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EXPLORING THE PHENOMENA OF FACULTY WHO UTILIZE  
CONTEMPLATIVE PEDAGOGY IN THE HELPING PROFESSIONS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Christina Frasher

March 2022

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2022

EXPLORING THE PHENOMENA OF FACULTY WHO UTILIZE  
CONTEMPLATIVE PEDAGOGY IN THE HELPING PROFESSIONS

By

Christina Frasher

Approved March 14, 2022

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## ABSTRACT

### EXPLORING THE PHENOMENA OF FACULTY WHO UTILIZE CONTEMPLATIVE PEDAGOGY IN THE HELPING PROFESSIONS

By

Christina Frasher

May 2022

Dissertation supervised by Waganesh Zeleke, EdD, LCPC, NCC

The phenomenon of faculty who utilize contemplative pedagogy in the helping professions is a topic rarely discussed in the literature. In my review of the literature, I have found only one dissertation on faculty perspectives, one dissertation on individuals in higher education, and one study that used the perspective of faculty as the primary data. While this information is valuable, it is not context-specific research on how faculty in the helping professions experience practicing contemplative pedagogy. At present, there are no studies that explore how faculty process and utilize contemplative pedagogy when teaching in the helping profession; this study contributes to bridging the gap in the literature. The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological-oriented study is to explore, understand, and describe how faculty who teach in the helping professions process and utilize contemplative pedagogy in their teaching. Eight themes emerge as a result of this study. Some of the themes emphasized the lived

existential of being contemplative practitioners and teaching in the helping professions. Some of the themes highlighted the risk factors that existed in the academic careers and working environment. Stress-related to academic careers was ranked as the highest risk factor, and contemplative pedagogy being a non-traditional approach, was ranked as the second risk factor. Some of the themes emphasizes protective factors that appear as the faculty mitigate the experience of using contemplative pedagogy in their teaching. The ability to showcase their expertise in a professional helping field and fulfill their teaching goals are the most ranked protective factors. The implication for this research is that utilizing contemplative pedagogy in one's teaching can be an overall support for faculty teaching in the helping professions.

## **DEDICATION**

This is dedicated to teachers who continue in the noble profession of teaching despite health challenges, global pandemics, uncertain futures, time away from your families, demanding schedules, low pay, stressful academic environments, and strains on one's mental health reserves.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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I am especially grateful for the numerous ancestors who have contributed their lived experiences, heart, and soul to the creation of these transformative contemplative practices. These cherished practices handed down through humanity have been my guiding light and well of replenishment throughout every significant turning point in my life. I would also like to acknowledge those that joined the ancestors including Ryan, Lindsey, Ruth, and my Uncle Tommy, may they rest well with the ancestors.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

*The teacher is, of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves. - Paulo Freire (Horton & Freire, 1990)*

The use of contemplative practices in education can be traced back to the earliest concepts of education and how human beings first encountered ideas of teaching (Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009). Contemplative practice and contemplative pedagogy are topics that have been discussed widely in the literature (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, Kangala & Rendon, 2013, Magee, 2013, Zajonc, 2013) and continue to gain popularity. Conversely, the effect of practicing contemplative pedagogy on the growth and teaching practice of faculty who utilize these practices in higher education is a topic that has been discussed rarely in the literature (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, Kangala & Rendon, 2013, Magee, 2013, Zajonc, 2013).

In reviewing the research, much has focused on the benefits to students by teachers who have incorporated contemplative practices into their teaching (Palmer, 2007). Contemplative pedagogy, as a concept, has been described by many pedagogical experts as a highly effective approach to learning outcomes and students' self-growth. However, our understanding of how practicing contemplative pedagogy affects the individual practicing it, in this case, faculty in the helping professions, is limited or undocumented.

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological-oriented study is to explore, understand, and describe how contemplative faculty who teach in helping professions in the higher education process and utilize contemplative pedagogy in and out of the classroom. The research design for this study proposed selecting and interviewing eight to 12 faculty who meet the following criteria: (1) hold a teaching position in higher education in the field of the helping professions (e.g., counseling, social work, psychology, nursing, and others), (2) are actively

practicing contemplative pedagogy, (3) teach in a higher education institution in Western Pennsylvania. The guiding question of this study is: What are the lived experiences of faculty teaching in the helping professions who practice contemplative pedagogy? There are four subsidiary questions that help answer the guiding questions. They are as follows:

- *What are the lived existential (lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived other) of being contemplative pedagogy practitioners in higher education institutions that focus on training helping professionals?*
- *What risk factors exist in the environment (s) of faculty who practice contemplative pedagogy?*
- *What protective factors appear or need to be constructed in these faculty's environment(s) to cultivate the practice of contemplative pedagogy in and out of the classroom?*
- *How does the practice of contemplative pedagogy shape the behavior of the faculty in the working environment?*

The remainder of the chapter offers the context and background for understanding the contemplative approach, in general, and contemplative practice in higher education and the helping professions specifically. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and definition of terms are presented in the section that follows. The chapter concludes with a theoretical and conceptual framework for the study and organization of the study.

## **Context and Background**

In 2009, the New York Times published an article with the following headline: "The University's Crisis of Purpose." The author of the article, who was the President of Harvard

University at the time, highlighted how colleges and universities need to offer individuals and societies a depth and breadth of vision absent from the inevitably myopic present. He argues that human beings need meaning, understanding, and perspective as well as jobs (Sept. 1, 2009). Like many higher education leaders, Drew Gilpin Faust points to the need for higher institutions to be places of not only the transmutation of knowledge but a forum for the exploration of meaning. Furthermore, Faust states that it should be a container for students to learn who they are and a place for students to search for a larger purpose in their lives. In essence, the ultimate goal for universities should be for students to leave college as better human beings.

Contemplative pedagogy is an approach that frequently fills a gap in higher education, a gap that continues to be referenced by many higher education leaders. This gap has been created through the commodification of education and reflects education's earlier roots as a practice that nourishes the entire human being (Slattery & Selig, 1993). Contemplative pedagogy cultivates inner awareness through first-person contemplative practices. A contemplative pedagogy involves teaching practices with an extensive range: silent sitting meditation, compassion practices, walking meditation, deep listening, mindfulness, nature observation, self-inquiry, and many others.

The roots of contemplative pedagogy lie in early spiritual traditions and indigenous practices. Education originally came from the Latin term, *educare*, which means "to bring out" (Meade, 2007) and focused on bringing out "the brilliance of the student through respect and training" (Coburn et al., 2011). However, now higher education has been in danger of becoming content factories (Portiz & Rees, 2016). Contemplative practices have the potential to "unlock the innate yet often unexplored capacity for intuitive knowledge, expanded consciousness,

unconditional compassion for self and others, appreciation for beauty, and creative fulfillment” (Coburn et al., p 169, 2011).

Using contemplative practices as a pedagogical approach is cutting-edge research in higher education (Zajonc, 2013). The benefits of contemplative pedagogy as a teaching and learning tool includes helping students develop focused learning, foster creativity, and deepen problem-solving skills (Brady, 2007). Students can find themselves in the work when teachers utilize contemplative processes in their pedagogy and then “provide the opportunity for students to develop insight and creativity, hone their concentration skills, and deeply inquire about what means the most to them” (Barbezat & Bush, 2013). There is extensive research on the neuroscientific and cognitive benefits (O'donnell, 2015, Barbezat & Pingree, 2012, Winans, 2012). Additionally, there are numerous emotional and mental health benefits, including a more remarkable ability to be resilient in the face of stress and increased empathy and emotional intelligence (Tang 2007).

When discussing pedagogical techniques in the helping professions, one of the most significant considerations is the focus on multicultural awareness, even though there is a lack of agreement on how best to integrate it (Platt, 2002). Another important consideration in teaching in the helping professions is developing personal character in the student who will be a future professional (Cole & Lacefield, 1978). There are a variety of skills that students in the helping profession need and various factors at work in connecting these skills and competencies to professional requirements. In reviewing the table (see Appendix A) by Cole and Lacefield (1978), the reader will notice the skills and considerations needed in the helping professions. Many of the characteristics shown can be connected to attributes developed when contemplative practices educate students in the helping professions. In fact, contemplative practices have been

encouraged in the helping fields as a supportive measure against the common challenges those professionals face.

There are a variety of challenges for teachers in the helping professions, including the new and varied stressors that students in the helping professions face. Challenges for teachers in the helping professions include issues of stress and disillusionment (Cherniss, 2016). Another challenge for teachers is the issue of motivation among teachers and the continually changing demographic of students that teachers face. With the increase of nontraditional students, the challenges that younger generations face. With the pressures of a changing world, faculty now may teach students who have experienced previous trauma, been diagnosed with a psychological disorder, or be experiencing stress from socio-economic, cultural, and identity challenges (Brownson et al., 2016). With all of these different factors, faculty must balance their pedagogical strategies accordingly.

With the realization of these challenges, recommendations have been made for faculty who teach in the helping professions. About burnout and compassion fatigue, it is recommended that faculty who teach in the helping professions find a way to integrate pedagogical experiences that increase self-awareness (Zellmer, 2004) in students. Further recommendations include increasing ethical value awareness and a more process-based approach that “not only create awareness of personal and professional values, ethics and obligations but also teach processes for recognizing ethical dilemmas and ways of resolving such dilemmas” (Zellmer, 2004, p. 23). Key to these recommendations is the value of dialogue (Rhodes, 1991, Henderson, 2016) and listening, and the encouragement of increased critical thinking (Zellmer, 2004). To address the changing demographics with this is the recommendation that all faculty (not only those in the helping professions) need to offer learning experiences that encourage different ways of

knowing. This study also seeks to discuss if integrating contemplative practices can somewhat alleviate these issues.

The idea for this study emerged during my employment as a graduate assistant at Duquesne University's Center for Teaching Excellence. I had organized a book study open to both faculty and graduate teaching assistants around the text, *Contemplative Practices in Higher Education* (2013). I utilized contemplative practices in my own teaching for several years and had been excited and curious about how my students took to these practices. Though I did not know it then, what I was practicing was defined as contemplative pedagogy; I sought out these practices to encourage my students' learning and to offer what I had termed "the wisdom of the ancestors" and what I now understand to be as indigenous epistemologies (Goduka, 1999). This way of teaching is how I have been inspired to teach through my varied educational experiences, including my experiences in high school, my master's degree at Pacifica, and is one of my teachers at Duquesne.

I had also found that integrating contemplative pedagogy into my teaching has reinvigorated my teaching practice. I felt how I had felt when I first started teaching; each class was a discovery, a mystery. The world had changed since I had first begun teaching, and perhaps in response, my education had changed too. I challenged myself; I became braver; I pushed myself to be more accessible, authentic, and vulnerable. I found that this pedagogy supported me during my most challenging moments and offered lingering enjoyment when I encountered my most triumphant moments.

When I encountered challenges, I reflected on my previous models and mentors. How had they been able to touch and reach students? During my education in high school, I had encountered a teacher who actively provided opportunities for experiencing and studying

contemplative practices. In my graduate education at Pacifica, I had various teachers who provided contemplative activities to help develop and deepen my inner awareness and knowledge. Finally, in my doctoral education, I had a teacher who modeled how to teach one of the most challenging courses in a graduate curriculum, Developing Trauma-informed Care, utilizing contemplative practices.

When I met with the faculty who chose to participate in the book study, I became curious about the faculty perspectives and their experiences of using these practices in the classroom. I wondered if they were experiencing the same experiences as I was. As someone trained as a psychotherapist, I also began to see connections with the tenets of contemplative practices and the unique needs that faculty who teach in the helping professions face. I also found that I had colleagues teaching in the helping professions and utilizing this type of pedagogy. However, it did not seem to be openly stated or shared. There were moments in which faculty shared their fears around bringing these practices to their students and worried about the opinions of colleagues and superiors if it was found out that they utilized contemplative practices in classes. Faculty seems to have experienced the impact behind these practices but had struggled with openly bringing them into the classroom.

During my conversations with faculty in the workshops I facilitated, I wondered their experiences in utilizing contemplative practices in their courses. Many shared experiences of being concerned about how others may perceive them as teachers and how they felt very strongly that they needed a good argument for bringing in these practices. Some felt very strongly through their personal experiences that it was a beneficial practice but struggled to find a way to integrate it into their teaching with students. Others who had successfully integrated this had shared experiences that had supported them in their education.

During these contemplative workshops, I noticed that faculty shared their desires to integrate contemplative practices into their teaching. However, they worried if students would accept these practices and how their fellow colleagues and the department would view this integration. They all seemed to have had the positive experience of using contemplative practices and knowing its personal importance to their lives. However, they did not seem to understand how to bring that part of themselves to their teaching practices. Those who had successfully brought contemplative practices to their teaching seem to display confidence in the group with others who had not brought these practices; however, they seemed reluctant to share it with the larger university community. When I had first thought of exploring this study, I was interested in the effects of contemplative practices on students. However, when I began to work with fellow teachers, I wondered what their experience was in bringing this to their students and how it affected their teaching and wellbeing.

I also realized that I had been practicing different aspects of contemplative and indigenous pedagogies for years and had not learned the category these teaching practices fell into. I also reflected on past teachers I had had at both Duquesne and Pacifica and had realized learned that they too had been practicing this approach as well. These individuals were also coincidentally teachers that I both deeply respected and admired. This study arises from my deep respect for these teachers and my desire to understand their experience and how the processes behind the offering of these practices. Hence, this study seeks to look at the lived experiences of faculty who utilize this approach and who specifically teach courses in the helping professions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Higher education institutions around the country have been searching for ways to serve students and prepare them for post-graduate life. Part of the problem in helping students prepare



for post-graduate life is the changing future. Economic instability creates funding problems, affecting many in the helping professions. Safety issues affect the mental health of students and their clients, increasing the stress that many helping professionals already face. Higher educational institutions have found challenges in preparing students for a future “with accelerating change, increasing complexity, contested knowledge claims and inevitable uncertainty” (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2015, p. 73). Our recent experience in the global Covid 19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges and calls for better methods to support those working, teaching, and learning in the helping professions have only increased.

Integrating contemplative practices into education has been shown to serve students’ intellectual pursuits and has served students in various ways, including mentally and physically. Much of the research behind utilizing contemplative practices in education has focused on the student perspective and the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach on the students’ learning outcomes. There is less research on the views of faculty. In my analysis of existing literature, I have only found one dissertation (Pizzuto, 2018) that explored the practice of contemplative pedagogy from faculty perspectives. This study looked at faculty perspectives who utilize contemplative pedagogy in their courses and found that they frequently had to respond to colleagues' unsupportive attitudes around the use of it. Faculty had chosen to use this type of pedagogy regarding their student's needs and their own professional identity. The study did not address this. However, the study did not address faculty from specific fields or those that also taught graduate students.

The basis for this research also rests on an inclusionary approach in that contemplative pedagogy offers a nonwestern paradigm for teaching and a postcolonial and decolonial approach to education. Much of education in higher education institutions has been from a western

approach, which has its origins in early colonizing practices (Seth, 2007). Institutions increasingly notice the need to bring in pedagogical approaches that encourage less-oppressive ways of delivering content and serving students. Colonization can be defined as “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distinct territory” (as cited in Tamburro, 2013). Providing pedagogies that move past colonial-originated approaches to education can offer students a more authentic learning experience.

This study also builds on the case for scrutinizing these western educational approaches (Seth, 2007). By only utilizing a western approach, we are biased in our way of educating others by only providing one view of how students learn. Additionally, these western approaches have originated as oppressive techniques, as “colonizing has been a pedagogical approach” (Seth, 2007 p. 2). This approach privileges a Western, in particular European approach, which may or may not correspond with the experiences of all people. Inclusion-based practices and “mainstreaming” ask that we offer formal education and teach in effective ways to the different student demographics in our classrooms. Integrating these varied ways of knowing is a challenging task, and “part of the ultimate struggle is a regeneration of new relationships among and between knowledge systems, which needs scholars competent in both knowledge systems to converge and reconcile these and other knowledge, ways of knowing, and systems” (Battiste, p. 103, 2013). Contemplative, including western pedagogies focus more on different ways of being and ways that are not confined to academic learning. Contemplative practices provide access to the student’s inner experience and first-person knowledge and focus on the learning process. It represents a decolonial approach as western European practices encourage learning through the perspective of others and “unsettles” the student (Batacharya & Wong, 2018).

All of the helping professions researched report the need for inclusion in their professional practices and their education of future professionals. The helping professions included in this study find their origins in European values, concepts, and problems and this original colonizing perspective (Tamburro, 2013). This study may be considered an inclusive step in that direction, and the percentage of faculty members who identify from non-dominate backgrounds can be considered part of this movement.

Teachers and institutions are called more than ever to serve a more significant role in their students' lives. Although there is increasing research in this area, this is a very old idea from a non-western and indigenous approach. In earlier traditions, the teacher was tasked with *sitting with* the students (Miller, 2016) and *sitting with* the world. As our students continue to face a growing existential crisis, it will be teachers who can speak not only from Western-dominated research models but also from an inclusion-based approach and experience rooted in the present. These are the same skills that are required of teaching future helping professionals. Much has been written about faculty and student perspectives in using contemplative practices in higher education; however, little has been said of the lived experiences of faculty, teaching in the helping professions, and utilizing these practices in the classroom. There is still a gap in the research literature understanding the utilization of contemplative pedagogy in the classroom.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological-oriented study was to explore, understand and describe the lived experience of faculty members who utilize contemplative pedagogies in their teaching of courses in the helping profession. The study sought to gather information from faculties with contemplative pedagogy experience in the helping professions. Helping professionals in this study refer to counseling, psychology, nursing, occupational

therapy, pharmacy, and social studies. The main objective was to: (1) understand, explore and describe what it is like to practice contemplative pedagogy in their teaching, and (2) provide helping professionals and counselor educators with more insight into and understand the phenomenon of using contemplative pedagogy and its meaning in their living. In addition, this research contributes to the limited research on the experiences of higher education faculty who use this approach and perhaps encourages and adds to the argument for the utilization of contemplative practices in teaching.

### **Research Questions**

The guiding research question is *the lived experience of faculty that utilize contemplative pedagogical approaches and teach courses in the helping professions*. The following subsidiary questions were used to answer this guiding question:

- *What are the lived existential (lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived other) of being contemplative practitioners in higher institutes programs that focus on training helping professionals?*
- *What risk factors exist in the environment (s) of faculties who practice contemplative pedagogy?*
- *What protective factors appear or need to be constructed in the environment(s) of the faculties to cultivate the practice of contemplative pedagogy in and out of the classroom?*
- *How does the practice of contemplative pedagogy shape the behavior of the faculties in the working environment?*

### **Significance of the Study**

There are many direct benefits from utilizing contemplative practices in education, and many speak to the very core of the learning process. The conclusions from much of the research on using contemplative pedagogy are that students make the learning their own and become a process that is motivated from within the student (Barbezat, 2014). Studies have shown that students who are aware of their learning processes and can explain what they are learning will learn more and develop better problem-solving skills than those who do not (Ambrose et al., 2010). For students “to become self-directed learners, students must learn to monitor and adjust their approaches to learning” (Ambrose et al., 2010, p 6). Contemplative practices assist in this process by creating space and an environment where self-directed learning can occur. It is also a significant way to decolonize pedagogical theories to provide a more inclusive format (Battiste, 2013) by entering the student's own experience.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

The theoretical framework of this study is necessary because it facilitates understanding through relevant models and concepts. This study examined the phenomena through the lens of van Manen’s (1990) hermeneutic phenomenology and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Bioecological Model for Human Development.

#### ***Hermeneutic phenomenology***

Initially inspired by Edmund Husserl’s work, van Manen developed a hermeneutic phenomenology approach that offers researchers a practical way to study individuals' lived experiences. Hermeneutic is the ability to interpret the "text" of life, and phenomenology is the ability to describe a lived experience (van Manen, 1990). The approach utilized the four existential or lifeworld themes to guide reflection. These four existential are lived-time, lived-body, lived-relationship, and lived-space. Lived time refers to how the individual experiences

time, lived body refers to how the participant reveals how they sense in their bodily feelings on the phenomenon, and lived relationship refers to how the individual experiences the phenomena to be studied in relation to others. Finally, in regards to lived space, this refers to how the participant experiences the more significant issues of the time.

Using his framework, I examined the experiences of faculties through their lived existential of relationship, body, time, and space. An example of this experience through the lived existential of lived time would be “as we went through the experience of beholding an image of a family during the holocaust, I lost all sense of time.” An example of a lived relationship would be, “during the loving-kindness meditation, I felt how my relationships with my family had been affected by my work ethic.” Van Manen’s hermeneutic phenomenological model allows for the lived experiences of teachers to be understood in these lived existential.

### ***Bioecological Model of Human Development***

Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Model (1979) is an approach that explains how individuals develop within their social environments. It focuses on the importance of the individual-context relations and how they shape or influence the individual’s desire for growth. The theory states that there are five environmental systems surrounding human interaction; these include microsystems, macrosystems, exosystems, mesosystems, and chronosystems. His theory describes the systems behind human interactions between faculty and students, faculty and departments, faculty and cultural definitions of teaching.

These different systems reveal different layers of meaning. The microsystems refer to the immediate surroundings and environments of the individual. The mesosystem refers to social connections around the individual. The exosystems refer to the indirect environment around the

individual. The macrosystem refers to the cultural values surrounding the individual, and the chronosystems are the more significant changing times around the individual.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

*Contemplative*: this refers to “a person’s reflective approach to his or her experience” and can be engaged in various ways.

*Contemplative Pedagogy*: The use of contemplative practices in various educational contexts to support learning objectives.

*Helping Professions*: This can be any field that is concerned with assisting human beings and includes professions such as nursing, psychology, social work, etc.

*Learning*: a process that students undertake and involve the change of a student's knowledge, beliefs, and conceptions (Ambrose et al., 2010).

### **Researcher Assumptions**

To provide a non-biased as possible approach to this study, I, as a researcher, offer my own assumptions on this research. My first assumption is that contemplative pedagogy can offer a more profound learning experience for students taking courses in the helping professions. Investigating the experiences of faculty who utilize contemplative practices in their teaching is worthy of studying. Second, by providing a thorough and thick description of faculty's experiences, we will not only be more thoroughly introduced to their experiences but also know them more deeply. Third and finally, that the experiences of faculty practicing in the helping professions and utilizing contemplative pedagogy may encourage other faculty who teach in the helping profession to use this approach.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This study is organized chapter by chapter to show the background, context, methodology, results, and discussion about the lived experiences of faculty who teach in the helping professions and utilize contemplative pedagogy. Chapter I offered the context and background for understanding the contemplative practices in general and reflective pedagogy in helping professionals, specifically. The chapter introduces the reader to the overall study, including the purpose and significance of the research and the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Chapter II delves into the relevant literature to support the survey, including an overview of the history and origins of contemplative pedagogy, the theoretical components behind the research frameworks, and an exploration of teaching in the helping professions. This chapter also expands on the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter III presents the methodology or research design of the study. In this chapter, I present the study populations, sample, method of gathering data, data analysis, triangulation, research limitations, and a chapter summary. Chapter IV provides the study results, reflecting on the methodology used and the specifics of the research method process. Chapter V provides an overall discussion of the results, limitations to the research, and possible implications for future studies on this topic.



## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

*“The practice of mindfulness has helped me balance my passion for thinking, for processing—this passion that is the catalyst for ecstatic teaching—with a passion for silence, for the present moment”-bell hooks (hooks, 2003, p. 172)*

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature on contemplative pedagogy and its practice in higher education, focusing on the helping professions. To develop an appropriate research picture, first, we must delve into the literature on contemplative pedagogy. The justification for the literature is based on various sources of scholarship examining the challenges behind teaching courses in the helping professions and the uses of contemplative pedagogy to address these challenges. This literature review will first explore the roots of contemplative practices, how it relates to learning and educational practices and the benefits of utilizing this method, what general challenges there are in teaching for both students and teachers around helping professions courses, and how contemplative pedagogy can be an appropriate fit for these fields. In addition, the theoretical framework for the study will be discussed, which is Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Model for Human Development (2005) and van Manen’s Hermeneutic Phenomenology (1990).

### **Contemplative practice**

Contemplative pedagogy has its roots in contemplation through religious uses, spiritual traditions, and indigenous practices. Contemplative practices are self-reflective practices and focus on first-person experience (Barbezat & Bush, 2013). Contemplative practices “provide opportunities for enhancement of experiential and critical self-other-world awareness, expansion of consciousness, and, ultimately, the transformation of how we live in the world” (Harrell, 2018, p. 12). Standard self-reflective practices are variations of meditation-based practices, including mindfulness meditation, originating from a Buddhist approach. Traditional Buddhist

meditation is connected to these practices in that both “mindfulness but also insight, awareness, compassion and the nature of self” (Bonnerdel, 2018) are encouraged as well as “a deep focus and the intention of developing insight” (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, p. 22). However, as contemplative practices have gained momentum in various western spaces, it is essential to note that many other contemplative practices originate from different religious, spiritual, and regional backgrounds. This study does not privilege only Buddhist approaches; however the researcher is aware that Buddhist contemplative practices may be the most well-known for the population studied.

### ***Spiritual History of Education***

Contemplative practice is related to intellectual inquiry. The wisdom one acquires during contemplative practice is “immediate and non-conceptual insight which provides the basic inspiration for intellectual study” Chogyam Trungpa (Barbezat & Bush, 2013). Parker Palmer (1983) argued that education is a spiritual endeavor and concerns the processes of teaching and learning “whose end is not an explanation but contemplation” (p. 13). If the very foundation of our educational methods is spiritual, then combining a spiritual approach to education is, in effect, recalling the same basis of education itself. One teacher expressed why she uses contemplative pedagogy in the following statement:

We endeavor to teach the whole person with an intention to go beyond the mere transfer of facts and theories. The advent of online learning and the availability of information on the Internet has made our focus on deeper and richer teaching and learning experiences ever more critical. While concentrating on these holistic goals, we also want to challenge and develop students’ analytical problem-solving skills and provide careful explanations of complicated material. We want to create the opportunity for our students to engage

with material to recognize and apply its relevance to their own lives, feel deeply, and experience themselves within their education. In other words, while fostering their knowledge base and analytical abilities, we want to present material in a way that supports students in having their own agency so that the material is not simply a set of intellectual hoops for them to jump through but an active opportunity for them to find meaning and develop intellectually (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, p. 3)

### *Contemplation as pedagogy*

“In contemplative teaching, the principles of contemplative practice guide the pedagogy: seeing things as they are, being open to new ideas, appreciating the contribution of silence to learning, valuing each human voice, honoring the constantly changing nature of ideas” (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, p. 17). Faculty are providing an environment in which the student can get in touch with the “calm under the waves,” and we want students to work from this calm and in that calmed state is where the learning happens (Cavanaugh, 2016). The same pillars found in traditional educational settings are found in contemplative education settings, including “learning theory, curriculum, pedagogy, and learning assessment” (Grossenbacher & Parkin, 2006, p. 1). Barbezat and Piligree (2012) state that the objectives of bringing contemplative practices into classrooms include:

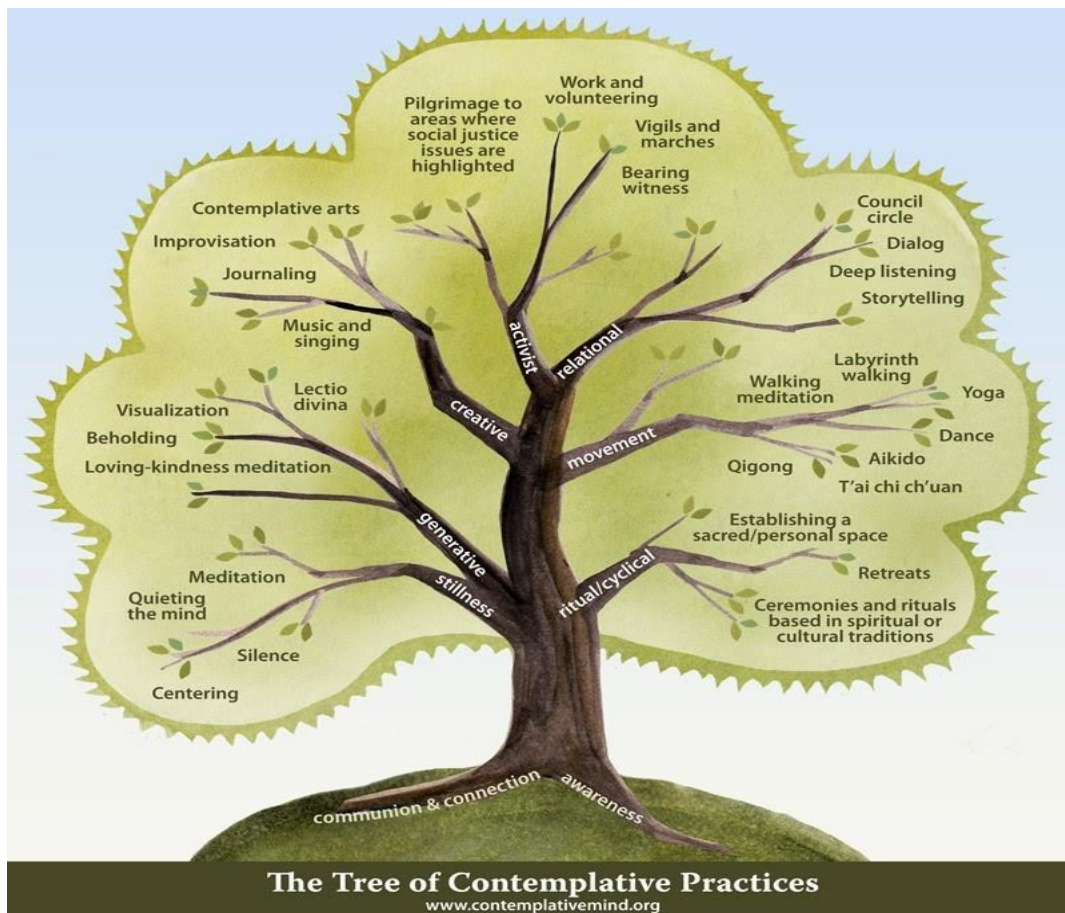
- Attention building, mainly through focusing meditation and exercises that support mental stability.
- Introspection into the content of the course. Exercises are designed to have students discover the material in themselves and thus deepen their understanding of it. This is a personal form of deeper critical reasoning in more traditional pedagogy.

- Building compassion, connection to others, and a deepening sense of their education's moral and spiritual aspect. Contemplative practices are uniquely situated to support this sort of inquiry.
- Perhaps most importantly, an invitation to begin an inquiry into the nature of their minds, selves, and their relationship to others. (p. 182)

There are a variety of contemplative practices that are either used in noneducational settings or have been adapted for educational environments. A visual way of conceptualizing the variety of methods is the Tree of Contemplative Practices created by the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (2021).

*Figure 1*

*Contemplative Practice Tree*



The practices are broken down into branches: generative practices, movement practices, creative practices, relational practices, ritual/cyclical practices, activist practices, and stillness practices (Center for Contemplative Mind); however, these can be modified in a variety of ways to suit specific courses. A summary of selected practices is included as follows:

**Reflective writing:** This activity includes having students respond to a prompt and then allowing them to write continuously and in silence. Students are encouraged to contemplate the immediate and first encourage their own response but then wonder about the prompt about the larger community, beginning with self and moving to others (Case Studies, from Center for Contemplative Mind). This activity will frequently offer a short centering activity before the writing portion and encourage students to be mindful of their thoughts throughout the movement.

**Beholding:** Students are encouraged to focus on one specific image. A length of time may be set aside for a portion of the class, or one image may be the focus for an entire semester encouraging students to hear their own thoughts, feelings, and impressions and discouragement of using outside research, opinions, and any other secondary sources. The focus of this activity is on attentiveness. Students are encouraged to engage with their subjectivity which has been found to lead to greater objectivity (Center for Contemplative Mind).

**Lectio Divina:** This practice originates from Christian contemplative practices and has been modified for academic settings. It involves reading straight through a text, noticing initial responses, and then slowly rereading the texts and noticing words or phrases that stick out to the reader. It encourages the reader to delve deeper and deeper into the reading, connecting with a subjective meaning and then expanding that to a more significant meaning (Center for Contemplative Mind).

## **The Benefits of Contemplative Practice to Students**

The various types of contemplative practices have been shown to have various beneficial effects on students making it an increasingly researched pedagogical technique. Utilizing meditation, in particular, has been scientifically found to increase concentration and attention, mental health and psychological well-being, creativity and insight, and empathy, as well as deepening students' understanding of the course material (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, Zajonc, 2013). Other forms of contemplative practices have been shown to have similar benefits as outlined in the following:

### ***Neuroscientific benefits***

Various forms of contemplative practice have been shown to cause positive changes in brain functioning that assist in educational processes. Meditation has been shown to positively affect the brain's natural plasticity, which can form and maintain new neural connections (Lauders et al., 2012). Contemplative practices have been shown to have physical changes in the brain regions that are used and aid the learning process. Utilizing meditation specifically has been shown to aid participants in acquiring "thicker brain regions (prefrontal cortex and right anterior insula) associated with attention, interception, and sensory processing" (Lazar et al., 2005, p. 1894). Studies that use brain-imaging suggest that contemplative activities "triggers active processes within the brain and can cause physical changes to the structure of regions important to learning, memory, emotion regulation, and cognitive processing" (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, p. 54).

### ***Focus and Awareness***

Instructors who utilize contemplative practices in their teaching encourage their students to focus and be attentive in learning. Contemplative practices "support analytical intelligence

through stabilization of the mind and increased ability to focus” (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, p. 15). Studies have shown that for students to solve problems effectively, students “must have the capacity to hold alternative possibilities along with the ability to switch their attention between them” (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, p. 13).

### ***Creativity and Self-regulated learning (or motivation)***

Often in one’s educational journey, the question of whether or not a student can do something eclipses their own natural tendency to explore the material (Langer, 1989). Contemplative practices help open the student to multiple possibilities in learning and encourage creative thinking and seeing new possibilities in the content. Contemplative pedagogy allows for “the opportunity for students to develop insight and creativity, hone their concentration skills, and deeply inquire about what means the most to them” (Barbezat & Bush, p.17). Contemplative pedagogy offers students an opportunity to engage with their curiosity of the content, “the one aspect of students’ learning for which they are unambiguously sovereign is the awareness of their experience and their own thoughts, beliefs, and reactions to the material covered in the course” (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, p. 4). Creativity offers students the ability to take what is being provided to them and create something new out of it, and as teachers, we provide those opportunities to students. Students need these opportunities and additionally faculty thrive off of the newness and excitement that come from student engagement with these processes (Cavanaugh, 2016). If we do not offer these opportunities and simply offer the same well-worn paths, then we wither as teachers, for “without opportunities to inquire deeply, all they can do is proceed along paths already laid down for them.” (Barbezat & Bush, 2013).

### ***Emotion***

Contemplative pedagogy offers “an experiential, embodied engagement with emotions and identities” (Winans, 2012, p. 152). Bringing contemplative practices into one’s teaching also boosts the emotional processes behind learning (Canvenough, 2016). Studies have shown that students have “increased empathy for others and a deeper sense of connection with the world” (Birnie et al., 2010, p. 34) when contemplative practices have been used in their courses. Other learning outcomes are significantly increased when students feel compassion and feel socially connected in their educational process (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2008). “Meditation and introspection provide effective means for students to become aware of their emotions and reactions while at the same time helping them clarify what is personally most important. Both of these qualities contribute to effective decision making” (Barbezat & Bush, 2013 p. 16). Contemplative activities have been found to support increased emotional intelligence, “the ability to recognize and regulate emotions has also been shown to be more pronounced” (Barbezat et al., 2013, p. 17).

Offering a contemplative practice puts faith and confidence in the student’s learning processes intelligence and supports their unique voice. Students that feel listened to, feel supported, and can expand their learning possibilities in the process:

In academic culture, most listening is critical listening. We tend to pay attention only long enough to develop a counterargument; we critique the students or the colleague’s ideas, we mentally grade and pigeonhole each other. In society at large, people often listen with an agenda to sell, petition, or seduce. Seldom is there a deep, open-hearted, unjudging reception of the other? And so we all talk louder and more stridently and with terrible desperation. By contrast, if someone truly listens to me, my spirit begins to expand. (O’Reilly, 1998, p. 19)



## *Mental Wellness*

More and more higher education institutions are noticing the need to support students' academic and social needs and their needs for personal meaning and mental health wellness (Kitzrow, 2009). Institutions are noticing that the increase in stress, both within academic institutions and without, is causing increased student distress requiring universities to address issues of wellness and self-care in their programming. More than two-thirds consider it 'essential' or 'very important' that their college enhances their self-understanding. A similar proportion rate highly the role they want their college to play in developing their values. Nearly half also say it is "essential" or "imperative" that colleges encourage their personal expression of spirituality (Astin et al., 2010).

Studies in those who utilize contemplative practices like meditation have shown "great effect in lowering levels of depression, obsessive rumination and anxiety, and raising levels of positive affect while increasing students' immune systems and general physical health." (Barbezat & Bush, 2013). It has been shown to help with time management. Many of our students are worried about how they spend their time or feel that they have too little time and want to be good planners of the time that they do have:

We have, then, the paradoxical situation of people having many more positive feelings at work than in leisure, yet saying that they 'wish to be doing something else when they are at work, not when they are at leisure . . . Needless to say, such a blindness to the real state of affairs is likely to have unfortunate consequences for individual well-being and the health of society. (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989, pp. 820–821)

They conclude that people should become more aware of their inner states; by doing so, they will better allocate their time and achieve higher states of sustained well-being.

### ***Compassion***

Contemplative Pedagogy is essential in the development of compassion and empathy. Tania Singer, a neuroscientist working in Leipzig, Germany, argues that as humans, “we are coded, that is, wired to have empathy” (Barbezat & Bush, 2013). Education can be a place for this compassion building, and contemplative practices build and nourish that capacity. When there are increases in compassion and empathy, this leads to increased collaboration, which is an essential marketable skill for students to gain in their college education. Individuals who used practices like Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, MSBR, “had a greater ability to adopt others’ perspectives, experienced reduced distress...and were increasingly spiritual and compassionate toward themselves” (Birnie et al., 2010, p. 110). This shows how contemplative pedagogy can increase compassion towards others and oneself. Having a compassionate attitude towards oneself can aid in a reduced stress response when encountering the ups and downs of the learning process.

Additionally, as we consider the changing populations and demographics of our client populations in the helping professions as well as our changing student demographics it will be more important than ever to engage in practices that support compassionate responses. The different identities that we inhabit and offer into the various educational spaces we enter into call for an increase in relational ethics (Keating, 2013). One way these relational ethics can be supported is through nourishing compassionate responses through the use of contemplative practices in teaching.

## **The practice of Contemplative Pedagogy in the Helping Professions**

### ***Defining the helping professions***

A helping profession is a profession that nurtures the growth of or addresses the problem of a person's physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional, or spiritual wellbeing, including education, counseling, medicine, nursing, family studies, child development, social work, sociology, anthropology, criminal justice, human services, public health, and other fields. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines the helping professions as "occupations that provide health and education services to individuals and groups, including occupations in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, counseling, medicine, nursing, social work, physical and occupational therapy, teaching, and education."

### ***Teaching in the Helping Professions***

Unlike the natural sciences, the teaching and learning process in the helping professions involves modeling relational connectedness, core practice skills and values, fostering transformative awareness, and nurturing personal and professional growth. In other words, the nature of helping professions requires a pedagogical approach that is highly concentrated on process rather than content. Studies show that it is process-oriented, pedagogy is a good fit for the field of helping professions. However, there are several variables such as diversity issues, diverse clientele, learning environments, and critical thinking that faculty who teach in the helping professions need to address.

**Diversity.** One of the most notable challenges facing all faculty is the changing demographics of students, including "age, educational purposes, background and preparation, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity" on campuses and the need to use diverse learning methods to address new student populations and their needs (Chickering, 1981). The different identities

that our students, colleagues and clients offer into the professional and educational settings that helping professionals both teach and work in asks for a response that can both support and nourish the learning processes of all individuals.

Along with the changing demographics at higher educational institutions is the challenge of working with students from differing demographics and their processing of the content and professional aspects. Many students from non-dominant backgrounds may find that they have internalized their oppression. “The unmitigated internalization of racist, sexist and other oppressive messages and experiences leads to self-hatred and self-destruction among oppressed people” (as cited in Rosado & Barreto, 2002, p. 67). This can be problematic for students and faculty, and allowing respite through contemplative practice may deepen the teaching and learning. This type of engagement is needed because students from historically oppressed populations may not participate fully in their learning processes because they have been conditioned to think or see information that is not authentic or intrinsic to who they are. This includes, in particular, African-Americans, who in educational settings, she says have been “brainwashed” by “images which degrade” and have become numb in taking “delight in images that reveal the essential goodness of black people” (hooks, 2003, p. 221).

**Diversity of Clients Students will be Serving.** Mirroring the changing demographics in higher education institutions is the changing in different families, groups, communities, and student populations, all of which faculty will need to provide an avenue in which to prepare students (Anguiano & Harrison, 2002). So, a pedagogical model that aids in bringing awareness of the diversity of clients their students will serve is needed for teachers.

**Learning Environments.** Overall, faculty face the challenge of creating the most conducive environments to learning. In her work, *The Spark of Learning*, Sarah Rose Cavanaugh

(2016) notes that classrooms are collective social settings where faculty influence students and students affect faculty. She cites that the best model of an educational environment can be found in honey bee colonies. These colonies provide a diversity of diverse knowledge, transparency, sharing of opinions, and leadership not based on domination. Contemplative pedagogy is an approach that often provides this non-hierarchical model that fosters learning.

Studies have shown that students who are aware of their learning processes and can explain what they are learning will learn more and develop better problem-solving skills than those who do not (Ambrose et al., 2010). For students “to become self-directed learners, students must learn to monitor and adjust their approaches to learning” (Ambrose et al., 2010, p. 6). One path to this self-directed learning is teaching practices that support first-person learning. Through the support of this first-person learning, contemplative practices assist in this process by creating a space and an environment in which this self-directed learning can occur.

An additional challenge for students learning in the helping professions is based on the political aspect behind teaching, which faculty may or may not recognize (Sanchez & Fried, 1997). Many times, faculty and departments are acculturation centers for the professions students will be going into. Because of this, there is a need “to help students become cognizant of the values and belief systems embedded in their chosen professions” (Sanchez & Fried, 1997, p. 26). Students need the spaces and support to think critically about these values and beliefs, and contemplative pedagogy can be a tool to support this critical thinking.

### **Contemplative Pedagogy as a tool to overcome the challenge**

#### ***Addressing Diversity***

Utilizing a contemplative methodology also allows for the inclusion of other perspectives, including feminist and indigenous perspectives, and a pathway for those from

oppressed populations to participate fully in learning experiences. Recent research shows the importance of incorporating more diverse voices into the classroom (Gurin et al., 2002). Further, more and more institutions focus on the value and need to bring in more culturally responsive pedagogies (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

Utilizing contemplative practices in higher education allows the whole self to be brought into the classroom a self that may have been fragmented through an oppressive system or colonization. A notable feminist and liberatory theorist, bell hooks, cites the value of the whole self in teaching those from historically oppressed populations. Offering a pedagogy that addresses the entire individual and the entire self is what bell hooks recommend in her work on engaged pedagogy, which “relates to students as whole human beings” (Berry, 2010 p. 25). This “critical first-person learning” means that students “engage directly with the practices being studied, and “critical” means that students are not asked to believe anything but instead to evaluate their own experience with openness and discernment.” (Barbezat & Bush, 2013, p 21). Contemplative pedagogy offers a framework that challenges power-oriented systems (Brabeck & Ting, 2000) and empowers the students to connect to their own subjective experiences before integrating the ideas and thoughts of others.

Many scholars have advocated for other pedagogies to be utilized in classrooms to allow for a more inclusive environment. Hooks recommends a “philosophy of soul” to support the expression and self-confidence of students from historically oppressed populations. The African American soul can be “understood here as a deeply felt inner attunement and connectedness that moves one to inspired expression and resonates with collective experience” (Harrell, 2018, p. 14). Hooks goes further to say that the repression of black people is translated through the restriction of the soul through the “control of emotions, being stoic and poised, is perceived as

positive” (as cited in hooks, 1994, p. 222) and hence “white.” Thus, the need for pedagogical approaches to bring these fragmented and repressed parts into the learning experience allows for a fuller educational environment.

Contemplative practices offer a window into allowing this repressed aspect in the classroom. Contemplative practices can offer “opportunities for the affirmation of a communal and transcendent identity beyond the masks created and worn in the service of survival, coping, adaptation, and efforts to be palatable and “acceptable” to the world” (Harrell, 2018, p. 21). When students from historically oppressed populations have opportunities to bring their whole selves into the room, they can develop the skills of Freire’s ideas of critical consciousness (Kumagai & Lypson, 2009), self-confidence, congruence, and connection (Harrell, 2018). By utilizing contemplative pedagogy, we allow all selves to be present. The socio-emotional benefits discussed earlier allow for a holistic approach to learning and all gifts to be present.

### ***Providing Experiential Learning Opportunities***

Contemplative pedagogy is an appropriate connection for teaching in the helping professions as it allows for an experiential learning component. Here experience “is focused on students' introspection and their cultivation of awareness of themselves and their relationship to others” (Barbezat & Piligree, 2012, p. 179). It offers learning benefits not only to students in the helping professions but also to nondominant and historically oppressed populations because it offers a learning format that is not easily accessible. In many sectors, academic knowledge is privileged over experiential knowledge; however, many women who live in the margins of society gain their unique perspectives from experiential learning (Watkins & Shulman, 2011).

Finally, contemplative practices offer students in the helping professions an opportunity to bring in real-world applications even if they have not started an internship or practicum. “The

presentation of the material can be approached in a manner in which students can directly see its impact on their lives; they discover the fit. This builds capacity, deepens understanding, generates compassion, and initiates an inquiry into their human nature.” (Barbezat & Pilligree, 2012, p. 180). These are the very aspects that teachers in the helping professions hope to cultivate in their teaching.

### **Type of Contemplative Practices in the Helping Professions**

Various types of contemplative practices have been integrated into fields in the helping professions. These fields include psychology and social work. The contemplative practice of mindfulness has been integrated into various psychological treatments. These treatments include Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (Davis & Hayes, 2011), which use the practice of mindfulness in increasing psychological wellness and as a support for therapists. Mindfulness is also a contemplative practice advocated in the training and education of future therapists because of its psychological benefits and because it is a metacognitive skill and is helpful in the exercise of future clinicians in the mental health field (Davis & Hayes, 2011).

### **Faculty perspectives of contemplative practices**

There has been some scholarship on both faculty and student perspectives in using contemplative practices in higher education; however, little has been said of the lived experiences of faculty utilizing these practices in their helping-profession-based courses. A review of the literature justifying the utilization of mindfulness in human services education was completed. In it, justification was made for the inclusion of mindfulness into an introductory helping skills course (Banks et al., 2016) however it did not include the perspectives of faculty.



Additionally, the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society collected a selection of faculty case studies, some of whom were working in the helping professions (Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, 2009). While these case studies did speak to the reasoning behind using contemplative practices in their courses, they did not share the faculty's unique experiences. Additionally, there was a survey of higher education institutions utilizing contemplative approaches to education; however, these too did not include the experiences of faculty. A recent dissertation (Stewart-Silver, 2016) using a mixed-methods system touched on individuals in higher education utilizing contemplative practices in all aspects of higher education. Still, it did not focus on faculty perspectives around teaching or those who specifically teach in the helping professions.

The justification for the literature included is based on literature examining the challenges behind teaching human sciences courses and the uses of contemplative pedagogy to address these challenges. I believe the literature review shows the connection to these ideas and points the way to looking at the lived experience of faculty who utilize contemplative pedagogy in their helping professions courses.

To put this research in a historical context offers connections on many levels. Although contemplative pedagogy has been researched on its effect on students, little has been analyzed on how faculty are affected. Additionally, from this researcher's review, there has not been a study focusing on faculty who teach human science courses and utilize contemplative pedagogy in their courses.

## **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

### ***Bioecological model of human development***

The bioecological systems approach was created by Urie Bronfenbrenner based on the idea that behavior can be interpreted through the environment or systems around that individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner stated that human development could be researched by looking at three different aspects: (1) an individual's perspective of the environment; (2) the environment surrounding that individual; and (3) the dynamic interaction between the individual and the environment (Rein et al., 2005). These different circles of influence were conceptualized in five different systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). These are the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem. The microsystem places the individual in relation to their immediate surroundings and has the most influential impact on the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Examples of this first system would be the students and colleagues in a faculty member's department. The mesosystem is the sphere in which two or more influences interact and can include the more extensive department a faculty member works in or the administration. The exosystem is that the faculty may not be directly influenced by, but through this sphere of influence is affecting the individuals who are influencing the faculty member (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The fourth system, the macrosystem, influences all of the systems below it and may include larger ideas such as the values, culture, or policies. The fifth and final system is the chronosystem, which changes over time within the person and in the environment.

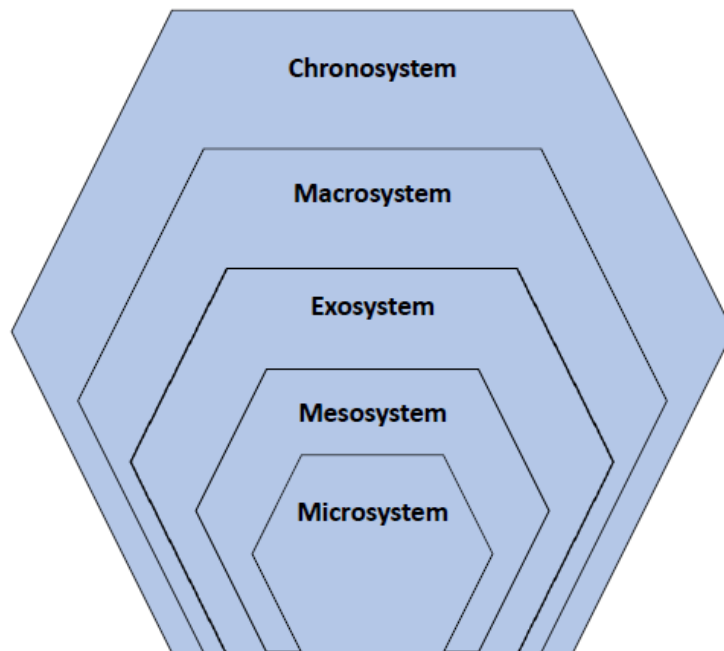
Bronfenbrenner's theory was initially formed about education. He posited that there were two effects to learning: "the first being the characteristics of the learner and the environments in which they exist, and the second the relationships and interconnections between them" (Zhang et al., 2014, p. 27). Relevant to this study is Bronfenbrenner's point that one's development is impacted by the various ecological systems one is placed in. Further, these ecological systems can affect an individual positively or negatively. The more supportive these systems are, the

more positive that will impact the development of the individual, and the less supportive these systems are, the more detrimental these systems will be for the individual.

The following diagram illustrates the framework of the bioecological system:

*Figure 2*

*Bronfenbrenner Bioecological System*



### ***Hermeneutic Phenomenology***

Van Manen's perspective of lived existential is another theoretical foundation for this study. It helps one understand the experiences of faculty who are teaching in the helping profession and utilizing contemplative pedagogy. Hermeneutic phenomenology is the study of subjective experience. According to van Manen, a person's subjective experience can be studied through the four lived existential: (a) lived space, (b) lived body, (c) lived time, and (d) lived human relation.

**Lived space.** Lived space is defined as the space that we feel. It represents the emotional or feeling aspect of an experience. Van Manen (1990) stated that "in our physical or bodily

presence we both reveal something about ourselves and we conceal something at the same time—not necessarily consciously or deliberately, but rather despite ourselves” (p. 103). An individual may state, “I felt overwhelmed with joy when my students shared that the activity helped them gain a deeper understanding of racism.”

**Lived Body.** Lived body refers to the physical or corporeal aspect of a phenomenon. Van Manen (1990) stated that “in our physical or bodily presence we both reveal something about ourselves and we conceal something at the same time—not necessarily consciously or deliberately, but rather despite ourselves” (p. 103). For example, an individual may state, “my heart began to beat faster as I shared with my departmental chair my teaching philosophy of integrating contemplative practices into the classroom.”

**Lived Time.** The lived time represents the temporal aspect of the experience. Van Manen (1990) stated that “lived time is the time that appears to speed up when we enjoy ourselves or slow down when we feel bored during an uninteresting lecture or when we are anxious, as in the dentist’s chair” (p. 104). Individuals may share a comment of, “I did not realize that 5 minutes had gone by when I offered the experience of beholding an image of a mother during the Depression”. Lived time also refers to past, present, and future temporal dimensions.

**Lived Relationship/ Other.** The last lived existential from van Manen (1997) is lived other or lived human relationship and represents our experiences with others. Van Manen (1990) contends that individuals will meet in a corporeal way or even by phone or letter and then “form a physical impression of the person which later may get confirmed or negated” (p. 104). For example, “I felt a sense of loss when a student shared that my class had been the first time she had taken the time to reflect on her own feelings and experiences in her undergraduate career.”

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of contemplative practice in the helping professions. The information on this topic was divided into the following sections: contemplative practice, the benefit of contemplative practice to students, the practice of contemplative pedagogy in the helping professions, teaching in the helping professions, contemplative pedagogy as a tool to overcome the challenge, types of contemplative practice in the helping profession, and faculty perspectives of contemplative practice. Next, I provided a comprehensive review of the theoretical framework of this study: Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 2006) Bioecological Model for Human Development and van Manen's (1990) Hermeneutic Phenomenology. The Bioecological Model for Human Development explained how people develop through bidirectional influences in social context. Hermeneutic phenomenology explained how van Manen's four lifeworld existentials could be used as a guide for reflection: (a) lived space (spatiality), (b) lived body (corporeality), (c) lived time (temporality), and (d) lived other (relationality).

## CHAPTER III: METHODS

*“I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.” — Albert Einstein.*

This chapter is an overview of the method and research process related to this study. It restates the purpose and research questions, discuss the rationale for the selected research paradigm and design, outlines the target population and background information for sampling, sampling procedure, and provide a detailed description about the data collection process, procedures, and analysis

### **Restatement of Purpose**

This study explored how faculties in the helping profession experience and process the contemplative approach. The purpose was to uncover the practice and craft knowledge embedded in the faculties' contemplative practice. In addition, the research sought to explore participants' learning and lived experiences. Learning and lived experience refer to participants' learning experience and the events and situations that impacted their learning and practicing contemplative pedagogy in their teaching. Contemplative practice is a complex phenomenon involving emotional, cognitive, and interactive processes.

The guiding question of this study was *what are the lived experiences of faculty teaching in the helping professions who practice contemplative pedagogy?*

The following subsidiary questions are used to answer the guiding question above:

- *What are the lived existential (lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived other) of being contemplative pedagogy practitioners in higher education institutions that focus on training helping professionals?*

- *What risk factors exist in the environment (s) of faculty who practice contemplative pedagogy?*
- *What protective factors appear or need to be constructed in these faculty's environment(s) to cultivate the practice of contemplative pedagogy in and out of the classroom?*
- *How does the practice of contemplative pedagogy shape the behavior of the faculty in the working environment?*

### **Rationale for Qualitative Research Approach and Paradigm**

This research aimed to explore and understand faculty members' lived experiences that utilize contemplative pedagogies in courses for helping professions. Even though many philosophical paradigms exist for research today due to advancements in our way of thinking, the goal of this study fits with the philosophy, strategies, and intentions of constructive epistemology. The constructivism philosophy paradigm refers to an approach that asserts that people desire to create their subjective meanings when interpreting their worlds and daily work (Creswell, 2013). Constructivism accepts reality as a construct of the human mind.

The constructivist approach focuses on humans' perspectives, and understanding of their life settings engages participants to answer semi-structured open-ended questions and allows them to share their views about particular issues. The constructive approach seeks to understand the context of participants' experiences by gathering personal information and interpreting findings based upon the researcher's background and experiences. Thus, it was the best framework to use in the current study.

The multiplicities of these meanings compel researchers to understand the complexity of such views rather than coercing such a purpose into minute categories/ideas. Hence, the method

that guided this study is a qualitative inquiry, created initially to study experiences and a need to study human consciousness because methods that studied the natural sciences did not adequately express lived experiences (Zahavi, 2003). By researching through a qualitative lens, the researcher is not assuming what faculty experiences will be or what the outcomes will be, which is a necessary criterion for the qualitative research method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

This study fits exceptionally well with phenomenology methods because it frames its practices around faculty questions that help them share stories about their authentic experiences. A phenomenological orientation describes the ordinary meaning for several individuals regarding their lived experiences and perception of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The goal of the phenomenological research method is to “describe what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). Phenomenological and hermeneutic phenomenology inquiry is an appropriate choice here because it values and uses participants' personal experiences as data. The data is the individual experiences, which the researcher is measuring. The phenomenological method is appropriate to use with faculty because it does not privilege only first-person accounts (Wertz, 1983) and this is significant as the job of teaching requires more than the teacher, namely the students, but also interactions with other faculty members is an essential consideration in how that faculty member makes meaning in using non-western approaches. Data collection was primarily verbal with informed consent to have the interviews recorded. Phenomenological methods also privilege other forms of communication with the possibility of drawings, etc. During the interviews, I also noted any nonverbal communication that may arise during interview (Hycner, 1985).

Phenomenology looks at a phenomenon as itself without any preconceived knowledge (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). Phenomenology originated through the philosophical work of Edmund



Husserl and is influenced by early continental philosophy. Husserl describes the overall goal of the phenomenological method as to go “back to the things themselves” (Husserl, 1970/1900, p. 252 as cited in Giorgi). Another noted phenomenological theorist, Merleau Ponty, noted that our initial experiences before interpretation are essential and meaningful material and raw data for scientific exploration (2013). The phenomenological method is considered a lens (Wertz, 1983) to view the data and hence does not have a specific process.

The method is dependent on the data itself and used to analyze themes, line-by-line readings, and the like (van Manen, 2016). The commonality between these aspects is the lens of seeing the data anew without interpretations to provide the most precise representation possible of the experience. Once we begin to make interpretations, we lose the essence of the experience and raw data of the research itself (Hillman, 1989). This method was chosen because of these theoretical underpinnings and because the researcher sought to know the authentic experiences of faculty utilizing contemplative practices in their teaching. Only the faculty know what their expertise is in the classroom. To honor that experience, the researcher needed a methodology that could express what each faculty member was experiencing as accurately as possible.

## **Research Methodology**

The objective of this research was to explore the lived experiences and meaning-making that faculty make out of their experiences. Hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen as a suitable methodology for this research to generate findings of the lived experience of faculty who practice contemplative pedagogy in their teaching. Hermeneutic phenomenology was also an appropriate approach because it is descriptive and interpretive. According to van Manen (1997), lived human experiences are more multifaceted than the result of any singular description. It is recommended that the researchers use lifeworld existential as guides to reflection. Van Manen’s

(1997) lived existential was used to explore the themes in the qualitative data. These four existential include lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relationships. His concept of the four lived existential was essential in this study to understand faculty teaching experiences in the helping professions and utilize a contemplative pedagogy approach. For van Manen, lived space can be defined as understanding one's experience in a particular space or environment. His concept of the lived body relates to the corporeal sense or physical sense (VanManen, 1997) an individual has in an environment and their felt sense in interacting in that environment. Lived time relates to how an individual experiences time even if that experience feels as though it is an absence of time. The last lived existential relates to lived other or lived human relationships, and this relates to how to connect and experience others in our lives. All of these come together to give us the most entire description of what faculty are experiencing when utilizing contemplative pedagogy.

### **Research design**

The research design for this study involved a rigorous data collection process that enabled me to gather information to answer the research questions. The data collection process is modeled by Creswell's (2013) recommendations on the process of data collection, illustrated below. The site here is Duquesne University and its faculty, who teach helping professions and utilize contemplative pedagogy. Because of my working position at the Center for excellence in teaching, I gained easy access to the participants and rapport with different faculty utilizing contemplative pedagogy. The sampling chosen is faculty who provided insight into their contemplative pedagogy experiences. I collected the data via virtual interviews using the Zoom platform. A decision was made to use virtual interviews due to the Covid 19 pandemic, which prevented the utilization of in-person interviews as initially proposed. The availability and wide

use of the Zoom platform, as faculty had transitioned to this platform to provide a virtual teaching option for their students and had already undertaken training for that purpose, made Zoom an appropriate choice. Information was recorded via interview notes and via recorded device to later be transcribed. Field issues were resolved via the researchers' journal and stored on a password-protected laptop.

### **Role of the researcher**

The role of the researcher is a vital aspect to consider, especially in qualitative inquiries (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), as it helps establish the position of the researcher and clarifies questions of objectivity. My positions and hence bias on this study relates to my own experience as a teacher, my own experience utilizing contemplative pedagogy in the classroom, and my own experiences teaching and working in the helping profession. I also have experienced and do believe that using contemplative practices in the classroom is a reliable pedagogy. In looking at my biases, I also realize that I am viewing the information and processes through my gender. As a woman, I feel that utilizing a pedagogy informed by non-dominant populations is positive. However, I consider view this study through the lens of my whiteness and my lived experience in white patriarchal culture, system, and educational foundation. A further bias is my experience as a graduate student and adjunct instructor, as I am further down on the academic hierarchy and may have biases because of my positionality.

To balance these positions and biases, I have made an effort to keep a researcher's journal since I began this research journey. In it, I have recorded notes of my own teaching experiences and notes of my own interests while developing this study. I have returned to this journal to note any patterns and or instances of strong effect that may indicate my positionality or bias. An example of this may be when I have a substantial effect around socioeconomic status at a

particular point in the research literature, I may need to ask myself, “Is this affecting me, or am I focusing on socioeconomic status as a way to avoid issues of race?” (Sue, 1993, p. 246). During interviews, this is particularly helpful, especially in open-ended phenomenologically oriented questions, and I felt that it supported the authentic exploration of a phenomenon rather than my own interests based on my own experiences.

Another point to be addressed is the role of the researcher in the domain of trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) canon work is relevant here in describing how the reliability of a research study is a helpful determinant in evaluating the worth of an investigation. They argue that trustworthiness is evident in a study if credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability can be established. For credibility, one way that I believe this has been set has been through my own prolonged engagement in the field and through my work at CTE. I have been utilizing contemplative practices in my own teaching for over ten years, and I have also been able to establish rapport and confidence in my abilities through my workshops and other offerings on contemplative pedagogy at CTE. In regards to transferability, Lincoln and Guba (1995) cite the use of thick descriptions as a way to, in a detailed manner, explore phenomena with as many details as possible, which I see in regards to the various interviews I have used. By incorporating my own experience, exploring the phenomena in the literature review, and then interviewing several individuals with varying levels of experience with contemplative pedagogy and from different backgrounds, I support creating a thick description. For the results portion of this study, I have also provided many examples for each theme that arose in the study. Using other individuals who are not part of the research process is different from establishing trustworthiness through dependability. The two committee members for my dissertation have extensive research experience and limited knowledge of contemplative

pedagogy, allowing them to bring fresh eyes and perspectives to my study. Confirmability is maintained in this study through reflexivity, particularly in the use of a researcher's journal and through the guidance of my dissertation chair. The researcher's journal is similar to the reflexive journal advocated by Lincoln and Guba (1985). I kept track of my concerns, values, biases, and positionality as I see myself as a teacher and researcher. My dissertation chair also supervised my research and has a background in contemplative practices and teaching, preventing any unseen biases from emerging.

### **Site Location**

Western Pennsylvania was selected as several higher education institutions are close to each other. In addition, of these higher education institutions, many offer disciplines in the helping professions, and Duquesne, in particular, offers many disciplines in the helping professions and has an established contemplative pedagogy group. I provided a recruitment letter that described the study's purpose and required IRB information. The letter included my email address and cell phone number and was provided to members of the established contemplative pedagogy group.

### **Population and Sampling Approach**

The target population for this research study was faculty at Duquesne who utilize contemplative pedagogy in their teaching of courses in the helping professions. Duquesne University was used since it has many programs in departments based on the helping professions and has many faculties utilizing contemplative pedagogy.

The sampling method is a way to approach the study and cast as wide a "net" to have the most reflective data on faculty experiences. Sampling methods are based on five aspects, "the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the quality of the data, the study design, and the use of

shadowed data” (Starks & Brown-Trinidad, 2007, p. 1374). The sampling method was purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013) as I had gained access to different faculty who practice contemplative pedagogy in their teaching through my work at the university’s teaching center. Participants were recruited based on the criteria above. Participants were recruited through a purposeful sampling technique, specifically through an email list of faculty members who had expressed interest or participated in workshops on contemplative pedagogy. A range of faculties volunteered to participate, including those with little to no experience with contemplative pedagogy, published scholars in meditative practices, and those who had utilized contemplative pedagogy in their teaching for many years. As a graduate student consultant in the university’s teaching center at the time of this study and as someone who, through that position, had cultivated relationships with each of the instructors, I was able to engage in rich and meaningful interviews with each individual. Before and throughout the interview process, I kept a researcher’s journal (see Appendix C) of my thoughts, experiences, and reflections to be conscious of an unbiased perspective. Additionally, throughout the interviews, I took interviewers' notes to reflect on essential points I would want to be aware of and my reactions.

### **Participants Recruitment Process**

The initial starting point for this study was a contemplative pedagogy group formed through the University's teaching center and where I pulled interview participants from. In this contemplative pedagogy group, only individuals associated with Duquesne were allowed in the Center, and therefore I utilized the email list of members to pull participants from. Since an in-depth answer and multiple lived experiences can be described by one person, large sample size was not necessary (Stark & Brown-Trinidad, 2007).

Based on those who volunteered to participate, I selected individuals to represent the target population based on the following criteria: an individual who was faculty at an institution of higher education and practiced a contemplative or non-western teaching pedagogy. For meeting the requirements of utilizing a reflective or non-western pedagogy, individuals were asked based on their own disclosure. Participants were not selected based on gender, race, or sexual orientation since this study focuses on pedagogical methods. Participant selection is also significant to the qualitative approach because the participants need to connect to the phenomenon being studied (Wertz, 1983). In this case, all participants related to the phenomenon being investigated because of the criteria above.

### **Generating and Collecting Data**

There are several methods to gather information in qualitative research, including surveys, interviews, focus group discussion, and observation (Creswell, 2013). The technique that I used to collect data was in-depth interviews. Both the literature review informed the qualitative questions and the researcher's lived experience. My purpose was to provide an alternative viewpoint of the processes and reasoning behind contemplative approaches and the experiences of faculty who utilize this approach. As I formulated questions for the interview, I also kept a research journal to support the awareness of my own thoughts, assumptions, and processes and be critical when I notice any of these parallel processes (Wertz, 2018).

*Sample interview* questions included: *What experiences have you had utilizing contemplative practices in your teaching? When and how have you started the practice? What thoughts come to your mind when you think about contemplative practices in general? How do you feel about your practice of contemplation? How is your engagement affected as a teacher when you use contemplative practices? How do you live your contemplative practice in and out*

*of your workplace, outside the classroom? What are the benefits of practicing contemplative pedagogy? How did it make you feel? What are the opportunities and challenges of practicing contemplative pedagogy in your teaching and the work setting? How does it affect you in other areas?*

Sample sub-questions included: *Do contemplative approaches affect varying levels of teacher engagement? Do contemplative practices encourage resilience in the face of teaching obstacles? Does contemplative pedagogy help teachers encourage a professional clinical identity in students? How does bringing in contemplative practices affect classroom discussions? How does contemplative pedagogy correspond to your own identity as a teacher? How does contemplative pedagogy affect your energy levels? How do you feel after a class in which you have engaged in meditative practices? What is your background in utilizing contemplative practices around difficult issues, including identity issues? What is the space created in the classroom when you are using contemplative practices? How is the information you are receiving on the student learning different from when you have used traditional pedagogical approaches? Can you describe any emotions you experienced while teaching that was significant?*

The interview questions were open-ended to provide a format for inquiry into the lived experiences of faculty who are utilizing this approach. I focused on the aspect of psychological phenomenology. One “refrains from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33) to get the most authentic answers possible. In addition, I suspend my beliefs about any previous knowledge I have on the subject; the basis informs this of scientific study in which the researcher “begins with a fresh and unbiased description of its subject matter” (Wertz, 1983, p. 167).



## **Data collection procedure**

Interviews were conducted via Zoom virtual meetings, and data was stored on a password-protected laptop. The interviews were projected to take between 1 to 1.5 hours; however, the range of interview duration lasted from approximately 1 hour to 2.5 hours. Upon agreeing to participate, participants were asked about their demographic data (see appendix for form) via an electronic format. They later were asked about their age demographics through an updated form. I recorded the data via the Zoom platform recording option. I took interview notes throughout and ensured all data was preserved on a password-protected electronic device to be later transcribed (Creswell, 2013).

The participants provided a rich amount of information during the interview. Interviews were conducted via zoom due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and the inability to meet face-to-face for public health reasons. After receiving the signed consent form and agreeing to a mutually agreeable time was discovered I emailed the Zoom link and demographic data form to each participant before the meeting. At the beginning of each interview, I thanked the participant for participating, provided a verbal estimate of how long the interview would take, and inquired how they were feeling and the type of space they were in. Before beginning each interview, I verbally reviewed each portion of the consent form and paused to see if the participant had any questions along the way. I then obtained verbal consent that they understood and were complying with the study and that they still wanted to participate. Data was stored on a password-protected laptop to preserve the security of data. Each interview averaged around 1.5 hours, with the shortest interview lasting for an hour and the most extended interview lasting for 2.5 hours. I recorded the data via the Zoom platform recording option. I took interview notes

throughout and ensured all data was preserved on a password-protected electronic device to later be transcribed (Creswell, 2013).

### **Data analysis**

Data analysis is a process that encourages review and engagement with the data. As I reviewed and reflected on the data, I kept in mind categories connected to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (1977) and van Manen's lived existential (1990), as well as keeping in mind the unique population I interviewed, that is, those who teach in the helping professions. I went through and transcribed each interview with the support of the Otter.ai program, reviewing the transcripts provided against the voice records and making edits for accuracy. After arriving at a final transcription for each interview, I then uploaded the transcriptions to the Atlas. ti program. Each interview was reviewed multiple times to identify codes with corresponding data. Codes were selected based on the literature review previously examined and on the theoretical constructs of this study.

Data analysis also reflected this in that I structured the collection of codes and themes to support the different contexts of participants' experiences and what I interpreted based on my background as a researcher. In the process of re-reading the data multiple times and through the Atlas.ti software program, codes appeared, which revealed descriptive themes. This process of collecting in-depth interviews from participants and then reviewing the data for the appearance of codes and then themes show a thorough analysis of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process also occurred over months, spending much time with the interview data to allow different themes to emerge.

Since this study employed a constructivist paradigm, then the experiences faculty shared express their lived sense of reality. The interview questions were open-ended to support this

constructivist approach, and questions were also formulated to support participants' views on specific ideas. The open-ended questions allowed a depth of experience to emerge.

Creswell (2013) described several ways to analyze data in qualitative research. Since the primary approach of this research was phenomenology with a hermeneutic orientation, I used van Manen's (1997) data analysis to uncover codes and themes that seem to be thematic from the text. A cross-case analysis was used to offer an in-depth look at the similarities and differences between the participants' experiences. There are three possible ways one can approach the data phenomenologically and include holistic, selective, and detailed methods (van Manen, 1990). From a holistic approach, the researcher first reviews the data as a whole as well as reviews it multiple times and then finds what meaning(s) as a whole are emerging. In the selective approach, the researcher looks for statements that describe the phenomenon that is appearing. The researcher looks at specific words and statements from the detailed approach that describe the phenomenon. The researcher first collects the data and from experience and then chooses which approach would be the most appropriate fit.

In approaching the data analysis, I first read the data and tried to note and understand the experience as a whole. I broke down the data into smaller significant portions and began to differentiate the data into units. I then reflected on each unit as a whole and began to make meaning from each unit. Finally, I looked at and tried to understand how each of these units reflects a larger experience (Wertz, 2018).

For the organization and coding of the qualitative data, I looked at meaning-based themes within the interviews. I also looked for any words that would connect with terms found in non-western and contemplative pedagogies, the research on teaching future clinicians, and faculty

development. These terms included: mindfulness, beingness, present, moment-to-moment, and other similar terms.

When analyzing the results, a few considerations need to be made. Randomness and lack thereof can be an issue when performing qualitative research. There may be an issue of participants being too similar. This can keep the researcher from adequately describing the phenomenon of faculty who use contemplative pedagogy, including non-western pedagogical approaches (Heycer, 1985). Additionally, there was a worry of generalization based on such a small group; however the researcher compensated with appropriate literature on the topic for comparison. There was also the worry that the researcher could not adequately describe the experience through the use of language and the problem of the researcher situated in a retrospective position from the phenomenon being studied (Haycer, 1985).

Validity was also a concern in this methodology, and Giorgi suggests that the responsibility for validity falls on the researcher, particularly in their search for essences. Searching for essences means looking for “the most invariant meaning or identity that can be assigned to a phenomenon for a given context” (Beck et al., 1994, p. 28). As a researcher, I sought out the essence of each participants’ experience.

### **Establishing rigor**

It is important to note Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) guidelines of credibility, transferability, and dependability when establishing rigor. *Credibility* was established by comparing responses to other participants to ensure that they reflected similar codes and themes. Additionally, the data analysis process occurred over many months, which allowed me, as a researcher, to enter into a prolonged engagement with the data. *Transferability* was established through the researcher boundaries provided by the research questions, participants' number, and demographic and

geographic information. These points were offered so that if a future researcher may want to do this study again, they may have similar results if they had research participants with similar geographic and demographic information. *Dependability* was established through the transparency in which I provided the details of this study, including the ever-changing environments of both the participant's experiences and thoughts on initial experiences before the global Covid-19 pandemic. The detailed description of each portion of the research process allows researchers to follow this study and establish dependability (Creswell, 2013). By establishing credibility through comparable responses from other participants, transferability through thoroughly describing the demographic and geographic aspects of the study, and dependability through a detailed research process and description of changing environments during the study, the ultimate purpose of demonstrating rigor, through the legitimization of naturalistic inquiry is achieved.

### **Ethically and culturally relevant strategies**

In performing this research, I have taken a few considerations into account. First, the IRB review process establishes ethical guidelines when working with and researching human subjects. This includes ethical guidelines to ensure that participants are not harmed in the participation of this study, rights to participant privacy and confidentiality, and that there are goodwill benefits to participation in the study and that participants will not be exploited. By acquiring IRB approved, this study meets the ethical guidelines for research. When considering culturally relevant strategies, it is important to note any biases and provide transparency. During the research process, the researcher would need to control or declare any bias in conducting or researching the research practice. The use of the researchers' journal provided an avenue of transparency so that any biases were declared and the researcher continued to consult the journal

to monitor any areas in which biases might arise. Additionally, participants were reminded that they could refuse to answer any questions during the in-person interviews and the demographic forms. In addition, both informed consents (both written and verbal confirmation of consent) were provided to participants.

Multicultural and ethical considerations need to be taken into account. One way is through verbal consent to provide more methods of communicating consent, and another is through the use of translation if the participant is not a fluent English speaker. I followed this procedure in all of my interviews. I also omitted any instances in the data that might reveal a participant's identity through the use of a code for each participant.

### **Methodological Limitations of the study**

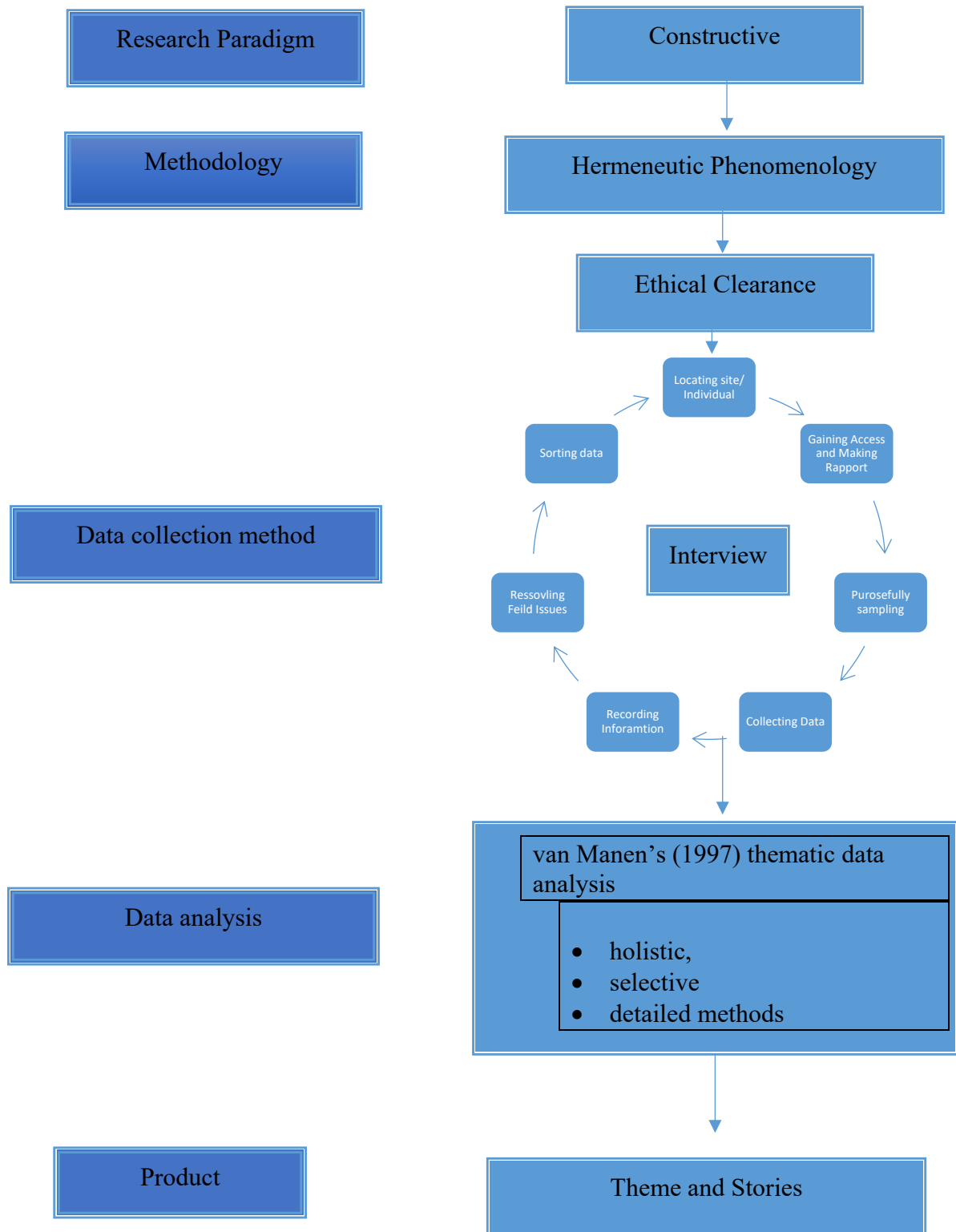
It is also important to acknowledge the potential limitations of this study, including both limitations of the method and the study. By utilizing a qualitative approach, I am necessarily pulling from a smaller population, limiting results and perspectives (Creswell, 2013). It is also a long process and typically does not have generalizable results (Queirós et al., 2017).

There are limitations to the study, including the faculty population and locations. Faculty with more established positions such as tenure, etc., may have different experiences and perceived support in utilizing contemplative pedagogy. Geographic location may also play a part in how faculty perceive their experiences in using contemplative pedagogy. Universities with a conservative mission may affect the utilization or acceptance of pedagogies from non-dominant backgrounds, or a set curriculum may be in place that also hinders the utilization of these pedagogies. Similarly, by utilizing a university that is situated among many universities, there could be more opportunity to use different approaches as a way to stand out as a teacher as opposed to the need to maintain a more standardized approach.

The covid-19 pandemic may also have played a role. There may have been a greater feeling of urgency to provide the supportive environment that teachers who utilize contemplative pedagogy typically provide. Additionally, faculty members may have been using contemplative practices in their teaching precisely because there was a global pandemic. They may have more experiences to provide than the earlier time of the study's proposal, which was pre-pandemic.

Figure 3

Overview of the Research approach





## **Chapter summary**

The chapter addresses the methodology that guided my method of gathering data, analyzing data, and writing a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis. In each section, I discussed each component of the research design in detail. There are six sections, and they include population and sample, locating the site and individuals, sampling method, method of gathering data, recording data, and way of analyzing data. I used van Manen's (1990) thematic data analysis to uncover patterns or phenomenological themes. Thematic data analysis offers researchers three distinctive ways to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The first way is the holistic or sententious approach, the second way is the selective or highlighting approach, and the third way is the detailed or line-by-line approach.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

*“As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence.”-bell hooks (1994)*

This chapter presented the study results through cross-case analysis. Each of the seven participants' interviews was analyzed using questions offered in this section and summaries and a chart revealing the themes found throughout each interview. The cross-case analysis reveals similarities and differences between each participant's experience utilizing contemplative pedagogy while teaching courses in the helping professions.

The purpose of this research was to understand the meaning of contemplative practice as experienced by faculty who teach in the helping professions. This research was guided by the research question: *what are the lived experiences of faculty that utilize contemplative pedagogical approaches and teach courses in the helping professions?* A phenomenological approach was used to explore the phenomena of faculty who use contemplative practices in their teaching to answer this question. By examining the data, categories arose through the analysis of the interviews and the confines of the research. These categories allowed for descriptive analysis and for themes to emerge. The theoretical framework for this dissertation rested on Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model (1977) and van Manen’s phenomenological method of lived existential (1990). These theoretical foundations supported the structure of the data as well as perspectives. This structure and these perspectives allow us to understand better the lived experiences of faculty who teach in the helping professions and utilize contemplative practices in their teaching.

## Participants Demographic Detail

Seven faculties who claim to use contemplative practice in their teaching in the helping profession at Duquesne university volunteered to participate in this study. The faculty sample varied in age, gender, ethnicity, faculty positions, and length of contemplative practice (See Table 1). Participant 1 identifies as female and engages with contemplative pedagogy for 1-2 years. She is a tenured professor and identifies as an African American. Participant 2 identified as female and engaged in contemplative pedagogy for 1-3 years. She is an untenured faculty member and identifies as Caucasian. Participant 3 identifies as male and has been practicing contemplative pedagogy for over seven years. He is a tenured faculty member and identifies as Caucasian. Participant 4 identifies as female and has more than three decades of experience practicing contemplative pedagogy in her teaching. She is a nontenured faculty member and identifies as Caucasian. Participant 5 identifies as female and has over seven years of experience practicing contemplative pedagogy in her teaching. She did not disclose her ethnic identity and is a tenured faculty member. Participant 6 identifies as female and has between 1-3 years of experience with contemplative pedagogy in her teaching. Participant 7 identifies as female and has between 3-5 years of experience with contemplative pedagogy in her education. She identifies as Puerto Rican and is a tenured faculty member. The table below reveals the demographic data in a more structured format for comparison.

*Table 1*

*Participant Demographics Summary*

<b>Alias</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Faculty position</b>	<b>Length of time utilizing contemplative practices in their teaching</b>
Participant 1	40-49	F	African American	tenured faculty	1-3 years

Participant 2	30-39	F	white/Caucasian	untentured faculty	1-3 years
Participant 3	60-69	M	white/Caucasian	tenured faculty	7 years or more
Participant 4	60-69	F	white/Caucasian	nontenured faculty	7 years or more
Participant 5	not disclosed	F	not disclosed	tenured faculty	7 or more years
Participant 6	50-59	F	white/Caucasian	nontenured faculty	1-3 years
Participant 7	40-49	F	Puerto Rican	tenured faculty	3-5 years

### **Participant Interview Analysis**

The following section presents selected key vital text from the participants' answers to share. This information is presented in a question-and-answer format for easy readability and to point structure that is explored in this study to reflect each individual's lived experiences regarding their use of contemplative pedagogy in their teaching. Also included in this section are tables that contain significant statements, themes, risk factors, and protective factors, and a summary at the end of each interview to highlight the main point. At the end of the chapter, I presented a cross- case cross-case that examined participants' themes, similarities, and differences.

### **Participant Interviews**

#### ***Participant 1***

My interview with Participant 1 occurred over zoom due to the covid 19 pandemic and the inability to meet in person. After I responded to my email to share that she would like to participate, I emailed the consent form to review and sign. Once she returned the consent form via email, I shared a short demographic form. We agreed to meet, virtually due to COVID

restrictions and I shared the zoom link with her. Once we began the meeting, I verbally asked her if she felt comfortable engaging in the interview and confirmed that it would be a suitable time to respond to my questions. Before proceeding into the interview, I reviewed the consent form in detail and obtained verbal consent that she understood and wanted to proceed to participate in the study.

### *Interview Protocol Questions*

**Q1: What experiences have you had utilizing contemplative practices in your teaching?**

**When and how have you started the practice?**

Participant 1 shared that it was natural for her to start using contemplative practices in her teaching as her discipline encourages reflection. Her choice to integrate contemplative practices into her teaching stemmed from wanting to support her own *creative teaching abilities*. She shared, “I just view it as something distinct from traditional methods, but something that certainly enhances it allows for more creativity.”

**Q2: What thoughts come to your mind when you think about contemplative practices in general? How do you feel about your practice of contemplation?**

Participant 1 answered that *reflection* is one thought that comes to mind when she thinks of contemplative practice in her teaching. Even though Participant 1 thought her response was kind of vague, it showed that she was focusing on learning through connecting to the real world and reflection. She shared “*I think about the ways that we give students opportunities to focus in unconventional ways on the material at hand.*” There was a tendency for participant 1 to limit her responses to her teaching role:

*So rather than simply receiving information and immediately responding to it and writing about it, I like to give them time to consider the material or the information and to make*

*associations into being imaginative to encounter the material imaginatively and to see how that reflection enhances their intellectual understanding, and perhaps their critical thinking skills, what I consider reflection to be kind of distinct from ordinary or traditional approaches to learning.”*

**Q3: How is your engagement affected as a teacher when you use contemplative practices?**

When participant 1 responded to this question, she reflected on how she connected to her students, “like it was an opportunity to, we’ll *get to know the students better*. And also to validate their experience. And to just draw them into the conversation and have them converse with each other because they all have their ideas and opinions.”

**Q4: How do you live your contemplative practice in and out of your workplace, outside of the classroom?**

Participant 1 responded that contemplative practices support her daily living and impact how she experiences her life. Although again she related her experiences to the classroom setting, she did note that this experience moved outside of the classroom. Participant 1 stated, “meditation can be helpful in terms of informing how we move through daily experience, and so can have an impact. My experiences there have had an impact in terms of understanding the “*subject matter better, but also just moving through life more mindfully.*”

**Q5: What are the benefits of practicing contemplative pedagogy? How did it make you feel?**

For participant 1, what emerges is the cultivation of present-moment awareness. She shared that she feels “greater attentiveness” and needs to be ready to accept the unexpected, “I feel that I have to probably be a little more flexible to sort of navigating whatever comes up”. In her

response, she cited *moment-to-moment awareness* and energy in her answer. For participant 1, this energy was connected to feelings of joy, “there can also be moments of joy.”

**Q6: What are the opportunities and challenges of practicing contemplative pedagogy in your teaching and the work setting? How does it affect you in other areas?**

For Participant 1, the challenges around practicing contemplative pedagogy were to make sure it was directly tied to a pedagogical purpose and, in particular, reflection. She shared that she experienced unexpected moments of joy from integrating contemplative practices in her teaching.

*Table 2*

*Analysis of Interview with participant 1*

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Lifeworld existential theme</b>	<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Protective factor</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
“And there can also be moments of joy when someone says something that I wasn’t expecting, or someone makes a really strong point after the reflection process”	Lived time: You feel present to the moment -Present moment awareness		Gratitude Mindfulness	Teaching goal: Students connected to content
“what comes to my mind, for me, would be a greater attentiveness. Because I have to, to be present to what they are experiencing”	Lived other: You feel connected with students			Attention
“there might be some anxiety”	Lived body: you feel courage	Nontraditional approach		
“I mean, in the humanities, faculty certainly are receptive to this kind of thing”	Lived space: you feel connected		Like-minded colleagues	
“there can also be moments of joy”	Lived body: you feel happy, joy	Can be difficult to tie the		Joy in classroom

		approach to the content goal
"I feel that I have to probably be a little more flexible to sort of navigate whatever comes up"	Lived others: you feel like you accept your students unconditionally	Teaching reflexivity

**Summary of Interview with Participant 1:**

Participant 1 started the interview by sharing when and how she started practicing contemplative and reflected many times throughout the interview on students’ reactions to the contemplative practices and on her own teaching goals in providing the contemplative practices. She felt that contemplative practices gave her a sense of joy and helped her feel more present in her life and in the moment to moment living of her life. The themes reflected by this participant related to the six interview questions are feeling connected, feeling joy, happiness, her sense of present moment awareness, and fostering student’s learning and understanding of the material. She feels a sense of reservation to share the practice and claim it as a pedagogy since it is not the traditional and popular way of teaching. There was a feeling of being able to accept her students unconditionally and she felt a sense of courage in her teaching. There were also feelings of gratitude and mindfulness.

***Participant 2***

My interview with Participant 2 occurred over zoom due to the covid 19 pandemic and the inability to meet in person. After she responded to my email to share that she would like to participate, I emailed the consent form for her to review and sign. Once she returned the consent form via email, I shared a short demographic form with her. We then agreed on a time to meet and I shared the zoom link with her. Once we began the meeting, I verbally asked her if she felt



comfortable engaging in the interview and confirmed that it would be a suitable time for her to respond to my questions. Before proceeding into the interview, I reviewed the consent form in detail and obtained verbal consent that she understood and wanted to proceed to participate in the study.

### *Interview Protocol Questions*

**Q1: What experiences have you had utilizing contemplative practices in your teaching?**

**When and how have you started the practice?**

Participant 2 shared that she came to contemplative practices because of the positive experience of her *own personal contemplative practice* and considered that those practices could be of use in the classroom. Participant 2 reflected on her role as teacher and saw a connection between the benefits of her practice and how she could bridge these activities into her teaching. She realized the benefits of contemplative practices could be integrated into her teaching and used as a *support for future professionals*. She realized this especially since she had worked professionally in her field and wanted to bring those benefits to her students,

*I definitely feel my role is to educate them more than just in the discipline, I want them, I want them to be able to think about what's going on, I want them to be able to connect with each other and have empathy. And yes, I want them to be a good scientist. But I also want them to be a good person and know how to take care of themselves.*

**Q2: What thoughts come to your mind when you think about contemplative practices in general? How do you feel about your practice of contemplation?**

When asked about her thoughts and feelings around contemplative practices in her teaching, Participant 2 began her answer with how the practices made her feel and replied that she found it helped with “*stress reduction and just generally enhances wellbeing*”. She shared that some of

the feelings that arise for her when she reflects on her contemplative experience, are feeling in the moment and that “doing the doing any sort of like contemplative practice has allowed me to just really *embrace the moments*.”

**Q3 How is your engagement affected as a teacher when you use contemplative practices?**

Participant 2 shared that she feels engaged when bringing contemplative practices into her teaching to the point at which it increases her energy and productivity with teaching duties, “I can often find myself being more productive after a contemplative practice.”

**Q4: How do you live your contemplative practice in and out of your workplace, outside of the classroom?**

Participant 2 reflected on the stresses of managing her teaching life and professional life and the new stress of the strain from the global covid-19 pandemic. She shared that all of these together can be *overwhelming* but that engaging in contemplative practices can help her. She shared “While I'm working all of sudden, if one of the guided meditations comes on, it's like a time just to take a little three minute to five-minute timeout, so that's been really helpful.”

**Q5: What are the benefits of practicing contemplative pedagogy? How did it make you feel?**

Participant 2 found that one benefit of bringing contemplative practices to her teaching was the *connection* she could make with her students. She shared, “we were able to connect on a different level, which is really nice. So, for me, it was gratifying, just getting to see their personalities more as individuals”. She shared that it also helped her authentically view her students and connect with them on a human-to-human level; she shared that the practices “helps remind me how much they're taking on and how much everyone was taking on during this time”.

**Q6: What are the opportunities and challenges of practicing contemplative pedagogy in your teaching and the work setting? How does it affect you in other areas?**

An opportunity that Participant 2 shared around bringing contemplative practices into the classroom was to share these practices with her students as they continue into their professional careers. She offered a perspective of sharing her experiences in the field as *professional guidance* for these students. She added:

*When you keep hearing about these really violent crimes, year after year, it gets to be really draining and really stressful...so my goal is to help them set up practices now that can help them deal with those feelings later. I think it's hard for them; they don't think they'll ever feel like that they don't think that, you know, the job will drain them, but I can take what they're feeling now with all the classes and that sort of stress and build shared practices that help them deal with that now. And hopefully, they will learn to continue.*

One challenge participant 2 shared was not having enough faculty sharing that they practiced contemplative pedagogy or actually practicing it in their classes. She shared, “If we had more people talking about it that way, maybe the students won't make me feel like I was crazy,” and that she wished other faculty would acknowledge contemplative pedagogy as a good pedagogical practice. She also felt the challenge of working with a pedagogy that is considered *nontraditional* and shared, “I get many eye rolls.” This was particularly true in her field; she shared, “especially being in a science field, this was never something that was presented, and so it just seems so foreign”.

Table 3

*Analysis of Interview with participant 2*

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Lifeworld existential theme</b>	<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Protective factor</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
“I feel like it really grounds me in the moment, right? Because there's always so much to be thinking about and worrying about”	Lived time: present moment Lived body: feeling present in body	Stress of academic career		Support for future professionals, learning self-care
“They (the students) only called me crazy one time but I definitely felt it”	Lived Relationship: I feel connect and accept self and other Lived relationship: connection to students	Nontraditional approach		
“definitely a calming feeling comes over me during the practice. And, and just the sense of connection to what I'm doing in that moment”	Lived body: sense of calm		Resources of own practice	Connected teaching
“stress reduction and just generally enhances wellbeing”	Lived body: I feel less stress Lived Space: I feel well		Everyday practice	
“I can often find myself being more productive after a contemplative practice”	Lived Time: I feel more productive Lived body: increased energy		Positive self-talk	

**Summary of Interview with Participant 2:** Participant 2 shared the many benefits she felt from engaging in contemplative practices and how they supported her overall wellbeing. Participant 2 also offered many reasons why she felt these contemplative practices would help her students not only during her class but as they moved into their professional careers. The themes expressed in the interview with Participant 2 reflected the lived existential of lived time through feeling more productive and feeling present, as well as lived body through an increase in energy, calm, less stressed and feeling present in one’s body. The lived existentials of lived relationship was also

present through the themes of feeling connected to one's self and connected to students as well as lived space of feeling well. The themes present in Participant 2's interview that would could be defined as risk factors include the stress of academic career and the themes connected to protective factors were participant's own practice. The themes related to teaching include expressing her professional expertise through teaching how to care for one's self and connecting to students through teaching.

### ***Participant 3***

My interview with Participant 3 occurred over zoom due to the covid 19 pandemic and the inability to meet in person. After he responded to my email to share that he would like to participate, I emailed the consent form for him to review and sign. However, he requested that I send the consent form via postal mail due to technical issues and due to the covid 19 pandemic, we could not exchange the paperwork in person. After receiving the paper consent form, we then agreed on a time to meet, and I shared the zoom link with him. I also shared the short demographic form with him. Once we began the meeting, I verbally asked him if he felt comfortable engaging in the interview and confirmed that it would be a suitable time for him to respond to my questions. Before proceeding into the interview, I reviewed the consent form in detail and obtained verbal consent that he understood and wanted to proceed to participate in the study.

### ***Interview Protocol Questions***

**Q1: What experiences have you had utilizing contemplative practices in your teaching?**

**When and how have you started the practice?**

Participant 3 shared that contemplative practices were woven throughout his whole life when asked this question. He shared that "it seemed very natural to do because I, the contemplative

sensibility, not just the practices, but the sensibility, *contemplative sensibility imbues all of my life*. And my teaching is an expression of my life. So it seemed very natural to bring it into my teaching, how could I not, in a way.” Participant 3 also shared that he brought in contemplative practices for a convenient reason:

*I knew that experiential learning was often more effective than mere conceptual learning. Right, so many classes are focused on learning about something rather than actually engaging with that something, and contemplative practice allows us experiential access and contact and **experiential exploration** of what we're focused on.*

**Q2: What thoughts come to your mind when you think about contemplative practices in general? How do you feel about your practice of contemplation?**

Participant 3 shared that he feels a variety of different feelings when he engages in contemplative practices. It also depends upon the type of contemplative practice he engages in. He shared, “I feel a sort of creative interruption or subversion of my habits and conventions and defenses...and out of that interruption, I feel a space of *awareness*, a kind of consciousness that allows me to see more clearly, to see more intimately, to see more deeply”.

**Q3: How is your engagement affected as a teacher when you use contemplative practices?**

Participant 3 shared that he experiences several different feelings related to his engagement and shared that the integration of contemplative practices aids his engagement through the experiences of *fun and playfulness*. He shared:

*for me, it just makes it more lively, more engaged, often more fun...there's a different kind of **interaction**, there's a different kind of **energy** in the room. There can be playfulness at times. It's just lively or more energized, engaged...there's a deepening, a*

*more profound contact between me and the students and also, I see a **deepening contact** between the students and their own self.*

He shared that engagement also supports connection not only between himself and his students but students to themselves.

**Q4: How do you live your contemplative practice in and out of your workplace, outside of the classroom?**

For Participant 3, contemplative practices are woven throughout all aspects of life and how we relate to the world. He shared, “it's life-enhancing both for us and for our relational partners, conversational partners here I'm including, students, friends, intimate relationships. The larger natural world can be a relational partner, too. So contemplative practices, I think, are profoundly helpful. And both in teaching, and in life beyond teaching as well.

Participant 3 shared how contemplative practices supported his overall relationships in his life. He is able to respond more authentically to not only his students but his colleagues and loved ones in his personal life, “And out of that space, I can **respond more appropriately**, hopefully with a little more understanding, love, compassion, justice.”

Participant 3 also shared that being a teacher was connected to meaning and purpose for him in life and that contemplative practices offer this method of achieving that meaning and **purpose with these students**. He shared:

*I'm a professor because it's one way to touch people's lives, to touch people's suffering, and to also tap into to the joy and the beauty and the wonder of being alive. To offer them conditions for and opportunities to real into their own, to live in a way that really matters to them. And contemplative practices aren't the only way to do that by any means, but they sure facilitate them. And I think that's why I cherish them.*

**Q5: What are the benefits of practicing contemplative pedagogy? How did it make you feel?**

Participant 3 shared that he supported his teaching goals for students taking his helping profession course, which would encourage them to engage in topics of living and how to *support themselves as future practitioners* supporting clients trying to live in the world. He shared:

*I'm aspiring to afford my students the opportunity for they themselves to set aside their habits, conventions, defenses, presumptions, fast-paced way of moving in the world so that they can slow down and see more deeply. And upon seeing more deeply, maybe going on to think more deeply, more critically more creatively and translate that into practical action in some way.*

**Q6: What are the opportunities and challenges of practicing contemplative pedagogy in your teaching and the work setting? How does it affect you in other areas?**

Some of the benefits of integrating contemplative practices into teaching that Participant 3 shared related to connecting with others. He shared, “The real point is somehow to have those be integrated into our life in ourselves in a more stable way, so that they facilitate, more intimate, more open, more aware, more loving, more understanding, ways of relating to each other, including relating to a particular I would say semantic content of the particular course.”

Additionally, he offered that bringing in contemplative pedagogy provided a way to support his teaching goal of making the content more experiential, he shared, “moving into the experiential realm deepened the learning.”

Participant 3 had noticed that early in his teaching career, he had felt unsure at times if he could openly share how he brought his contemplative practices into his teaching. He reflected that society many times does not support a present-centered existence and that contemplative



approaches reflect a nontraditional approach. However, at his current *tenured position*, he shared, “I have to say, fortunately, everything that I've wanted to do as a teacher, has been encouraged and supported at Duquesne by my colleagues, by my chair, etc.” and that that supportive environment allowed him more freedom in his teaching.

Table 4

*Analysis of Interview with participant 3*

Significant Statement	Lifeworld existential theme	Risk Factor	Protective factor	Teaching
“I cherish them because contemplative practices can be truly life changing”	Lived relationship: enhanced relationship, lived body: wellbeing	Society/nontraditional approach	security through position	
“I feel they interrupt the momentum of our habitual sort of fast-paced, rushing, habitual presumptions about ourselves in the world and other people”	Lived time: present moment, lived other: relations with others		wellbeing from own practice	teaching goals: experiential learning
“I think contemplative practice can sponsor, more creative thinking, more critical thinking, can sponsor actual transformation. So the move from information to transformation can be cultivated with contemplative practice.”	Lived space: Wellbeing		sense of transformation from own practice	Supports teaching goals: critical thinking, creativity

**Summary of Interview with Participant 3:** Participant 3’s experiences reflected his vast experience with contemplative pedagogy and the depth with which he has been able to engage with his students in meaningful ways. His responses also showed that engaging in contemplative practices throughout a lifetime can offer deeply meaningful effects in one’s life and those around us. For participant 3 the lived existential themes of lived body and lived space were expressed

through a sense of wellbeing. The lived existential of lived time was expressed through the feeling of the present moment and the lived existential of lived other through relationships with others. The themes that can be related to risk factors was the nontraditional approach that contemplative practices offer. The protective factors offered in participant 3's responses were the security of a tenured position and sense of wellbeing one receives from one's own practice. The themes around teaching accomplished the teaching goals of critical thinking and creativity.

#### ***Participant 4***

My interview with Participant 4 occurred over zoom due to the covid 19 pandemic and the inability to meet in person. After she responded to my email to share that she would like to participate, I emailed the consent form for her to review and sign. Once she returned the consent form via email, I shared a short demographic form with her. We then agreed on a time to meet, and I shared the zoom link with her. Once we began the meeting, I verbally asked her if she felt comfortable engaging in the interview and confirmed that it would be a suitable time for her to respond to my questions. Before proceeding into the interview I reviewed the consent form in detail and obtained verbal consent that she understood and wanted to proceed to participate in the study.

#### *Interview Protocol Questions*

**Q1: What experiences have you had utilizing contemplative practices in your teaching?**

**When and how have you started the practice?**

Participant 4 shared how important contemplative practice is to her life and that she wanted to integrate it into her teaching,

*What comes to my mind is the importance of it in a very personal way to my own life, which I think it's from that, that I felt the desire to share it with my students, especially in*

*how important it was to me in my practice, as an occupational therapist in a very stressful burn unit, and then in a very stressful rehab center, and as an administrator, that keeping my sense of my center and what was essential in stepping back has always been really important to, I think, to be more effective in what I'm doing. So I really wanted that for my students as well*

**Q2: What thoughts come to your mind when you think about contemplative practices in general? How do you feel about your practice of contemplation?**

Participant 4 shared that the thoughts and feelings that arise for her when she practices and thinks of contemplative practices are: peace, groundedness serenity, trust openness, mindfulness, awareness, gratefulness, being present”.

**Q3: How is your engagement affected as a teacher when you use contemplative practices?**

Participant 4 shared that “using contemplative practices, I think helps me to be more effective in the classroom and more present.” She went on to share how challenging the academic environment can be and how it can affect teacher engagement. It can be hard to stay true to pedagogical goals and support students' learning experiences. Participant 4 shared, “I mean, sometimes I think I'm just working on adrenaline, rather than being really able to tune in to the students. So yeah, I think that the contemplative practices help to kind of guide a more effective and intentional classroom experience.”. She shared further that contemplative practices affect so many aspects of herself as a teacher, “I feel when I use contemplative practices in my teaching, I feel more focused. I feel more aware of the context. And more aware and in touch with the students. I feel a sense of flow. I feel a deeper sense of presence”.

**Q4: How do you live your contemplative practice in and out of your workplace, outside of the classroom?**

Participant 4 shared that contemplative practices are in every aspect of her life; she shared, “I think that first of all, it was it's always been an important part of who I am and how I try to do my everyday activities.”

**Q5: What are the benefits of practicing contemplative pedagogy? How did it make you feel?**

Participant 4 answered this question by sharing an experience that a student had had and emphasizing that this student could take the skills that he had learned in the classroom and apply them to his professional life. Participant 4 had also intentionally offered these practices to support that transition into the professional sphere, through her fieldwork courses.

*And he (the student) said, the second or third time I had to go into a room with ICU, he said, something came to me that I remembered from your mindfulness exercises that you would give us at the beginning of class. And he said, I was feeling so stressed out. But I just decided that what I really needed to do is just to stop. So at the door, before I went in, he said, I took a minute or two to take mindful breaths. It gave me so much energy just to do deep breathing exercises, focus, and be mindful of where I was, and the patient who I was going to see, and the family members that might be in there. And he said, that has made such a difference in my life.*

Participant 4 offered these experiences and shared how much joy she found it hearing that her student was able to take this practice and bring it into this professional sphere.

**Q6: What are the opportunities and challenges of practicing contemplative pedagogy in your teaching and the work setting? How does it affect you in other areas?**

One challenge that participant 4 shared was the initial offering to students, she shared, “I also recognized that not everyone would be excited and enthusiastic. In fact, there were a lot of eye

rolling”. Additionally, she found that it was hard, early on in her academic career, to share that she practiced contemplative pedagogy in her teaching. She shared, “early on, I felt like I was a voice in the desert, and I was just tempering my conversations, because I discovered that I get so enthusiastic about talking about it”. Later in her career and at her current University, she appreciates and experiences “gratefulness for being at a university and in a profession that respects and honors, this kind of thoughtfulness and this kind of approach to practice”. She shared further that she had a supportive group of colleagues around her that made the difference in offering these practices, and bringing meaning to the practices. She shared that she has,

*colleagues that really know me for life, ...there are a few of my colleagues that, you know, kind of share a similar heart...I feel I'm in a room with colleagues who share a similar heart. And, you know, I think it's good to hear both sides, I think it's important to tune into the skeptics and to learn from, you know, the doubt. And to always be listening to different perspectives. That said, it was also very comforting and inspiring to be with other colleagues who use contemplative practices in the classroom.*

One benefit that participant 4 shared centered around an experience with a peer faculty member who was observing her during a class. Participant 4 had already planned a contemplative activity that day and was anxious about this peer, however the peer responded positively to her contemplative teaching, she shared that the peer “reported that she recognized how it impacted the students in a positive way and openness to learn more”. That experience meant a lot to her, to feel affirmed in her teaching.

*Table 5*

*Analysis of Interview with participant 4*

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Lifeworld existential theme</b>	<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Protective factor</b>	<b>Teaching factor</b>
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I would listen to what the students said, and, you know, try and respond, and in the thoughtful way, but mostly just listening.	Lived others: student faculty relationship		Connection to students	Connected teaching
Some of my colleagues kind of shook their head and, like, “of course, she's going to do that, good luck with that.” And, you know, kind of disbelief that the students would actually pay attention or engage in this five-minute activity.”	Lived others: relationships with colleagues	Nontraditional teaching practice, lack of support from colleagues		
“how important it is, in my life, to help with keeping my equilibrium”	Lived body: wellbeing	stress of academic career	wellbeing from own practice, like-minded colleagues	
“And he said, that has made such a difference in my life.”				expressing professional expertise, connected teaching

**Summary of Interview with Participant 4:** Participant 4 shared a variety of ways in which contemplative practices have nourished both her personal life and professional life. She also shared the impact these practices can have on future professionals. The emphasis on colleagues who support one’s pedagogical strategies is also evident here. The lived existential themes of lived body were expressed as a sense of wellbeing. The lived existential theme of lived relationship was expressed through the themes of connecting with students and with colleagues. The themes representing risk factors included lack of support from colleagues, contemplative pedagogy as a nontraditional practice and the stress of an academic career. The themes representing protective factors include the community of like-minded colleagues and the sense of wellbeing she receives from her own practice. The themes related to teaching include the sense of connection she feels with her students and also the expression of her professional expertise.

### *Participant 5*

Interview with Participant 5: My interview with Participant 5 occurred over zoom due to the covid 19 pandemic and the inability to meet in person. After responding to my email to share that she would like to participate, I emailed the consent form for her to review and sign. Once she returned the consent form via email, I shared a short demographic form with her. We then agreed on a time to meet and I shared the zoom link with her. Once we began the meeting, I verbally asked her if she felt comfortable engaging in the interview and confirmed that it would be a suitable time for her to respond to my questions. Before proceeding into the interview, I reviewed the consent form in detail and obtained verbal consent that she understood and wanted to proceed to participate in the study.

#### *Interview Protocol Questions*

**Q1: What experiences have you had utilizing contemplative practices in your teaching?**

**When and how have you started the practice?**

Participant 5 shared that she originally brought contemplative practices into her teaching because she had wanted to support her students well-being during their communications courses. She shared, “they just wanted to get done with the speech, rather than stay and be present in the moment with their audience which is critical to effective speaking in front of a group of people, so I felt like you know, they need to slow down, they really need to slow down, they need to feel connected to themselves and to the people they're speaking to”.

**Q2: What thoughts come to your mind when you think about contemplative practices in general? How do you feel about your practice of contemplation?**

For Participant 5 there are many thoughts that she offered in relation to her own experience of contemplative practices and thought them in terms of the different forms and different aspects of an individual that contemplative practices touch on. She offered that she feels:

*a sense of ease, I start with feeling the breath, the body...there's an increased awareness of the body and the breath. And then a sense of connection with the surroundings, including contact with the seat, and contact with the air and temperature and all those things. And then along with all that usually comes a sense of allowing, being this, staying here. Listening. Receptive, open. Peaceful.*

She shared that she engages in these practices because they “facilitate the connection and immediate connection to the experience of the body, mind, heart, in the present moment”.

**Q3: How is your engagement affected as a teacher when you use contemplative practices?**

Participant 5 shared that her engagement increases when using contemplative practices in her teaching. She shared that in relation to her teaching she finds herself in a, “relaxed mode of being more in tune with things as they are rather than demanding, imposing, wanting”. For participant 5 being more in-tune and present to the current moment supports her engagement as a teacher.

**Q4: How do you live your contemplative practice in and out of your workplace, outside of the classroom?**

Participant 5 shared that being able to bring her contemplative self into the classroom only furthers her life experiences of living contemplatively. It becomes an additional support to her life and her relationships to the world. She shared, “the more I can keep the connection to my body, my thoughts, judgments, resistance or reactions, then I notice it's much more natural, much more flowing, much more helpful” in her life.



**Q5: What are the benefits of practicing contemplative pedagogy? How did it make you feel?**

Participant 5 shared the benefits of contemplative pedagogy in relation to her teaching. She shared that it helps her feel more *connected to students* and that her teaching becomes more pleasurable. She shared, “you know, your teaching becomes joyful rather than something you have to do... I feel a sense of playfulness”. She also shared how this “I would say, it really helps me walk with the students rather than talk at the students kind of an experience”

**Q6: What are the opportunities and challenges of practicing contemplative pedagogy in your teaching and the work setting? How does it affect you in other areas?**

Participant 5 shared that she *felt hesitant* to offer contemplative practices initially and connected it to her identity as an international scholar. She shared, “I used to feel a bit anxious before because it is not part of this culture. It's not a familiar practice, students can be resistant, they question and they're thoughtful of what is being done”. She felt that she was able to move past this hesitation, however, once she had academic job security, she shared, “with tenure, though, you have the extra confidence”.

*Table 6*

*Analysis of Interview with participant 5*

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Lifeworld existential theme</b>	<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Protective factor</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
“I would introduce contemplative practices with a sense of hesitation even. But I never gave up because of the connection that I strongly felt”	Lived others: connection	Non-traditional practice hesitation	Own practice tenure (academic status/stage)	connected teaching
“I felt the need to slow the students down to have them be more	Lived other: connecting with students			

grounded in the moment and in their bodies because without that connection and awareness of self, how do you reach out to the other?"	Lived time: slowing down		
"I become more responsive, rather than reactive, and much more grounded and spontaneous and creative in working with students."	Lived other: connected to students Lived body: present	Increased faculty responsiveness increased creativity	connected teaching

**Summary of Interview with Participant 5:** Participant 5 was very honest about the differences between being a newer faculty offering contemplative practices and being a tenured professor with more freedom to offer practices. She also shared the unique perspectives as an international scholar and the different cultural subtleties that may affect how teachers offer and if they choose to offer contemplative practices. The themes that emerged from participant 5’s interview concerning the lived existential of lived body were feeling present, the theme for lived relationship was feeling connected to others. The theme that arose for risk factor was the non-traditional approach that contemplative pedagogy is. The themes that arose around protective factors related to academic status and like-minded colleagues. The themes that arose around her teaching were a sense of connection with students and accomplishing the learning goals.

***Participant 6***

Interview with Participant 6: My interview with Participant 6 occurred over zoom due to the covid 19 pandemic and the inability to meet in person. After responded to my email to share that she would like to participate, I emailed the consent form for her to review and sign. Once she returned the consent form via email, I shared a short demographic form with her. We then agreed on a time to meet and I shared the zoom link with her. Once we began the meeting, I

verbally asked her if she felt comfortable engaging in the interview and confirmed that it would be a suitable time for her to respond to my questions. Before preceding into the interview, I reviewed the consent form in detail and obtained verbal consent that she understood and wanted to proceed to participate in the study.

### *Interview Protocol Questions*

**Q1: What experiences have you had utilizing contemplative practices in your teaching?**

**When and how have you started the practice?**

Participant 6 sought to bring contemplative practices into her teaching to *support her teaching goals*, she shared, “try to apply that to how I’m teaching to make them self aware of their own process of learning and their own strategies and how to apply those to their lives, you know, and into their studies, but also to move it into other contexts.”

**Q2: What thoughts come to your mind when you think about contemplative practices in general? How do you feel about your practice of contemplation?**

For Participant 6 when she considers contemplative pedagogy, she considers the different aspects of herself that are brought into being. She shared, “there’s physical, there’s mental and there’s spiritual connections” and that she feels *deeply connected to the world* when she engages in contemplative practices.

**Q3: How is your engagement affected as a teacher when you use contemplative practices?**

Participant 6 found that she was able to be more present with her students when engaging with contemplative practices in her teaching. She shared, “it’s a matter of slowing down myself and taking that space”.

**Q4: How do you live your contemplative practice in and out of your workplace, outside of the classroom?**

When considering how contemplative practices are lived in Participant 6's life she shared those contemplative practices give her a *sense of connectedness* and *belonging in the world*, she shared "I am able to fully experience the world and a sense of confidence that there is belonging". She shared those contemplative practices give her *more confidence* in herself because she spends that time with herself.

**Q5: What are the benefits of practicing contemplative pedagogy? How did it make you feel?**

Participant 6 found that bringing in contemplative practices to her teaching helped her to *accomplish teaching goals* for her students. She shared, "contemplation encourages students to reflect on what they're doing and realize, become self-aware of what they're doing and recognize that they are progressing and how they're progressing and how they can continue to progress and to use that in other contexts". Participant 6 further shared that she finds the benefit, as a teacher, of seeing her students connect to their own potential. She shared, "it's about *awakening the student's possibilities*...to the possibilities within themselves". This participant shared how she longed for more faculty who shared her practice of contemplative pedagogy, "*If we had more people talking about it...maybe the students won't feel like I was crazy...my colleagues, they don't really acknowledge it*".

**Q6: What are the opportunities and challenges of practicing contemplative pedagogy in your teaching and the work setting? How does it affect you in other areas?**

One challenge that participant 6 shared in offering contemplative practices in her teaching arose from the *stresses of working in academia*. She shared the pressures as, "there's a lot of extra stuff that we're having to do now, we have to do a lot of mental power, we have to devote time to things that will help us stay viable or to show our value to the university, and then still provide

students with the support they need”. Participant 6 also shared that she had wanted to bring contemplative practices into her teaching more fully however she had been managing multiple teaching assignments as an adjunct faculty member. It was when she obtained a full-time position and increased her *academic status* at the university, that she was able to bring the fullness of her contemplative pedagogy into her teaching practice.

*Table 7*

*Analysis of Interview with participant 6*

<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Lifeworld existential theme</b>	<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Protective factor</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
“Nobody has time. The university forces us to cover so much material in so little time and doesn't leave much time to support students more.”	Lived time: lack of time	Stresses of academic career	academic status	connected teaching
“a feeling of lightness”	Lived body: wellbeing			
“The teaching center is so great for connecting with others and reflecting on teaching”	Lived other: connecting with others		Like-minded colleagues	
“awaking student’s possibilities”	connecting with others			accomplishing teaching goals
“If we had more people talking about it...maybe the students won't feel like I was crazy...my colleagues, they don't really acknowledge”	Lived others: connected with other practioners	Less acknowledgment Not-popular method		

**Summary of Interview with Participant 6:** Participant 6 authentically shared her experiences of being a nontenured faculty and the differences between having a contract-based teaching position and a full-time position. She shared the goals she has for her students outside of the traditional pedagogical definitions. The themes that emerged for Participant 6 include related to

lived relationships include connecting with others through the use of contemplative practices. In addition, like-minded colleagues and her own wellbeing were protective factor themes that arose. The themes of risk factors included the stresses of an academic career, lack of time and navigating academic status were themes as well. The themes concerning teaching that arose were accomplishing her teaching goals.

### ***Participant 7***

Interview with Participant 7: My interview with Participant 7 occurred over zoom due to the covid 19 pandemic and the inability to meet in person. After responded to my email to share that she would like to participate, I emailed the consent form for her to review and sign. Once she returned the consent form via email, I shared a short demographic form with her. We then agreed on a time to meet and I shared the zoom link with her. Once we began the meeting I verbally asked her if she felt comfortable engaging in the interview and confirmed that it would be a suitable time for her to respond to my questions. Before preceding into the interview I reviewed the consent form in detail and obtained verbal consent that she understood and wanted to proceed to participate in the study.

### *Interview Protocol Questions*

**Q1: What experiences have you had utilizing contemplative practices in your teaching?**

**When and how have you started the practice?**

Participant 7 shared that she decided to introduce contemplative practices into her teaching for ***her own wellbeing*** and in response a ***stressful academic environment***. She shared:

*I first decided to use contemplative practices because I was under a lot of stress, physical and emotional stress that was causing my body to express the stress through migraines. A*

*colleague suggested I try mindfulness, meditation, and breathing techniques to help me to manage my stress levels and I decided to take it on as part of my teaching and learning.*

Participant 7 also shared that she had began engaging with contemplative practices in reaction to the feedback she had received from students when she first began teaching as a full-time university professor. She shared that on her students surveys that she was “really smart, but she's all over the place”. Participant 7 decided to bring in the contemplative practices to have a more ***relaxed environment in her teaching*** she shared, “I have noticed that since being more contemplative in my practice and in my personal life and my teaching, then those kinds of comments have actually reduced...and now I get comments, almost the opposite, she has a ***calming presence***”.

**Q2: What thoughts come to your mind when you think about contemplative practices in general? How do you feel about your practice of contemplation?**

For Participant 7, the feelings and thoughts that arise for her reflect supportive concerns. She shared, “***I feel confident, I feel safe*** and vulnerable at the same time”.

**Q3: How is your engagement affected as a teacher when you use contemplative practices?**

Participant 4 feels that the ***safety level increases*** with contemplative practices especially since she touches on difficult topics. She shared, “the reason I do that is because I think it makes it a safer space because when it's safer, they will take more risks”. This faculty member shared:

*“I think that, you know, a few of my colleagues that, you know, kind of share a similar heart, we're open to listening to the stories because I found myself sharing it outside of our, you know, outside of our wrangles faculty. And then, once you started those reflection groups on contemplative practice in the classroom, and even the group on spirits and parent pedagogy as well, I say, Well, you know, I'm in a room with colleagues*

*who share a similar heart. And, you know, I think it's good to hear both sides, I think it's important to tune into the skeptics and to learn from, you know, the doubt. And to always be listening to different perspectives. That said, it was also very comforting and inspiring to be with other colleagues who use contemplative practices in the classroom.”*

**Q4: How do you live your contemplative practice in and out of your workplace, outside of the classroom?**

Participant 7 feels that she has been able to grow through her use of contemplative practices but in and out of the classroom. She shared, “it's become part of how sort of I show up. It's part of my presence...so I have grown”.

**Q5: What are the benefits of practicing contemplative pedagogy? How did it make you feel?**

One benefit that Participant 7 shared was the contemplative pedagogy allowed her to share pedagogical skills that her students would be experiencing in their professional field placement settings. She shared, “I get the validation and the confirmation from them with the things that I'm saying in the classroom, the University classroom, and the connections they make with the field experiences, or their school based learning. And that is extremely valuable.

**Q6: What are the opportunities and challenges of practicing contemplative pedagogy in your teaching and the work setting? How does it affect you in other areas?**

Some of the benefits of contemplative practice are offering *a safe space for both student and professional* and the blossoming that comes out of that. She shared, “maybe holistic, empathetic, *compassionate*, they might use those words. And, and I think, again, because I've created a safe space”.

*Table 8*

*Analysis of Interview with participant 7*



<b>Significant Statement</b>	<b>Lifeworld existential theme</b>	<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Protective factor</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
But in those moments, unplanned moments and uncomfortable moments, you realize that maybe the contemplative practices serve to the cultivate the soil...cultivate the, moment of solidarity or the moment of empathy.	Lived others: connection	Nontraditional teaching method		Teaching difficult subjects
I just don't have the time now	Lived time: lack of time		safe space	
for me, it was it was just a way of managing stress	Lived body: stress	Stress of academic career	her own practice	
And then I thought, Well, why don't I teach them contemplative practices, to see if that might help them, to be better able to focus, and to help them, you know, develop this, to help them develop the skills that they could use during the week, during the rest of their lives. And also, as a practitioner, I knew that it was really important to me, in working in stressful situations, which sometimes is daily, in the clinic, or in the rehab center. So, I thought, you know, as a life, you know, as a life skill that this would be, maybe something. So I think it was overall that desire to help them to cope with their daily life, and hopefully to be more focused and in tune to class to be more intentional.”	Lived body: lessen stress more focus			Enhance responsiveness  Help students coping on their stress

**Summary of Interview with Participant 7:** Participant 7 shared the various ways in which she came to contemplative practice and how it has grown to be a space of physical and psychical wellbeing. She shared many experiences of being stressed from working in the academic environment. The themes that arose in relation to the lived existential were a sense of stress with her lived body. The risk factors that arose were the stress of an academic career. The protective

factors that arose were her own practice. The teaching-based themes that arose were her teaching of difficult topics and creating a safe space.

### **Cross Case Analysis**

In this section, I provide a cross-case analysis of themes that emerged from the data (see Table 9). Some of the findings emphasized the lived existential of being a contemplative practitioner in the helping field in higher education (i.e. lived time, lived space, lived body, and lived other). Some of the findings emphasize the risk factors and resources that appear to be constructed in the environment of higher education. Each of the categories and themes offered in this portion of the study reveal the lived experiences of faculty who teach in the helping professions and utilize contemplative pedagogy in their teaching.

Overall, the cross- case analysis, along with the themed analysis, showed key findings common to all participants. The key findings or themes that emerged reflect the experiences of faculty who utilize contemplative pedagogy and teach in the helping professions. Eight major themes emerged under four categories (see Table 10) that explicate how faculties in the helping professions experience contemplative pedagogy in their teaching. Each theme is presented in relation to the research goal, which reflects lived existential (of lived space, lived body, lived time and lived other). Of ecological factors, and behavior affected by utilizing contemplative pedagogy as a teacher.

*Table 9*

*A cross-case Analysis of Themes, Similarity, and Differences*

<b>Theory</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Lived Existential	Lived Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Faculty doing well               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Alignment between body and mind</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Practicing contemplation in and out of classroom/teaching</li> </ul>
	Lived Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Feeling well <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feeling joy</li> <li>○ Feeling relaxed</li> <li>○ Mind body connection</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Lived Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Present moment awareness</li> <li>○ Authenticity</li> </ul>
	Lived others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enhanced student-teacher relationship</li> <li>○ Enhanced students understanding of self and learning materials</li> </ul>
Ecological	Risk Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stresses of academic career,</li> <li>● nontraditional approach</li> </ul>
	Protective Factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Own practice,</li> <li>● like-minded colleagues</li> <li>● Academic freedom</li> </ul>
Teaching	Teaching Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enhanced faculty responsiveness</li> </ul>
	Pedagogical Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enhances expression of professional expertise,</li> <li>● Supports teaching goals</li> </ul>

## Chapter Summary

The inspiration for this research was to discover the lived experiences of faculty who utilize contemplative pedagogy and teach in the helping professions. The data for this research came from 7 faculty interviews, faculty who were at different stages of their academic careers and were teaching in the helping professions and utilizing contemplative practices in their teaching. The themes from the transcribed interviews were organized through the categories guided by the research questions and methodology. The data was then coded based on significant statements and then organized around emergent themes and then structured and explored in the cross-case analysis. These themes included faculty wellbeing, nontraditional approach, stress of academic career, own practice, importance of like-minded colleagues, enhanced faculty responsiveness, supports teaching goals, and supports expression of professional expertise. These

categories arose from the theoretical orientations of the study. The final chapter of this dissertation reviews the broader implications of this research as well as limitations and future directions for research.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

*The new education must prepare our students to thrive in a world of flux, to be ready no matter what comes next. It must empower them to be leaders of innovation and to be able, not only to adapt to a changing world but also to change the world. (Davidson, p. 255, 2017)*

This chapter offers an overview of the study and a discussion of the findings that pertain to the research questions. The guiding research question for this study is *what are the lived experiences of faculty that utilize contemplative pedagogical approaches and teach courses in the helping professions?* There are four subsidiary questions support the answering of the guiding question above: (1) What are the lived existential (lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived other) of being contemplative practitioners in higher institutes program that focus on training helping professionals? (2) What risk factors exist in the environment (s) of faculties who practice contemplative pedagogy? (3) What protective factors appear or need to be constructed in the environment(s) of the faculties to cultivate the practice of contemplative pedagogy in and out of the classroom? and (4) How does the practice of contemplative pedagogy shape the behavior of the faculties in the working environment? The implication of this study for future research, the field of counseling, and questions generated by this study along with a conclusion and chapter summary are included in this chapter.

### **Overview of the Study**

Contemplative Pedagogy is an emerging practice in the field of teaching and learning; however, little is known of faculty who practice this form of pedagogy, especially those faculty teaching in the helping professions. The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological oriented study was to explore the experiences of faculty who teach in the helping professions and utilize contemplative pedagogy in their teaching. Based on the literature review, which focused on contemplative pedagogy and previous research of faculty who use contemplative pedagogy I

constructed the research questions to allow for a phenomenological arising of the experiences of faculty who use this approach. To accomplish that, I selected seven faculty members who met the criteria of this study: (1) faculty in the field of helping professions, (2) actively practicing contemplative pedagogy in their teaching, and (3) willing to share their experience with me through an interview.

The interviews were first transcribed and then reviewed for clarity and errors. Next, the data was coded line by line through the Atlas.ti program. After the coding, themes were organized based on the theoretical orientation of the study and the research questions. The themes and data were then organized and structured through the cross-case analysis to provide a comparison view of faculty experiences.

This qualitative study contributes to the field by providing a view into the experiences of faculty who utilize contemplative pedagogy. In looking at the lived existential of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived, other faculty, offered a variety of lived experiences. These themes included faculty well-being; regarding protective factors, the themes of vocation and community of like-minded individuals arose in the review of faculty experiences.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

In the following paragraphs, I provide a detailed discussion on the lifeworld's of participants through the lens of van Manen's (1990) lifeworld extensions ( lived space, lived body, lived time, and live other) and Bronfenbrenner's (2005) risk and protective factors, as well as the behavioral implication of contemplative practice for teaching and pedagogical enhancement.

### ***Lifeworld Existential***

**Lived Space (Faculty wellbeing).** The space in which the faculties practice contemplative pedagogy, including both in the classroom and out of classroom, contributes to how they maintain their wellbeing. Almost all of the participants expressed how they felt joy ,less stressed, or connected in and out of the classroom. There are a variety of positive effects to one's well-being resulting from the ongoing engagement in contemplative practices. This study of faculty experiences revealed that faculty experience positive changes in their overall wellbeing from the use of contemplative practices in their teaching. As one participant shared, *“your teaching becomes joyful rather than something you have to do”*.

One participant shared how supportive that continued engagement in contemplative practices was for her own wellbeing and how it supported her as a teacher, the practices offered a *“relaxed mode of being more in tune with things as they are rather than demanding, imposing, wanting”*. She shared further that bringing in these practices support her overall balance, *“when I think about contemplative practices on a very personal basis, of how important these are, in my life to help with keeping my equilibrium”*. This need for balance will also cue us to a later theme that emerged which includes the risk factors associated which are the stresses of an academic career. Another faculty member went further to share the benefits that come with continually engaging in a contemplative practice, *“there's an extended benefit of being more focused, being a little bit less stressed, even though I took that time, I always have to think about how it will feel after.”* She went further to share that these practices supported her wellbeing and reduced stress, *“I've definitely found that it's nice, offers a stress reduction. And just generally enhances my well-being”*.

These findings are consistent with the literature about the positive effects of contemplative practice (Zajonc, 2014). One factor that makes contemplative pedagogy optimum

for wellbeing is that it functions in a subjective state and encourages connections with content and others (Bai et al., 2016). For that subjective state to occur and for connection to others to develop we need to be inhabited in our bodies (Hrash, 2019). Faculty wellbeing is an important component in higher educational settings (Hubbard & Atkins, 1995) and there will need to be increasing efforts to support this in higher educational institutions.

**Lived Body (Feeling Joy, Relaxed and a deepened Mind-Body connection).** A key finding common to many of the participants was that their stress level is reduced as a result of intentional contemplative practice and they experience spontaneous joy in the classroom. We find ourselves feeling more joyful when we can be embodied, as contemplative practices help us do, “in full embodiment, one experiences lightness and radiance of being” (Bai et al., 2016). Sarah Rose Cavanaugh (2016) discusses the joyful emotions that are contagious for students when faculty experience pleasure in their teaching. One participant shared, “*there can also be moments of joy when someone says something that I wasn't expecting.*”

Similarly, when we are stressed our nervous systems become activated and we begin to operate in ways that distance us from others or distance us from our internal states which in turn cause distance from others (Van derKolk, 2015). Learning is a relational activity for both the teacher and the student and one might say that it would be pedagogically smart to find methods that support that connection with our students (Schwartz, 2019). Finding ways to experience joy and be less stressed are supports for faculty’s overall wellbeing.

**Lived time (Present moment awareness and authenticity).** Being aware of the present moment was associated with the benefit of contemplative practice for most participants. One participant shared her feeling of being in the moment when she offered contemplative practices, “*just the sense of connection to what I'm doing in that moment*” and other shared her feelings of



*“mindfulness, awareness, gratefulness, being present”*. Another participant shared, *“I feel they interrupt the momentum of our habitual sort of fast-paced, rushing, habitual presumptions about ourselves in the world and other people.”* Experiencing the moment and expressing oneself authentically are additional ways in which we experience our overall well-being (Hubbard & Atkins, 1995). Authenticity in teaching allows us to tap into our creativity (Thompson, 2017) and create these sorts of experiences that help faculty experience wellbeing. Being present to the moment and authentic in our responses not only supports students but supports our own well-being as faculty (Nobel & Powietrzynska, 2021).

**Lived others (enhanced student-faculty connectedness).** Enhanced student-faculty connectedness was a key finding in this research study. Much of learning is based on the relationships we form with our teachers (Ambrose, et al., 2010). One faculty member shared how more connected she feels to students because of her use of contemplative practices, *“I would say, it really helps me walk with the students rather than talk at the students, that kind of an experience”*. This allows faculty to connect to students as human beings, *“as teachers we are in a unique position to offer to our students not just our capacity to impart knowledge and skills, but our essence as people”* (Siegel, 1999, p. 276).

Due to the timing of this study, many faculties were continuing to teach during the Covid-19 pandemic and had decided to utilize contemplative practices to support this student-faculty connectedness. One participant shared, *“helps remind me how much they're taking on and how much everyone was taking on during this time”*. Many faculty felt that due to the global pandemic, their students were experiencing points of helplessness and feeling lost. Another participant shared, *“it's about awakening the student's possibilities. To the possibilities within*

*themselves*". This point returns us to the idea that contemplative practices can help foster a sense of purpose and meaning.

## **Bioecological Themes**

### ***Risk and Protective Factors***

Bronfenbrenner's model provides a framework in which we can understand the various systems of influence around an individual's life and experience. This model helps one understand the individual in their environmental contents through analyzing the diverse microsystems around the individual (Rein, et al., 2005) and then broadening this view to the larger mesosystem that the microsystems are planted in and finally the macrosystem. Faculty were affected by the systems around them in regards to relationships to colleagues and the greater academic environment. The themes that arose from the category of resources were their own contemplative practice and the connection to like-minded colleagues. The themes from the category of risk factors that arose include the academic duties asked of faculty and the opinion of contemplative pedagogy as a nontraditional teaching framework. The category of behavior revealed the theme of enhancement of faculty responsiveness.

### **Protective Factors**

***Academic freedom and Own practice.*** An additional theme that arose from this study was how the instructor's own practice was a resource for their use of contemplative pedagogy in their classes. The literature reflects this, as one of the strongest indications that a faculty member will utilize contemplative practices in their teaching comes from their own practice (Barbezat, 2014). Indeed, the more an instructor engages in their contemplative practices the better they will be at supporting students' experiences when offering these exercises.

One inquiry that offered a deep connection to faculty experiences was when faculty were encouraged to share what they experienced during their own contemplative practice. One faculty member shared, *“I feel a space of awareness, a kind of consciousness that allows me to see more clearly, to see more intimately, to see more deeply”*. Another faculty shared how they experience the pedagogical environment from the use of contemplative practices: *“peace, groundedness, serenity, trust, openness, mindfulness, awareness, gratefulness, being present”* which provides an insight into why these faculty members choose to bring contemplative practices into their teaching. Another participant shared how transformative the practices can be, *“I cherish them because contemplative practices can be truly life changing”*.

One important part in contemplative pedagogy is the ongoing engagement in one’s own practice (Zajonc, 2016). This ongoing engagement is meaningful for teaching purposes as faculty who engage in their own practices and have experiences with both the successes and the inner resistances one encounters will be a support for students when they are also experiencing successes and resistances.

***Importance of like-minded colleagues.*** Faculty offered that one significant resource was connection to and community of like-minded colleagues, whether this was in the form of the university teaching center or other faculty who were supportive in offering contemplative pedagogy. The importance of supportive colleagues in our academic careers cannot be underrated (Shulman & Wilson, 2004, Thompson, 2017). One space that can provide this support are teaching centers (Barbezat & Pingree, 2012), which allow liked-minded faculty to converge and share interests and ideas around teaching and learning. This can come through an institution as one participant shared, *“gratefulness for being at a university and in a profession that respects and honors, this kind of thoughtfulness and this kind of approach to practice”*. Having a group of

colleagues who have knowingly shared that they engage in contemplative pedagogy was very helpful. One participant share, *“I feel I’m in a room with colleagues who share a similar heart. And, you know...it was also very comforting and inspiring to be with other colleagues who use contemplative practices in the classroom.”* A few participants shared the importance of the teaching center as a significant source of support for them.

### **Risk Factors**

***Nontraditional approach.*** Concerning the risk factors that faculty shared, themes arose that showed that faculty faced resistance at times when offering contemplative practices in their teaching or when sharing that they offer contemplative practices with colleagues. Research shows that faculty want to feel that their pedagogical choices are valued and supported by both students and colleagues and also that faculty frequently learn new pedagogical methods and ideas from their colleagues (Andrews, et al., 2016). A number of faculty interviewed, shared the experiences of not being supported in their pedagogical choices. Two faculty shared that there was a negative response when offering a contemplative practice, one participant shared that at times there is *“there were a lot of eye rolling”* and that faculty needed to do extra preparation to convey the pedagogical purpose behind offering the practice. However, this faculty member noted that over time, *“early on, I felt like I was a voice in the desert. And I was just tempered my conversation, because I discovered that I get so enthusiastic about talking about it”*.

One participant shared the experience of negative perceptions by other faculty members when she offered that one of her teaching practices was the utilization of contemplative pedagogy in her teaching. She shared, *“some of my colleagues’ kind of shook their heads, like, “of course, she’s gonna do that, good luck with that”*. She went further to share that her colleagues had a *“kind of disbelief that the students would actually pay attention or engage in*

*this five-minute activity*". Many faculty members cite the need for pedagogical acceptance by peers as a reason for increased teaching excellence (Hall & Archibald, 2008). Another faculty member shared the stress of offering a contemplative practice because of cultural reasons. She shared, *"I used to feel a bit anxious before because it is not part of this culture. It's not a familiar practice, students may resist or they may question."* But over time this can change as another faculty member shared, *"I would introduce contemplative practices with a sense of hesitation even but I never gave up because of the connection that I strongly felt"*.

***Stress of Academic Career.*** Most participants reported that the stress of academic duties contributed to the time constraints they might have as far as planning contemplative activities in class or being able to consider integrating contemplative pedagogy as a teaching support. One participant reflected, *"sometimes I think I'm just working on adrenaline, rather than being really able to tune in to the students"*. There was an understanding that integrating contemplative practices takes time to prepare and also can potentially slow down a traditional lesson plan, although the advantage is of supporting deeper learning and more retention of material (Barbezak & Bush, 2014). When asked why a participant doesn't include more contemplative practices in her teaching she shared, *"nobody has time. The university forces us to cover so much material and so little time and doesn't leave much time"*.

In considering the different and varied responsibilities that faculty have as they advance along the tenure track, one needs to find different resources to balance the stress of this particular professional track. Extended hours and work stress contributes to a lower quality of life for faculty (Jacobs and Winslow, 2004). Faculty continually face increased demands from their academic careers which has shown to decrease their abilities to balance work and life demands including lack of time for both family and self-care practices (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004), this has

only increased with the Covid-19 global pandemic. Faculty members have shared that there has been a decreased sense of overall well-being throughout the Covid-19 global pandemic and that there is a need for additional support and ways to manage stress (Lashuel, 2020). This was reflected in the experiences of faculty as well. One faculty member shared that she was experiencing a tremendous amount of stress, she shared, *“I was under a lot of stress, physical and emotional stress”*. Her response to this stress of academic life was to integrate contemplative practices in both her life and teaching, *“so that is why it was sort of like in response to stress levels, or in response to finding a way to heal or manage my physical symptoms. I decided to take it on as part of my teaching and learning”*. Another participant shared how hard it can be to insert a contemplative activity into her teaching but finds there are rewards when she does, *“I struggle with that, because, you know, you're fighting the urge to do other things all the time. So really trying to make the time because it's been a huge benefit. I can often find myself being more productive after a contemplative practice”*.

### **Pedagogical Techniques in the Helping Professions**

As reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study there are many considerations when teaching students in the helping professions. Through the interviews of these different faculty, many different teaching goals were supported through the use of contemplative practices in their teaching. These goals included the development of personal character, multicultural awareness, and others listed on the table (see Appendix A) by Cole and Lacefield (1978). Many of the experiences that faculty shared when they integrated contemplative practices, revealed many of these personal skills listed. Multicultural awareness was one skill that was summarized in chapter 2 as important for the development of professionals in the helping professions. The two themes that emerged in the relationship of pedagogical techniques in the helping professions were the

support of teaching goals and the support of each faculty member's professional expertise in the helping professions.

### ***Enhanced faculty responsiveness***

An important part of the learning process in any educational setting is the relationship between teacher and student (Ambrose, et al 2010). One aspect that came up frequently, that can be demonstrated in the questions that I as researcher asked, was the pattern of faculty continually coming back to how the activities were affecting the students. Each time I asked about the experience of the contemplative practice faculty offered, they would offer how the exercise was affecting the students but I would need to ask multiple times how it was affecting the faculty member. This may be because faculty members who chose to utilize contemplative practices into their teaching are the same types of faculty members who evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching through the real-time interaction with their students (Cavanaugh, 2016).

One faculty member shared how this deepened her amenableness to students so that she might be more receptive to her students, "*I would listen to what the students said, and, you know, try and respond, and in a thoughtful way, but mostly just listening*". Another participant shared how bringing in a contemplative practice allowed her "*to be more effective in the classroom and more present to my students*". This faculty member shared further the importance of being present to her students that what arises for her is "*a greater attentiveness because I have to be present to what they are experiencing*". A teacher's ability to connect and form relationships (Ambrose et al., 2010) with students supports the overall learning process and faculty engagement.

### ***Supports teaching goals***

Many of the participants shared how the use of contemplative pedagogy helped them accomplish their teaching goals. One participant shared how she had wanted to convey the social aspect of the content she was teaching. She had prepared a contemplative activity around music to encourage her students to experience the expression rather than only intellectualizing the expression. She her focus was on understanding the music as a *“cultural expression and how it's a significant force in our society, the role that music plays and how it helps to bring people together....And so helping students to understand that music is not just lyrics. But it's not just sound, but it's a lot more than that..”*

Making connections between students' emotional experiences and creative expression has shown to be an effective learning method (Cavanaugh, 2016). Additionally, having students “feel” the content rather than intellectualize it allows students to personalize their learning experience for the great acquisition of the content (Thompson, 2017).

This faculty member had sought out contemplative practices to support her teaching goals for students, *“So rather than simply receiving information and immediately responding to it and writing about it, I like to give them time to consider the material or the information and to make associations”*. This faculty member found that the use of contemplative practices in her teaching supported her teaching goal of making associations between different contexts (Ambrose, et al., 2010) which is an important skill for helping professionals. Similarly, another participant shared, *“I try to apply that to how I'm teaching to make them self-aware of their own process of learning and their own strategies and how to apply those to their lives, you know, and into their studies, but also to move it into other contexts”*. This faculty member’s use of contemplative pedagogy encouraged students to become more aware of their learning processes which is an overall important skill for learning (Ambrose, et al. 2010). The teaching goal of deepening their



understanding through contemplative relation and furthering critical skills that are of vital importance in the helping professions. Another participant shared that the contemplative “*reflection enhances their intellectual understanding, and their critical thinking skills*”. Finally this same faculty member connected the need to have students engage in an experiential way and that contemplative pedagogy offered this. He shared, “*moving into the experiential realm deepened the learning*”. This same participant went on to share:

*“I knew that experiential learning was often more effective than mere conceptual learning...so many classes are focused on learning about something rather than actually engaging with that something and contemplative practice allows us an experiential access and contact and experiential exploration of the thing that we're focused on.”*

As we review these different experiences we can see that a number of different teaching goals are accomplished. One large teaching goal that contemplative pedagogy supported was the experiential component. Experiential learning is shown to be an effective method of learning (Cavanaugh, 2016) and this is true of the helping professions as well (Cole & Lacefield, 1978). The figure below reflects how teaching goals can be supported through the use of contemplative pedagogy and are comparable to the different learning objectives common in the helping professions:

*Figure 4*

*Common Learning Objectives in the Helping Professions*

Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning Experiences (Fink, 2003)	
Objective	
Learning how to learn	Becoming a self-directed learner; inquiring about a subject
Foundational Knowledge	Understanding and remembering ideas and information
Application	Critical, creative and practical thinking; managing projects
Integration	Connecting ideas, people and realms of life
Human dimension	Learning about self and others
Caring	Developing new feelings, interests and values.

***Supports expression of professional expertise***

All participants who were teaching in the helping professionals also had professional experience in the helping professions field they were teaching in. This experience was an asset to faculty as they were able to consider what the students would be facing in future professional settings, these faculty were aware as well of the pressures that students would face in these fields (Cole & Lacefield, 1978).

There was a consideration in offering the contemplative practices as they realized this had worked for them and had offered these practices as professional practices to support future professionals. Another participant shared, *“here's how it helped me. And my goal is, you know, just to expose you to it, and hopefully it can help you in some way”*. Another participant, reflecting on their role as teacher further shared,

*I definitely feel my role is to is to educate them more than just in the discipline, I want them, I want them to be able to think about what's going on, I want them to be able to connect with each other and have empathy. And yes, I want them to be a good scientist.*

*But I also want them to be a good person and, and know how to know how to take care of themselves.*

One faculty member shared how she assigned students journal responses around their contemplative practices and encouraged them to connect it with their own scientific inquiry process and how these practices supported them as professional scientists. She also considered the impact that the field these students would be going into might have on their overall wellbeing. Her own professional experiences had afforded her the knowledge of potential burnout in forensic field, which is a common concern in the helping professions (Greenburg, et al., 2016). She shared:

*When you keep hearing about these really violent crimes, year after year, it gets to be really draining and really stressful. So my goal is to help them set up practices now that can help them deal with those feelings later, because they don't, I think it's hard for them, they don't think they'll ever feel like that they don't think that, you know, the job will drain them. But I can take what they're feeling now with all the classes and that sort of stress and build practices that help them deal with that now. And hopefully they will learn to continue.*

In looking at the larger implications of the two themes that emerged from the category of pedagogical techniques in the helping professions we see that these themes reflect the specific demands of teaching in the helping professions. New demands in higher education for increased diversity, equity and inclusion awareness (Davidson, 2017), more sustainable teaching practices in the areas of student and faculty wellbeing, and more student-centered practices in teaching all are interconnected to the utilization of contemplative pedagogy.

The reality is that it is still rare for faculty to allow students to express their emotions when they are learning about the Middle Passage, the systemic rape of Black and Native women, the Holocaust, forced sterilization, and other human violations. Students can sense when faculty are not up to the challenge of allowing embodied reactions to the profundity of what they are learning. (Thompson, 2017, p.40)

One theme that emerged related to supporting the teaching aspects of faculty, was the use of contemplative pedagogy to support their teaching goals. This theme got to the essence of utilizing contemplative practices in their teaching and faculty for a variety of reasons, that showed faculty sought out contemplative practices to support their teaching. Contemplative pedagogy has been shown to support such teaching goals such as increased creativity (Zajonc, 2013), increased critical thinking skills (Barbezat & Bush, 2013) and increased classroom community (Thompson, 2017). All of these were identified in the coding process of the analysis of the data and reflected in the emergence of larger themes and in the comparison of these themes in the cross-case analysis.

### **Research Questions and Identified Themes**

The relationship between my research questions and the identified themes is discussed in this section. The identified themes are “structures of experience” that occur frequently (van Manen, 1990). There were a total of 8 themes in this study. One theme was associated with the lived existential of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived relationship. Two themes were described as risk factors and two themes were described as protective factors, and three themes reflect the pedagogical benefit of the practice. Similar themes were grouped under a category, such as for the lived existential and teaching goals.

The first research question was: *What are the lived existential (lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived other) of being contemplative practitioners in higher institutes program that focus on training helping professionals?* The themes that best answers this question was the theme of faculty wellbeing which was expressed through such expressions as feeling well, joyful, connected to others, mindful and others.

The second research question was: *What risk factors exist in the environment (s) of faculties who practice contemplative pedagogy?* The themes that best answer this question were nontraditional approach that contemplative pedagogy is seen as and the stress of having an academic career.

The third research question was: *What protective factors appear or need to be constructed in the environment(s) of the faculties to cultivate the practice of contemplative pedagogy in and out of the classroom?* The themes that best answer this question were faculty's own practice and the importance of like-minded colleagues.

The fourth research question was: *How does the practice of contemplative pedagogy shape the behavior of the faculties in the working environment?* The themes that best answer this question were expressed in the pedagogical themes of an enhanced faculty responsiveness, the supporting of teaching goals that faculty members were intending to accomplish and the supporting of each faculty member's own professional expertise.

Table 10 - provides an illustration of the relationship between the research questions and identified themes.

*Table 10*

*Relationship between Research Questions and Identified Themes*

Research Questions	Identified Themes
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What are the lived existential (lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived other) of being contemplative pedagogy practitioners in higher education institutions that focus on training helping professionals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Faculty wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Being mindful</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Faculty feeling well <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ You feel less stressed</li> <li>○ You feel joy</li> <li>○ Enhanced present moment awareness</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Enhanced connection with student</li> </ul>
What risk factors exist in the environment(s) of faculty who practice contemplative pedagogy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nontraditional approach</li> <li>● Stress of Academic Career</li> </ul>
What protective factors appear or need to be constructed in these faculty's environment(s) to cultivate the practice of contemplative pedagogy in and out of the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Own Practice</li> <li>● Importance of like-minded colleagues</li> </ul>
How does the practice of contemplative pedagogy shape the behavior of the faculty in the working environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Supports teaching goals</li> <li>● Supports expression of professional expertise</li> </ul>

### **Researcher's Impressions**

Overall my study here does not capture the passion, courage, creativity, and innovation of these teachers, nor does it express the incredible respect, value, and potential that they see in humanity, their students. Throughout my process of deciding on this dissertation topic and then choosing the most appropriate research orientation of either qualitative or quantitative, I feel that both fall short of expressing “results”. The results do not express the deep connection between myself and the participants, the joy and laughter, or how I felt as though I was along for a meaningful journey in each interview, learning and leaning in, marveling at their persistence to “reach” each student. Listening to and reviewing these interviews over and over again, during a pandemic, global unrest and climate uncertainty, gave me hope, helped me feel a sense of belonging in a group that “does not let go” or doesn’t give up. It further inspires me to continue along the path, not only of teaching, not only of connecting meaningfully to students, and not

only to each other as instructors and faculty, but to continue the path of servicing and supporting each other's purpose.

### **Limitations to the study**

Any research study will inevitably produce some limitations, as there is not a perfect process to research. This is also true of this study which looked at the lived experiences of faculty, teaching in the helping professions, who utilize contemplative practices in their teaching. Some of the limitations to this study include size, timing, research methodology.

Size was a consideration in this study and there can be a concern that with a size this small one will not get an adequate depiction of faculty experiences (Creswell, 2013). However, I determined that the size was adequate based on the quality of responses provided and that there began to be similarities in the responses that allowed me to know that the study had reached its saturation point (Creswell, 2013). The saturation point was achieved when no new codes or themes were emerging during the analysis process and I kept encountering the same codes repeatedly (Saunders et al., 2017). During the interviews I also made sure to engage the participant until they felt they had shared all they had wanted to share in their experience (Legard et al., 2003). Additionally, the different experiences that faculty offered provided an insightful and meaningful exploration of their experiences of utilizing contemplative pedagogy while teaching in the helping professions. Further interviews may have lost the insightful and meaningful exploration of their experiences and become too saturated, such that the lived experiences of faculty teaching in the helping professions and utilizing contemplative pedagogy would have been lost (Saunders et al., 2017).

The timing of this study is significant as contemplative pedagogy is becoming a more well-known teaching practice, had I interviewed these participants 10 years earlier they may not

have been as forward and honest in their experiences. Further, the interview portion of this study was conducted right at the beginning of the Covid-19 global pandemic. The global pandemic caused a multitude of upheavals in everyone's lives, especially those working in higher education institutions (Sahu, 2020). For this reason many of the participants may have been in mindsets and moods and shared their experiences in such a way that they might not have if they had not been experiencing a global pandemic. On the same note, this might also be a positive aspect as participants may have been more closely connected to what matters for them in their lives and spoke from that space. Additionally, my professional relationships with each of the participants may have been a factor as well. Due to my position of working in a teaching center, in a non-supervisory role, this may have provided more freedom of response as to someone who may be a peer or higher up the academic ladder. I knew these participants and they may not have shared to the same depth had they interviewed with someone they did not know.

This study achieves Lincoln and Guba's (1985) guidelines when establishing rigor however more could have been achieved in many of these areas. Credibility was established through my own experience with contemplative pedagogical practices and my position at the university's teaching center and my rapport with participants through that experience. I believe credibility would have been increased had I begun each interview with a contemplative practice to have authentically support my knowledge of how contemplative practices can support increased dialogue, etc. Transferability was established through the detailed description of the interviews and thick description of participants' experiences. Additional transferability would have been supported through a mixed-methods methodology and incorporating scaled responses from participants to get an even more descriptive description of their experiences. Confirmability was established through the use of the researcher's journal and through consultation with my



chair, who also engages contemplative pedagogy in her teaching. A more detailed researcher's journal may have strengthened confirmability as well as have used the journal in consultation with my chair other specialist in contemplative pedagogy.

### **Future Directions, Implication, and Questions Generated from the Study**

One space that this study did not touch on, is looking at the use and experiences of contemplative practices in relationship to experiences of diversity and inclusion. It was and continues to be a strong interest of mine however in keeping with the phenomenal method, I chose to let whatever experiences faculty had arisen and not confine them in any way based on my own interests in contemplative pedagogy. I would be very much interested and hope that this topic is further researched. Many individuals from non-dominant identities find themselves as practitioners, scholars and teachers in the helping profession. Additionally, I would be interested to research if faculty of color experienced a more authentic relationship to their teaching pedagogy when using contemplative practices.

Further research is needed to discover if those who are drawn to using contemplative pedagogy are also teachers who are focused on student engagement. Additionally, further research is needed to find if those who are drawn to contemplative practices are also drawn to a particular environment in teaching, perhaps one that is person-to-person centered (Schwartz, 2019).

An additional consideration is the interview questions used. As a researcher, if I were to do this study again, I would be interested in the experiences of minoritized faculty and if utilizing contemplative pedagogy allows a more fuller expression of their teaching identities. One possible model for this would be to encourage journal entries of faculty participants that

reflected on the experiences of traditional teaching techniques versus the experiences of using contemplative pedagogy in their teaching.

Another avenue to consider future research in this area would be to expand on this study to not only include the experiences of faculty but which particular contemplative practices supported these different results. For example, which contemplative practices most supported their overall wellbeing and which contemplative practices supported specific teaching goals.

The implications of this study for those in the particular helping field of counseling and counselor educators, are the consideration of this as a valid and effective teaching tool for teaching future counselors. This method has been found to be effective for those in the counseling field as a supportive tool for managing the stresses of being a counselor (as both teaching professional and counseling student) and also been shown effective for those future counselors learning in master's level graduate work (Hilert and Tirado, 2019). This can also be a consideration for those teaching these future counselors in master's level program.

The themes of expressing faculty expertise as well as managing the stress of an academic career are both relevant here for counseling faculty. In the counselor education field in particular much attention is focused on experiential learning and providing opportunities for practitioner expertise is of significance. This is especially true as best practices continue to surface with varying populations and new techniques and concepts that are consistently emerging in the field are more effectivity offered from a practitioner standpoint. (Kopala & Keitel, 2003).

## **Conclusion**

In reviewing these experiences of faculty members who utilize contemplative practice in the helping professions, what is the larger impact of what this small group of individuals shared? What is to be required, as a teacher or even as a student, in this ever-changing world? Perhaps

the large loads of content that we encourage and sometimes force students to engage with are not what is most needed

As mental health concerns and distress among students continue to increase, providing an environment in which both students can be present to their learning processes and faculty can be present to themselves, bringing forth their expertise, and being responsive to students. Faculty who are engaged, present, responsive and able to clearly focus on teaching goals may become increasingly valued. Perhaps as a society we may have to face the loss of impactful teaching before we see its value, as part of the foundation of societies that value human flourishing.

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## Appendix A

### PROCESS SKILL DOMAINS

Name and Abbreviation	Description	Rationale
1. Achieving, exhibiting and maintaining competence in the academic content of one's discipline or profession. (PT)	Being an expert in the organized knowledge and practice of one's field.	Essential to the self-esteem of the individual, his ability to serve well and inspire others, and the esteem which his clients and colleagues may exhibit toward him.
2. Cogent and accurate verbal communications. (VCO)	Being able to recognize and construct precise and unambiguous statements which accurately describe some action, event, idea, or situation.	Essential to efficient and clear communication with others as well as to logical, consistent, "nonfuzzy" thinking.
3. Making observations, constructing inferences, and distinguishing between the two. (OI)	Describing objectively. Forming reasonable hypotheses about what course of action to take (decision making). Not confusing inference with observation (hypothesis with fact).	Essential to fair, rational, and impartial thought and evaluation. Essential to avoid stereotypic, judgmental thinking that can impose self-fulfilling prophecy situations on others and self.
4. Using multiple theoretical and conceptual frameworks to observe and infer. (MT)	Being able to explain a given situation, event, or instance in multiple ways with different accepted theories with differing assumptions, biases, and implications.	Essential to avoid becoming a "true believer" who dogmatically applies one set of constructs to all situations and becomes blind to many other interpretations and problem solutions.
5. Showing and maintaining respect and regard toward others, especially one's clients. (IR)	Being able to exhibit nurturant behavior toward others to establish esteem for others, and to recognize their competence and worth to whatever degree these qualities are present.	Essential to the establishment of a supportive environment where the helpee can profit from the nurturance and direction of the helper and will implement the action prescribed by the helper.
6. Value clarification. (VCL)	Recognizing what one values, likes, and dislikes. Questioning and clarifying one's own beliefs, values, and preferences. Evaluating and judging the effects of one's own beliefs, values, likes, dislikes, and habits on one's perceptions, biases, actions, and interactions with others. Being able to express what one values. Being able to judge which theories, techniques, or methods agree or conflict with one's values. Being able to comprehend and accept as different but appropriate, habits and values different from one's own.	Essential to consistent and wise behavior in areas of personal integrity, ethics, and morals.
7. General fluency and flexibility of thought, perception, and response. (FF)	Being able to break set in one's ideas, observations, feelings, actions, and responses. Being able to see things from multiple perspectives.	Essential to adaptive behavior and problem solving in true problem situations, be they rational, emotional, social, personal, or cooperative.

## Appendix B

The Phenomena of Faculty who Utilize  
Contemplative Pedagogy in the Helping  
Professions Interview Form

Form description

Please enter the code assigned to you here

Short answer text

Can you share what age range you identify with?

20-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60-69

70-79

do not want to disclose

What is your status as a teacher/instructor?

Teaching Assistant

Instructor

Adjunct Faculty

NonTenured Faculty

Tenured Faculty

How many years of teaching experience do you have?

less than 2

2-5

5-10

10-15

15 or more

What helping profession field(s) do you teach in?

K-12 Education

Psychology

Human Services/Social Work/Counseling

Law/Criminal Justice

Theology/Ministry

Physical/Occupational Therapy

Higher education (Administrative and teaching)

Nursing

Public Health

Medical/Dentistry

Other...

How long have you used contemplative practices in your teaching?

None

Less than a year

1-3 years

3-5 years

5-7 years

7 years or more

What gender do you identify as?

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

Nonbinary


Other...

What is your religious affiliation?

Short answer text

What ethnicity or race do you identify as?

Short answer text





## Appendix C

### Researchers Journal

In order to be able to note important phrases as well as my own internal process and what can be reflected on I took notes during each interview and also wrote reflective journal entries during my teaching of contemplative practices and any time I was reflecting on my own personal ideas around contemplative pedagogy. I looked at first my own experiences in offering contemplative practices to my students and then my experiences when coding and analyzing participant data. It was important that I reflected on my own phenomenon arising so that I could be aware when a phenomenon was arising.

Journal entry 1:

I offered an activity virtually today and through the offering became aware of my own teaching self. This was my guided activity on a beloved place in nature and the vedanta temple was the place that arose for me. However what was even more instructive was not the image that arose but the different experiences for students. There was a great variety in what students offered. Some struggled initially with the experience however I provided ways to keep them on track such as finding and focusing their breath. Some students focused on water-based places in nature and some focused on mountain based images. I had a few that found connections to individual aspects in nature such as an animal or a flower. Very rewarding experience to share with them and felt a reviewed sense of community with the class.

Journal entry 2:

This week I provided a “take-home” contemplative experience in which students could experience the activity on their own time and in their desired spaces. Our next class a few of them shared how appreciative they were to have had made that space in their lives

Journal entry 3:

Today I provided a moving exercise based on the mass shooting that just occurred in New Zealand. I have tried to provide some sort of contemplative activity to help contain the emotions and responses anytime there have been hate-based attacks in the news. I am aware that my students are surrounded by the events in the community and around the world and are deeply affected by these events.

Journal entry 4:

So moved by the participants in the book study, holding silence, sharing their own struggles and uplifting each other. I also so appreciate the anger there, they want to be acknowledged and its continually frustrating to not be validated by their peers and/or chairs.

Journal entry 5:

Reflecting on today's mediation with students I realized that they make sense of their own experience if space and time are given to them. They have become much more used to silence than they were at the beginning of the term. I thought of that Rilke poem and shared it with the class at the end of our time and that seemed to silently resonate with them.

Journal entry 6:

Moving faculty retreat, so much authenticity and courage. In such a beautiful space. It makes me aware of how special this climate is at this university and this special center holding it all together, continually making that space with authentic offerings (from staff at the center but also faculty). Watching everyone continue to feed that "possibility of being".

Journal entry 7:

Today after experiencing the loss of a friend I decided to do an activity with self compassion. I gave all of the students post it notes and told them to write down a negative feeling or thought or voice from their inner critic. then I had them move to another seat and read it. then I had them reply and write something positive. I told them to be authentic, to write not necessarily to the person but to the voice there. I told them to be compassionate. they wrote more and for a longer time the second time around. I realized that talking about the brain when I am feeling this way, so emotional and so right hemisphere that some of my questions and points were not making sense. I told them the first time if they wanted a second post it note to let me know, the second time when they were writing the positive I told them the same thing and this time they wanted another post it note. it was very moving and inspiring and hopeful for me as a teacher in dealing with this tragedy.

Journal entry 8:

As I am reviewing two of the interview participant's data I noticed that I was looking for examples of descriptions of teaching roles. I was looking for expressions of role, tenure-track or other similar ranks in academia. I wonder if I am looking for these words because they are really there or am I looking for them from my own experience. I have been teaching as an adjunct for over 10 years and although it has been meaningful and I have very much enjoyed it I have felt the pressures of not being full-time or tenure track, that there is an instability there. I have to be careful as I continue to code the data to allow the codes and themes to emerge on their own and be wary of my own biases, of which this experience may be one.

Journal entry 9:

In looking at the different experiences I consider how my own experience as a woman and my own particular helping profession field of counseling may be shaping how I code and review the interview data. As I focus on the experiences that participants have had around wellbeing. I did use the lens of van Manen's lived existentials of lived body, etc however it is important to consider that I come from a perspective of valuing wellbeing. I have also had experiences of enhanced wellbeing when bringing contemplative practices to my own students. I frequently have used contemplative practices to support my students and my own wellbeing throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Journal entry 10:

I have now coded 5 participant's interview data. As I reflect on the codes that are emerging I wonder if these would have been the same codes that would've emerged had we not been living through a global pandemic. Perhaps they would not have brought up more vital experiences, there was such a focus on what the student's experiences were and I think that also connects to how concerned they are about their students during this time.

Journal entry 11:

I noticed during the interviews that participants seemed much more authentic and engaged. This might have been due to my rapport with different participants through my work at CTE or because I was interviewing them on a topic that it would seem they are passionate about or feel favorable about. I have turned to engage in a few breathing practices while I am coding the data to support a more authentic response to reviewing the data.

Journal entry 12:

I noticed both during some of the interviews and now, especially when looking at the data that many faculty members wanted to share how the contemplative practices they were offering connected to specific teaching goals. That was their experience during the interview however I wonder if they had not focused on that as much if I had not been associated with the university's teaching center.