Mindfulness and Student Success: The Meditation Incubator

Rhonda Schaller, MPS Pratt Institute
Esmilda Abreu-Hornbostel, PhD Pratt Institute
Monday, March 5, 2018  2:30 – 3:20 pm
Salon H – Marriott Downtown
Mindfulness Practice #1
There is a growing body of empirical evidence related to the use of meditation to facilitate the whole person

- Achievement of traditional educational goals
- Support student mental health under academic stress
- Enhance education of the “whole person.”

There is also a growing movement in education promoting

- Use of self-care for staff and faculty
- As tools for self-care fostering the practice of mindfulness, meditation and visualization
Today’s talk

• The Meditation Incubator has been part of the Pratt student experience for the last 4 years. This year we launched the Mindfulness in Student Affairs training program.

• We will share handouts: assessments, practice exercises and reflections for feedback loops, as well as facilitate small group discussions.

• You will learn how to create mindfulness training programs and encourage students and staff to apply their mindfulness training in leadership roles and career paths.
Meditation and Higher Education: Key Research Findings
(Shapiro, Brown & Astin, 2008 Toward the Integration of Meditation into Higher Education: A Review of Research)

Cognitive and Academic Performance
• Mindfulness meditation may improve ability to maintain preparedness and orient attention, improve ability to process information quickly and accurately.
• Concentration-based meditation, practiced over a long-term, may have a positive impact on academic achievement.

Mental Health and Psychological Well-Being
• Mindfulness meditation may decrease stress, anxiety, and depression, supports better regulation of emotional reactions and the cultivation of positive psychological states.

Development of the Whole Person
• Meditation can support the development of creativity, supports and enhances the development of skills needed for interpersonal relationships, empathy and may help to cultivate self-compassion.
Center for Contemplative Mind In Society
Using this research as a guide, we’ve created a variety of initiatives at Pratt Institute over the last 4 years:


Lunchtime mindfulness classes and class visits

Mindfulness in Student Affairs 2 year training program
“More than ever I wish to calm my mind, reduce stress and explore my creativity”

Meditation Incubator – 10 weeks
live class or the online program

Began in Spring term 2014 – has run for 8 semesters
800 people – with 20 % of participants repeat the program

- concentration and open awareness
- mindfulness, and visualize what success looks like in career and life
- series of meditative and creative visualization exercises.

They imagine their future from a meditative place while creating written or drawn mind maps to aid the planning of action steps and deepen their creative thinking and ability to problem solve.
Survey assessment results – administered online at the end of 10 weeks session through survey monkey
https://commons.pratt.edu/meditationincubator/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Reflections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>94%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enhanced academics and studio practice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>It's been beneficial in so many ways. My artistic practice has gotten more focused, more present when I am working.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>97%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Feel happier; have improved relationships with family and friends; experienced greater productivity; greater clarity of mind.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I am experiencing a steadiness as I make decisions and when talking with people in difficult situations. I seem very focused and others pick up on it.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100% feel less stressed, more relaxed, and feel</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I notice a radical change in my ability to be in the world, in finding spaces and pauses in my teaching and interactions with others. This shift was noticeable almost immediately with just a short morning and evening.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mindfulness Practice #2
Mindfulness and mind maps
Mindfulness in Student Affairs program – MISA Committee

We practice as a cohort and have online resources
- ideas and common language
- skill-sets for division
- metrics for evaluation
- innovative contributions for your departments
- creation of realistic 2-year time frame
- LMS resource and virtual community

Five steps over 2-year period
Step 1: Personal practice training – 10-week program
Step 2: Train the trainer – 10 week program
How to bring your practice to students and/or staff in your department
Step 3: Department and Division planning
Step 4: Department and Division implementation
Step 5: Personal practice reinforcement and Institutional alignment
SPRING 18 PERSONAL PRACTICE
MISA COMMITTEE
TRAINING CERTIFICATE

MONDAY’S 2PM – 3PM
PRATT CHAPEL

Session Schedule

1/29/18 – Rise and Fall, Nadi Shadona breath, Settle the Mind
2/5/18 – Orb of Light, Invite the Bell
2/12/18 – Mantra, Mindful Sitting
2/26/18 – Mindful Walking, Mindful Movement
3/12/18 – Choiceless Awareness, Awareness of Body
3/19/18 – Visualization, Release the Chatter
3/26/18 – Tibetan Channel Breath, Deep relaxation
4/2/18 – Body Scan, Mindful Eating
4/9/18 – Chanting, Breath and Emotions
4/16/18 – Quiet breath, Image of Pebble, 4 pebble practice, Tree in a storm
4/23/18 – Circle of sharing, compassion just like me, beginning a new

Personal practice training can run through May or June, sessions to be run by individual members.
Texts we use

- *Happy Teachers Change the World* by Vicki St. John and Katherine Moore
- *Why Meditate? Moving with Thoughts and Emotions* by Matthieu Ricard
- *Create Your Art Career* by Rhonda Schaller
Reflect on your experience:
What do you notice?
How do I feel right now, in my mind, body, breath?
What happened? How did it feel?
How did the practice affect me? Did anything change during the practice?
How easy, difficult, fun, boring, calming or challenging did I find the practice?
How much did my mind wander?

Simple awareness in your daily life:
Notice washing the dishes
Taking a shower
Walking to class
Awareness work (HW) – collected each week
MISA Committee - Agenda sample

Lunch – who is in the room + Mindfulness of breathing practice – Light attention
Sharing of your direct experience: Awareness work + Reminder of Ground rules: no advice, no interrupting, deep listening

A Mind and Life Approach to Student Affairs: Review Step 1
• Overview of personal practice training – 10-week program starts in January 2018 in addition to the monthly meeting. We will meet for 1 hour sessions once a week.
• We will introduce practices from MBSR, practices from Happy Teachers Change the Word and visualizations from Create Your Art Career – 2 books will be supplied.
• We will schedule a one-day silent retreat during the semester
• Certificate at the end of the training
• Product: A Mind and Life Approach to Student Affairs
  • Create a group practice timetable – days/times - Activity
• Research moving forward is everyone’s responsibility
  • what to look for
  • articles to add

Activity:
• Big Picture and Bite sized pieces. Discuss 2-year roll-out: mindset, process and products in small groups and share ideas how to bring your practice to students and/or staff in your department
• What can we start now?

“I notice that each time I meditate, I get stronger and feel more at peace”
Practice #3 - How do I experience it?

- Mindfulness of Breathing
- Compassion: Light attention
- Meditation of sound and image
- Concentration on beauty
- Loving kindness
- Creative Visualization
- Auto writing and drawing
- Mindful Movement
- Body Awareness
- Walking Meditation
- Simple Awareness – Mindfulness in daily life
Small groups – Discussion and report out

• How would you bring this to your department?

• Why would you bring this to your department?
What can we do now? Q & A

Silent retreat
Start meetings with 2 minutes of silence

• Mindfulness Day for campus
• Map of quiet spaces
Thank you for joining us today!

Rhonda Schaller
rschal20@pratt.edu

Esmilda Abreu
eabreu26@pratt.edu

Please remember to complete your online evaluation following the conference.

See you in Los Angeles in 2019!