The (slow) incorporation of Contemplative Practices into my courses

Lena Fletcher, 2016
Who is using contemplative practices in their classes?

What forms of contemplative practices are you using?
• Meditation?
• Reflection?
• Movement?
• What else?
Why?
My learning goals

• I’m still struggling to fully articulate them.
• I want to open my students up to the power of mindfulness and demystify contemplative practices by making them accessible (and enjoyable).
• I want to offer my students the tools for developing the core emotional and personal strength that can be accessed through these practices. They will need them to fully face the environmental problems that I am asking them to consider.
• I don’t want to teach my students facts about the environment, I want to guide them through practicing the skills they will need for being part of the solution. I believe mindfulness can provide grounding and strength in that fight.
How?

I’ll share with you what I am doing, but this is very much a work in progress.
Starting class with a breath:

Feedback from students:

I enjoyed the silent moment in the beginning of class because it calmed me down before getting to work.

I am glad I learned how impactful a silent minute of meditation can actually help my mood.

I also loved the silent minute and think it is very effective and that more people should engage in contemplative practices.

More silent time!

I really liked the silent minute and the resources that the class connected me to on campus.

We like the silent reflection period at the beginning of class (MAP – 8 teams)

• Echo 360 – NRC 100 9/18 – 2:17
Reflection journal ("blue book") – in class

NRC 100 – Environment and Society – Exs:

- What is the Environment? What is Society?
- How do you feel about local timber harvesting?
- Spend 10 minutes sitting silently in the forest – then free write about the experience
- Did your perspective on local timber harvesting change? Why or why not?
- What skills do you bring to your team? What are you naturally good at? What skills are you working on?
- Do we have a moral and ethical responsibility to be aware of where our food comes from?
- Etc.
Weekly forums – homework – reflective(ish) writing:

• Reflect on materials provided through moodle – articles, documentaries, TED talks, websites, etc.

• “Writing to learn”

• Exs: On Moodle
Civic engagement and reflection

Assignment prompt: Reflect on your civic engagement experience. What did you learn while working on your project? Was it what you had expected? Why or why not? What role does civic engagement have in natural resource conservation?

• Watch Hitchcock Center Civic Engagement Student Documentary
Summer Session on Contemplative Higher Education

the 12th Annual Summer Session on Contemplative Higher Education

August 7 – 12, 2016, at Smith College, Northampton, MA

Application Process | Costs | Accommodations & Meals | Summer Session Faculty

Accepting Applications Through March 11, 2016
Talking Truth: Finding Your Voice Around the Climate Crisis

SPRING 2016 SERIES

WORKSHOP
Monday, 2/29, 2:30-3:30 p.m., Floor 26, Du Bois Library
“Facing an Uncertain Future: Your Inner and Outer Skills”
Led by Skills for Life, a local program emphasizing introspective and practical skills

DISCUSSIONS
Friday, 3/4, 12:30-2:00 p.m., Floor 26, Du Bois Library
“Activism and Mindfulness: Grounding ourselves within the climate crisis”

Tuesday, 3/22, 12:30-2:00 p.m., Floor 26, Du Bois Library
“Passion, Motivation & Action: Telling your story”
Sacred mingling (“Professional Socializing”)

Walk around the room silently. When I say “stop” pair off with the closest person standing to you (make it work) and have a balanced mini-discussion:

1) Do you incorporate contemplative practices into your teaching and work? In what ways?
2) What are you trying to offer with your work? Why is it important?
3) What other ways are you thinking about/hoping to incorporate contemplative practices into your work?
New goal – ending with a breath