



Critical reflection and mindfulness training for teachers

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Introduction

As an organization dedicated to supporting and introducing innovation in the Bulgarian educational system, Tempo Foundation is interested in designing a training curriculum to educate teachers in mindfulness and reflection practices. The proposed approach has the purpose to eliminate teachers' stress, equip them with techniques and skills to constructively deal with their professional and everyday life challenges, and be effective role models of positive problem solving, emotional management, and self-awareness for students.

In the context of the reality of teaching in Bulgaria, we propose that mindfulness practices can lead to sustainable change in relation to three current problems of the Bulgarian educational system:

- difficulty to motivate youth to become teachers, as well as retain practicing teachers
- lack of adequate training of teachers which would prepare them for the challenges and opportunities of their profession
- lack of skills and strategies to reduce violence and support the positive social and emotional development of all key players on the educational arena (teachers, students, parents, administrators).

In the current report we summarize our findings based on several months of research, as well as consultations with experts, and mapping of existing practices.



The need to train teachers in mindfulness practices

The training of teachers in mindfulness and critical reflection (hereon referred to as “mindfulness practices”) could be motivated in many ways in relation to the benefits of such training to teachers’ personal and professional development, as well as their subsequent impact over students, colleagues and other peers. In the following section, we present a brief overview of the Bulgarian context in connection with the three core problems we identified in the introduction, and seek to address.

The demographic crisis in teaching

Eurostat statistics¹ rank Bulgaria 2nd in the EU in terms of its share of teachers aged 50 and over. A stunning 47.7% of Bulgarian teachers find themselves in this age category, whereas the EU average is 35.7%. The high number of aging teachers poses a serious threat, given the large share of teachers who will become eligible for retirement in the upcoming years, and whose spots will be difficult to fill.

According to facts circulated by the Bulgarian media², in 2018 alone 4,000 teachers have reached the age of retirement, with young teachers making a mere 1% of the total number of teachers employed in the sector.

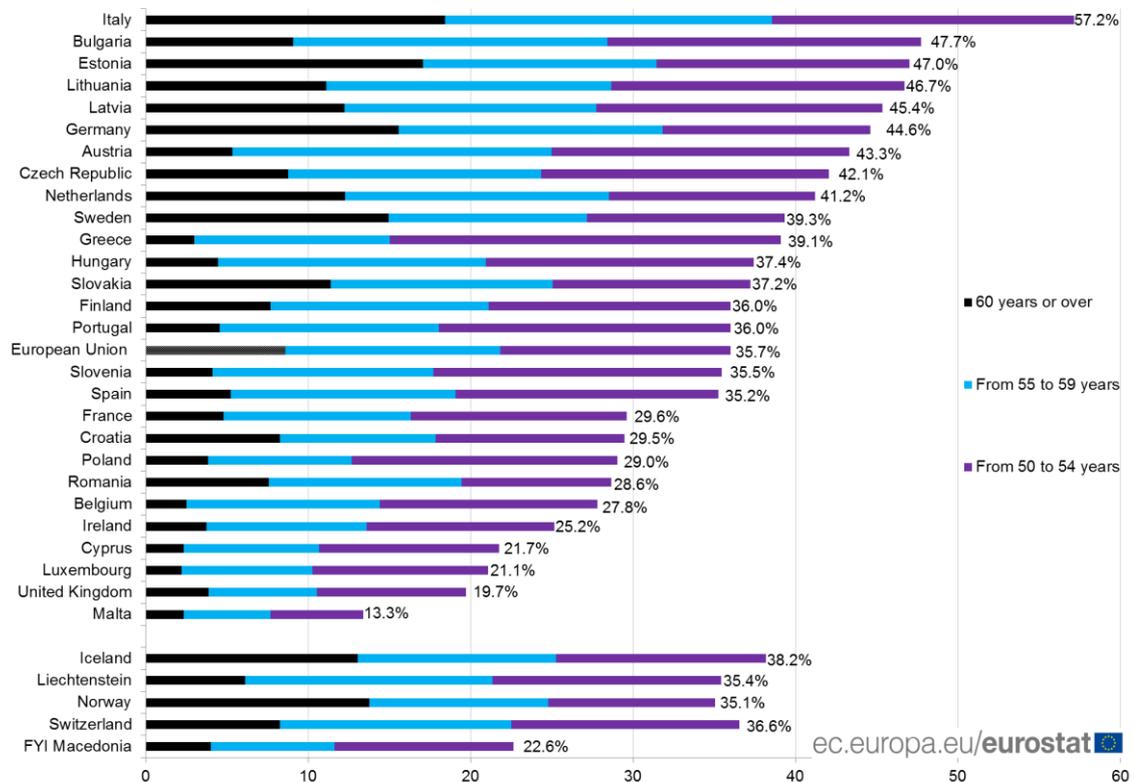
Teaching belongs to the high shortage occupations in Bulgaria (CEDEFOP, 2018). The shortage of teachers is not a new problem, although it has deepened in the recent years. Whereas in 2000, graduates in education science constituted 10% of all university graduates (in both bachelor and master programs), in 2014 they dropped to 8%³. The teaching profession has become less attractive for young people due to low wages, high requirements, stressful working environments, and low social status (CEDEFOP, 2018).

¹ Teachers in the EU. (2017, October 04). Retrieved November 1, 2018, from <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20171004-1?inheritRedirect=true>

² The hereby linked article along with many more has circulated the described statistics: <https://www.investor.bg/drugi/128/a/sindikata-образovanie-nad-4000-uchiteli-shte-se-pensionirat-prez-2018-g-267829/>

³ National statistical institute (NSI), online statistics: Graduates tertiary education by educational-qualification degree and narrow field of education, retrieved from: https://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/data/timeseries/Edu_3.6.2_en.xls/

Share of teachers aged 50 or over, primary to upper secondary, 2015



The National strategy for the development of teaching staff 2014-2020 targets the described shortage, and aims to introduce measures to recruit, retain and develop the competencies of teaching staff up to 35 years old. Furthermore, the Strategy emphasizes the need to develop and implement up-to-date programs for teacher qualification. The National Strategy for Lifelong Learning for the Period 2014–2020 (LLL strategy) also supports these recommendations. Priority areas of the LLL strategy include: ensuring 'effective' basic qualification and ongoing professional development of teachers and educators; transforming the profession of teacher and educator into an attractive career choice; upgrading of the funding system. The strategy foresees the introduction and development of a system of ongoing competency updates in vocational training in cooperation with businesses and universities⁴.

In practice, the Bulgarian Ministry of Youth and Education has been trying to keep retiring teachers on board at least at a part-time basis. However, alternative solutions such as

⁴ Ministry of Education and Science 2014. National strategy for Lifelong Learning for the Period 2014-2020, retrieved from <https://www.mon.bg/?go=page&pagelid=74&subpagelid=143/>



hiring back retired employees or allowing university graduates without formal teacher training to join the ranks of teachers constitute quick fixes, rather than sustainable, long-term options. Such is also the strategy to increase teachers' salaries, in order to attract young people to the profession. Although ensuring teachers' decent standard of living is important, and can reduce economic stress, raising salaries alone will not increase teachers' wellbeing.

The pervasiveness of teacher stress

Globally, stress is one of the core reasons to implement mindfulness practices at schools (Albrecht et al., 2012). Whereas comprehensive stress statistics are available in many developed countries, we had difficulty obtaining extensive information about rates of suicide and self-disclosed stress levels by age and occupation in Bulgaria.

According to statistics⁵ provided by the World Health Organisation, Bulgaria ranks 70th in the global suicide rankings, with suicide the 14th most common death cause in Bulgaria. Interestingly, the highest-ranking death causes in the country include death from stroke (#1), hypertension (#2), lung cancers (#3), lung disease (#6) - in other words, medical conditions that are also related to stress. A 2017 national survey of adults⁶ reported that 48% of Bulgarian adults experience stress daily; a pan-European survey⁷ conducted by EU-OSHA in Bulgaria similarly disclosed very high levels of stress among the working population.

Whereas the statistics presented are concerning in their own right, the prevalence of stress in daily life and at work is yet higher for those who work in the educational sector. According to the EU-OSHA survey, employees in the education sector are most affected by tiredness, health issues and sleep deprivation caused by stress, as well as work-related anxiety, along with those working in healthcare.

⁵ World Health Organisation, Profile of suicide rates in Bulgaria, retrieved from: <https://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/bulgaria-suicide>

⁶ Data based on a national sociological survey, conducted by Alpha Research, referenced in an article in the "Trud" Newspaper, retrieved from: <https://trud.bg/48-%D0%BE%D1%82-%D0%B1%D1%8A%D0%BB%D0%B3%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D1%81%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%81-%D0%BE%D1%82/>

⁷ EU-OSHA, European opinion poll on occupational safety and health 2013, retrieved from: <https://osha.europa.eu/bg/surveys-and-statistics-osh/european-opinion-polls-safety-and-health-work/european-opinion-poll-occupational-safety-and-health-2013>



A recent study of the work ability of aging teachers in Bulgaria found that compared to other professionals their age, older teachers' work ability was significantly lower, and was accompanied with higher rates of psychosomatic diseases, including hearing impairment and respiratory diseases, as well as musculoskeletal disorders, voice problems, hearing impediments and others (Vangelova, Dimitrova, Tsenova, 2018). Aging teachers⁸ also reported higher rates of slight mental disorders (including slight depression, tension, anxiety, insomnia) in comparison to aging non-teacher professionals, as well as young teachers. Teachers' physiological and mental disturbances have been related to their long-term exposure to stress hormones, induced by stress at work (Vangelova, 2005). In a previous study done by the same research team, teachers indicated an average of 7 features in their work as sources of constant tension, stress and reduced performance, as well as an average of 6 permanent health complaints for the last 6 months (Tzenova, Dimitrova, Vangelova, 2015). Aging teachers were also found to hold less optimistic views on being able to continue teaching over the following two years (Vangelova, Dimitrova, Tsenova, 2018).

Clearly, the stress that teachers face on the job has severe effects over their long-term physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, and need to be addressed with corresponding seriousness. On one hand, preservation of teacher health could contribute to teachers' motivation and ability to remain in the workforce longer (Vangelova, Dimitrova, Tsenova, 2018). On the other, reduction of teachers' stress can positively affect educational settings by reducing violence as teachers play a key role in stopping violence in schools (UNESCO, 2009⁹).

Currently, there is little done in Bulgaria to address teacher stress and burnout, and better yet - prevent it. University curricula focus on teachers' content knowledge and pedagogy, and do not factor in the need for self-examination, critical reflection and strategies for physical and emotional well-being. Teachers are left to their own devices in regards to finding ways to navigate and cope with stress at work. Apart from the lack of professional and academic training in stress prevention, there are few support resources available to teachers in Bulgaria. For instance, there is no state-funded psychological counselling for teachers, despite the fact that the need to provide teachers and school personnel with appropriate

⁸ aged 47.7±8.9 years old as per the study's sample

⁹ UNESCO, Stopping violence in school: a guide for teachers, retrieved from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001841/184162e.pdf>



psychological and mental health counselling has been supported by many scholars, and is implemented at least to some extent in other developed countries (Daniels et al., 2007).

Stress is considered one of the top reasons for teachers' burnout and desire to quit teaching (Albrecht et al., 2012). Whereas teachers' retention is a global concern (McCallum & Price, 2010, as cited by Albrecht et al., 2012), this problem is of critical importance in Bulgaria where a large proportion of teachers are in pre-retirement age and there is a dire need for young employees.

Violence at School

Violence at school in Bulgaria is a pervasive issue which harms not only students, but also teachers. Copious forms of violence can be found at educational settings in Bulgaria, including violence among students, teacher violence towards students, and violence towards teachers on behalf of students, as well as parents.

In Bulgaria 33.3% of boys and 18.8% of girls aged 11, 13 and 15 self-report exposure to bullying and victimization, including being victim of bullying, victimizing others, and observing how others are bullied (Craig et al., 2009). With its rates of bullying and victimization Bulgaria ranks closely to the countries with highest prevalence of bullying (Craig et al., 2009). School is where most displays of violence (43.8%) among children and youth occur according to data collected by the Bulgarian Central Commission for Combating Juvenile Delinquency¹⁰. The most widespread forms of peer-to-peer violence at school are physical aggression (36.10%), psychological harassment (32.40%), bullying based on personal characteristics (31.20%)¹¹. Data of the Ministry of Education¹² has shown that in 2016 there were 2270 reported instances of physical aggression at school and 2700 - of verbal.

¹⁰ European Institute Foundation, Research on problematic regions in relation to violence among children and youth, 2009, retrieved from: <http://www.europeaninstitute.bg/upload/docs/lzsledvane.pdf>

¹¹ European Institute Foundation, Research on problematic regions in relation to violence among children and youth, 2009, retrieved from: <http://www.europeaninstitute.bg/upload/docs/lzsledvane.pdf>

¹² As reported in newspaper "Dnes," 31.01.2017

<https://www.dnes.bg/obshtestvo/2017/01/31/striaskashta-statistika-nad-2-hil-sluchaia-na-fizicheskonasilie-v-uchilishte.330451>



Whereas we were unable to find statistics related to the bullying of teachers, educational professionals experience frequent exposure to verbal and, in some cases, physical violence on behalf of students and parents. In an interview¹³ for Focus Informational Agency Yanka Takeva, Chairwoman of the Syndicate of Bulgarian Teachers, reported that 65% of Bulgarian teachers are victims of verbal abuse, while 2.5% also experience physical harassment. In 2017 there were 39 reported cases¹⁴ of teacher harassment, although it must be noted that reported cases are typically ones with "abnormal" extent of aggression displayed and that fear of further violent acts may prevent teachers from reporting their abusers.

Instances of teacher violence towards students have not been subject of statistical surveys, yet every year there are at least several media reports following cases¹⁵ whereby teachers assaulted students or kindergarten pupils. Instances of violence against children at kindergartens which appear to be more common have resulted in heated public discussions¹⁶. Some of the arguments have pointed out teachers' stress and their need to receive greater public support. Others have propagated ideas about installing video cameras in all classrooms and kindergarten facilities to monitor teachers' behavior. Importantly, teachers' violence does not have to be physical to be worrisome. Shouting, using offensive language and employing other derogatory disciplinary actions are also forms of violence teachers resort to when experiencing difficulties with classroom and student management.

Evidently, violence at school in Bulgaria is a multifaceted problem that both exacerbates teachers' stress, and is rooted in it. One reason for classroom violence may be the low teacher-pupil ratio in Bulgaria. A global UNESCO ranking places Bulgaria under the EU average for teacher-to-pupil ratio. Research has demonstrated that instructional, physical and evaluational problems are more likely to occur in crowded classrooms (Dabo, 2015), and that

¹³ As reported on "Focus news," 01.20.2016, retrieved from: <http://focus-news.net/opinion/2016/01/10/36389/yanka-takeva-okolo-65-ot-uchitelite-tarpyat-psihicheski-tormoz-a-okolo-25-ot-tyah-sa-podlozheni-i-na-fizicheski.html>

¹⁴ As reported on "Teacher.bg," 17.11.2017, retrieved from <https://teacher.bg/39-%D1%81%D0%BB%D1%83%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%8F-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B4-%D1%83%D1%87%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0/>

¹⁵ For example, this article from "Dnes.bg," 01.06.2018, <https://www.dnes.bg/obrazovanie/2018/06/01/kreshtene-skubane-shamari-uchiteli-nalagat-uchenici-na-ekskurzii.378070>

¹⁶ "Teachers beat children brutally in a kindergarden in Burgas," 01.02.2018, retrieved from <https://novini.bg/bylgariya/obrazovanie/466707>



more flexibility and innovation, as well as improved teacher morale and job satisfaction, are associated with smaller classes (Hattie, 2009).



Brief overview of terms

Mindfulness

There is little agreement in research literature as to how best to describe mindfulness, as well as what it entails (Grossman, 2008; Hirst, 2003; Kostanski & Hased, 2008 as cited by Albrecht et al., 2012). In general, mindfulness refers to a "state of being" and "a natural human capacity, which involves observing, participating and accepting each of life's moments from a state of equilibrium or loving kindness." (Albrecht et al., 2012) Whereas scholars and practitioners differ in their definitions of the term, mindfulness is perceived as a specific, attainable habit of "being" with prescribed characteristics, activities and ways of conducting oneself (Albrecht et al., 2012). As a form of phenomenological practice, rooted in ancient meditation techniques present in various religions, the purpose of mindfulness is to help individuals perceive reality more clearly, understand themselves and enjoy more fulfilling lives (Albrecht et al., 2012). Researchers have proposed three common axioms related to mindfulness practice, including Intention, Attitude, and Attention (Shapiro et al., 2006). These axioms are best represented in the following definition of mindfulness: "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p.4).

- **Critical Reflection**

Reflection is considered a core professional competency in the so-called helping professions, and a critical component of initial training and professional development (Leight and Bailey, 2013), yet it is often undermined vis-a-vis more technical competencies (Bain, 1995 as cited by Leight and Bailey, 2013). Academic literature offers little clarity on how reflective practices should be thought, as well as how they could be defined and assessed (Leight and Bailey, 2013; Hatton and Smith, 1995).

Academic discussions of what reflection constitutes of in the educational sphere relate it to awareness of one's context, as well as societal and ideological constraints (Calderhead, 1989), emphasis on research and evidence-led practice (Cordingley, 1999), and critical analyses of one's actions (Imel, 1992), among other interpretations. Common definitions of reflection in teaching construe it as a cognitive activity, building on self-awareness and awareness of the nature and impact of teachers' own performance, and using the resulting insights to change behaviour (Ostermann & Kottkamp, 1993). The cycle of learning through reflection has been described as consisting of several stages, including observation, recording



experiential processes, analysing and theory making, as well as planning of future action (Smears, 2009).

However, other scholars have criticized the overly analytical approaches to reflective practice which predominantly involve reflecting on thoughts and thinking patterns, and warned that such an approach to reflection leads to rumination and self-focus associated with depression and anxiety (Leight and Bailey, 2013). Another approach to reflection involves embodied reflective practices that emphasize self-awareness of not only thoughts, but also physical sensation, and feelings (Leight and Bailey, 2013). Embodied approaches to reflection build on "holistic reflexivity," therefore constructing reflection as physical and worldly orientation and attention, and not mere introspection.

Mindfulness versus Reflection

Whereas mindfulness and reflection practices often go hand-in-hand or are used interchangeably, they exist as distinct training approaches as evident in the great corpus of academic literature dedicated to both. While mindfulness can be practiced at any point of time, as it involves non-judgemental observation of what is happening, reflection has been argued to follow experience, and facilitate corrections in the way individuals react to and behave in similar situations in the future (Leight and Bailey, 2013). One individual we consulted with on the subject made the distinction in a quite poignant way: "Mindfulness is being, reflection is thinking." Others see mindfulness as a prerequisite to reflection, whereby mindfulness equips individuals with the presence and calmness needed to later engage in critical analysis (reflection).



The place of Mindfulness in Education

Research of the applications of mindfulness and critical reflection in education is a promising field, albeit in its infancy. Academic literature has related mindfulness to many educational benefits, including improved management of educational settings, instructional strategies, teacher-student, as well as peer-to-peer relationships, and more (Albrecht et al., 2012).

Around the world mindfulness and reflective practices are being used with increased frequency, although differences in definitions and application methods point to the lack of a unified approach to implementing said practices at schools. Additionally, research and discussion of mindfulness interventions is conducted in a fragmented fashion without a guiding theoretical framework for analysis and evaluation (Ospina et al., 2007, as cited by Albrecht et al., 2012).

The frequency of applications of mindfulness into psychological practice and theory has increased significantly in the last 25 years (Albrecht et al., 2012). Mindfulness has become a core element of many therapies, including Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and others. The clinical success of the incorporation of mindfulness in behavioral therapies around the world has led to the adoption of mindfulness practices by school psychologists (Albrecht et al., 2012). Additionally, it has led to the introduction of mindfulness into classrooms with the goals to enhance student engagement and academic performance, improve school climate, etc. (Albrecht et al., 2012, 4)

There is a growing number of mindfulness programs carried out at school. In an effort to improve the Gross National Happiness, (GNH), Bhutan is implementing mindfulness trainings targeting students across its educational sector (J.P.Miller, 2010, as cited by Albrecht et al., 2012). Programs aiming to support teacher resilience, compassion and reflective skills have been developed in many Western countries (Albrecht et al., 2012).

Studies examining the impact of mindfulness-based programs on teachers have found that mindfulness training helps teachers to build mindfulness skills, and as a result learn to reduce emotional distress, increase their self-esteem, manage time, improve problem solving skills (Gold et al., 2010 as cited by Albrecht et al., 2012). Research shows that prior to teaching students mindfulness, teachers should first incorporate mindfulness into their own personal lives



and work as greater awareness over their emotions and actions enables connection with students, and facilitates the transfer of mindfulness skills from teachers to students (Albrecht et al., 2012, 10). Training of teachers in mindfulness over an 8-week period including learning mindful breathing, body awareness, meditation, movement and sensory experience was found to significantly improve the teaching behaviour of elementary teachers' helping them focus on the learning process and deepen their relationships with students (Albrecht et al., 2012).

Research findings from the US where the practice has been mainstreamed widely in the past decade show that a wide range of individuals are teaching mindfulness in schools (Albrecht et al., 2012). The list includes Buddhist mindfulness experts, volunteers with varying degrees of meditation experiences, and teachers incorporating mindfulness into their classrooms based on personal practice.



Reflective practices: a means to teacher development

Critical reflection has received great attention in scholarly literature, particularly in relation to teachers' development (Saric and Steh, 2017). The purpose of teachers' critical reflection is to contribute to new insights, knowledge reframing, and introduction of changes that support students' learning and result in the development of better learning and life opportunities for entire communities.

The need to adapt teaching methods to students with various language and subject matter skills in increasingly more diverse social contexts turns the role of teachers into ever more demanding and complex. Depending on the goals that they try to achieve with their students, teachers need to employ critical reflection to observe and evaluate the extent to which they succeed vis-a-vis their goals. It has been argued that critical reflection trains teachers in "well-thought-out, autonomous and responsible action," especially in conflicts (Pozarnik, 1987, 1993, 2000 as cited by Saric and Steh, 2017).

Yet, scholars warn that the critical aspect to reflection is widely missing among students training to become teachers. Analysis of student teacher portfolios has found that 93% of learning activities identified by student teachers consist of recollections and evaluations of events. The "deep-approach" components of critical reflection such as analysis, critical processing, diagnosis and reflection are largely missing in student teachers reflective writing (Mansvelder-Longayrox, et al., 2007). The lack of critical reflection and predominance of reporting in student teacher portfolios and diaries have been established by other researchers, as well (Cvetek, 2003). Experienced teachers similarly struggle with partaking in more sophisticated, critical reflection (Pozarnik, 2013; Bakkenes, et al., 2010 as cited by Saric and Steh, 2017).

Some challenges to deep critical reflection include teachers' simplified understanding of critical reflection, performing reflection in a recipe-following manner without actual learning, and intellectualising reflection, among other reasons for shallow reflection. Personal characteristics along with motivation, feelings, ideas about oneself and the world also shape how reflective practices are enacted (Mansvelder-Longayrox, et al., 2007).

To that end, it is important to note that critical reflection is not in itself a safe process. The questioning of one's beliefs and predispositions is a process likely accompanied by powerful emotions, and some degree of threat (Mezirow as cited by Liu, 2015). Emotions can enter reflective practice at many stages of the process: in the beginning as the reason to engage in reflection when strong emotions remain lingering; as a by-product of reflection when



the teacher encounters less known parts of herself or when her identity foundations have been called into question due to reframing in her understanding; or as a result of reflective practice, whereby emotional response and regulation have been influenced by reflection (Liu, 2015, Saric and Steh, 2017).

The extent to which teachers engage in deep critical reflection is also influenced by the social context in which they encounter and practice reflection. Organised learning environments such as peer coaching and team collaborations enhance the likelihood for deep critical reflection more so than informal workplace learning (Vermunt, 2014). In order to increase its adoption, reflection practice needs to gain a more prominent role in the university curricula, yet do so without becoming yet another obligation to fulfil. Scholars argue that the encouragement of critical reflection can undermine the controlling function of assessment (Hobbs, 2007). Importantly, the assessment of reflection impacts its authenticity, and therefore should be refrained from (Hobbs, 2007).



What is happening in the world - analysis of existing practices

When considering the design of a new teacher training including critical reflection, self-awareness and mindfulness to be carried out in Bulgaria, we first conducted an online research, as well as a number of consultations, to map existing approaches and their features, including their objectives, activities (if disclosed online), locations, length, and pricing. The mapping is surely limited in its scope, and does not represent all existing such programs in the world. It is rather a collection of top Google search results and experts' recommendations. While the list of programs is inconclusive, and can be further expanded, it provides a useful map of the ways such programs are communicated and promoted, and the content they include.

We discovered that the courses available could be divided in two groups:

- **University courses:**

– *On-campus courses* - Out of the eight courses that fell into this category, only three directly targeted teachers (and coaches). Whereas the scope of our research, does not allow us to make conclusive statements, the process of aggregating our sample showed us that university courses on our themes of interest which also specifically target teachers are rather limited on an international scale. Their topics and titles differ significantly from one another ("Stress management for teachers," "Self-awareness and consciousness," "Coaching Teaching Techniques: Understanding and addressing biofeedback," "Develop growth mindset for success," "Strengths and social challenges"), pointing to underlying similarities, yet lack of a unified approach to teaching reflective practices. Indeed, "reflection" or "critical reflection" is missing as a core term in the observed examples.

The courses included in this group are located at higher education institutions in Western Europe (Germany, Italy, UK) and the US, and identically are semester-long (13 weeks). A great variety of activities compose these courses, including reading assignments, studying and reflecting on psychological theories and models, group discussions, daily mindfulness practices, written reflections on mindfulness experiences, case study reviews, etc. Unsurprisingly for academic courses, most focus on the theoretical study of given concepts and practices, with action compromising a secondary role or in some cases is absent.

– *Online courses* - We also discovered two courses, one provided by University of Colorado Boulder on Coursera, one offered for free by the OpenUniversity, which specifically targeted teachers in relation to reflection, as well as "teachers' social and emotional learning" (titles are as follows: "The teacher's social and emotional learning," (Coursera) and "Learning to teach:



becoming a reflective practitioner" (OpenUniversity). The Coursera course is an online version of a University of Colorado Boulder's course, whereas the one by OpenUniversity does not credit its creators. The former was included in this category because of its status as a free online learning service offered by OpenUniversity, although it resembles the offerings at Udemy, presented in the following category. The sheer number of offerings related to teachers education on websites such as Coursera, OpenUniversity and others may be pointing to a tendency to provide postgraduate training to teachers online. Benefits of and developments in online training for teachers are not within the scope of this project, but are worth considering.

- **Non-university courses (based on informal education)**

We included seven programs in our sample for this category, five of which are delivered on the premises of the organisation offering them, while two are online courses provided by Udemy¹⁷. All of the programs in the category are programs specifically intended for teachers, and all focus on either "stress management" or "wellbeing."

– *On-premise courses* – Our sample includes on-premise courses from Australia, New Zealand, UK, as well as Italy/Spain (same course has two locations depending on dates). Four of the five on-premise courses are led by small consulting firms, specializing in teachers' effectiveness and wellbeing. The fifth is an Erasmus Plus training course, offered by an Italian NGO, called "IFOM - Teacher training courses and Vocational placement." Prices of these courses were not available on all courses' websites, but the Erasmus Plus one cost 1220 Euro for 6 days of full-time training, while another one based in Canterbury, UK cost 1,100 British pounds for 13 days of full-time training. Evidently, courses differ in their length, starting from 8 hours of training (lowest length of training in the sample) to 13 full-time days (highest length).

Unlike the university courses summarized earlier, the on-premise courses all rely on experiential learning and informal education techniques, although some also communicate that they provide participants with summaries of relevant scientific research, whereas one course consist of activities in which teachers share strategies to cope with stress and build resilience (a 1-day course, UK). Whereas university courses focus on theoretical understanding

¹⁷ an online learning platform aimed at professional adults, which unlike other MOOCs, e.g. Coursera, offers online content created by content creators deemed experts for profit



of teacher stress, burnout and related issues, on-premise courses emphasize building practical strategies and daily habits. The language of descriptions of these courses at large is informal, conversational, and emotion-inducing, with a clear objective to encourage readers to sign up for the given trainings in order to improve their personal and professional well-being and satisfaction.

– *Online courses* – The two Udemy courses considered are samples of a bigger variety of courses offered on the platform in relation to the subject. They are prepared by individual consultants who provide their educational and professional credentials at length in the course descriptions of their offerings. Courses are self-paced, and cost a single-time fee of about \$10.99.



Recommendations for Bulgaria

Based on the previous parts of this report and our continuous research on the topic, we propose the following recommendations to be implemented in Bulgaria:

1. *Creation of curriculum design for teacher trainings*

Given that there is no existing curriculum to use in training teachers on critical reflection and mindfulness, the first step is to create said curriculum. Importantly, curriculum design should take into account the academic literature on the subject, as well as the approaches developed by international organisations already implementing mindfulness interventions in school environments. Yet, we propose that the curriculum design also needs to take into consideration the specific challenges, limitations and opportunities that Bulgarian teachers face, in order to ensure its effectiveness. To that end, the curricula to teach mindfulness and reflection will need to be frequently updated following initial experimental trainings with teachers.

2. *Integration of the curriculum into teachers' initial training, as well as complementary professional development*

Once developed, the curriculum used to train teachers in mindfulness and reflection should be integrated into the formal strategies for teachers' education, as well as their professional development post-graduation. If mindfulness and critical reflection become integral components of teachers' skillset as early as during their university studies, young teachers will be significantly better equipped to begin their careers in teaching, and to remain in the field longer. As evident from the academic literature review presented, more experienced teachers also have much to gain from mindfulness and reflection trainings which should be recognized and financed as complementary professional development.

3. *Mainstreaming of mindfulness and reflection and awareness-raising among key stakeholders in the educational field*

In order to integrate mindfulness and reflection into the Bulgarian school system, we need to educate administrators, teachers and other relevant stakeholders (including parents and students) about these practices, and raise awareness about their benefits.



This process can involve the creation of attractive informational materials, introduction of new school or classroom traditions, as well as organization of informational meetings, lectures, skill-building trainings, trainings of trainers and much more.



Annex #1 Mapping of existing practices

- **Non-university courses¹⁸**

Stress Management for Teachers

Program Location	UK
Program Length	1-day
Program Price	
Program Organizer	
Program Summary	The aim of this one-day course is to share strategies which will focus on the wellbeing of the individual teacher. This course gives you the opportunity to share around the challenges teachers face and it is very much about 'stressing the positives' and building individual resilience.
Program Target	
Program Objectives	To develop: Strategies to deal with stress and manage different situations effectively Techniques to relax reducing potential health risks and enhancing for personal wellbeing The ability to help yourself and others identify and manage stress far a more effectively
Program Activities	Understanding stress: What is stress and why does it happen? Identifying the signs, symptoms and causes of stress It's only stressful if it matters The Global stressors v the presenting stressors for teachers Mindful Stress Management for the classroom The link between your beliefs, perceptions and your experience

¹⁸ Descriptive texts of program summaries, goals, and activities are drawn from the original digital marketing materials we found for each program, in order to keep the authenticity of the texts, and allow for further analysis of how such programs are marketed.



of stress

Reacting or Responding?

Managing stress: Learn practical insights, tools and techniques to manage stress

Focus your mental energy, think positively and respond proactively

Combat stress with mindfulness – great techniques to reduce feelings of stress and frustration

Preventing stress: Interrupt the stress reaction before it occurs

Prevent anger and conflict escalating in relationships

Program Link

[Teachers Stress Management Training](#)

Program Location

New Zealand

Program Length

8 hours

Program Price

Program Organizer

Renew Your Mind - psychology and mindfulness consultancy

Program Summary

Program Target

Program Objectives

Program Activities

SESSION 1. THE BRAIN AND STRESS REDUCTION A revelatory session introducing the powerful impact stress has on the brain, followed by transformative techniques to reduce stress no matter how demanding the external pressures are. A must-do workshop for all educators and staff facing the intensity of today's teaching environment. Teachers will leave the session with: » More insight into how the brain works » 3 short stress reduction techniques » Practical strategies on how to reduce stress in everyday work life



SESSION 2. LEADING WITH CALM A follow up to session one exploring the impact emotions have on everyday classroom expectations and management. Includes a simple but powerful technique to process emotions, so that educators and managers can move from reactive to responsive. Teachers will leave the session with: » A different perspective on emotions » A powerful brain training technique that reduces stress and calms emotions » Practical strategies on how to lead with calm even when under pressure

SESSION 3. EFFECTIVELY DEALING WITH CHALLENGING STUDENTS AND PARENTS Drawing on sessions 1 and 2 this session recognises the role educators play in managing the difficult emotions of others - both students and parents. This session teaches emotion recognition and empathy, whilst also moving quickly to either solutions or boundaries. Teachers will leave the session with: » New insight into the brain processes behind effective communication » A powerful communication technique that helps teachers lead with calm when dealing with difficult students or parents » Practical strategies that improve communication effectiveness and reduce emotional strain on teachers

Program Link

http://renewyourmind.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/RYM-Teachers-Stress-Management_brochure-2.pdf

Erasmus stress management for teachers

Program Location

Italy and Spain

Program Length

6-days, full-time

Program Price

1220 Euro

Program Organizer

IFOM Teacher training courses

Program Summary

Program Target

Teachers, trainers, headmasters



Program Objectives real-job examples and case studies, simulations, best practices exchange,

Program Activities

Program Link <http://www.erasmustrainingcourses.com/stress-management.html>

Stress Management & Wellbeing for Teachers

Teacher Wellbeing Workshop

Program Location Australia
Program Length 2-day
Program Price Unknown
Program Organizer Principals Australia Institute

Program Summary The Highly Effective Teacher 2-day Teacher Wellbeing Workshop teaches the IMPORTANCE of effective habits that create a sense of wellness by increasing your energy levels, managing your emotions and improving your focus. We teach YOU how to get more fulfillment out of your day by implementing very simple techniques and practices in your professional and personal life.

Program Target "Designed for teachers... BY TEACHERS!"

Program Objectives Utilise current brain science and research
Manage stress without adding more work to your day
Empower yourself and maintain a sense of balance
Take control and responsibility for how you feel
Understanding the meaning of happiness and how you can have more of it
Increase harmony with colleagues, parents and students
Manage overwhelm and model healthy behaviour to your students
Manage time more effectively



Bring the excitement back into your practice
Use Growth Mindset concepts to your advantage

Program Activities

Program Link

<http://pai.edu.au/content/teacher-wellbeing-0>

Teacher Wellbeing Made Easy

Program Location

Online on Udemy

Program Length

Self-paced

Program Price

13.99

Program Organizer

Kathryn Lovewell, speaker, trainer and best selling author of Every Teacher Matters : Inspiring Wellbeing through Mindfulness, has created this introductory wellbeing programme for you. Teacher Wellbeing Made Easy has been designed especially for you.

Kathryn qualified as a secondary school teacher in the 1990s and has been training teachers and students in emotional health and wellbeing tools since 2007. She experienced physical burn out after just one year of teaching (read page 57 of her book for the full story) and ended up in hospital; missing the long awaited summer holidays and months after rehabilitating. Whilst this experience was incredibly demanding on her body, which is still not 100%, her spirit and love of teaching remains strong. This is not the case with many teachers who she has trained over the years. Her hope is that she every teacher is happy and healthy for life.

Program Summary

What if you woke up each morning energised and recharged?

What if you went to bed happy, relaxed & satisfied?

What if being happy & well was the most important lesson you could teach?

What if you were a shining example of vibrant health & positivity in your classroom?

What if your being well, meant your students would learn with



ease?

Our mission is to help you not just survive teaching but thrive and flourish, so you can create the life you'd love. Being a teacher is the best job in the world! And it also a highly pressured and (potentially) emotionally draining role. If you don't manage your stressors, you could easily burn out or worse!

Student wellbeing and stress management is becoming a more recognised intervention for students - and this is great! But what about the teachers? We are passionate about supporting teachers to be their best selves, so students are inspired to mirror you.

Program Target

teachers
senior leaders
support staff
educational psychologists
youth service workers
anyone with a pulse!

Program Objectives

Reduce your risk of burnout
Reduce your stress
Improve your energy
Improve your concentration
Improve your quality of sleep
Improve your relationships
Improve your overall happiness and sense of wellbeing
Quite frankly, this course could SAVE YOUR LIFE!

Program Link

<https://www.udemy.com/teacher-wellbeing-made-easy/>

Teacher Equilibrium: Be Happy and Avoid Burnout (K-12)

Program Location

Online on Udemy



Program Length	Self-paced
Program Price	\$104.99
Program Organizer	Kelly Knoche Educator Wellness Leader, Founder of The Teaching Well; Lance Hunter Burbank Teacher Mindfulness
Program Summary	Create balance in your classroom. Learn to keep students on track, reduce your stress levels, and be a great teacher.
Program Target	Teachers and student teachers
Program Objectives	Understand how students are feeling, so you can be more empathetic Effectively communicate with students to end needless arguments and keep your classroom on track Craft your own personal creed which will guide you through your toughest times Create strategies that will help students keep themselves accountable and take the burden off of you
Program Activities	Each section of this course is broken down into three (3) segments: Individual: perform on your own in the privacy of your classroom or home Interactive: help you with interactions with students and coworkers Integrated: bring your students into the work that you're doing In addition to these segments we provide a reflection tool which gives you the necessary framework to reflect upon your workday to continuously grow and improve.
Program Link	https://www.udemy.com/teacher-equilibrium-preventing-burnout/

- **University Courses**

[Stress Management for Teachers](#)



Program Location	Florida, US
Program Length	1 semester (13 weeks)
Program Price	Unknown
Program Organizer	Teacher Education Institute
Program Summary	The purpose of this course is for teachers to enhance student performance by minimizing the negative effects of stress in the classroom.
Program Target	Graduate students
Program Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a definition of stress.Distinguish between good stress/bad stressIdentify the primary source of stressDefine and use mediators to interpret stressorsRecognize "killer" mediatorsComplete the "Assessment Format for Teachers."Assess the interaction among Life Events, Mediators, and ContextDescribe the mind/body connectionAssess stress signalsConnect stress to mediatorList teacher sources of stressAssess student stress using testsApply cognitive reappraisal to reduce stressAssess David Burn's Ten Forms of Distorted ThinkingDevelop a "Pre-Assessment" instrumentInitiate a classroom stress management strategyCompare and contrast stress reducersConstruct a Whole School Stress Management approachCompare the approach in Chapter Eight with course contentComplete a Time Utilization Survey



Connect teacher anxiety to Teacher Support Teams
Analyze the flight or fight response
Establish a functional relationship among major concepts
Identify blocks to learning due to stress
Assess the concept of problem ownership
Recognize the need for student/teacher dialogue to reduce stress
Review long-term stress reducers
Apply a five-point approach to stress management
Identify important stress management tips
Create a Plan of Action

Program Activities

Session/Module 1: The Nature Stress

Contents:

- An Operational Definition Of Stress
- Four Theories Of Stress - Person: Environmental Fit Model; Demand: Control Model; Effort: Reward Model; Fight: Flight Model
- Stress, Survival Instincts And Brain Development
- Psychosomatic Theory Of Stress
- Eustress And Distress

Session/Module 2: Sources of Stress

Contents:

- Mind-Body Dichotomy
- Psycho Cybernetics And Stress
- Areas Of Freedom
- Job Content
- Work Organization
- Lack Of Feedback
- Uncertainty
- Up The Down Staircase
- Social Isolation
- Bad Press
- Fight - Flight Revisited

Session/Module 3: Assessing Stress



Contents:

- Identification Of Stress Indicators
- Self-Assessment
- Student Assessment (Classroom And Individual)
- Prototype Questionnaire
- Analyzing Results
- Student Performance In Terms Of Measured Stress Level
- Student Health In Terms Of Measured Stress Level
- Teacher Health In Terms Of Measured Stress Level

Session/Module 4: Stress Reduction Strategies For Students

Contents:

- Prevention (Use Cognitive Behavioral Strategies)
- Timely Reaction (After Assessment)
- Rehabilitation (Enhancing Well-Being)
- Changing Perceived Context
- Changing Expectations (Demand Control Model)
- Realistic Problem Assessment
- Matching Strategy With Assessment

Session/Module 5: Stress Reduction Strategies For Teachers

Contents:

- Whole School Stress Management Action-Plan
- Prevent, Reduce And Change Organizational Stressors
- School Stress Review
- Stress Management Training For Educators
- Improving Job Satisfaction (Implementing Whole School Stress

Management Action-Plan)

- Effective Dialogue

Session/Module 6: Stress and Learning

Contents:

- Typical Blocks To Learning - Fear; Threat; Anxiety
- The Neurochemical System Of Memory
- The Casual Relationship Between Fear And Anxiety
- Carl Roger's Explanation Of Perception Of Learning
- Presentation: Review Of Research Findings On Stress And

Learning



Session/Module 7: Stress and Teaching

Contents:

- The Gordon Method: Who Owns The Problem?
- Evaluation, Critical Judgment And Stress
- Acceptance And Stress
- Action As A Function Of Choice
- Meditation, Relaxation And Stress Reduction
- Creativity And Stress
- Teaching In An Age Of Terrorism
- Eustress And Teaching
- No Stress - No Learning

Session/Module 8: Effective Dialogue: A Means Of Reducing Student Stress

Contents:

- Dialogue Defined
- Dialogue As A Human Need
- Time Management - Fractionalizing Ourselves Into

Incompetence

- The Process Of Interpersonal Communication
- Listening Skill And Practice
- Self-Disclosure Skill And Practice

Session/Module 9: School As A Source Of Stress For Students

• Contents:

• The Four Social Groups in Schools:

- o Academic Culture
- o Elite Culture
- o Adapted Youth Culture
- o Isolates

- Social Rejection As A Cause Of Student Stress
- Teenage Maturation
- Competition; Sorting; Status; Performance; Testing; Life;

Decisions

Session/Module 10: Synthesis

Contents:

- The Sources Of Stress



- Assessment Of Stress
- Strategies To Reduce Stress
- Coordinating Whole School Stress Management
- Back-Home Action-Plan
- Measuring Improved Student Performance (In Stress Free Context)
- Long-Term Considerations

Course Link <https://www.teachereducation.com/Stress-Management-for-Teachers-10-727.html>

Self-awareness and consciousness

Location Bologna, Italy

Length 1 semester (13 weeks)

Organizer University of Bologna

Summary The questions surrounding consciousness and self-awareness have fascinated humans since the dawn of time, giving rise to significant cultural constructs and spiritual endeavours. In recent years, neuroscientific methods have begun to provide important insights into different brain / mind states and the components that make up our sense of self. The module aims to build up a critical thinking on the subject and provide in depth knowledge of the neural bases and the functional mechanisms underlying consciousness, self-awareness and their altered states from a neuroscientific perspective. A historical perspective on the philosophical, psychological and neuroscientific approaches in the study and understanding of consciousness.

**Objectives**

At the end of the course the student: - gets in depth knowledge of the historical, philosophical and psychological perspectives as well as the main theories and current neuroscientific approaches to the study and understanding of consciousness; - moreover, the student is able to critically define the building blocks and neurophysiological foundations of conscious experience through the study of visual awareness and visual illusions as well as the volatility of conscious experience through the evaluation of clinical cases. Lectures on the different topics of the module will be approached in an interactive way, through the discussion of neuroscientific articles, organization of small groups led by the teacher and aimed at in depth discussion and presentations to the classroom.

Activities

the main theories of, and current neuroscientific approaches to the investigation of consciousness and self-awareness. Novel neuroscientific perspectives to answer old questions around consciousness and the self.

Critical definition of the building blocks of conscious experience through the study of visual awareness and visual illusions.

Different brain states associated with different conscious states (e.g. schizophrenia, coma, sleep, meditation etc.): tracking the neurophysiological foundation leading to experiential consequences of altered conscious states.

The volatility of conscious experience: evaluation of clinical cases.

Artificial intelligence and conscious experience.

Course Link

<https://www.unibo.it/en/teaching/course-unit-catalogue/course-unit/2017/430521>

Body Awareness Teaching Program

Location

Germany

Length

Depends on how many courses are taken

Organizer

Folkwang University of the Arts



Summary

Every human being's consciousness and physical body are programmed by nature to work together in harmony to create upright posture, walking, self-perception, life energy and an ability to move freely and with perfect coordination. Yet these two basic elements of the human organism often seem „separated“ from each other. This condition of inner separation limits personal development and artistic excellence, yet this state can be replaced by the natural forces of inner connectedness simply by becoming more aware of the body and how it wants to function. This kind of natural strength gives a person a lively and reliable sense of their body. It seems to many people that the body does not want to do what the head plans and intends to do! The back hurts, their thoughts are uneasy, the breathing shallow, the knees are painful, the neck and shoulders feel stiff, the hands shake and they cannot control their voice as they wish. These experiences are in no way unusual even among gifted young people, particularly at a university of arts where the students need the very best personal conditions for their future vocation and for the continuing development of their creative potential.

Objectives

The Body Awareness Teaching Program covers different areas of learning, and the aims and contents of the courses are varied: Support can be found through the skills of Body Awareness which are stage presence, natural posture and movement and clarity of gesture, for the application of an individual's creative and artistic impulses both for performing and for teaching. Raising a student's self-awareness and the ability to be in control of their mind-body unity during different study tasks, particularly in their own main subject of study.

Training a personal psychophysical balance to reduce or avoid stress in everyday activities, both in their professional studies and in their personal lives.

Students are given concrete and well-founded material through



which they can improve their own ability to take care of themselves and at the same time intensify the individuality of their artistic development.

Support will be offered which will help regulate health issues related to body awareness. This can prevent or reduce injury and discomfort.

Body and Spatial Awareness can be practiced in a group to create a shared "field" for interdisciplinary and intercultural performance work.

Course Link

<https://www.folkwang-uni.de/en/home/hochschule/study/body-awareness-teaching-programme/>

Leadership Self Awareness and Self-Empowerment

Location

UK

Length

1 semester (13 weeks)

Organizer

Edge Hill University

Summary

This module focuses on reflection to determine: the type of leader the student is; the type of leader they aspire to be and why; and the action that will be taken to further their leadership development. This will be supported by group work, debate, action learning sets and student led seminars to create a learning community.

Target

Healthcare professionals and non-clinical social workers

Objectives

The aim of the module is to facilitate leadership self-awareness and self-management in order to empower health and social care workers to develop their leadership skills. The focus will include personal reflection, peer review and self-awareness tools such as emotional intelligence, psychometric testing and action



learning. On successful completion you will:
Critique own leadership skills, qualities and competencies and
formulate an action plan to facilitate your future development.

Activities

Psychometric theory and tools;
Emotional Intelligence;
Leadership approaches;
Leadership self-awareness and self-empowerment;
360 theory;
Case studies;
Action Learning Sets;
Reflective models.

Course Link

<https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/health/cpd-modules/leadership-self-awareness-and-self-empowerment/>

Alternative Trends in Successful Coaching Teaching Techniques: Understanding and Addressing Biofeedback

Location

Ohio, USA

Length

1 semester (13 weeks)

Organizer

Muskingum University

Summary

When we hear what the body is saying, we can respond with our best efforts. Preparing for any endeavor requires proper warm up mentally and physically. This workshop examines the most recent brain science which points to a new approach to getting prepared for competition in or out of the classroom.

Target

Students studying to become coaches and teachers

Course Link

<https://www.muskingum.edu/gcs/professional-development>



Helping students and staff develop a growth mindset for success

Location	Ohio, USA
Length	1 semester (13 weeks)
Organizer	Muskingum University
Summary	Have you ever wondered why some people seem to navigate their way through life more successfully than others? In this course, you will learn about the research collected by Stanford University's Carol Dweck that indicates having a growth mindset can help you become more positive and motivated, leading to more opportunities for success. You will also evaluate and analyze your own mindset and learn powerful skills and strategies to help your students and staff develop a growth mindset that will set the stage for them to grow and thrive—throughout life!
Course Link	https://www.muskingum.edu/gcs/professional-development

Mindfulness for Inner Strength and Social Challenges

Location	Boston, USA
Length	1 semester (13 weeks)
Organizer	Harvard University
Summary	This course focuses on how mindfulness can enhance adult learning and development in all contexts of our lives—our relationships, workplaces, communities, and civic life. We will learn mindful ways to build inner strengths to enhance communication and our ability to act skillfully in relational and social challenges. First we will learn to be more fully present and savor the joys of daily life in the midst of difficulties: to manage stress and deepen well-being and resilience; develop calm, clarity, and stability in the mind; enhance positive qualities such



as gratitude and compassion for ourselves and others; and develop insight to work consciously with emotional reactivity and unhelpful habits of thought and behavior, especially those that perpetuate personal suffering and systemic injustices. After spring break we explore how to mindfully navigate individual experiences of discrimination and systemic forces of power and privilege to take skillful action in context of race, gender, class, and other social dynamics.

Target

Undergraduate and graduate students

Objectives

Understand what mindfulness is and experience a range of mindfulness practices to identify practices that work best for you.

- Learn through practice, inquiry, and discussion with your peers, the teaching team, and guest experts how to apply mindfulness to your personal, professional, and social contexts.
- Actively apply mindfulness to enhance communication, relationships, and dialogue across social differences.
- Be introduced to the scientific evidence for (and limits to) the effectiveness of mindfulness.
- identify next steps for your learning and/or for integrating mindfulness into your life.

Activities

Through readings, presentations, large and small group discussions, daily mindfulness practices and activities, and written assignments we ask you to apply mindfulness in action—in your work as educators, your personal and professional development, your relationships, and your community and civic activities. Written work includes reflective essays in which we ask you to experiment with mindful listening and speaking in context of a challenging relationship, and a dialogue across social differences of power and privilege. This course does not teach mindfulness in schools, however we provide resources for those with that interest.



Consciousness And The Bodily Self

Location	UK
Length	1 semester (13 weeks)
Organizer	University of Essex
Summary	<p>The questions surrounding consciousness and self-awareness have fascinated humans since the dawn of time, giving rise to significant cultural constructs and spiritual endeavours. In recent years, neuroscientific methods have begun to provide important insights into different brain / mind states and the components that make up our sense of self. This module will teach students the significance of cognitive neuroscience approaches for our understanding of (self) awareness, by providing them with hands-on experience of experimental methods for testing and manipulating awareness and self-recognition. Students will receive training in the theoretical and practical aspects of the methodologies involved and in the effective communication of scientific findings acquired using those methodologies, as well as a solid understanding of the concepts of consciousness and the bodily self.</p>
Target	undergraduate students in Psychology
Objectives	<p>The aim of this course is for the student to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Understand the main theories of and approaches to investigating consciousness and the bodily self, their developmental origins and the experiential consequences of their malfunction, as well as appreciate the theoretical and empirical constraints faced in the study of (self-) consciousness2) Have practical experience of some of the Cognitive Neuroscience recording and data analysis methods used at Essex to investigate consciousness and the bodily self (e.g. EEG, TMS, tES)3) Have experience effectively communicating scientific findings acquired using those methodologies



At the end of this course students will:

- 1) Have a solid understanding of Cognitive Neuroscience approaches to the study of consciousness and the bodily self and can consolidate state of the art research findings across different sub-domains within these fields
- 2) Have a solid understanding of the processes involved in topic-relevant data collection and analysis using the Cognitive Neuroscience methods currently employed at Essex
- 3) Have received training in communicating cognitive neuroscientific methods, analysis, and findings within their relevant theoretical framework

Activities

10 x 1-hour lectures and 20 hours of practical lab classes. In the practical sessions, students will work in one large or several smaller groups for data collection, processing and statistical analysis. 20 contact hours during lectures / practical classes; additional contact through the Moodle Q&A forum.

Course Link

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/default.aspx?coursecode=PS501&level=6&period=AU>

The Teacher's Social and Emotional Learning

Location

Online at www.coursera.com

Length

5 weeks, 4-9 hours/week

Organizer

University of Colorado Boulder

Summary

Social and emotional learning, or SEL, programs have flourished in schools during the last decade. While this growth has been impressive, inadequate attention has been paid to teachers' social and emotional learning. In this course Dan Liston and Randy Testa introduce you to various rationales for why teacher



SEL is needed as well as examine and reflect on various emotions in teaching and learning.

This course is a part of the 5-course Specialization “The Teacher and Social Emotional Learning (SEL)”. Interested in earning 3 university credits from the University of Colorado-Boulder for this specialization?? If so check out "How you can earn 3 university credits from the University of Colorado-Boulder for this specialization" reading in the first module of this course for additional information.

Target This course is designed for pre-K through high school educators and is a master's level course.

Course Link <https://www.coursera.org/learn/teachers-social-emotional-learning/home/welcome>

Learning to teach: becoming a reflective practitioner

Location Online
Length Self-paced
Organizer Open University

Summary This is the third of four courses which comprise the course Learning to teach. Critical reflection is crucial to becoming a successful teacher. This free course, Becoming a reflective practitioner, explains what is meant by reflective practice and how to ensure that reflection leads to learning. As a beginner teacher you will encounter many contradictions and challenges in school; you will learn to teach in a particular context but will need to be able to transfer your learning to new contexts. Critical reflection will help you to do this. This free course explores the different models of critical reflection, knowledge of which will help you to structure



your practice and evaluate whether you are reflecting and therefore learning effectively.

Target

teachers and student teachers.

Objectives

After studying this course, you should be able to:
understand the role of reflective practice in ITE (Initial Teacher Education)
recognize some models of reflective practice
identify the difference between reflection, analysis and description
understand the difficulties in ensuring that reflection leads to learning and begin to develop some strategies to ensure reflection supports development.

Activities

Course Link

<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/learning-teach-becoming-reflective-practitioner/content-section-0?active-tab=content-tab>



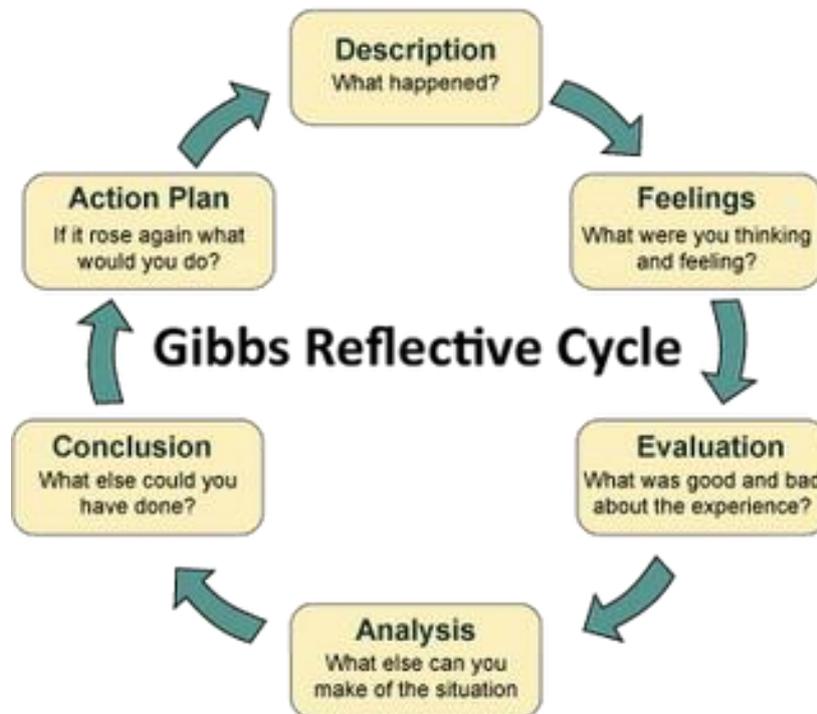
Annex #2 Sample Activities

Following is a list of a few sample activities that may be included in the design of a teachers' training on mindfulness and reflection.

Reflection

- *Journal Writing*
- *Brainstorming ideas for and committing to daily reflection habits*
- *Regularly collecting students' feedback on their learning process* – in the last five minutes of each class ask students: "What conclusions did you draw from today's session? Why did you draw those conclusions? What questions remain for you?"¹⁹ This activity allows teachers to receive feedback on each class, and figure out what aspects of each lesson need further clarification, as well as gain clarity over how their students make sense of and integrate the information they are presented with.
- *Identifying motivations to teach* – alone or in small groups, this activity invites teachers to consider the reasons they choose to teach, and helps them to gain self-awareness in relation to their goals, ambitions and motivations.
- *Peer observation and feedback sharing* – teachers take turns to visit their colleagues in their respective classrooms and observe them "in action," then provide each other with feedback on what works and what – not. The activity allows teachers to receive an outside perspective on their teaching methods and performance from a knowledgeable peer.
- *Introducing, exploring and building habits of using the Gibbs Reflective cycle:*

¹⁹ Questions taken from the New York University website: <https://www.nyu.edu/faculty/teaching-and-learning-resources/programs-and-services-for-the-advancement-of-teaching/reflective-exercises-for-teachers.html>



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Mindfulness

- *Brainstorming ideas about ways to build daily mindfulness habits*
- *Employing guided visualisation*
- *Participation in relaxation and visualization sessions*
- *Practicing breathing and self-awareness techniques*
- *Honing our observation skills through observing a leaf for five minutes.* This exercise helps individuals to practice giving their full attention to one thing at a time, and reminds them to be present and notice colors, shapes, textures, and patterns. Great exercise to align one's thoughts with one's current experience.
- The Body Scan Exercise
- Practicing mindfulness eating with the Raisin Challenge – the exercise involves taking a raisin and paying attention to it through all senses prior to and while eating it.

²⁰ Image taken from: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/learning/PDP-and-employability/pdp/reflective.html>



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