

A Self-Study of Contemplative Pedagogy in a Philosophy Classroom

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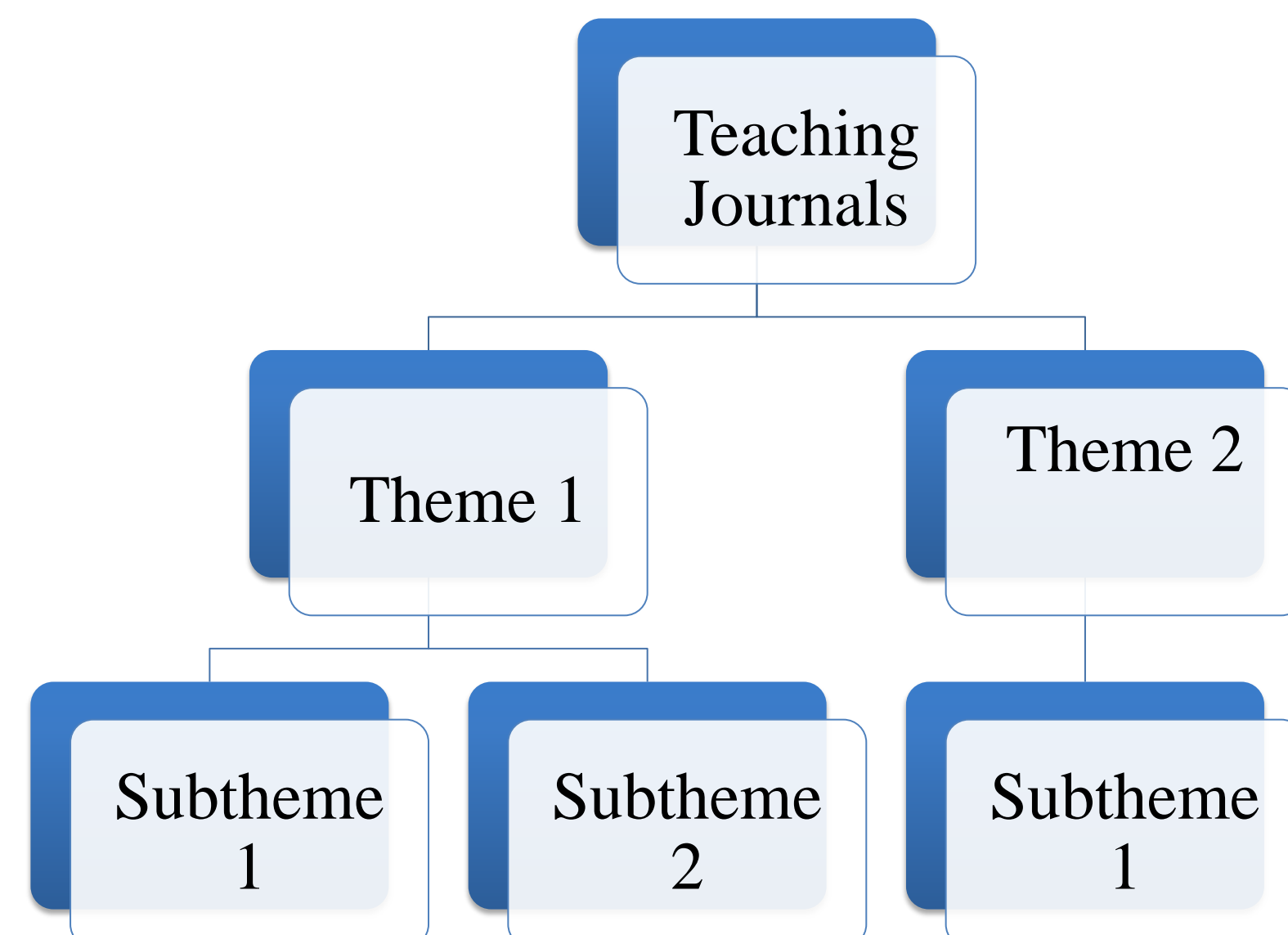
My self-study primarily focuses on how I engage in pedagogy with my community college students. My contemplative pedagogical practices emerge from my self-study, which causes me to concentrate on improvement-aimed pedagogy. The student quotes are from my **Philosophy class during the Spring 2015 semester at Middlesex County College** in Edison, New Jersey.

Each contemplative educator may engage in different pedagogical approaches. The pedagogical components that I present are a part of my contemplative pedagogical approach, which develops based on my self-study.

Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices

Educators need to consistently reflect on their teaching for the purposes of improvement. The self-study methodology provides a framework to accomplish this.

- ✧ Improvement-aimed Pedagogy
- ✧ Collection of Data about the Self, Example: Teaching Journal
- ✧ Deliberation with “Critical Friends” or “Peer Scholars”
- ✧ Challenge Assumptions
- ✧ Confirm Beliefs



Circle Setup

- ✧ Get to Know One Another
- ✧ Talk Directly to One Another
- ✧ Creates a Space for Classroom Intimacy
- ✧ Builds Classroom Community
- ✧ Allows for Communal Connection
- ✧ Allows for Transformation
- ✧ Professor = Co-Inquirer, Facilitator
- ✧ Sensitive Dialogue
- ✧ Interconnectedness



“I feel very comfortable when professors and teachers decide to sit with the students. It provides more of a dynamic feel. It is more of a way for students to feel more at ease with the professor instead of seeing the professor up front as somewhat most of the authority.”
-Shenne

View Contemplative Pedagogy with Dr. MisirHiralall at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbqR-rxrje4>



Meditation

- ✧ Secular Meditation
- ✧ Eastern Instrumentals
- ✧ Engage in Inner Exploration
- ✧ Gain Focus
- ✧ Self Awareness
- ✧ Let go – Distractions
- ✧ Be Present
- ✧ Mindful of Purpose

Examples of Instrumentals:

- ✧ *Sweetness of the Earth* - Anugama
- ✧ *Rebirth* – Midival Punditz
- ✧ *Sunrise at the Ganges* – Karunesh
- ✧ *Forgiveness* – Krishna Das, Jai Uttal, Charles Burnham

“Meditation is a good way to get rid of thoughts that may distract you from the purpose of learning. I like how the silence of it all makes me hear my thoughts separately before we begin talking and discussing. It reminded me why I was there every time, which I think is important to think about before any task or challenges you may face. The musical instrumentals were necessary so the class wouldn’t be filled with awkward silence and they were also very calming.”
-Amandeep

Philosophy for Children

- ✧ Community-based Discussion Inquiry
- ✧ Group Interest
- ✧ Professor = Co-Inquirer, Facilitator
- ✧ Circle Set-up
- ✧ Socratic Questioning
- ✧ Teach how to think and not what to think.
- ✧ Critical Thinking Moves

“Students were encouraged to participate and speak during class. I felt that it gave them a very personal space where they can not only talk about the issue that we were discussing in class but also any discussion matters that we wanted to talk about ourselves. We philosophized about philosophy.”
-Miles



Validations and Pulse

- ✧ Stand in circle.
- ✧ Reflect on Class.
- ✧ Offer Validations if needed.
- ✧ Cross right hand over left.
- ✧ I use my right hand to squeeze the hand of the person to my left.
- ✧ Pulse continues.
- ✧ I tell students they are my heartbeat.
- ✧ After the pulse returns to me, we turn around and class is dismissed.

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