

ABSTRACT

This heuristic inquiry into ‘the mindfulness of seminaria’ (TMoS) qualitatively explores the nature and being of a seven-line, 27-syllable form of poetry. Designed as ‘seminar form or verse’ by J.-P. Linde in 1988–1989 from the scholarship of three seven-step processes, from Aquinas’s 13th century *Quaestiones* to the rudiments of 21st century Scharmer’s (2009) Theory-U, TMoS was adopted by six classroom teachers and educational leaders employed in state and independent settings from early childhood to higher education in New Zealand and the UK. Integrating it into their existing mindfulness, contemplative practices daily for three weeks they found the mindfulness of seminaria to be surprisingly creative and grounding. Its key benefits—meaningfulness and self-realisation—highlighted the versatility, vitality and potential of this mindfulness practice for attaining subjective wellbeing.

Though introduced to its theoretical construct, the research participants were encouraged, in practise, to explore it in enjoyable ways that suited their personal and professional needs. From a standpoint of ‘teacher as reflective practitioner’, possible applications included: recording events, processing feelings, problem solving, child study, contemplative inquiry, ‘book-ending’ the day and planning ahead.

Moustakas’s (1990, 1994) ‘heuristic inquiry’ is transpersonal and phenomenological. Participants become co-researchers because the essence of the phenomenon under investigation is derived from their perceptions and experiences regardless of the interpretation of the researcher whose lived experience remains focal. Therefore, this study reveals the prefatory experience phenomenologically evoked in the author by a month of walking mindfully across Northern Spain, followed by soundings in the Great Pyramid, and participating in an Alamandria Art of Mindfulness event where—introduced informally to the form of seminaria—the genesis of a new mindfulness practice for teachers was ignited. Heuristically, whilst a walking-sounding-thinking integration undergirded the quest of the primary researcher, seminaria was independently investigated by each of the other six educators. From the strongly coherent themes they highlighted, a creative synthesis of findings illuminates the vitality of the nature and being, use and potential, of the mindfulness of seminaria, whether for personal—professional direction, emotional understanding, or cognitive enrichment.

Support was found for the protective effects of TMoS in reducing occupational stress, and the value of mindfulness meditation practices for teachers’ personal and professional wellbeing. Thus, the mindfulness of seminaria builds on and contributes to mindfulness research in initial teacher education (ITE), and to professional learning for experienced teachers and leaders, alike. Significantly, all participants in this study were themselves, long-term mindfulness/meditation practitioners who, without exception, attributed to their practice of seminaria, a capacity to connect more consciously with other aspects of themselves, thereby restoring a sense of vitality through self-realisation and meaningfulness—recognised by the OECD (2013) as key subjective wellbeing indicators. Deemed accessible, companionable, and energising, Seminaria’s transformative potential for teacher wellbeing is its original contribution to knowledge. Moreover, marking it worthy of further investigation, is the discovery of its use as a simple tuning-in device—like a poetry app.—to which teachers and leaders could turn and re-turn for solutions when stressful feelings mitigated against their concentration, calm, and creativity.