the programme for instance, but he was *given a separate programme*, with the intention or hope that he would benefit from that. In this

anecdote Ivanka shows care both for herself, for *all the students* as a group, and for this individual student.

Laura's practice of teaching mindfully also supports her to continue caring about a student in spite of a challenging communication from the student, as was evident in one of her stories:

During one paper a student said: "Look, I don't really want to be here. I know all of this. It's at too low a level. Thanks for your efforts, it's nothing to do with you; but that's how I feel". I tried to contact her afterwards, to talk about this, but she did not respond to my messages. Then I happened to see this student in the car park one day and we had a conversation. I told her that I really did appreciate what she was saying, and realised she's a busy person. ... She told me she was trying not to be disruptive, and asked whether I thought she was. I let her know that she was a bit disruptive, but that I could cope with her. The next time in class, she was much better, I could tell from her body language, but I didn't say anything else. I was just mindful that she knew that she could make her decision. So she came to a couple more classes and she did not attend the last ones. She did submit her assignments, which weren't perfect, but they were alright. [Laura]

Laura's caring about this student's experience and needs, shows through how she listens to and hears the student's learning experience. At the same time Laura is aware of her responsibilities as a teacher and stays in relationship with the student: she is upfront, honest, and at the same time kind in her communication. Laura shows she cares by acknowledging the student's life situation. She lets the student know that she *can cope* with the student's somewhat challenging behaviour, that it is safe for the student to reveal herself and her experience and that she accepts the student in making her own decisions about her learning needs. At the same time she is clear about the expectation that the student still needs to meet the course requirements in terms of submitting an assignment. The next time the student is in class, Laura knows from *her body language* that *she is much better*. It seems that this student now feels more at ease in the context of the paper and the teaching, and that she may feel acknowledged, recognised, safe and accepted for whom she is and what she brings to the situation.

Roger frames caring in terms of compassion. For him "*compassion is a big part of mindfulness*", but he indicates we "*can't be compassionate until we notice*" (Roger).

I can go back to the example of this young girl going on the mission. I noticed and was quite aware that she was very anxious about her deadlines for when her assignments were due. And I was quite taken, not

by her anxiety so much as her passion for wanting to be on this mission. I felt it was very important for me to help her find a way through the anxiety and so had compassion for her. We sat down and worked through every assessment she had due and when it was due and how it would work and that kind of thing. It feels quite good when you're able to help somebody and you show compassion. [Roger]

Roger notices a student's anxiety about meeting *her deadlines for assignments*. This noticing enables him to show her that he cares about her as a student and as a person. Having talked earlier with this student about *her anxiety*, he knows that it is underpinned by a larger context in which she reveals *her passion* to help others, which he admires. Because he notices her anxiety, addresses it, and finds out about the larger picture of her life's goals, he can now tap into his care and *compassion*. He recognises the importance of his wanting to assist the student to find a way through her anxiety and meet the deadlines, so she can then also meet her larger goal.

This example demonstrates how Roger's way of engaging in a caring and supportive student-teacher relationship is very important to this student's ability to achieve the learning that needs to occur. Roger's commitment and willingness to respond to what is needed in the moment, allows him *to help somebody and ... show compassion*, while still ensuring that the learning needs are met. Several of the participants indicated the importance of 'doing what is needed' as part of teaching mindfully and caring, which will be explored next.

Caring and doing what is needed

Throughout the stories, the meaning of caring and doing-what-is-needed when teaching mindfully became apparent.

There is a kind of automatic aspect to teaching, as I've taught the courses that I teach before, so I remember examples that have worked. I remember certain stories and I've got a reminder in the power point. But when I interact with a class and do exercises or ask them to answer questions, I do try to stop for a moment and ask myself "ok, what's the best thing to say here?" [Bruce]

As seen in Chapter Five, and again here, Bruce consciously and deliberately builds 'stopping' into his teaching approach. In this anecdote he does so to create an opportunity for some time and space to reflect on *the best thing to say*, the most helpful comment or direction in which to take the class. In the previous chapter I highlighted stopping as an element of being open. In this section it is evident that

stopping is also about caring, about doing what is most useful to students at that particular point in time as well. Gadamer (2004) indicated that words may show more than one meaning depending on their relationship to the whole of the text, which is clearly shown here in relation to stopping.

Bruce calls this element of caring the ‘task oriented aspect of mindfulness’. As my research conversation with him progressed he noticed that he had used this notion frequently, almost as if surprised or “pulled up short” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 270) by his own spoken ‘text’ himself: *“And here is that task oriented aspect of mindfulness again. I think it keeps coming back to that”* (Bruce). Bruce recognises that this is responsible or role-related care. Teachers need to care whether they feel like it or not. Mindfulness practice during teaching supports Bruce to achieve this.

In my listening to all of the stories I see that caring is integral to doing what is needed at any given time.

*I would always have said that I teach to the students’ needs and develop a rapport with them, but I’m more keenly aware that I am **actually** doing it now, I really **am** doing it. So when I’m with a student it’s about the **whole** student. I really try hard to be aware of that student and where they’re at, at that moment. I am also more aware of when they’re getting it, whereas before, I think it would have been more about **me** covering the content. For quite a while now it has been more about where are they at with what’s happening right now, and me adjusting what I do to make that happen if it isn’t. [Roger]*

Roger now knows, through his mindfulness practice, that he is *actually teaching to the students’ needs*. Not only does he know, he also intentionally *tries really hard to be more aware of*, and to direct his attention to what is needed. This intention assists him to hear the call from within and beyond (Heidegger, 1953/1962) of teaching mindfully as being open, stopping, attending to noticing, and caring to respond to that need when it arises.

Andrea shared how she interacted with one student, who reacted strongly in a lecture and revealed her vulnerability in front of the whole class.

*One lecture I very much engaged with [one student] in the moment when she came up with some quite close personal things. ... I think if people [do this], they **need** something, there’s a reason why they’re doing that, in this class at that moment. I just spoke to her in a general sort of normalising way, without it being too distant. And I just felt myself drop into that space of, well I’m ready... because I prepared mindfully for what I might be about to face or have to deal with in the classroom. That*

*space is a feeling of confidence and accessing, not expertise, but knowledge of dealing with people in conflict or in high emotional states. ... And while that is happening also looking at the other people in the room, to give them the confidence that I am **able** to help this person in a limited way, in that part of the lecture, and **not** close her down and also not to let her feel dismissed. So it is recognition of what is going on for **her** ... and also for them.*

*What happened between us just felt very right. It was the right thing to do. ... There was something that had to be worked out, so: what would be **useful** to get her back into the room but not feeling dismissed ...? It was actually just about what I can do that's helpful. To be right there, to be congruent, to be genuine and to be mindful of what we need and what the others need as well. ... And it does take up quite a lot of the class time, so what I do after [an interaction like this], is to say: "this is what I was doing and this is what you can do... in conflict..." I then turned to the rest of the class and used this situation as a teaching tool. It is a holding device in some ways; a recognition that we've all got needs. And hers was the one that was coming up at that moment. And mine was to do that in a humane way, with respect, and being very mindful of everything in the room, including me! That I'm part of that interaction, and that in every moment I have a choice! And then there's a next moment, I can choose to say oh we don't want to hear about that. ... A lot of what I do and what I teach them is just to be receptive. [Andrea]*

Andrea's words frequently point to her care about and *recognition that we all have needs*: the individual student's needs, the class needs, and her own needs. Through Andrea's mindfulness practice her own needs have become apparent. It is part of the philosophy of Buddhism to recognise the fundamental similarities between ourselves and other people, in order to develop compassion for others (Kyabgon, 2007). Being mindful during her teaching practice allows Andrea to remember, at frequent intervals, that everyone has needs, particularly in situations like in this instance, when one student's needs *take up a lot of class time*. In this story she also frequently refers to her desire to *be helpful*, to respond appropriately to everyone's needs, including her own.

Andrea's mindful preparation for this class allows her to *drop into a space of, well, I'm ready*; a space of trusting and knowing how to be and what to do; a space of *being right there, being congruent, being genuine and mindful of everyone's needs*. This is similar to Ivanka's sense of her core self. At that moment she also demonstrates "authentic, 'releasing' Fürsorge" (Inwood, 1999, p. 36). She steps in, "attentively leaping ahead" (p. 36) for this student, anticipating her needs, able to be helpful in this situation in contributing something useful to the individual and to the

group. Through *using this situation as a teaching tool*, Andrea allows the situation that has arisen to become an experience of rich learning for all.

In terms of the underpinning philosophy, Andrea is able to help in a way that gives this student's own self back to her, to take something from this situation that will allow her to tap into her own resources and "stand on [her] own two feet" (Inwood, 1999, p. 36). She speaks of doing this "*in a humane way, with respect, and being very mindful of everything in the room, including [her]self*" (Andrea). Andrea's teaching mindfully is about deeply caring about the students' learning needs as well as their wellbeing and their personal development needs. Andrea also recognises that helping in this way has limited scope because of the educational context, as she indicates that this helping is necessarily *limited* and the holding *is just a snapshot*. She recognises its importance nonetheless, as it *gives this student experience* of potentially a *new way of being*, and the rest of the class a powerful example of how they could respond in a situation they may find themselves in and *how to be receptive* to what occurs in any given moment.

Andrea is not afraid of being there with the one student in that moment, and simultaneously she is able to let the other students know and *give them confidence* that she knows how to do this: how *to hold* the situation; through coming in close proximity to the person whose needs are highest at that time; *engaging with her*, joining with her, being able to talk with the one student and simultaneously *being aware of the other people in the room*; Andrea's words point to her being able to have what Zajonc (2009) calls "a kind of "breathing" of attention" (p. 39), holding a wide field of awareness with alternating focused and open attention. To me this speaks of a sense of ease with being in that situation, a sense of being open and available to respond to the situation, both specifically and generally.

The ability to hold a wide **and** focused perspective enables participants to see and acknowledge their own as well as the students' needs. Self-care is a well-recognised need in a demanding working environment like higher education (Adams, Logan, Rorrison, & Munro, 2013; Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper, & Ricketts, 2005; Winefield & Jarrett, 2001). Another theme identified in this study shows that mindfulness practice supports these teachers to also care for themselves.

Caring for self

Several participants indicated that one of the initial reasons for starting and maintaining mindfulness practice was to be able to take care of their own needs, both personally and professionally. Ivanka started formal and informal mindfulness practice in response to a life event:

*In 2008 my father passed away. He had a very tragic demise with a lot of medical misadventure. I was very distressed.I started looking for a way to calm the subtle latent distress in me I came across and bought Kabat-Zinn's book "Full catastrophe living". Then I started doing body-scans two or three times a week and I signed up for an 8 week MBSR course, which grounded me in my practice. I ended up particularly doing the body scans, the two minute breathing spaces and also the 3 minute brakes. The body-scans were just a way of completely returning to base, of **allowing** what had happened during the day, and just to **be** with myself. I have to say that mindfulness saved me last year and it probably saved some of the students as well. [Ivanka]*

In this anecdote Ivanka acknowledges that she is not always able to attend to, or process, the fullness of her experience while it is happening in class. On those days she needs to simply deal with where she finds herself in her "thrown-ness" (Heidegger, 1953/1962, p. 174) in the world of teaching. In those moments in time she needs to attend to what needs to be done. At the end of a day she engages in the body-scan or mindful walking (two of several recognised mindfulness practices (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010)) in order to *allow what happened* to be there and welcome. It speaks of giving time to herself and turning towards what and how she actually finds herself at that time. Ivanka finds mindfulness practice gives her a way *just to be with herself*; a sense of coming back to herself, helping her to reunite with her authentic self and being centred, rather than being fragmented. She indicates that mindfulness practice is very important in her caring for herself, to the extent that she feels it *"saved [her] life last year."*

When Roger started mindfulness practice, he found it a helpful way to respond to his personal history. "The culture in my family is quite dysfunctional. I found other things were not as useful for dealing with dysfunction as mindfulness". Additionally he talks about the usefulness of mindfulness practice in caring for himself:

I start a lecture with about 10 minutes of mindfulness practice. I do it because I notice that it actually gives everyone a chance to pause and get in there. I could be wrong, but I think that the students are more engaged and are talking less than they would have done before I started doing that. It gives me a chance to be more focused, to be totally in that room,

instead of somewhere else, and I also relax ... it releases me to “what happens in these three hours, is intended to happen in these three hours” “and it might be different to another three hours of the same lecture, but oh well”. (Roger)

Roger purposely uses a mindfulness practice at the start of a lecture; he knows it *relaxes* him. It also *releases* him from distracting thoughts which may take his attention *somewhere else*, and *to be totally in that room*, present to *what[ever] happens in [those] three hours*. His words hint at a *release* from the expectation that lectures ‘*cover the content*’ (see Roger’s anecdote in the previous section). Roger’s use of mindfulness practice in this example works as a relaxation or self-management tool. And something more is happening at the same time: it allows him to create a space of care for himself and the students to become “*more engaged*” in the learning.

From the examples already seen it is evident that caring has many different dimensions. The following anecdote from Laura highlights another dimension of caring for herself.

It was good that I wasn’t attached to the issue. I didn’t take it personally and [the student] wasn’t being personal about this. It was as it was and I dealt with it, and I was able to let it go. [Laura]

Laura feels better able to deal with a challenging student interaction that has come up during teaching (as discussed before). She acknowledges that the interaction is not easy, but she is able to see it from a larger, less personal perspective. This allows Laura *to let it go*, in Heidegger’s terms “to let it be” or to be “released” (Inwood, 1999, p. 117) from thinking or worrying about it. At the same time her *letting go* allows her to “let the Other be in [her] ownmost potentiality-for-Being” (Heidegger, 1953/1962, p. 344).

The last example is Norman’s final sentence, after recounting a time of great challenge in his teaching career: “*I believe [mindfulness] really helped, otherwise I would have gone under.*” There is a depth of feeling in his words, which gives an indication of Norman’s appreciation of how mindfulness practice contributed to his ability to care for and support himself through a time of challenging interactions with colleagues. This is similar to Ivanka’s deeply felt experience of her mindfulness practice having “*saved [her]*” as discussed near the start of this section.

Reflection

In order to write this chapter about teaching mindfully as caring, I opened myself to the call to thinking (Heidegger, 1954/1968) in congruence with the methodology. I assumed I knew what “caring” meant. I thought this writing would flow. What I found was a disconcerting silence – the meaning of the word seemed to have “fallen away” (van Manen, 2014, p. 21) once I wanted to probe more deeply into its essence as I saw it in participants’ stories. Further dwelling with the notion of care, consulting the dictionary and literature (for instance D. Orr, 2014), accessing my felt sense (Perl, 2004), and writing in my journal, meanings started to emerge. Care has many meanings. Some that seemed relevant to the phenomenon of teaching mindfully were being

interested in or concerned about something or someone, to feel affection for someone, wanting to do something, things that are done to keep someone healthy or safe, having the responsibility for or attention to health, well-being and safety. (Merriam-Webster online dictionary, n.d.)

From the participants’ stories I see caring also as wanting to allow someone (the students) to grow and learn, and finally, and simply, as wanting to be kind. As Waldfogel (2006) identified, it is essential for our very survival, health and wellbeing, as well as for becoming a well-adjusted human being, that someone cares about and for us. There is no reason to think that this would be any different within the context of higher education.

At various times in the interviews participants stated “I don’t know whether this is mindfulness or not, but...” The notion of caring was one of those domains. With the topic of this chapter I do not suggest that caring in teaching only comes about through bringing mindfulness practice into one’s teaching; however, bringing mindfulness practice into their teaching clearly supported the participants in this study to develop, maintain and, where needed, reconnect with their caring attitude.

It was interesting to notice that the poems related to the findings chapters were significantly shorter than all of the other poems in this work. I wonder whether this was due to the extensive contemplative exploration of participants’ words and anecdotes which guided the discussions in these chapters; it was as if no more than a short poetic summary was called for. I conclude this chapter with another short poem

on Being Caring, before turning to the final chapter of the thesis: Chapter Seven, Discussion.

Being Caring

Being is caring

Being me and being you

One humanity

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion

[T]he gaze of Orpheus expresses a desire that can never be completely fulfilled: to see the true being of something. (van Manen, 2006, p. 717)

[I]n every class I teach, my ability to connect with my students, and to connect them with the subject, depends less on the methods I use than on the degree to which I know and trust my selfhood – and am willing to make it available and vulnerable in the service of learning. (Palmer, 1998/2007, p. 10)

Introduction

I have shared my journey of working with participants' anecdotes of the lived experience of teaching mindfully. I have offered what I came to see as "themes" and subthemes "of meaning" (van Manen, 2001, p. 87) of the phenomenon. I referred to elements of participants' stories as examples of what made me see the identified themes. Identifying and grouping the themes and subthemes allowed me to find a way to reveal multiple layers and depth of meaning inherent in the phenomenon of teaching mindfully.

This chapter provides opportunity to draw the findings together, identifying deeper links between participants' stories, and make sense of my findings. Hermeneutic phenomenological writing, as a way of identifying separate layers of meaning, helps the writer come to a deeper and renewed understanding of the phenomenon by the end of the process, as Finlay (2003) and Schuster (2013) explained. I demonstrate this process by the structure and content of this chapter. I introduce how I merge and discuss my understanding of the themes. Following my synthesis of the findings I provide suggestions for teaching in tertiary education. I discuss limitations of this study, as well as suggest opportunities for further research in this domain. Finally, I present a last reflection and poem, and then close the chapter with a conclusion and include how my understandings have changed.

Merging the themes

The three main themes of meaning that emerged from the research findings are noticing, being open and being caring. The merging of the themes happens on

different levels. I revisit these themes, briefly, in order to introduce additional insights I gained through contemplating the main themes across all participants' stories. Furthermore, the meanings of teaching mindfully may not be unique to the context of bringing mindfulness into a teacher's daily teaching practice; I show how these notions merge with similar understandings in other literature. Next I discuss another level of merging that I started to demonstrate in the previous chapters. The main meanings are not separate but intricately interwoven, forming the undifferentiated subjectively experienced meanings of teaching mindfully. Some of the subthemes I identified in my earlier interpretations, for instance the relational dimension, proved to be integral to all the main themes. For this reason I decided to bring them to light in this chapter rather than including them in just one of the main themes chapters. Finally I revisit some of the horizons of understanding that had a bearing on my interpretation and the discussion in this chapter. To illustrate my discussion I refer back to extracts from participants' stories in other chapters; to identify when I do this I will use their pseudonyms.

First, I discuss the themes across all the participant's stories and situate them in the context of relevant mindfulness related and other literature next.

Attending to noticing

Descriptions of mindfulness practice usually refer to intentionally paying attention to or noticing what is happening right now. In this research it became apparent that teaching mindfully includes *and* is much more than a practice for intentionally sharpening one's ability to pay attention in the moment. All participants identified the additional need for understanding the significance, the meaning, of what was noticed. This effect is evident in participant Bernadette's example of

a dialogue where one person said "I realise I've been feeling uncomfortable". The other person completely woke up. Because of me stopping and checking in with what I was aware of, the light was absolutely able to come in, even in this environment. [Bernadette]

The importance of noticing in education was introduced by Mason (2002). He asserted that recognising the meaning of what has been noticed, allows a teacher "an opportunity to act appropriately" (Mason, 2002, p. 1). In Bernadette's anecdote the appropriate action was to articulate what was happening in the room. This created a 'clearing' of understanding amongst the people present and the possibility for new and more positive responses. Mason referred to this kind of noticing as "disciplined

rather than sporadic and serendipitous noticing” (p. 61). Many of the participants highlighted this notion in various ways, mostly expressed in terms of teaching to the needs of the students and responding to what is needed in a given moment. This shows that intentional noticing is a skill that can be developed, as understood and introduced by Mason from a secular perspective, that makes no reference to mindfulness practice for teachers that is the focus of this thesis.

At the same time, Mason (2002) acknowledged that while making noticing more deliberate and organised does not place high demands on a person, it is nonetheless a significant practice that is “by no means a trivial matter” (p. 61); this understanding is similar to the recognition that mindfulness practice may seem simple, but it is a difficult and complex art requiring committed and regular practice (Bai et al., 2014; Grossman, 2010; Schoeberlein & Sheth, 2009). Likewise participant Laura’s thoughts concur with that: “[mindfulness] is actually a relatively simple philosophy, but it’s much more challenging to actually put it into practice and for it to become part of [my] being.”

In recognising the commitment and discipline needed for developing one’s noticing skills, Mason (2002) further asserted that disciplined noticing can be purposefully used for ongoing development of professional skills and knowledge, because “the very heart of change is being awake in the moment to possibilities” (p. 144). This is similarly aligned with the foundation of mindfulness practice, whether from a Buddhist (Nhat Hanh, 1975/1987) or psychological perspective (see for instance Grossman, 2010; Langer, 1997), or even from a neuroscience perspective (Bennett & Hacker, 2012). In my discussion on attending to noticing, a number of examples highlighted participants’ noticing or lack of noticing during teaching or other interactions, and how it contributed to participants reflecting on, changing and improving their teaching practice.

Being open

Being open and welcoming is another of the essential themes of meaning to come out of the parts and the whole of the text. This finding reveals how being open is while teaching mindfully. Participant Andrea uses meditation practice before potentially challenging teaching sessions “to build [her] own openness”. Furthermore participant Norman indicates that “sensitivity and openness [generate] moments of

mutually lived experience” in the classroom. What this means in practice is shown, for instance, by Bruce when he says:

I try not to take myself too seriously when someone challenges me There was a student who challenged the material and then I stopped and thought: actually, is this a reasonable challenge does this person actually have a point?

And by Bernadette: “*So then I stopped reading; I just stopped in myself. There is a moment of mindfulness, of checking, of going in and [just] feeling*” Openness in mindfulness practice is part of turning towards experience in the moment (Grossman, 2015); it is being receptive to the stream of sensory information, feelings and thoughts that occur within subjective experience (Bishop et al., 2004; Kyabgon, 2001; Purser & Milillo, 2015). Thus teaching mindfully is about teachers being open and receptive to their own experience during teaching. Wilde (n.d.) wrote a phenomenological reflection about this openness based on a personal experience, and related it to her role as a teacher of children. Openness to what is happening within is pointing to mindfulness being an experiential, first person practice. On the other hand, teaching is considered a relational practice (Frisby & Martin, 2010; Frymier & Houser, 2000). As discussed in Chapter Five, the participants in this study carried their intention to be open to their own experience into the teaching context, into the educational relationship with students, individually and as a group. Additionally this openness extended to interactions with colleagues.

Inherent in being open to students is a particular way of listening, such as Ivanka shares:

*...this student shared his thoughts. I can't remember the exact idea [he had right now], but I got him to say it again, and then I said: "You know, I've taught this book for five years and I've **never** thought of that!" This student puffed himself up, he was **so happy**, and said: "Well, yes, if you look on page 2..." and then explained it. I told him: "I think that's the most **wonderful** original idea I've heard of in relation to this book in the last five years! That's **fantastic** thinking and I'm going to use that in my teaching next year". This person was floating out in the stratosphere! [Ivanka]*

Ivanka is open to students' thinking and she listens in a way that allows her to hear a new idea and respond encouragingly when it happens. This way of listening which “promotes students' thinking and learning” (English, 2009, p. 70) can also be seen as part of being a reflective teacher, outside of a mindfulness practice framework.

English (2009) went on to say that to be able to listen in that way, the teacher needs to be “open to the idea of learning from the teacher-student interaction” (p. 73). This notion also aligns with a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, where being open, is being open to new meaning(s), to something beyond our own fore-understandings, going beyond a “natural attitude” (van Manen, 2014, p. 43). Being open requires a full awareness and “foregrounding” of “pre-judices” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 271), which are the meanings we have already assimilated from our being-in-the-world. Corradi Fiumara (1990) called this being open and prepared to be changed “in some way” (p. 165). Open listening is an example of being able to look beyond one’s own horizon in order to come to a “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 305) which allows for new and greater depth of understanding to occur. Participant Bruce specifically indicated his openness to this possibility: *“I am happy to acknowledge my own limitations. We are all humans and we are exploring the topic together”* [Bruce]. He acknowledges the student’s greater knowledge in that particular moment.

Being caring

Almost all the participants in this study indicated ‘care’, ‘caring’ or ‘compassion’ as part of teaching mindfully, either directly through the words they used or through words that pointed to or hinted at this meaning. Ivanka and Laura called this *“looking after myself”*, Roger was aware of *“anxiety and tension”* at times, Andrea mentioned that she *“think[s] of [her] needs”* as well as the students’ needs and Bruce indicated he sometimes needed *“self-protection”*. All of them used their mindfulness practice to assist with taking care of their own needs, in various ways within their own practice. In a climate of increasing workloads and a pressured academic environment, as identified by Houston, Meyer and Paewai (2006) in New Zealand, being caring for self was recognised and often expressed in term of awareness of teachers’ own needs. Mindfulness research has shown benefits in managing stress for teachers, as was identified in Chapter Two.

An additional element for the teachers in this study was a strong emphasis on being caring in relation to students. Caring and respect for students has been recognised as significant in the student-teacher relationship (Patrick & Smart, 1998; Teven, 2001) for better learning outcomes (Cornelius-White, 2007; Gorham, 1988; Myers, Goodboy, & Members of, 2014; Teven & McCroskey, 1997). This in itself could be

a sufficiently justifiable reason to develop one's being caring as a teacher. However, my understanding from being with the participants' experiences is that being caring was not employed as a strategy for teaching in itself, but was an integral meaning dimension of teaching mindfully. It is important to remember that inclusion criteria for this study meant participants had received instruction in a 'formal mindfulness' practice. All but one person had come to mindfulness practice from a Buddhist informed background, such as an MBSR programme and the Vipassana tradition, or a stream of Buddhism. In all of these approaches compassion and kindness are an integral and overt part of mindfulness practice as was evident in the literature on mindfulness practice as well.

From caring to love.

During the period of interpreting participants' stories, I was asked by my supervisors to stand back from the multiplicity of elements of meaning that I had seen or uncovered, and to express what stood out, what bigger meaning(s) I could 'see'. After moments of reflection and some hesitation about what I was about to say, I said "love". This was followed by a slightly uncomfortable silence. In my experience teaching as love is not talked about in an academic context.

Soon the conversation turned to 'not meaning soft and fluffy love', nor of course 'romantic love', 'needing to be grounded in and underpinned by a strong philosophical foundation', and that maybe 'care' was an alternative and more appropriate word or concept. It seems that many potential pitfalls and boundary issues could arise if the teaching relationship is viewed as a relationship of love. We can talk about loving teaching, loving a topic, loving a job, even loving ice-cream, but when it comes to loving people, in this case students, this word suddenly takes on a whole different dimension and becomes potentially problematic. I decided to stay with teaching mindfully as 'being caring', because it seemed more manageable at that point in the writing journey. Having explored the literature in a lot more depth, I now have a different understanding. Underpinned by contemplative writing by Zajonc (2009) and Hinsdale (2012), as discussed in Chapter Two, and further philosophical writing by Yue (2014), I could have stayed with my sense of teaching mindfully as love. This is an example of the ever evolving journey of uncovering meaning in hermeneutic phenomenology (Smythe, 2011a). On reflection, had I decided not to pursue 'caring', the link between caring and authenticity might not have shown itself to me. This significant meaning will be discussed later.

This brings my further analysis of the main themes of meaning to a close. Next I turn to an example of how all the main themes of meaning were intricately interwoven. Each element opens the way for another as a way of the teacher's being. In the everyday-ness of teaching mindfully, the space between these dimensions is almost imperceptible.

Noticing, being open and being caring as a multi-layered whole

I share an example that reflects this aspect of teaching mindfully as a way of being in the world; Andrea's interaction with a student who is struggling emotionally in a class:

*What happened between us just felt very right. It was the right thing to do. ...There was something that had to be worked out, so: what would be **useful** to get her back into the room but not feeling dismissed ...? It was actually just about what I can do that's helpful. To be right there, to be congruent, to be genuine and to be mindful of what we need and what the others need as well. [Andrea]*

I included the full anecdote in Chapter Six, where I focused on the caring element of the phenomenon; however, the merged nature of all three themes of meaning is evident in Andrea's experience. This points to the multiple dimensions of the lifeworld (van Manen, 2001). The classroom and teaching space in this instance is an example of what van Manen (2001) called "the immense complexity of the lifeworld" (p. 101). The lifeworld includes the interpersonal space between Andrea and this student and between her and the rest of the class and within the awareness of Andrea's own inner experience.

Through her mindfulness practice Andrea has an intention to be open to what happens at any given time. To be able to respond to this student and, at the same time, respond in an educationally sound way for the rest of the group, Andrea first of all notices that the student is signalling that "*she needs something*". Andrea attends to this noticing by turning to her experience (Grossman, 2015) irrespective of whether she considers the experience pleasant, unpleasant or neutral (K. W. Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). She allows herself to be with, or as Carmody (2015) frames it, to attend to the sensory and perceptible aspects of this experience, and recognises the significance of the situation. What sense does she make of it in the context of this student's situation? What is needed for the rest of the class, and for the focus of the session? She also recognises the importance of being *congruent* herself. Her response

shows that as well as being open and attending to what she has noticed, she demonstrates her caring about the student, what the student shared, and about her own needs and the needs of group as a whole. The merging of all of these dimensions becomes apparent within the element of teaching mindfully as relational practice, which was one of the significant subthemes I will present next.

Teaching mindfully as Relational Practice

Even though the relational dimension in mindfulness practice is only a recent focus in the literature, as discussed earlier, this research project, as well as some of the published writing analysed in Chapter Two, provides some evidence that it is already an integral part of teaching mindfully or contemplatively. Participant Andrea's example above is just one of many anecdotes in which it is visible how all three main themes are intertwined in participants' mindful way of being during teaching. Moreover, when reflecting on the parts and the whole of participants' anecdotes of teaching mindfully, and the contemplative education literature, what stands out for me is the essence of and commitment to the teaching and learning 'relationship' that all participants consciously bring into their teaching through the vehicle of their personal mindfulness practice. The meaning of teaching mindfully lies in participants' relationships with students in the immediacy of the teaching encounter; and, as such, it is hidden in the everydayness of their teaching.

The depth of meaning within the relationship domain of teaching mindfully can be seen in statements like participant Ivanka's: *"I try to make a connection; even with 220 people in a lecture I want their lives to be an enriched experience after the hour."* This includes their relationship with the topic being taught, such as when participant Bruce asked a student who *"[knew] a lot about [the topic] to share his knowledge [...because] we are all humans and we are exploring the topic together."* From a relational perspective of teaching, Hobson and Morrison-Saunders (2013) frame Bruce's view as "a gathering around a subject [which] opens up an endlessly rich and engaging community of learning" (p. 774). This view is supported by Bonnett (2002).

The relational dimension of teaching mindfully includes teachers' relationship with themselves, and their interactions with colleagues. This relational mutuality is reflected in being open, being caring and noticing what makes up the elements of that

relationship experience. From the teachers' perspective it creates a safe environment and connection with others.

While dwelling with participants' stories about caring for the students and caring for themselves as teachers, I saw another multidimensional integration of the themes. This is an ontological dimension of teaching mindfully that I think "matters significantly" and that I "wish to point to" (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1392) next.

From self-management to being authentic

As mentioned previously, one of the meanings of teaching mindfully for the participants is to assist with self-management and to cope better within a pressured academic environment. At the same time it is clear that teaching mindfully is, for them, much more than a stress management technique. Most of the participants gave examples that revealed how teaching mindfully enabled or assisted them to be more authentic in their teaching and in their relationships with the students. Participant Norman gives voice to this:

Mindfulness as a concentration technique or a relaxation technique is really, really good, but I don't think it reaches that depth. I think it is really good preparation, but I don't think the Dalai Lama does meditation as a stress reduction technique. I don't think it is a stress reduction technique.

Norman's statement made me wonder whether a deeper meaning was hidden under the caring for self and the process of stress management. I share how the participants' stories, some of Heidegger's writing, and my own thinking and writing took me to a place of deeper understanding.

Two of Andrea's anecdotes show her journey from stress management (caring for self) to authentically being present for, and with, the students (part of caring for self and others).

I came from a transformative mindfulness mediation practice, where I was quite experienced as a mediator, into tertiary teaching where I was quite unestablished and didn't know the rules. The first time when I was in the class, I was just sort of panicking, and what I call my monkeys: my monkey mind, was jumping all over the place. It was a kind of feeling of panic, really, a sort of feeling in my gut, of ... I just can't think, there's too much going on, and feeling panicky and feeling anxious and feeling the 'imposter syndrome' and I started to tell myself things like: "I'm never going to get it right" and "I'm hopeless at that". And it continued really, off and on. If I did not prepare mindfully I would get into that sort of spiral. [Andrea]

Andrea shares that early in her tertiary teaching she *was quite unestablished and didn't know the rules*. In those early days her feelings of panic and anxiety, and trying to do what is expected of her, points to the possibility that this state or way of being is what Heidegger calls “inauthentic being” and being-in-the-world according to ‘the they’ (Heidegger, 1953/1962, p. 225), which can be seen as the anonymous and faceless society.

In another example she refers back to that particular episode in her teaching:

I've realised over the years, since the first time, that it is important that I have sufficient confidence without being over-confident. It's also something about being authentic. [Andrea]

Andrea refers to a teaching experience I discussed in Chapter Six. Over time she has learnt to take responsibility to be herself, to be the person who knows she is able to respond to what the students present to her in that moment, the one and the many at the same time. She attributes this to tuning into the relationship at that moment, and her own personal and professional knowing and skills of being with people in high emotional states.

I grappled with how I could write about an integrated meaning of self-care, being caring and being authentic, because it seemed to me they are related. I was once again “trying to find my way through the dark” (van Manen, 2002, p. 2) and gave myself time to touch into the “felt sense” (Perl, 2004) I had about this. A poem emerged which then allowed me to find the prose I was looking for.

From stress management to authentic being

“Teaching mindfully
is used for stress management”
I say
with an ever-so-slight hint
of disapproval

But lingering and contemplating,
reading the sages
thinking and writing
and back to the stories

and what's tugging at me
from somewhere
within and beyond

Pondering
stress management...
I say
listening and paying attention
to a call,
is noticing the first whispers
being woken,
even shaken up
by the roar,
of inauthentic being

I say
teaching mindfully
as stress management
may be the start...

of sitting with
turning toward
recognising

then
uncovering
peeling back
layers of
Thoughts
Beliefs
Actions
that are
taking me away
from what is deeply
and meaningfully

my authentic way of being

With students

With myself

With what emerges

When teaching mindfully

Some of Heidegger's writing about Dasein, as care for self, resonated in relation to my wondering about the connection between stress-management and authenticity. Heidegger (as cited in Wrathall, 2005) stated that authenticity is "the ability to take responsibility for choosing our own way to be" (p. 61). Mostly Dasein happens in a state of "inauthenticity", in trying to follow "what 'they' say or what 'one' does" (p. 61), leading to fallenness, being quite unaware of itself in everyday life. This changes when Dasein makes a conscious choice to bring itself back from this fallenness and into authentic being, into one's "ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self" (Heidegger, 1953/1962, p. 313). Interpreted in the context of this study, when teachers set this intention, noticing and bringing awareness to sensations, feelings and thoughts, brings the opportunity to be with or be open to what arises. It is possible to gain understanding and insight from it. Then the opportunity presents itself to respond from a caring and deeper, more authentic place within. In Heideggerian terms, an individual is primed to being called into greater authenticity and the 'they', the anonymous 'they' which shapes so much of how and who he or she is, "collapses" (Heidegger, 1953/1962, p. 317) and greater authenticity becomes evident.

From a similar and psychological perspective, Shapiro, Carlson, Astin and Freedman's (2006) research findings showed that meditators' intentions for practice shifted as they continued practising mindfulness meditation, "from self-regulation, to self-exploration, and finally to self-liberation" (p. 376); this resonates with the shift from stress-management to being authentic. Furthermore, opening into authenticity during teaching is imbued with and reveals the interconnectedness of all the themes of meaning, in the moments of teaching mindfully. Andrea was not alone in indicating that "*being authentic*" was important to her. Ivanka similarly spoke of "*return[ing] to my inner centre of strength and knowing. When I'm in that place a true voice comes out*" and Laura called this "*being mindful of who I am in relation to what the situation is.*"

Relating these findings to the themes I saw in the existing literature, I see that the combination of factors that contribute to a greater sense of authenticity of the teacher are very similar to the notion of presence, or being present while teaching mindfully. Another dimension of teaching mindfully in relation to teacher authenticity and presence points to the possibility that ultimately teaching mindfully is not about

implementing mindfulness exercises or techniques or interventions. While this is likely to be appropriate and one very natural place to make a start with teaching mindfully, when practised on a regular and longer term basis, this is more likely to become a way of being, as the stories show, from participants in this research and in some of the existing literature discussed in Chapter Two (see for instance Kahane, 2011; O'Reilley, 1998).

Being relational and authentic while teaching mindfully can be considered positive qualities for a teacher in higher education (L. E. Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002; Cornelius-White, 2007; Frymier & Houser, 2000; Teven & McCroskey, 1997). Bonnett (2002) came to the same conclusion from a Heideggerian perspective on authenticity and the educational relationship. This ability to fully participate in the intimate interpersonal “clearing” (Todres, 2007, p. 115) during teaching can be experienced as a sense of freedom and spaciousness, through allowing an “embodied awareness” (Bai, 2001, p. 97) to become accessible. At the same time, this brings a degree of vulnerability that is inherent in being human and in opening oneself to “receive-perceive the world” (Todres, p. 116) and to what it means to be human in relation to self and to others.

Challenges of teaching mindfully

Many of the participants also shared some difficulty with turning to and staying with elements of their own experience, at times, during teaching, as discussed briefly in Chapter Four. To ensure that both positive and potentially negative elements of teaching mindfully are addressed, and in light of the recent interest in the more challenging elements of mindfulness practice (Lomas, Cartwright, Edginton, & Ridge, 2015; Mindful Direct, 2014), it is important to discuss this subtheme in some more depth. Brown (2011) observed that “many teachers” at the Naropa Institute (with contemplative pedagogy as its foundation and focus) “struggle” to translate their mindfulness meditation practice from the cushion to the “complex dynamics of the classroom” (para. 2). Falkenberg (2012) similarly identified that even during formal meditation practice it was easier to become aware of external “objects of awareness”, such as what was happening around him, than of “internal objects of awareness” (p. 25), such as what he was actually paying attention to, and when that attention shifted to something else. This is a level of complexity inherent in

mindfulness practices that is belied by its apparent simplicity of paying attention to and being with experience.

Participants revealed some of the challenge of attending to the many elements of experience and shared this vulnerability in their stories. They were aware of mindfulness slipping in their teaching at times. They also acknowledged sometimes having difficulty in staying mindfully present with their own experience, staying in relationship, and being open and authentic in the encounter with others. For example, Ivanka became tearful in front of a class when telling a story that had a greater emotional load for her than she expected. She felt she had to leave the class, instead of being able to stay with and acknowledge her emotional response, and possibly use it as a teaching moment. Likewise Andrea found it difficult to be with her feelings when she had experienced a mis-communication about the timing of an appointment with a colleague. At other times participants were aware of this vulnerability and were able to stay present to it and stay in authentic relationship, for example when Bruce was able to acknowledge he did not know everything; or when Bernadette was aware of her irritability with a student and was able to make a conscious choice about her response in the situation.

What some of these examples are pointing to is that experiencing vulnerability in this way is something that we, as human beings, may experience as difficult or unpleasant, and therefore try to turn away from the experience, rather than turn towards it (recognised by the Buddha as one of the foundations of suffering). In contrast, when participants were able to turn towards, or stay with their vulnerability this contributed to the possibility of an opening to the shared humanity, which in turn ultimately allowed greater intimacy, trust and safety in participants' relationship with students.

The above findings in this study are also very similar to the experiences shared by Walsh (2014) and Vacarr (2001) in the articles explored in Chapter Two. Both authors demonstrated their desire and the challenge to be authentic and turn towards their experience as part of their mindfulness practice, both with satisfying outcomes in terms of the relationship with their students, at least from their own perspective and from what they observed in class as a result.

Having discussed some of the depth, complexity and multidimensionality of the meaning of teaching mindfully, derived both from this research and from the literature, I now turn to discussing some of the horizons that I bring to this research, in more depth than was possible or appropriate in Chapter One.

Multiple horizons

I found both in my own experience and from this research that bringing mindfulness practice into teaching opens the possibility of the experience and benefits of a relational multidimensional reality. The interconnectedness of human beings is a foundational premise and understanding in Buddhist thinking (Kyabgon, 2007). In hermeneutic phenomenology I saw a Western philosophical understanding of this as “a single shared world” (H. L. Dreyfus, 1991, p. 145), or what van Manen (2001) calls the “lifeworld existentials” (p. 101) of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relation, able to be “differentiated but not separated” (p. 105). In this current research, all of these “existentials” are visible through the participants’ anecdotes of teaching mindfully. Similarly within the anecdotes these lifeworlds can be seen as intimately interconnected and multidimensional, as I discussed in relation to one of participant Andrea’s examples. Moreover the anecdotes, as well as the interpretations in this research and in the literature explored, show that teaching mindfully creates the possibility that academic teaching and learning can become a whole-person interpersonal and intersubjective experience for all parties in the teaching encounter.

To support the tentative conclusions above, I offer some examples of the latter from my research next. In one of participant Ivanka’s anecdotes she facilitates the transition from different horizons at the start of a tense interaction (lived relationship) with students into a shared horizon (Gadamer, 2004). She creates a “lived space” through the felt sense of spaciousness inside herself. The students resonate with the experience and respond by choosing not to follow through with their drastic plan. Another example is when Bruce is willing to acknowledge his limitations when a student “*challenges*” him (Bruce, Research interview October 30, 2014) in a lecture, he creates a shared lived space of learning in that moment: he is learning from the students as they are learning from him. Students in these groups are likely to feel safer to express their thinking and share their knowledge in this shared and open space.

The relational dimension of teaching mindfully appears also to create an emotionally safe space for students to learn. Ivanka specifically referred to this in her example of creating an individual “*conversation*” within a lecture in order to provide “*a safe place [for the student] to be*”. Like van Manen, Heidegger argued that this kind of place or space does not have a physical spatiality, but is an existential “spaceishness” (M. King, 2001, p. 44) of Dasein, of being-in-the-world, which is a relational quality. Similar examples of all other participants at least intending to create a safe relational learning environment for their students are evident in the findings chapters.

For the purpose of transparency and trustworthiness I want to re-visit my interest in a non-duality focussed mindbody healthcare approach, in which personhood is seen as a manifestation of multi-dimensional unity and in which healing is supported through what happens in the emotionally intimate inter-subjective relationship (Broom, 1997). This interest and the Buddhist roots of my mindfulness practice will no doubt have influenced my seeing of this theme.

Another horizon I brought to this project is an interest in the similarity between my experience of hermeneutic phenomenological research and mindfulness practice. This was affirmed for me in my process of engaging with the participants’ information for the purpose of interpretation. An in-depth comparison of the philosophies underpinning both approaches is beyond the scope of this thesis; however a number of other authors and researchers have done so (see for instance Bernay, 2012; Felder, Aten, Neudeck, Shiomi-Chen, & Robbins, 2014; Mitchell, 2003). On the one hand, and from a practical perspective of ‘doing’ this hermeneutic phenomenological research, I have found my own mindfulness practice a very helpful vehicle for dwelling with the text (van Manen, 2001) and inviting a meditative space for insight and deeper understanding to arise, or in Smythe’s (2004) words, inviting “the fertile ground of thinking” to occur while “the mind is resting” (p. 330).

Additionally I see the application of mindfulness practice in teaching as a helpful adjunct to cultivate a “phenomenological attitude” in the tertiary education context. In my experience, being “open or receptive to what gives itself” in student’s lives and in the teaching context, and being “sustained by wonder [and] attentiveness and a desire for meaning” (van Manen, 2014, p. 220) is explicitly supported by my informal mindfulness practice during teaching. Participant Bernadette’s experience in

“stopping and checking in with what I was aware of” is another example of this. In both approaches, turning towards the experience and taking time to be welcoming and shine the light on it in an open and receptive way, assists a new understanding of the meaning of the experience to come out into the light. Conversely, I can see benefit in being able to promote a phenomenological attitude in teaching, where there may be some resistance to the idea of introducing mindfulness into the academic context.

Finally, I wish to touch on Heidegger’s book with the English title *“Mindfulness”* (1997/2006). When starting this Masters project I was loaned a copy of this book. I had every intention of referring to at least some of its content in this thesis, but found that after my initial foray into it, I did not return to it. I could not make sense of why Heidegger’s (1997/2006) book was given the translated title *“Mindfulness”*, while the original German title is *“Besinnung”* (p. xiii). *Besinnung* is close in sound and meaning to the Dutch word *“bezinning”*. From my perspective, as a native Dutch speaker, these have no relation to the often used Western meaning of mindfulness as paying open and caring attention to what is happening in the present. My leap of understanding came one day while reading and thinking about the contemplative dimension of mindfulness meditation in relation to the literature on contemplative education. I suddenly saw the link between the English title *“Mindfulness”* and the original title *“Besinnung”* of Heidegger’s book: it is the contemplative domain of mindfulness practice. By the time I realised this it felt too late to delve into Heidegger’s *“Mindfulness”* (1997/2006) for this thesis.

Finally I turn to some of the contextual dimensions for this research, starting with identifying some of the strengths and limitations of this study, followed by implications for practice and for further research.

Strengths and limitations of the study

I will address three areas of strength first. My in-depth engagement with, and transparency in, the research process demonstrates this study’s methodological rigour. The writing clearly shows how the interpretation, analysis and synthesis of findings are integrated with existing literature. Another strength is its usefulness in relation to the paucity of research knowledge about the experience of teaching mindfully in tertiary education. The depth of the findings is the third strength. This outcome was made possible because of my deep engagement with the hermeneutic

process, my own depth of experience with mindfulness practice, and with teaching mindfully. At the same time this can be seen as a potential limitation, as my experience may have over-influenced my interpretations.

One of my own challenges when considering the topic and focus for this research was the necessity to limit its scope, in order to make it a manageable project. Hence I see a number of limitations inherent in this research. It is not possible to generalise the findings from this project due to the small number of participants in this study, although seven participants is appropriate for a study of this kind where depth and quality of information, rather than quantity of data is important. Secondly, while participants' self-reports indicate strong relationship skills and caring, I cannot speak to how this was perceived by the students, other than some of what may be seen through the teacher's lens.

There is no clear indication whether all or any of the experiences described as "mindful moments" in participants' teaching, were actually directly due to their mindfulness practice. This was indicated by some participants' responses, for instance by Roger: *"I don't know if this is being mindful, but"* Similarly, it needs to be acknowledged that all the participants were experienced tertiary teachers. It is possible that the people who self-selected for this study may already have an inclination to bring an authentic and strongly relational way of being into their teaching, and mindfulness practice was a 'handle' for how they could talk about their way of teaching, as was articulated by participant Ivanka: *"I was already kind of doing this practice, but a mindful framework helped me to formalise it and to speak about it"* Furthermore, it is not possible to know from this research whether bringing mindfulness practice into tertiary teaching would have similar meanings or would show in similar ways for teachers who are new to mindfulness practice.

Finally, it is not known from this research to what extent the foundation of participants' mindfulness practice had an impact on the meaning of teaching mindfully as compared to for instance mindfulness from a psychological scientific perspective, bringing it back to the most fundamental element of its impact (see for instance Carmody, 2015).

As identified in Chapter Three, part of the rigour of research is to evaluate its ability to inform and its usefulness to improve practice (Annells, 1999), which I will address next.

Implications for practice

This research is one of very few accounts of the experience of teachers in a tertiary education setting bringing their personal mindfulness practice into their teaching. Essentially, phenomenological research provides an opportunity for readers to join in the thinking that has been shared through the writing (Smythe et al., 2008; van Manen, 2007). In the spirit of that understanding, I propose some possible implications for practice, allowing readers to think about bringing informal mindfulness practice into tertiary teaching and the educational relationship, about “who they are” and “who they may become” in that practice (van Manen, 2007, p. 26) when teaching mindfully.

Based on the findings, the interplay between teacher, student and topic, learning and applying personal informal mindfulness practice to teaching is a potential doorway into developing a positive educational relationship with students individually and collectively. As such, it may be a way that supports teachers to develop a way of being that increases students’ engagement in sessions, and that ‘lets [students] learn’ (Bonnett, 2002, p. 241; Heidegger, 1954/1968, p. 15). Teaching mindfully within a tertiary education setting may support new academic teaching staff to feel more resourced in responding to the challenges of the academic context and may generate a greater sense of agency and satisfaction. Teaching mindfully may therefore contribute to teacher wellbeing and greater enjoyment and satisfaction in tertiary teaching, as was specifically indicated by several of the participants of this study. Teaching mindfully may be a way to model a compassionate and whole person approach in tertiary education for the helping professions. Finally, the participants in this research worked in education, psychology, mediation, psychotherapy, and English language contexts. The findings from this study point to the possibility that mindfulness practice is not about the context or the activity or the discipline in which it is practised, rather it may be about individuals who bring this practice into whatever context they are and whatever occupation and relationship they engage in and potentially transform their experience of that context.

Implications for further research

The question at the start of hermeneutic phenomenological research serves as a point of reference for a journey of exploration. The end of this study does not generate a specific answer; rather a broadening perspective that remains open to new or deeper meanings that may still lie hidden from view in this particular situation (Smythe et al., 2008; van Manen, 2007). In light of this thinking I offer suggestions for potential future research within education and within the domain of mindfulness practice itself. As discussed in Chapter Six, the quality of the student-teacher relationship is important and determined by students in tertiary education. Therefore it would be of interest to research students' perceptions of the quality of the educational relationship with teachers who do or do not bring their mindfulness practice into their teaching. Researching the lived experience of bringing mindfulness practice into another education-related context could point to a useful approach for all parties involved, for instance for students and their supervisors within health or social services practice education. Student completion rates of degree programmes are significant for funding criteria. Researching the impact of teaching mindfully on students' learning outcomes and completion rates could provide an argument for the support or otherwise of bringing mindfulness practice for teachers into tertiary education. Finally, in light of the divergent opinions about the parameters of mindfulness practice, it would be useful to conduct a comparative study of the meaning and outcomes of teaching mindfully between teachers practising psychology-informed and Buddhist-informed practice.

Now that I have come to the end of, or more likely a pause in, my journey with the meaning of teaching mindfully in tertiary education, I close with a final reflection, a conclusion, and a poem that forms the bridge between them.

Final reflections

I started at a beginning, by asking a question. I have been on what seems like a new leg of a long journey; of turning to reading, meditative thinking, writing, frustration, joy, more sitting and writing, more reading and thinking and writing, trying to squeeze some more in after a busy day or week at work, at times immersing myself in the richness of it all through the luxury of being able to take blocks of time away from work. I have come to an end, which appears similar to that beginning; with a sense of wonder and ongoing interest in the relationality and intersubjectivity of

teaching mindfully. I know, however, this temporary end *is* different from that beginning. I have touched into and hopefully have a more enduring sense of the place in myself that I have only dipped into intermittently in times gone by. I have learnt so much.

I could not have imagined how much of ‘my thinking’ could appear in one place in the form of this thesis from a seemingly simple practice of attending to and contemplating what is happening in a moment of teaching mindfully. Of course I realise that my thinking would not have been possible without the being and thinking of so many others, friends, writers, supervisors, teachers, teaching colleagues and fellow meditation practitioners and other guides in my life – a true reflection of the my historicity (Heidegger, 1953/1962) and being part of my tradition (Gadamer, 2004). Nevertheless, the “thinking as gathering” and the “thinking as speaking” (Robbins, 2014) (in this case writing) that has come together in this thesis is through my own slow and laborious efforts, which paradoxically needed to be effortless “thinking [as] letting be” (Robbins, 2014, p. 18) or “poetic” thinking as “ongoing receptive-responding” (Bonnett, 2002, p. 236) efforts at the same time.

Another topic for reflection that seems important to discuss is the spiritual dimension. It was not until nearer the end of this journey when I started reading more deeply about contemplative practice in tertiary education, that I realised that the spiritual dimension of teaching mindfully is absent in this thesis. I know from some of the participants’ interviews that their personal mindfulness practice is also an integral part of their spiritual practice. Yet Laura, for example, spoke of carefully presenting her own “*way of being*” (as a Buddhist mindfulness practitioner) during teaching without discussing her Buddhist interests in class or with most colleagues. Similarly Bruce indicated that “*it is [not] appropriate to advertise that my [own] practice is of religious nature*”; however, he is comfortable lecturing on mindfulness practice as a secular approach in a psychological context. Yet both participants clearly bring their informal mindfulness practice into their teaching from their own historicity, which includes the spiritual dimension. From my own horizon, I cannot see the spiritual dimension as different or separate from the material or any other dimension of life. At the same time, and similar to some of the participants in this study, I also recognise that Kabat-Zinn’s (1996) work in secularising mindfulness practice in healthcare has paved the way for introducing and integrating a secular form of mindfulness and contemplative practice into all levels of education. I suspect

that my own and some participants' underlying fear of muddying the waters between religion and education contributed to the lack of attention to this domain in this study.

My experience of bringing a whole-person mindbody approach to teaching through my personal mindfulness and meditation practice provided the impetus for the topic of this thesis. I thought I had a good sense of the meaning of teaching mindfully as a result. And in some ways that was so. I had experienced the interpersonal dimension of consciously bringing mindfulness practice into the classroom. I knew that paying attention to what my senses were telling me created a sense of openness and spaciousness that has given me a completely different perspective on being with a group of students in a teaching space. I also had a general impression of openness and caring from colleagues who practice mindfulness or other forms of meditation. Nonetheless, through doing this research and the thinking-and-writing process alongside the philosophical readings, I have come to understand the meaning of teaching mindfully from a much deeper and richer place. Being with the depth of this in the context of participants' experience of teaching mindfully has been affirming and moving.

I have a greater appreciation of the challenges of teaching mindfully, the vulnerability and discomfort entailed in facing those challenges, and the level of commitment that seemed to call and draw participants along this way of teaching. I had not fully realised the level of contrast and paradox in the meaning of teaching mindfully. It is multi-layered, complex, unique and individually-based, and at the same time simple and deeply interconnected. The complexity includes the ever-changing multi-dimensional and multi-layered meaning of the phenomenon. I suspect that the content of this complexity depends on the person experiencing it and his or her background. The simplicity lies in returning again and again to a shared human experience of 'being here now'.

The last poem is another example of words that appeared on a page when I tried to touch into the felt sense of the meaning of the end of this journey. It helped to find the words for the conclusion of this thesis.

Exploring the meaning of teaching mindfully

So many words
in earnest effort to
explore what
teaching mindfully
is.

The only way
we will ever
really know
is
to live the question
until one day
in some distant
future⁴
we may
each experience
an answer
in our own unique
yet deeply human
recognisable
way.

⁴ Adapted from Rilke's "Letters to a Young Poet" (cited in Palmer, 1998/2007, p. 89)

Conclusion

There is a wealth of literature on the question of what mindfulness is, how it effects change in people, what one can do to practise it, its origins, and its neural correlates and the proclaimed importance of any or all of those elements. In this study I explored the meaning of teaching mindfully through interpretation of the anecdotes from seven participants. The findings from this thesis may contribute to a deeper understanding of the meaning of teaching mindfully for tertiary teachers.

Mindfulness practice is usually seen as an individual activity. It consists of responding to the call of turning attention to one's internal elements of experience with an attitude of openness, welcome and curiosity. Paradoxically, one of the significant meanings underpinning the lived experience of teaching mindfully points to a deeply relational approach to teaching. In moments when this apparently individual practice is remembered and brought into the everyday activities of a tertiary teacher, it opens into the possibility of a transformative interpersonal experience for all involved in the encounter. Additionally it opens to the possibility of an experience of unity and interconnectedness within the multidimensional lifeworld, which includes the teacher, the students, the subject and colleagues. This includes openness to multiple perspectives and paradox within the classroom and within teachers themselves.

Teaching mindfully brings so much to notice, attend to, and open up to; yet welcoming the multiple elements of this complexity often creates ease and spaciousness, or a clearing to manifest. It allows new understandings and creativity to arise. The meaning of teaching mindfully in its depth, multidimensionality, and relationality is hidden from external observation and difficult to articulate; it can only be known from within in a teacher's own everyday practice.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval



4 June 2013

Valerie Wright-St Clair
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Valerie

Re Ethics Application: 13/102 The lived experience of teaching mindfully.

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTECS).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 29 May 2016.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTECS:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 29 May 2016;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 29 May 2016 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTECS is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTECS approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTECS grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Madeline Banda'.

Madeline Banda
Acting Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Marlies Dorrestein marlies.dorrestein@aut.ac.nz

Appendix B: Advertisement

<p>If you are a lecturer and use informal mindfulness practices in your teaching...</p>	
<p>Participants are needed for a research study exploring the experience of teaching mindfully</p>	
<p>If you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are a lecturer in a tertiary education institution • Have or have had a regular mindfulness meditation practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring informal mindfulness practice into your teaching • Live or work within 1.5 hours' drive of Auckland
<p>Then we would love to hear from you.</p> <p>For more information please contact: Marlies Dorrestein (09) 921 9999 ext. 7784 Email: mdorrest@aut.ac.nz</p>	



Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30/05/2013. AUTEC Reference number 13/102

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

29 May 2013

Project Title

The lived experience of teaching mindfully.

An Invitation

My name is Marlies Dorrestein. I am a lecturer in occupational therapy. I invite you to participate in a research project to explore what it is like being a mindful lecturer in a tertiary education institution.

This project forms part of the requirements for the completion of my Master's degree in MindBody Healthcare at AUT University. My interest in the topic stems from my own long term engagement and interest in meditation, my study of whole-person mindbody healthcare and my own positive experience of implementing informal mindfulness practice in my role as lecturer for occupational therapy students at AUT University.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, you can do so without any negative implications. I have not identified any potential conflict of interest issues.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the knowledge about mindfulness in tertiary education, specifically what it is like to be a mindful teacher. It is anticipated that the findings will be used to promote the benefits of mindfulness for tertiary lecturers in academic circles. To that end the findings of the research will be published in a peer reviewed journal, and presented at a mindfulness and/or tertiary education related conference.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You were identified through one of the following contacts: a Mindfulness Special Interest Groups in Auckland, through a teacher of an Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction course for professionals, through a local Buddhist centre where mindfulness is a foundational practice, through key contacts within one of the universities in Auckland or Hamilton, through a meditation newsletter, or through someone who considered you would meet the inclusion criteria and might be interested in participating in this research. I am looking for participants who are teachers at a tertiary education institution and who have or have had a regular meditation practice. Your experience of a mindful way of being in your lecturer role is the focus of this study. For practical reasons you need to live or work within 1.5 hour's driving distance from Auckland.

Interested people who have a supervisory relationship with me will be excluded from participation in this research in order to minimise any risks of coercion.

What will happen in this research?

This project involves in-depth individual interviews with lecturers who use informal mindfulness practice in their teaching, preparation of teaching sessions, and/or interactions with students. If you decide to participate in the project, I will arrange to meet with you at a place and time of your convenience. You will be interviewed in one session of up to 90 minutes' duration, about your experience of being a mindful lecturer. The interview will be audio recorded with your consent. Once your story has been written up by me, I will check with you whether it is an accurate representation of what you shared with me. The purpose of gathering your story along with others' stories is to gain a better and deeper understanding of what it means to be mindful as a lecturer. The information you share will only be used for this purpose.

What are the discomforts and risks?

In-depth interviews allow opportunity to explore your lecturing experience at a deep and personal level. Since teaching at tertiary education level is recognised to come with many challenges, recalling specific examples from your teaching experience may trigger memories of disconcerting teaching experiences. Similarly mindfulness practice is known to bring to into awareness aspects of our experience that may not be particularly comfortable. Both of these dimensions may at times engender some discomfort or a sense of vulnerability during the interview or afterwards.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

At any time during the interview you may choose not to answer questions you don't feel comfortable about, or not to disclose thoughts, feelings, or experiences you wish to keep private, or withdraw from the interview or the project altogether. Should you have any discomforts arising from the interview, you would be most welcome to access AUT counselling services, which are fully confidential and free of charge.

What are the benefits?

Taking part in a phenomenological study often gives participants an opportunity to explore the topic of investigation in a way they have not had opportunity to do so before, allowing new insights and greater awareness to arise as a result.

You may gain acknowledgement and greater depth of understanding and appreciation of your own experience of how mindfulness practice impacts on yourself as a person and teacher, on your relationships with students and colleagues, and potentially on students' attitudes, attributes and learning within your class rooms.

The academic teaching environment may benefit from the outcomes of this research, as it may uncover potential benefits of mindfulness practice for tertiary teachers, e.g. the potential of mindfulness practice for developing positive educational relationships within tertiary education

How will my privacy be protected?

Your privacy will be respected and protected at all times. Whatever you discuss in the interview will be treated as confidential. Any potentially identifying information about yourself, your specific position, and the institution you work for that is gathered during the interview will be altered in the final report and any other publication, to avoid the risk of recognition and to protect your identity. All recordings will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office, and consent forms will be stored separately in a locked cupboard at AUT University. Should you wish to withdraw from the project, any recording will be deleted from all electronic devices and/or returned to you at your discretion and any hard copy documents containing information gathered from the interview will be shredded.

The only people who will have access to your information will be me, my two supervisors, and potentially a contracted transcriber of the interview. The transcriber and I will be required to sign a confidentiality form.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

I expect the cost to you to be limited to the time, up to 2 hours, it takes for your participation in this study. This will include the interview, up to 90 minutes, plus another time to discuss whether I have accurately represented your story in writing, up to approximately 30 minutes. This time will exclude any travel time if you choose to be interviewed at AUT. You will be given a book voucher in appreciation of your participation. A petrol voucher will be offered in recognition of travel costs you may incur as a result of participating in the interview.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Once you have received this information sheet and you are interested in participating, please contact me within two weeks on the email address provided below. You are welcome to contact me or my supervisor if you have further questions about any aspect of the project.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you choose to participate in this study, you will need to complete and sign a copy of the Consent Form that I have already sent to you alongside this Participant Information Sheet. Completing and returning the enclosed Consent Form in the pre-paid self-addressed envelope will indicate your voluntary participation in the study. I will contact you in approximately two weeks to arrange a date, time and place at your convenience for the interview.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

A print copy of the stories generated from your interview will be sent to you. At that point you will be able to request any changes to the content. Additionally, you may choose to receive a summary of the findings of the research which will be made available to you. You will be informed of the details of this once the study has been completed, approximately 12 – 18 months following your interview. You can also request a copy of your type-written interview transcript.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Valerie Wright-St. Clair, valerie.wright-st.clair@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext. 7736.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Acting Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Madeline Banda, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 8316.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Marlies Dorrestein

Contact details: Email: marlies.dorrestein@aut.ac.nz

Phone: 09 921 9999 ext. 7784

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Associate Professor Valerie Wright-St.Clair

Contact details: Email: valerie.wright-st.clair@aut.ac.nz 09 921 9999 ext. 7736.

Appendix D: Consent Form

1

Consent Form



Project title: ***The lived experience of teaching mindfully***

Project Supervisor: ***Valerie Wright-St.Clair***

Researcher: ***Marlies Dorrestein***

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 23 April 2013.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes may be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details:

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30/05/2013, AUTEK Reference number 13/102

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix E: Indicative Questions Guide

28 April 2013



Indicative Questions Guide

Project title: The lived experience of teaching mindfully

Researcher: Marlies Dorrestein

Indicative questions:

- Tell me about your mindfulness practice
- Tell me about informal mindfulness practices you bring into your teaching?
- Tell me about what stands out as a mindful moment in your teaching?
- Give me an example of how your teaching is different when you are mindful
- Tell me what helps you to be mindful as a teacher
- Tell me about a mindful interaction with a student / students
- Tell me about a mindful moment when preparing a teaching session
- Tell me about a mindful moment when interacting with a colleague / in a meeting
- Tell me what it is like not being mindful as a teacher
- Tell me about a quality of being mindful as a teacher – with students, while preparing lectures / tutorials, in interactions with colleagues, in meetings.
- Tell me more about (participant's words)
- What does being mindful mean to you?

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30/05/2013. AUTEK Reference number 13/102

Appendix F: Sample of poem

Laura

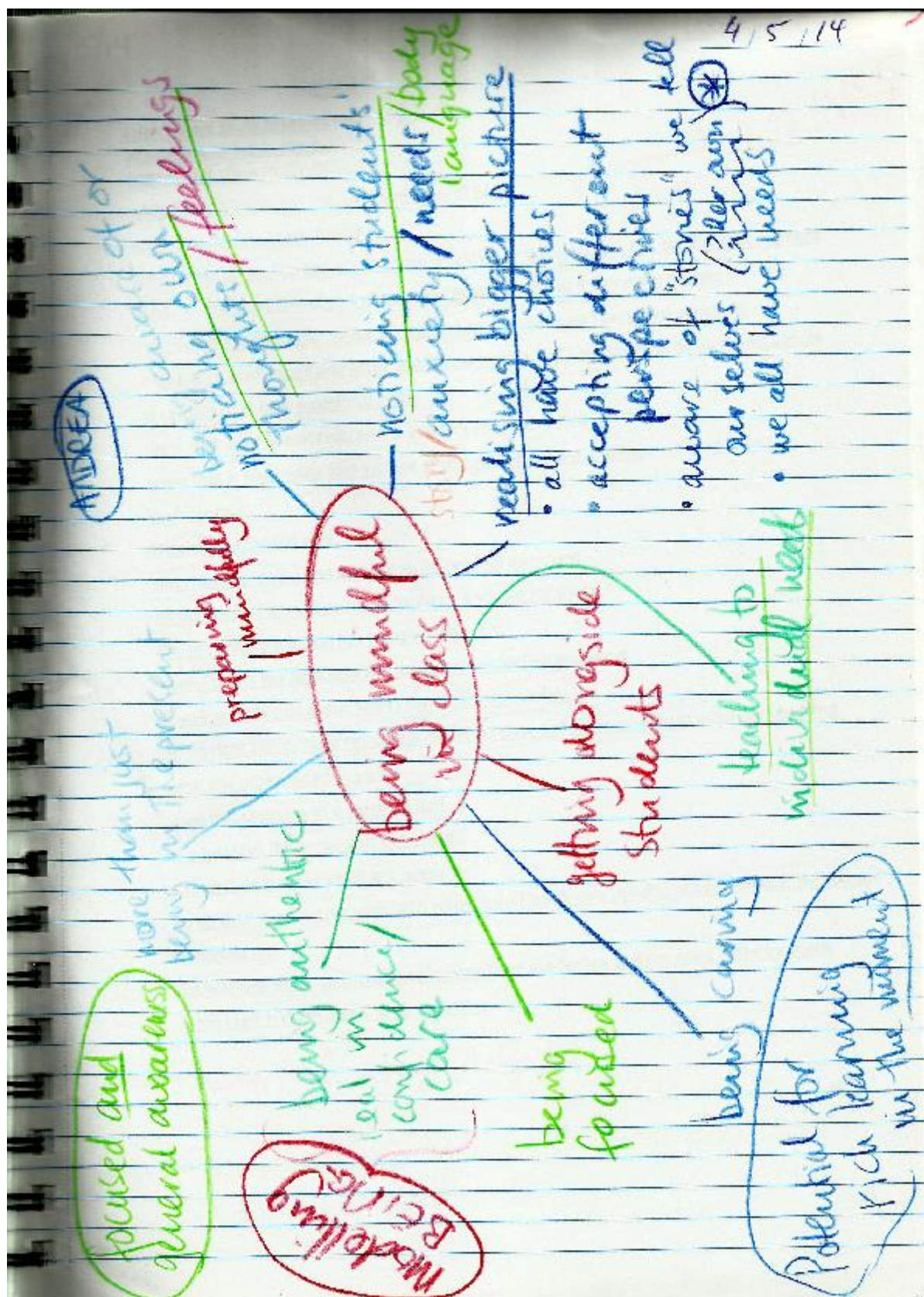
Aware

*Aware
my needs
your needs
feelings
engaging, not withdrawing*

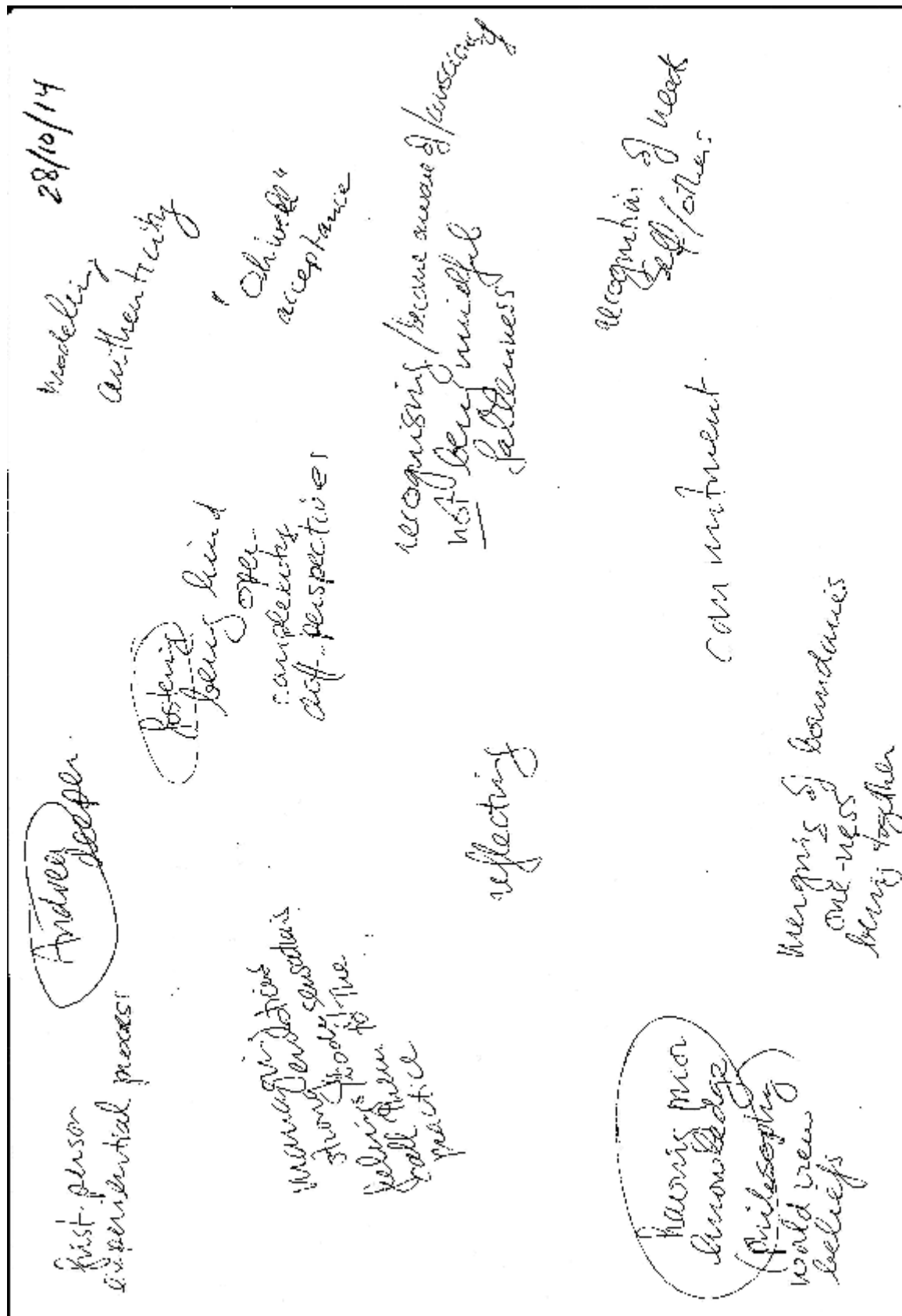
*remembering the context
remembering
to notice my thoughts*

*being agile
doing what is needed
right now
being free*

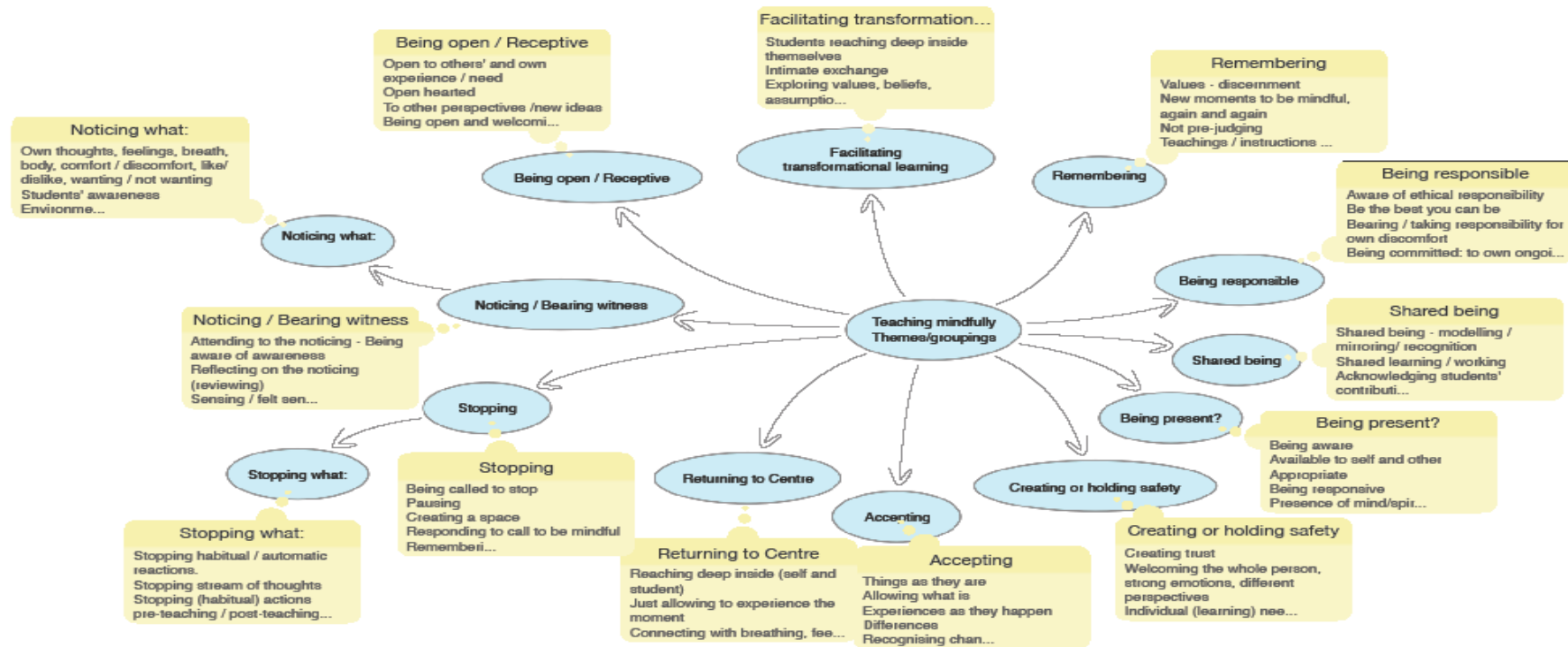
Appendix G: Sample of Initial Meanings Mind Map Andrea



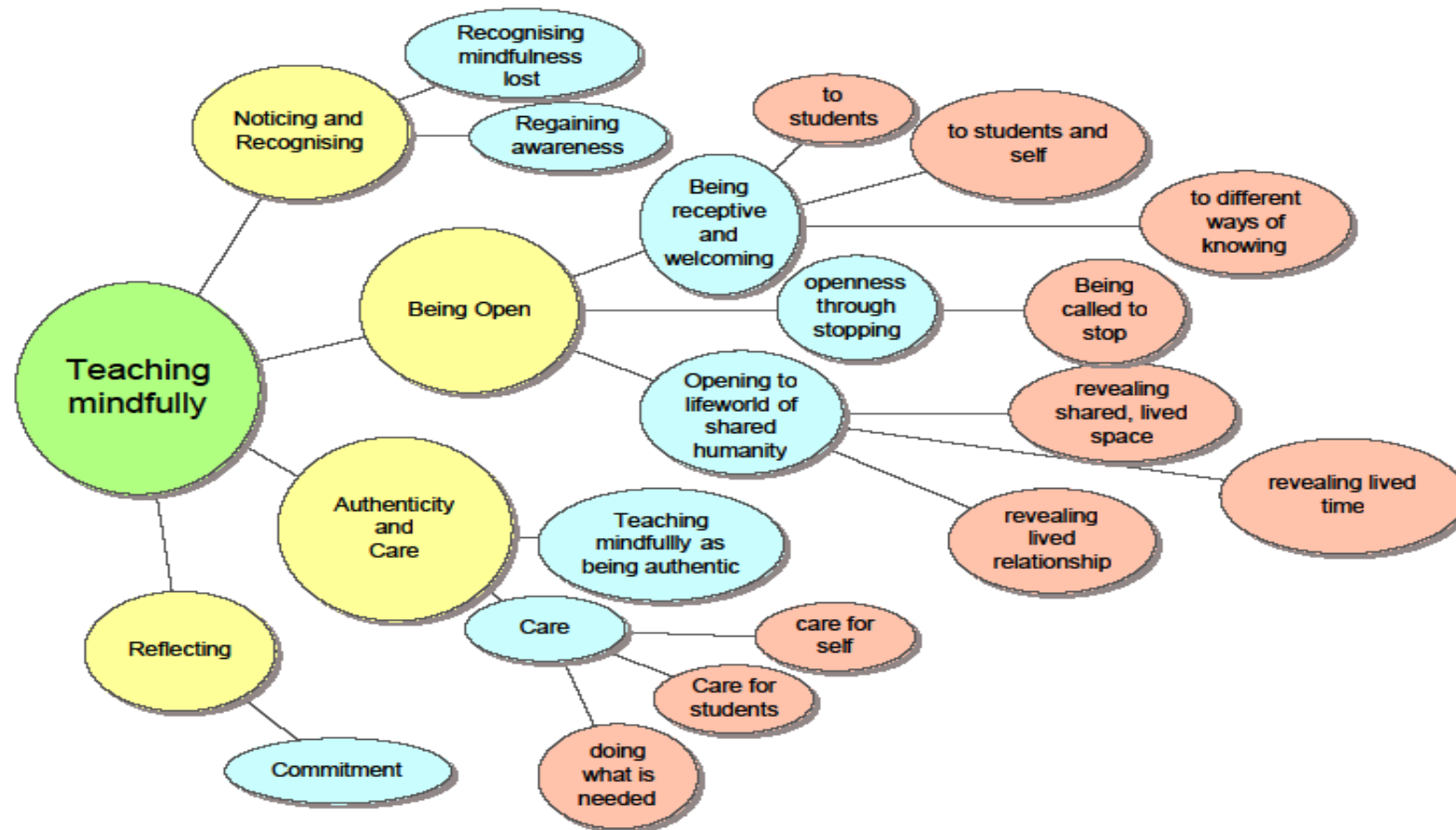
Appendix H: Sample of Deeper Meanings Mind Map Andrea



Appendix I: First Naïve Interpretation Across All Stories



Appendix J: Draft 2 – Second Level Interpretation Across All Stories



Appendix K: Draft 3 – Second Level Interpretation Across All Stories

Teaching mindfully – DRAFT 3 – second layer of interpretation

Remembering

- Commitment
- Prior knowledge (philosophy, worldview –impermanence, beliefs, practices)
- Allowing, letting be (bearing witness?)

Recognising

- Mindfulness lost (Internal and external cues, felt sense, thrown-ness, fallenness)
- Context (complexity, multiple perspectives)
- Being together, intersubjective space



STOPPING
INTERRUPTING
PAUSING
Creating SPACE

Responding (becomes way of being)

- Inviting / Welcoming (self and other)
 - Accepting / acknowledging
 - Being available
 - Vulnerability / discomfort
 - Staying with / bearing witness
 - Shared experience
 - Turning towards

Modelling
Authenticity

- Safe Space (lived time) – opening out – beyond natural / habitual attitude
- Uncovering / bringing into light
- Meeting horizons (fusion of / shared boundaries or horizons; sharing the learning journey; appreciation of students)

Returning to centre

- Grounded
- Equanimity & Kindness
- Spaciousness (lived time), openness, "easefulness"

Reflecting (individual / internal)

- Being with and
- Exploring experience (past, present and future)
- Renewed commitment
- Teachings /practices

Changing / Meaning / Changes

28 Oct. 2014