

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.

*I currently use the self-study methodology to help me improve my pedagogy for my community college classes. As I reflect on my teaching, I write in a personal teaching journal each week after my classes. My Peer Scholar, an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of South Carolina Aiken, deliberates with me about my teaching journals to help me challenge my assumptions and confirm my beliefs. We scrutinize my teaching journals as we look for themes that arise. Together, we explore each theme critically with the goal of improvement-aimed pedagogy.*

**To learn more about self-study, visit the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices SIG of the American Education Research Association.**  
[www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net)

### Pedagogical Components:

- ✧ Circle Setup
- ✧ Meditation
- ✧ Philosophy for Children Discussion
- ✧ Validations and Pulse

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

### 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

### 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.

**References:**

**Contemplative Education**

- Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. (2008). *Contemplative practices in higher education: A handbook of classroom practices*. Northampton, MA: Center for Contemplative Mind in Society.
- Hart, T. (January 01, 2004). Opening the Contemplative Mind in the Classroom. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 2, 1, 28-46.
- Miller, J. P. (2006). *Educating for wisdom and compassion: Creating conditions for timeless learning*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Corwin Press.
- Nhát, H. (1976). *The miracle of mindfulness!: A manual of meditation*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Palmer, P. J., Zajonc, A., & Scribner, M. (2010). *The heart of higher education: A call to renewal: transforming the academy through collegial conversations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass.
- Zajonc, A. (2009). *Meditation as contemplative inquiry: When knowing becomes love*. Great Barrington, Mass: Lindisfarne Books.

**Philosophy for Children (P4C)**

- Bohm, D., and Lee Nichol. 1996. *On dialogue*. London: Routledge.  
<http://public.ebib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=165503>.
- Gregory, M., & Brubaker, N. (2008). *Philosophy for children: Practitioner handbook*. Montclair, N.J: Montclair State University.
- Gregory, M. (1999). *A Crash Course In Logic* (pp. 1-30). New York: University Press of America, Inc.
- Lipman, M., Sharp, A. M., & Oscanyan, F. S. (1980). *Philosophy in the classroom*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Paul, R. "Dialogical Thinking." In Oxman, Wendy, Michelli, Nicholas M., & Lesley Coia, Eds., *Critical Thinking and Learning*. Second Edition, pp., 19-23. Montclair NJ: Montclair State University, 1992.
- Splitter, L. J., & Sharp, A. M. (1995). *Teaching for better thinking: The classroom community of inquiry*. Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research.

**Self-Study for Teacher Education Practices**

- Beer, M. D. (2009). Memory-based expressions of the self: demonstration/expression of identity through the art of making. In K. Pithouse, C. Mitchell, & R. Moletsane (Eds.), *Making Connections Self-study and Social Action* (pp. 77-96). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Kelchtermans, G., & Hamilton, M. L. (2004). The dialectics of passion and theory: exploring the relation between self-study and emotion. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Vol. 1, pp. 785-810). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- LaBoskey, V. K. (2004). The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Vol. 2, pp. 817-869). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- Taylor, M., & Coia, L. (2006). Revisiting feminist authority through a co/autoethnographic lens. In D. Tidwell & L. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Self-study and Diversity* (pp. 51-70). AW Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Tidwell, D., & Fitzgerald, L. (2004). Self-study as teaching. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Vol. 1, pp. 69-102). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer