



Mindful Teaching and Learning: Developing a Pedagogy of Well-Being

Ragoonaden, Karen, ed.

Lexington Books (Rowman & Littlefield use this name for sending reviews.), 2015

Book Review

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Mindful Teaching and Learning challenges educators to be attentive to their own self-knowledge and location in the classroom. Emphasizing a transdisciplinary approach, the authors articulate the value and effectiveness of mindfulness-based practices and the possible benefits for pedagogy and curriculum. The editor contends, “The content of this book examines ways in which to develop habits of mind, courses of action, as well as a curriculum of study that would support educators as they cultivate competencies for thriving and coping with the modern demands of being a teacher” (viii).

The first three chapters draw on evidence-based research to argue for the value and effectiveness of mindfulness-based practices. Elizabeth R. Mackenzie assesses previous research across disciplines in order to craft a compelling foundation for the need for and benefits of mindfulness training for students and educators. Karen Ragoonaden draws on Eastern contemplative practices, indigenous wisdom, and mindfulness to demonstrate the positive impact of mindful practices on one’s personal and professional life. Through her self-study, Ragoonaden reveals the impact of mindfulness on educators and students. Kathryn Byrnes and Tom Bassarear provide pedagogical techniques to demonstrate the effectiveness of contemplative pedagogy. They discuss techniques that arise from their own contemplative practices and urge readers to similarly engage practices to be meaningfully incorporated into class sessions.

The second portion of the book considers the implementation of mindfulness-based practices in leadership, curriculum, and field experiences. Sabre Cherkowski, Kelly Hanson, and Jennifer Kelly consider leadership as informed by mindfulness. Drawing on their own experiences in

educational research, in leadership in a school district, and in the classroom, the authors articulate mindful leadership as being rooted in knowledge of oneself, assisting others to live and work better, and being nurtured in relationship with colleagues. Geoffrey Soloway draws on his qualitative research on mindfulness-based wellness education programs to offer insight into curriculum design and implementation. Significantly, he offers suggestions for how to assist students in drawing connections between mindfulness and their own lives. Margaret Macintyre Latta examines field experience for prospective teachers as an opportunity to attend to the relation between theory and practice in curriculum and to implement mindfulness in the classroom.

Overall, the authors contribute to wider discussions in pedagogy as they question the goals of education and emphasize a holistic approach to the individual and learning in contrast to a dominant emphasis on content. *Mindful Teaching and Learning* challenges faculty to focus on the learning evident in the present moment. The chapters draw on a wide range of research and methodologies (self-studies and qualitative research). In particular the use of self-studies by several of the authors and reflections by educators on their own use of mindfulness encourage the reader to reflect on his or her own practices and the possible impact of mindfulness on an individual's personal and professional life, pedagogy, and students.

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