



Using Contemplative Practice for Pre-service Teacher Healing

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ABSTRACT

There is a critical need to create a shift in curriculum that is framed around the whole person rather than isolating a pre-service teacher's development solely to theory, content, and skills. This paper explores ways to promote citizenship, sustain preservice teacher wholeness and wellbeing, and examine preservice teacher perceptions of spirituality and mindfulness.

KEYWORDS

Contemplative; education; mindfulness; holistic; spirituality.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, mindfulness in higher education can be divided into two components (Ergas & Hadar, 2019). The most common intervention method uses mindfulness to increase psychological/occupational health (Bamber et al., 2016). The other aspect of higher education incorporates mindfulness-based-contemplative practices as a critical tool for healing, spiritual purpose, and transformation (Ergas & Ragoonaden. 2020). Although there is much overlap and endogeneity between the two strands, mindfulness as a method of contemplative inquiry has continued to support and increase a holistic model of higher education that fosters self-knowledge, awareness, and meaning-making of student identity (Rich et al., 2022). The strand of mindfulness we chose for this study is mindfulness as a means of contemplative practice, with the intention of advocating greater healing, inquiry, and awareness of pre-service teachers.

Although contemplative inquiry may contribute to open awareness, spiritual development, and self-actualization for students, these parts of the self (the mental, emotional, and spiritual) are often disregarded in academic spaces even though they comprise key components of who pre-service teachers are as whole human beings (Lyle, 2018). There is a critical need to create a shift in course curriculum that is framed around the whole person rather than isolating a pre-service teacher's development solely to theory, methodology, content knowledge, and skills. When the whole person is included, such as social emotional skills, spirituality, resilience, etc., meaning-making and purpose may increase and may allow teachers to succeed in their public lives, workplaces, homes, and other societal contexts (Bardach et al., 2019).

Parker Palmer (1988) famously argued that "we teach who we are." Acknowledging Palmer's theories of teacher self-development suggests that we teach—first and foremost—from within. This statement in and of itself prompts a need for self-inquiry to be paramount within teacher preparation programs. The notion that we teach who we are suggests that teachers bring different spiritual and mindful states to the classroom that inform their perspectives of the students and their conduct. Avraham Cohen (2012) expands Parker Palmer's statement, stating: "We teach who we are and that is the problem" (2015, p. 25). hooks (2014) expounds on this idea, stating, "teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization. She continues, citing Thich Nhat Hanh (a modern contemplative), "the practice of a healer, therapist, teacher or any helping professional should be directed toward his or herself first" (p.15). Unless teachers possess a compassionate sense of themselves, they experience challenges in accepting students for who they are.

This paper interprets ways to promote citizenship, sustain preservice teacher wholeness and well-being, and examine preservice teacher perceptions of spirituality and mindfulness. The study attempts to accomplish this goal by interpreting the outcome of a series of contemplative interventions designed to prompt mindfulness and contemplative curiosity within students enrolled in a teacher preparation program at a major midwestern institution. Specifically, the purposes/objectives of this paper/project are:

- Examine the current state of student dispositional mindfulness within a Midwestern Teacher Preparation Program.
- Examine Midwestern Teacher Prep student's spiritual awareness.
- Understand the impact of contemplative-based interventions on preservice teacher mindfulness and spirituality.
- Consider the importance of understanding the relationships between democracy and spirituality.

The preparation of a critically thinking democratic citizenry that possesses the compassion to be receptive to multitudes of perspectives. In view of marginalized elementary social studies over the last quarter century, the preparation of mindful and spiritually literate teachers represents a piece in solving the puzzle of self-promoting citizenship education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Contemplative Practices in Higher Education

Contemplative practices (meditation, mindfulness, and other practices that focus on increasing reflection and contemplation) can decrease stress levels, increase self-worth, and promote resilience and well-being (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Brown & Ryan, 2003). Contemplative practices in higher education are ultimately designed to help students develop greater self-awareness, improve their ability to manage stress and anxiety and cultivate a deeper sense of connection with themselves and others (Hart, 2004). According to Bergman and (2015), contemplative practices in higher education can take many forms, including mindfulness meditation, yoga, tai chi, journaling, and other forms of reflective writing. Many universities and colleges have started to incorporate contemplative practices into their curriculum, recognizing the benefits that these practices can offer to students (Zajonc, 2013).

Although contemplative practices are becoming more common in educational spaces for attending to whole-student learning, a majority of the research within education concerns its impact on student psychological distress and well-being (Ross et al., 2022). It must be acknowledged that the origins of contemplative practices extend well beyond utilizing these tools as solely an intervention to stress. According to Bergman & Duerr (2021), contemplative practices are based on various cross-cultural traditions represented worldwide, from religious to secular, and each tradition contains the foundational root of "awareness" or mindfulness. When the entirety of the contemplative tool is used in educational settings, it attempts to facilitate holistic learning through focused attention, reflection, and heightened awareness (Barbezat & Bush, 2013) by putting greater importance on the mental, emotional, spiritual connection of the entire self (Ergas, 2014; Kabat-Zinn, 1994). We, therefore, desire to expand mindfulness beyond the clinical definition and examine mindfulness as a key foundation to spirituality for preservice teacher wellness and democratic expression.

Spirituality in Higher Education

In understanding more about the mindful expressions of spirituality amongst college students, we examined the literature on the purpose of incorporating spirituality in higher educational spaces. Spirituality in higher education investigates the importance of spiritual elements in the academic and personal development aspects of a student's college experience. This concept recognizes that students operate from their cognitive frame of being and are emotional and spiritual beings. Spirituality in higher education seeks to address the holistic development of students. However, the extent to which spirituality is integrated into higher education can vary significantly (see Evans-Amalu et al., 2021), as some institutions have a more secular approach. In contrast, others may strongly emphasize spiritual and ethical development, especially if religiously affiliated.

The variance in private and public institutions' incorporation of spirituality suggests a broader expansion of the term spirituality that is much more inclusive. For this reason, we use Underwood's (2011) definition of spirituality allows for a more expansive practice of contemplative traditions and more nuance to be held in sometimes hard-to-discover spaces.

Despite this difficulty in fully describing and defining, university students still report that spirituality and meaning-making are important to their overall well-being (Astin et al., 2007). Such benefits in students' spiritual exploration and growth are the deep sense of peace, grounding, and calm that spirituality provides in the face of challenge (Dalton et al., 2010). In examining the literature on spirituality's impact on college student's well-being, spirituality as a practice impacts all dimensions of life (Pong, 2022; Schmits et al., 2021). Byproducts of spiritual practices include greater resiliency, positive coping skills, and self-transcendence (Barsh, 2015).

Montessori (1995) advocated for spiritual connection within educational spheres and argued that it is important for students and adults alike to study values, beliefs, habits, strengths, and weaknesses as part of this spiritual preparation. Namely, the study of self (connecting to one's inner self) is critical. For this reason, the researchers chose to use mindfulness intervention, as it has its roots in spiritual practice that can be used for self-awareness and transcendence, which is the basis for the contemplative.

Mindfulness as a Spiritual Practice

Similar to the nuances of spirituality, mindfulness varies depending on tradition and how it is practiced. Its interpretation and application vary widely. Historical considerations suggest that mindfulness practice may best be considered a foundational practice for the contemplative and spiritual life (Dahl et al., 2019). Mindfulness is one of the core teachings of Buddhist belief (Gunaratana, 1992; Hanh, 1999; Thera, 1962), yet, as mindfulness has been introduced into Western culture, there has been a secularization that has attempted to take spirituality out of mindfulness (Lomas et al., 2017).

Mindfulness in teacher education preparation within a university setting has been used prior for varied purposes, including psychological distress reduction and self-actualization (Cochran et al., 2023). Although mindfulness offers spiritual (Trammel, 2017) and secular (Siegel,

2007) methods for cultivating a calm mind and body despite external stressors, the two most widely used mindfulness-based interventions are predominantly secular in nature, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) developed by Kabat-Zinn (Frank et al., 2015; Sarah et al., 2016) and Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) (Jennings et al., 2017; Schussler et al., 2016). While MBSR draws from Buddhism, mainstream implementation of contemplative practices, inclusive of mindfulness, are problematically decontextualized from the cultural contexts in which these are used (Proulx et al., 2017), and position self over community- rather than including the ‘me’ and ‘we’ of spirituality (Keefer et al., 2022).

To honor the roots of the practice, Vipassana meditation was chosen as the mindfulness-based intervention for this study. Vipassana is a Pali word which means ‘insight’ (Goldberg, 2001; Siegel et al., 2009) or “to observe things as they really are” (Goenka, 1999, p.26). This practice remains true to the epistemology and ontology of mindfulness, as a practice that maintains a non-judgmental awareness (self and others), cultivates awareness (paying attention to purpose, moment to moment, focused mindset), and enhances compassion for self and others (Bon-Miller, 2015; Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

The Spirit of Democracy

Democracy represents a process of governance in which the entire community determines its representatives to engage in decision-making and requires both awareness of self and others. In spirit, all community members represent valued process participants. Yet, the spirit of the community influences the basis upon which members value each other. Campaign speeches associated with nomination and/or practice can convey discriminatory attitudes by excluding underrepresented groups from social visions (Bell, 2010).

Welch and Koth (2013) posit three factors associated with spirituality: 1) the self, 2) the other, and 3) oneness. As teacher educators, we want our preservice teachers to come to the third stage, oneness, where they can consider the perspective of someone other than one’s own perspective. Oneness suggests a complementary and holistic relationship between the self and the other. There are many ways to reach this goal. For example, Lake et al. (2024) suggest that when service-learning experiences are thoughtfully facilitated, these experiences can catalyze preservice teachers to pursue additional personal, intellectual, and spiritual learning. They believe that through service-learning, preservice teachers can gain a deeper understanding of personal meaning and one’s relationships with the environment, which can support them in moving from me-ness to we-ness. Yet, Michalec (2022) argues that to reconceptualize teacher education, the ultimate goal will be to shift from oneness to wholeness as a democratic principle.

In a higher education environment of intellectual elitism, teacher educators prepare candidates the way they have been taught in industrialist traditions of teacher-centered processes, which tend to remove holistic/spirituality frameworks from their educational processes. While advocacy for cooperative and democratic environments occurs, narcissistic inclinations prevail, and environments of mobbing develop in response to nonconformists

(Crawford, 2019). In short, higher education practices an environment of hypocrisy in which a cooperative and mindful world represents one largely of imagination and theory. As Montessori (1947) aptly put it,

Everyone talks about peace but no one educates for peace. In this world, they educate for competition, and competition is the beginning of any war. When educating to cooperate and owe each other solidarity, that day we will be educating for peace.

Spirituality, mindfulness, and democracy seem synergistic (Chickering, 2007). The interrelation of these domains contributes to an overall sense of well-being and activism within the field of education (Keefer et al., 2022). Ultimately, we believe that spirituality and mindfulness are the bedrock for democracy, as we are not separate from the issues of the world and exist in a state of interdependence with each other (Keefer et al., 2022), where mindfulness contributes to awareness of self and others. Spirituality is the impetus for the greater good in our democratic nation (Zembylas, 2022).

RESEARCH DESIGN

We used a mixed methods design to interpret the changes and reflections on the spirituality practices and mindfulness awareness of a convenience sample of students at a large public teacher education institution in the Midwest, United States of America.

Participants. The students were enrolled in two undergraduate courses (a social studies methods course and a multicultural education course) during the spring 2021 semester and consented to participate. There were 61 students enrolled in the two courses; 34 completed all items on both the pre-and post-course surveys, and 37 completed the qualitative data, namely the reflections.

Nineteen were seniors, six were juniors, seven were sophomores, and two were freshmen. There were 31 female and three male respondents. A majority (n=29) of respondents indicated they were Caucasian or European Americans.

Regarding religious beliefs, ten respondents disclosed that they were Catholic, nine reported being nondenominational Christians, six indicated that they were agnostic, three reported being spiritual but not religious, and six fell into other categories.

Intervention

In keeping with honoring the roots of the contemplative, the intervention used for this study is a meditation technique known as Vipassana. Vipassana meditation is a traditional Buddhist meditation technique that focuses on developing insight and self-awareness through observing the breath and bodily sensations (Holland, 2004). Practicing contemplative inquiry through vipassana practice, one turns one's attention toward one's experience to explore the phenomena of sensations, thoughts, and mental states moment-by-moment. This interoceptive reflection allows practitioners to inquire within through sense perception, reactivity, and urges, which allow for a deeper sense of self (Ergas, 2016).

A 5-minute Vipassana meditation was led via Zoom bi-weekly to students enrolled in the two courses. Previous research has suggested dosage of five minutes is still impactful, and also allows for class time to be maintained rather than the dosage of the mindfulness intervention interfering with the content of the course (Evans-Amalu et al., 2021). With this in mind, data were collected from the reflections after the seven (biweekly throughout the semester from Week 2 to Week 15) interventions and a final reflection in both undergraduate courses.

Instrument. A full description of the instrument is contained in a previously published work (Evans-Amalu et al., 2021). Items concerning spiritual practice originated from the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (Underwood, 2018), while items concerning mindfulness practices originated from the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Each instrument has been validated in varied populations of college students (Hall et al., 2014; Hepburn et al., 2021).

Analysis. We employed a mixed methods research design in which participants completed attitudinal surveys concerning their spiritual and mindful dispositions at the beginning and end of the semester. The project also included an analysis of student reflections after each mindfulness intervention. Data also include participants' final reflection on the overall experience. The low attrition within the research sample provided much data to unpack.

Quantitative data analysis employed t-tests to interpret for significant differences between the mean responses to the surveys.

Qualitative data analysis: After reading through all the responses/data once, the researcher started the coding process while identifying the common wording in the responses. These commonalities were demonstrated consistently by multiple participants. The researcher highlighted these commonalities with various colored markers. The researcher then created codes for each of these similar wordings. The keywords of the codes were highlighted and numbered accordingly throughout the data. 24 codes were created at the end.

Some codes consist of a singular specific word, while others contain multiple wordings of the same concept. These codes were common concepts among the responses and had frequent occurrences throughout. For example, focus (17%), stress/anxiety (15%), relaxation (12.7%), calm (8%), and paying attention to oneself (6%) are the most frequently appearing codes.

Once the data coding was complete, the codes were grouped into three main themes. These three themes embodied the smaller principles of the codes into larger categories that were present across the responses. Each code fits into one of the themes, and some even fit into more than one. The researcher then placed each code into a theme based on the context in which it was most used in the responses. This process enabled the researcher to see the meaning of the code in context and allowed her to see the more general themes being supported in the responses.

FINDINGS

We organize our comparison of attitudes into two sections: One provides the statistics that concern spirituality, and the other relates to mindfulness. Both sections concern statistics that depict the changes in the means of respondents' responses to survey items at the beginning of the course to the means of survey responses at its conclusion.

Spirituality. The first area of attitudinal comparison is related to spirituality. Our description of statistics considers changes associated with mean responses of 14 items, formatted using the six-level Likert-style scale. The levels ranged from 1 (Almost Never) to 6 (Almost Always) We also collapsed these 14 items into one statistic to create the spirituality subscale. Changes in the mean responses associated with these items are provided in Table 1.

Table 1.

Changes in Participant Spiritual Attitudes (n = 34) (see appendix)

In general, the means associated with survey items that interpreted attitudes towards spirituality did not change (i.e., 3.99 to 3.99). This change is statistically significant ($t = 2.68$; $p < .01$). Respondents were significantly more spiritual at the end of the semester compared to the beginning.

Of the 14 component spirituality survey items, there were six in which the mean agreement decreased from the pre-to-survey. The six items for which the mean decreased concerned God's love for others, beauty of creation, thankfulness, feelings of joy, and caring for others.

There was one item for which there was no change in agreement. There were seven items for which agreement increased from the pre- to post-survey.

The analysis determined significant mean changes associated with only two of the survey's spirituality items, Item 10 and Item 11. Concerning Item 10 (I am spiritually touched through the beauty of creation), levels of mean agreement decreased from 4.59 to 4.21 (Somewhat Frequently). This decrease is statistically significant ($t = -1.85$, $p .04$). This change indicates that respondents were significantly more touched by the beauty of creation before the treatment than they were after.

Concerning Item 11 (I feel thankful for my blessings), levels of agreement decreased from 5.38 to 5.03 (Very Frequently). This decrease is statistically significant ($t = -2.17$, $p .02$). This change indicates that respondents were significantly less thankful for their blessings after the treatment than they were before.

The survey also contained an item that asked respondents, "In general, how close do you feel to God?" The item provided five possible responses ranging from 1 (Not at all close) to 5 (Extremely close). The mean response decreased between the beginning ($\mu_{pre} = 2.74$) and ending ($\mu_{post} = 2.71$) surveys. This change was not significant ($p = (0.23)$).

Mindfulness. Our statistical description also considers changes associated with the 15 items structured using the six-level Likert scale. We also collapsed these 15 items into one

statistic to describe the mindfulness subscale. Changes in these items are provided in the following Table 2.

Table 2.

Changes in Participants' Mindfulness Perspectives (n = 34) (see appendix)

In general, means associated with attitudes that concerned mindfulness increased between the pre- (3.61) and post-surveys (3.75) surveys. This change was not statistically significant ($t = 1.32$; $p > .05$). Respondents were not significantly different in their mindfulness at the end of the semester compared to the beginning.

Of the component mindfulness survey items, there were four, the mean agreement of which decreased from the pre-to post-survey. The four items for which the mean decreased concerned emotional unawareness, carelessness, and distractedness.

The analysis determined significant mean changes associated with four survey items.

Concerning Item 4 (I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.), levels of agreement decreased from the pre- (4.15) to post-survey (3.71). The change was significantly different ($t = (2.08)$; $p = 0.02$). Respondents agreed somewhat frequently that they are inattentive while walking; however, they were less mindful in this area than they were in the initial survey.

Concerning Item 9 (I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I am doing.), levels of agreement increased from 3.62 to 4.00. The change was significantly different ($t = 1.93$; $p = 0.03$). Respondents agreed somewhat frequently that they are overly focused on goals; however, they were more mindful in this area than they were in the final survey.

Concerning Item 11 (I find myself listening to a person with one ear while doing something else at the same time.), levels of agreement increased from 3.83 to 4.50. The change was significant. ($t = 2.94$; $p = 0.00$). Respondents agreed somewhat frequently that they were unmindful listeners and were more mindful on the final survey than on the initial survey.

Concerning Item 12 (I drive to places "on autopilot" and then wonder why I went there.), levels of agreement increased from 3.18 to 3.56. The change was significant. ($t = 1.74$; $p = 0.05$). Respondents agreed somewhat frequently that they zone out when driving, yet a greater mean response agreed on the final survey.

Qualitative Findings

The 24 codes created were grouped into three themes: mental, physical, and spiritual well-being (transcendence).

Physical well-being. Most participants were very aware of their physical well-being, as it was apparent that they felt differences after the mediation. For example, Participant 3 explained, "I could feel my heart start to slow down, and I could really feel myself being relaxed." Another participant (Participant 24) also stated, "When doing exercises, I have noticed a type of weight being lifted off my body."

Mental well-being. This study was carried out during the global pandemic. Hence, it was not difficult to understand how stressed participants were during that time period, especially when courses were all online. Thus, almost all participants stated how the interventions helped them de-stress mentally and physically. Participant 19 commented, “At the moment, this exercise helped me clear my mind and helped me learn/realize that I need to stop worrying about things in the future.”

De-stress. Almost all participants stated how the meditation exercise helps de-stress. For example, “I think I learned that I need to take more time to just be still and meditate, or practice mindfulness so that I can take better care of my mental health” (Participant 15).

Focused Mindset. The meditation exercise helped students gain the ability to be present and ready to complete assigned work/tasks. For example, “I love having meditation on Mondays. It really sets me up for the week and makes me feel prepared and confident”! (Participant 6). Participant 13 also claimed, “I feel better after doing the meditation, which I think will help me to stay focused the rest of the day.” Further, Participant 29 argued, “By mediation, I feel like I am ready to focus.”

Transcendence. The practice of connecting to self and higher power is rarely discussed in teacher education, even though the importance of self-care is significantly emphasized in higher education (Barss, 2019). The qualitative data reveals that senior participants were more likely to connect mindfulness to spiritual well-being than the younger participants. At the beginning of the study, participants were not told that the meditation was meant to awaken their spiritual connection. Instead, they were told to engage in mindfulness exercises to help them destress. Thus, it was unsurprising that spirituality was not a term in their mind after going through the process for most participants.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study indicate that tuning in to one’s physical state was easier than connecting to one’s spiritual state. However, several students commented on how meditation helped them connect to their inner selves. “This practice reminded me to be in tune with my whole self and take time to feel connected (all of me) and to not compartmentalize as a coping mechanism as much” (Participant 11). Besides being able to connect to oneself, a couple of participants were able to state the importance of kindness and love to oneself and recognize their emotions. This study’s findings suggest that preservice teachers perceive spirituality differently; they are inherently spiritual (Michalec, 2022).

DISCUSSION

The qualitative findings support the previous studies that claim the impact of meditation on college students mentally, physically, and spiritually (Dalton, 2010; Evans-Amalu et al., 2021; Pong, 2022). During the global pandemic, students’ stress levels were high, and practices that support student mental health were deemed valuable, according to the findings of this study. Although not all participants became aware of themselves and the surroundings, namely the people and the environment, with respect, 90% of the participants found the mindfulness

exercise useful and would like to engage more. As Montessori (1995) emphasizes, “The real preparation for education is a study of one's self. The training of the teacher who is to help life is something far more than the learning of ideas. It includes the training of character; it is a preparation of the spirit” (Montessori, 1995, p. 95). Montessori believes teachers must cultivate peace when they connect to their hearts meaningfully.

Although our research focused on spirituality, mindfulness, and democracy, our findings may also be relevant to the debate about mindfulness and self-focus (Poulin et al., 2021). Specifically, the phenomena of increased attention to oneself, may contribute to self-centeredness rather than a more expansive, interdependent self. This finding is important as self-centeredness may contribute to decreased democratic behavior. As Michalec (2022) suggests, moving from oneness to wholeness in teacher education can support inclusiveness. However, humanizing pedagogy is needed in teacher education programs. Spirituality should be considered as a normal state of being in a classroom. That is, “It matters little if teacher education acknowledges this truth—preservice teachers will always bring spiritual aspects of self into the classroom” (Michalec, 2022, p. 6). For future research, we desire to look more deeply at a differing mindfulness intervention that may contribute to more prosocial behavior and realization of the collective rather than solely the self.

In general, the participants of this study frequently expressed that the exercise brought some peace and helped them connect to their bodies and minds. The qualitative findings were aligned with the quantitative findings. Participants became more mindful of their mental and physical states but not transcendence. Although we would like to see more participants express the connection to hearts/spirit, we understand the 7-week intervention might not be long enough to have a huge impact as expected. Likewise, the convenience sample used may reveal a lack of diversity in research participants. Further studies can investigate the longer period of time for each session, and diversity in population will be warranted.

CONCLUSION

Mindfulness interventions have been shown to specifically enhance teachers’ ability to cope and have decreased stress and burnout (Agyapong et al., 2022). Given the rise in teacher stress it would behoove teacher preparation programs to consider using contemplative practices that aid in developing further self-awareness and facilitate holistic healing for educators (Evans-Amalu et al., 2021). The current study has suggested mindfulness practices do have the ability to aid in connection to mind-body awareness and facilitate a deeper sense of peace. This finding aligns with current mindfulness literature.

Yet mindfulness interventions isolated solely to stress relief has the potential to diminish the potency of contemplative practice. We continue to seek ways in how mindfulness interventions could enhance the spiritual nature of teaching. Future studies will evaluate differing contemplative interventions, as a limitation of the current study isolates the intervention to one specific and shortened strategy- that may enhance self-centeredness. The

researchers are curious to learn more about differing contemplative interventions that may enhance self-awareness and pro-social behavior, which may aid in the holistic nature of teaching itself.

With this in mind, we consider the need to reevaluate the current state of teacher preparation programs to be inclusive of teaching and preparing the whole student and contribute to the greater healing and understanding of who they are prior to entering the workforce as educators.

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Appendix

Table 1.

Changes in Participant Spiritual Attitudes (n = 34)

	μ_{pre}	μ_{Post}	μ_{Change}	t	p
DSES Scale	3.99	3.99	0.00	(0.41)	.48
1. I feel God's/Higher Power's Presence	3.26	3.47	0.21	0.91	0.19
2. I experience a connection to all living entities	4.32	4.53	0.21	1.31	0.10
3. When connecting with God/Higher Power, I feel joy.	3.74	3.65	(0.09)	(0.52)	0.30
4. I find strength in religion or spirituality	3.50	3.76	0.26	1.51	0.07
5. I find comfort in religion or spirituality	3.79	3.79	0.00	0.00	0.50
6. I feel deep inner peace or harmony	4.00	4.03	0.03	0.18	0.43
7. I ask for God's/Higher Power's help in daily activities.	3.32	3.50	0.18	0.90	0.19
8. I feel God's/Higher Power's love for me directly	3.50	3.53	0.03	1.67	0.43
9. I feel God's/Higher Power's love through others.	3.79	3.65	(0.14)	(0.66)	0.26
10. I am spiritually touched through the beauty of creation.	4.59	4.21	(0.38)	(1.85)	0.04*
11. I feel thankful for my blessings.	5.38	5.03	(0.35)	(2.17)	0.02*
12. I feel a selfless caring for others.	5.29	5.12	(0.27)	(1.23)	0.11
13. I accept others, even when they do things that I think are wrong.	4.82	4.79	(0.03)	(0.19)	0.43
14. I desire to be closer to God, or in union with him.	3.82	4.06	0.24	1.09	0.14

Table 2

Changes in Participants' Mindfulness Perspectives (n = 34)

	μ_{pre}	μ_{Post}	μ_{Change}	t	p
MAASM Scale	3.61	3.75	0.14	1.32	0.10
1. I could be experiencing some emotion and not be aware of it later on.	4.09	4.06	(0.03)	(0.15)	0.44
2. I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.	2.94	2.76	(0.18)	(1.10)	0.14
3. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.	3.82	3.82	0.00	0.00	0.50
4. I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.	4.15	3.71	(0.44)	(2.08)	0.02*
5. I tend to not notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.	3.50	3.59	0.09	0.72	0.24
6. I tend to forget a person's name. almost as soon as I've been told it the first time	3.88	3.91	0.03	0.13	0.45
7. It seems that I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing.	3.59	3.47	(0.12)	(0.60)	0.28
8. I rush through activities without being attentive to them.	3.62	4.00	0.38	1.93	0.03*
9. I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I am doing.	3.50	3.85	0.35	1.53	0.07
10. I do jobs automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.	3.82	4.50	0.68	2.94	0.00**
11. I find myself listening to a person with one ear while doing something else at the same time.	3.29	3.56	0.27	1.04	0.15
12. I drive to places "on autopilot" and then wonder why I went there.	3.18	3.56	0.38	1.74	0.05*
13. I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.	4.24	4.50	0.26	1.47	0.08
14. I find myself doing things without paying attention.	3.59	3.88	0.29	1.44	0.08
15. I snack without being aware that I am eating.	2.97	3.26	0.29	1.83	0.04*

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$