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For further information: [**www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell**](http://www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell)

Summary

Courses on meditation and mindfulness are offered at the Munich University of Applied Sciences (MUAS) and at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) Munich in the context of the so-called Munich Model. Since its start in 2010, the program has continuously expanded, with more than 150 students attending the courses each semester. This paper describes the structure and implementation of the Munich Model, including course content and the conditions of participation.

Keywords

Meditation, mindfulness, intellect, intuition, Munich Modell, universities, educational system

Possibilities for training the mind: Meditation at university? –

The Munich Model.

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1. Introduction

*„As an archer aims an arrow,
as a carpenter carves wood,
the wise shape their lives.“*

Buddha

The following paper presents the Munich Model – an example how mindfulness and meditation can be implemented at universities¹ in a successful and sustainable way.

Before going into the details of the Munich Model I would like to emphasize why mindfulness and meditation should be part of a university's educational mission. Today's news headlines confront us with countless problems that are complex and apparently unsolvable. Injustice, poverty, violence and pollution have a lock hold on the world. The question arises how do we approach these problems? How do we solve them? How do we find sustainable solutions?

As physicist and Nobel laureate Albert Einstein once said: “The world will not evolve past its current state of crisis by using the same thinking that created the situation.” In other words: We have to dissolve old conditionings and develop new modes of perception and behavioral patterns. In this regard terms like creativity, ethics and spirituality increasingly come to the fore in our social educational discourse, as bridges to explore new approaches.

Creativity is a good example. A major researcher in the field of creativity, British author and international education expert Sir Ken Robinson highlights in his TED-Talk (February 2006) “*Do schools kill creativity?*” how important it is to foster creativity in the development of young people; he worries about the fact that in the worldwide educational systems the fine arts are always the last priority, showcasing that children are not supported to develop their creativity. Robinson says creativity is necessary for the development of relevant original ideas which often have their origin in the interaction of different perspectives (ebd., 13:20). Instead of creating room to enable the development of original ideas, our schools stick to the – in Robinson's opinion outdated – educational plans that only focus on students' cognitive competencies, to achieve a seamless integration in the working world.

If we wish to take Robinson's warnings and suggestions seriously, one of the crucial challenges for today's society is to recreate our educational institutions like kindergarten, schools or universities, so that a true education for life doesn't fall short.

¹ In this paper the term “university” includes all the existing types of institutions in the German tertiary education.

The internationally well-known spiritual teacher Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986) aims directly at this issue in his book *Think on these things* (1989), asking the reader whether he/she have ever thought about the true purpose of education, “Is it merely in order to pass some exams and get a job?” Pointing out then its actual mission, he writes, “Or is it the function of education to prepare us while we are young to understand the whole process of life? Having a job and earning one’s livelihood is necessary – but is that all?” (Krishnamurti 1989, p.1)

Intellect and intuition

Our educational system is today preoccupied with preparing children for their future working life and the training of the mind. In addition to this one-sided promotion of cognitive performance don’t we also need a way of training the mind, which fosters the intuition; a training of the mind that is beyond the scope of merely intellectual knowledge acquisition and that includes such essential human worthwhile values like empathy, compassion and altruism which are the backbone of every society? Meditation offers such a possibility. While we meditate our focus is not on impulses that are triggered by our thoughts but on those arising from a deeper level of awareness. The pre-stage of meditation is concentration. Our focus can be either on an external or internal object, but also on a human quality (e.g. empathy) or a mental image (e.g. a symbol or a word). The resulting effect is inner calmness. Our thoughts are still there but we don’t follow them. Our emotional and sense perceptions calm down as well in order that we contact our inner source of inspiration. This is sometimes called the inner space, our self or soul – a different level of awareness, which can be experienced in this state of meditation. The spiritual teacher Sri Chinmoy (1931–2007) was a teacher for peace meditations from 1970 until the end of his life, offering them to delegates and employees of the headquarters of the UNO twice a week. He said: “When we meditate, what we actually do is enter into the deeper part of our being. At that time, we are able to bring to the fore the wealth that we have deep within us” (1974, p. 2).

There is a link between meditation and creativity. When we are immersed during meditation in this inner space, “the deeper level of our being”, we become aware of our inherent creative skills. Meditation is therefore a catalyst for creative processes; ideally, creativity is a state of being. The direct gain of knowledge that takes place on different level of awareness and influences our mind directly is called intuition, an essential component in the development of creativity. Well-known artists have tried to describe the inner processes they experience while engaged with their creative work. Arthur M. Abell compiled the remarkable testimonies of great composers in his book *Talks with great composers* (1994). The German composer

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) said for example that initially he heard the music inside his mind, emphasizing the necessity to really concentrate so as to not miss a single part of the composition. “Straightaway the ideas flow in upon me, and not only do I see distinct themes in my mind’s eye, but they are clothed in the right forms, harmonies and orchestration.” (1994, p. 5) Brahms continued: “I have to be in a semi-trance condition to get such results – a condition when the conscious mind is in temporary abeyance and the subconscious is in control, for it is through the subconscious mind, which is part of Omnipotence, that the inspiration comes.” (1994, 6). He underlined that this state is not comparable to dreaming, but is more of a permanent struggle: “I have to be careful, however, not to lose consciousness, otherwise the ideas fade away. (...) Therefore, to evolve and grow, man must learn how to use and develop his own soul forces. All great creative geniuses do this, although some of them do not seem to be as conscious of the process as others.” (1994, 6-7)

Mindfulness and meditation

In the mid-1980s, neuroscientist and philosopher Francisco Varela (1946–2001), initiated a dialogue, in conjunction with other western scientists, with the Dalai Lama in order to encourage an exchange between modern science and Buddhism, to explore whether there could be interfaces (Mind and Life Dialogues²). One topic that came up was the handling of destructive emotions like suffering, hate, jealousy, avarice and fear. The Mind-Life team identified the exploration and improved understanding of these emotions as one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century, as every human being, but also society at large and finally mankind would benefit from such insight. In order to deepen their study of the topic of destructive emotions, The Dalai Lama and a group of monks met with the western scientists in Dharamsala (India) for a week of intensive exchange. These dialogues are preserved in the book *Destructive Emotions. How can we overcome them: A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama* (2005), by Daniel Goleman. Goleman also authored the book *Emotional Intelligence*, helping this term to become mainstream. The scientists and monks of the Mind-and-Life-Teams were able to prove that mindfulness and meditation have verifiable positive impacts concerning the handling of emotions. Numerous studies on the subject have since been conducted.

Meanwhile we know that mindfulness and meditation can not only calm the mind and body but also positively impact the functioning of the brain. It has been observed for example, through research using MRI brain scans, that meditation reduces stress, influencing the size of

² For further information see www.mindandlife.org.

the hippocampus and the amygdala. A regular meditative practice can also change our own perception, thinking and behavior patterns in a constructive and permanent way.³

Mindfulness and meditation are not the same thing. To be mindful one must first of all become aware of the present moment, and in that moment explore what comes up for us in our mind, without judgement. One can also have a mindful conversation, or engage with mindful cooking or eating, or mindful walking. One can even be mindful in tasks like washing the dishes or cleaning tasks. Mindfulness techniques where we are observing the sensations in our body, and the thoughts and emotions that come up, constitute the so called insight meditation forms. The object is to observe the flow of one's thoughts and emotions in order to gain more insight into how they come up and then dissolve. On the other hand, the forms of meditations that focus on our inner immersion leave the world of our thoughts and our emotions behind.

An important result of the research is that it can be seen that mindfulness and meditation have a verifiable positive impact on our attitude and behavior – and anyone can observe this. As monk and scientist Matthieu Ricard highlights in the film *The Altruism Revolution*: “My brain is absolutely not special and that comforts me. All this research would not be interesting if it was about studying extraordinary people like those who can hold their breath under water for 11 minutes. What fascinated me most about this research was the length of time people from the Himalayas, Tibet, Bhutan as well as the English, French, Americans, men and woman, monks and nuns, lay people spend meditating. This is what makes the difference.” (2016, 49:00 – 50:00).

Combining meditation techniques with compassion or metta meditations are scientifically demonstrated to increase the practitioner's capacity for empathy and compassion as well as altruistic behavior.

Neuroscientist and psychologist Tania Singer whose work is also showcased in the aforementioned film, *The Altruism Revolution* provides insight into her research on metta meditation in her book *Caring Economics: Conversations on Altruism and Compassion, Between Scientists, Economists, and the Dalai Lama* with Matthieu Ricard. Several authors report on the human inborn disposition of compassion and why we should foster this capacity instead of individualism and competition. They write among others about participants of a

³ A successful example of this is the film *The Dhamma Brothers* which shows the impact of a meditation course on prisoners at a high-security prison. Sitting on cushions and wrapped in blankets, the participants begin their journey to their inner world. Despite the fact that their bodies are imprisoned, the inmates become acquainted with a newfound freedom. In every human being is the potential for transformation; the film is a moving testimony.

research project. After a training in metta meditation those people come to much more altruistic decisions than before. These promising research results and my own long-term meditation practice gave me the impetus to create the Munich Model.

2. Structure and implementation of the Munich Model

The research on mindfulness and meditation has shown in many ways that a meditation practice can improve not only abilities like concentration, compassion, stress management (e.g. exam anxiety) and the regulation of emotions, but also physical and mental well-being in general. All these aspects are important for students as they positively impact both performance and creativity. (The section “Previous results” goes into more detail.)

What follows is a chronological overview of the implementation and development of the Munich Model.⁴

In the **2010 summer term**, I offered a course called “Mindfulness and Meditation” at the Department of Applied Social Sciences of the Munich University of Applied Sciences for the first time. There was space for 15 students to participate, but 65 students from the degree program “Social Work” applied. This is where the Munich Model began.

After the end of the course, at the end of July 2010 in the focus area „Arts /1st semester”, 14 participants asked for a follow-up course for the upcoming semester. The number of students interested was enough to engage a new course, but in addition, 51 students signed up to be on a waiting list. Unfortunately, the course was offered on too short notice, and therefore it wasn’t possible to integrate it into the second semester curriculum. We were able to offer a further course under the topic of “meditation” for the advanced study period curriculum of the **2010/11 winter term**. This course called “Meditation II” in the focus area

„Arts/Deepening/5th semester” offered not only practical exercises but in comparison to the first semester, dealt with a bigger range of research topics and professional fields where mindfulness and meditation are already being implemented. The next year, during the **2011/2012 winter term**, a course called “Meditation at elementary school” was offered at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University (LMU)⁵ for the first time, as part of the “Elementary School Pedagogics” degree program. In the **2010 summer term** the course “Meditation at school” was offered in the “Teacher Education” degree program. Both courses were open to students of the “Pedagogics for Special Needs Education”

⁴ All the various course offerings are listed on the Munich Model’s website (www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell). In addition to semester hours, ECTS, semester, numbers of applicants and participants, specifications of degree programs, beginning of implementation and proof of achievement are listed.

⁵ In the following: LMU Munich.

degree program.

In the **2013/14 winter term** a new course offering was created at the Munich University of Applied Sciences, in the “General and Interdisciplinary Studies” faculty, in the focus area “Personal Competences“. At first it was called “Management and stress prevention”.⁶ Right from the start, the students’ response was stupendous; more than 100 students applied for 15 seats. An additional course was created for the **2014 summer term**. As the two courses became more well-known, the number of applicants rose; after a few semesters more than 600 students applied for the 15 seats open for each of the courses. A course called „Meditation” was then established for the **2014 summer term**, both for the second semester of the part-time „Social Work“ degree program, as well as for the dual degree „Nursing Studies“ program, in the focus area „Exercise in Body Perception“.

For the **2014/15 winter term** the a supplemental course “Experiencing classical music in a holistic way” was offered through the degree program “Music Education” at the History and the Arts Faculty of (LMU Munich) and features an approach based completely on the meditation of music. The course constitutes part of the Munich Model’s „Meditation and Art” focus.

In the **2015/16 winter term** the course “Meditation and Mindfulness” was offered in the “Education and Training in Childhood” degree program in the „Methods of Stress Management“ focus area. This was an important development for the existing degree programs in education, as it enabled students training as educators for children aged 0-12 years, to participate in the courses offered through the Munich Model.

In the **2017/18 winter term**, the more advanced course “Meditation II” is taking place in the advanced study period of the “Social Work” degree program. Additionally the “Stress Management and Meditation” course is being offered in English and completes the choice of courses at the „General and Interdisciplinary Studies“ Faculty. In the same semester other supplemental courses are being integrated through the “Meditation and Art“ focus at the Munich University of Applied Sciences, in particular “Paintings of the Great Masters“, in the “Social Work“ degree program, as well as in the “Education and Training in Childhood“ degree program.

Additional events in the context of the Munich Model

From the **2013/14 winter term** on, additional events have been offered concurrently with the regular LMU Munich courses. Every semester students have the option to participate in four-

⁶ Since the winter term 2014/15 the course title was changed to „Stressmanagement and Meditation“. The participants had the feeling that stress management implicates more competencies than coping of stress. “Meditation” was included in the title as the course is mostly based on mindfulness and meditation topics.

and eight-hour workshops called “Meditation and mindfulness at school” at the Munich Center for Teacher Education at LMU. From the **2015/16 winter term** on, the Faculty of Psychology created a three-hour workshop “Meditation and Mindfulness in counselling”. Four additional course offerings take place regularly each semester: Network Meeting, a public talk and film event, contemplative meditation for students from various universities in Munich and a meditation class for employees of the Munich University of Applied Sciences. These events are described in more detail under the heading “Additional offers”

Rooms

The courses offered at the Munich University of Applied Sciences take place most of the time in the rooms of the Christian Student Center in Munich-Pasing, dubbed Paoso. Only the courses of the “General and Interdisciplinary” Faculty are run in a different location; in the room of Silence of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology. At LMU Munich the practical exercises are offered at the Catholic University Chaplaincy at LMU – KHG and the theory part of the courses takes place in the regular classrooms of LMU Munich.

Materials

Cushions, mats, blankets and storage lockers purchased for the meditation courses, were financed through tuition fees. As those fees were abandoned, materials were then purchased via financial means made available by the university.

Specialist literature and films

Under the auspices of the Munich Model an extensive variety of books and films have been arranged in the library of the Munich University of Applied Sciences at Campus Pasing. These materials can be borrowed not only through the other local branches of the University but are available as well to students at other universities throughout Germany. Additionally, many reference books are located at the Pasing campus. All books and films in the collection are marked with the abbreviation MZ, next to the regular library code, which stands for “Meditationszentrum” in German. With the aid of this code, all materials on the topic of “Meditation and Mindfulness” that are available at the Munich University of Applied Sciences show up on the library’s website in the “Free search” field. In the category “Limit search” students can choose between the different media like print or video (DVD). A small portfolio of books on the topic of “Mindfulness and Meditation” was also established at LMU Munich. The books belong to the library (Department of Pedagogics/Psychology) and are not

linked with the Munich Model. Interestingly enough, students from other universities in Germany have taken notice of the range of the books and films listed under the Munich model and order them via interlibrary loan. On the one hand this puts students on site at a disadvantage, but it's nonetheless nice to see that the Munich Model is recognized elsewhere.

Cooperation partners

In addition to the cooperation with Paose and the KHG, which has existed since the **2010/11 winter** term, a number of other cooperative efforts have been formed - especially with universities and institutions that offer meditation in different ways. Some of the cooperation partners are described under "Previous results"; others are listed on the website of the Munich Model.

Communication

The courses are listed in the online course catalogue of each faculty. The "General and Interdisciplinary Studies" faculty also has a print version of the catalogue, where the "Stress management and Meditation" courses are described in the German and English versions. Information about the courses is also published in a flyer of the "Healthy University" program. The additional meditation offers for students are listed as well. The free public talks and film events are advertised are not only on the online events calendars of the Munich University of Applied Sciences and LMU, but also on flyers and posters. Moreover a mailing list exists for those interested in receiving notices of upcoming events. The Munich Model's website (Category "Free download") also lists all events.

3. Conditions for participation

Anyone who wishes to participate in a course or in an additional meditation offer through the Munich model must be in a stable mental condition. Only the "Meditation II" and "Meditation III" courses through the "Social Work" degree program require previous knowledge in the field of mindfulness and/or meditation. This prerequisite is met by the successful completion of the basic "Meditation I" course, or on the basis of a successfully completed external meditation class. The students can register for nearly all the meditation courses online. The Munich Model's website indicates how many students have already applied for the available seats in each course, and how many of them have received a seat.

4. Content of the courses, certificate of performance and grading

In the practical part of the courses students learn different mindfulness and meditation exercises. The theoretical input of the course consists of scientific studies, background knowledge about the different approaches of meditation and the possible ways of implementing mindfulness and meditation in the social occupational fields.

Sequence

Generally every course is two semester hours, which means in total 90 minutes (2x 45 minutes). We start with a sitting meditation that focuses for example on the breath, the spot between the eyebrows or the inner recitation of a mantra (a word, line or syllable). In the beginning of the semester this exercise lasts only a few minutes and it expands over the semester until it becomes about 15-20 minutes. We then have a short feedback round: the students tell more about their experiences during the meditation - what went well and what were the challenges?

Depending on the course and degree program, each lecture deals with a specific topic.

Practical exercises and theoretical input may vary. Every lecture ends with a short sitting meditation. I use a singing bowl to guide the practical exercises: striking it one time reminds the students to return to focusing on their awareness, in the case their mind is wandering; three times indicates the end of the exercise.

The duration of the course in the “Social Work” degree program is three semester hours. The participants have an additional day of mindfulness (a block course). In addition to the theory part of the course, we eat and cook mindfully and in silence.

Content of the courses

It is not possible to explain all the following content of the courses in full detail in this article. Further references are available on the website of the Munich Model (Category “Literature and films” and “Free downloads”).

Practical exercises (selection)

- Mindful communication
- Mindful eating/cooking
- Mindfulness and breathing exercises
- Ajna meditation
- Bodyscan
- Walking Meditation

- Meditation on sound
- Loving kindness/ compassion Meditation
- Maranatha Meditation
- Other techniques (e.g. Vipassana Meditation, Transmission Meditation)

Theoretical input

- Research on mindfulness and meditation (especially neuroscience)
- Fields of implementation for mindfulness and meditation (specific to every degree program)
- Background knowledge about approaches to mindfulness and meditation (e.g. Vipassana, MBSR, Christian Meditation, Zen Meditation, Transcendental Meditation, Transmission Meditation etc.)
- Spiritual teachers and their concepts

Other topics (selection)

- Thoughts and emotions
- Health and stress
- Happiness / Compassion / Altruism
- Religion and spirituality
- Time (past, present/ moment, future)

Films (selection)

- Monks in the laboratory
- The Altruist Revolution
- Free the Mind
- The Dhamma Brothers
- InnSaei – the power of intuition

Further topics and films can be found under „Additional offers (Program of talks and films)“.

Gaining competencies

The main goals in the curricula are:

- Being aware of one's own thoughts
- Increasing concentration
- Strengthening self-confidence, self-efficacy, well-being and regulation of emotions
- Constructive stress management

The „Previous results” section deals with the effects of the courses.

Certificate of performance and grading

Students are graded on the basis of attendance in the course, regular participation, the writing of a personal meditation diary and a written reflection about possible and meaningful ways of implementing mindfulness and meditation in their future professional field. The students are also invited to practice the presented exercises at home.. They write down their experiences in their meditation diary. The structure of the entry should always be the same:

- What: Which exercise
- When: Day/Time
- Where: at home, in the park, in the train, at the station, etc.
- Other: potential additional materials (e.g. Timer/App and Smartphone, cushion)
- Length of time: flexible
- Personal wellbeing before and after the exercise

The particular goal of the diaries is that the participants gain more insight in their own meditation practice: When and where do I like meditating? Which time? Why? Which exercise is good for which time and in which situation?

It is not necessary to do every exercise at home exactly as many times as the other exercises. Usually some exercises emerge which become favorites and which create a high state of wellbeing. Likewise it is not necessary to repeat an exercise many times. It is important not to exaggerate or overstretch the time frame; overdoing things is not recommended. It is recommended that a sitting meditation be 15 to 20 minutes, once or twice a day.

In the middle of the semester all meditation diaries are handed in. I read them and have the opportunity to check how the students felt about the exercises, whether they do them in the correct way and, if necessary, to share general feedback that these diaries generate in upcoming lectures. The information in the meditation diary is, of course, strictly confidential. After introducing the exercises in the course, the students have enough practice and knowledge to practice at home. Of course, there are meditation forms that should only be practiced with the guide of an experienced teacher for a longer period of time. Students who prefer those kinds of meditation are recommended to contact serious meditation schools.

5. Additional offers

Four important additional offers are established in the Munich Model. Network Meetings, a public talk and film event, complete meditations for students of various universities in Munich and a meditation offer for employees of the Munich University of Applied Sciences. Current information is available at the website of the Munich Model (Category: “Current projects”).

Network meetings

Network meetings have taken place since the 2017 summer term. for students and alumni that participate or have participated in the Munich Model’s meditation courses.. The focus is on exchanging experiences that one has gained in a meditation and mindfulness project (e.g. in the context of an internship or thesis) and discussion the latest research in the general field of meditation. The meeting takes a maximum of two hours and the structure is as follows: 20 minutes meditation in the group, 30 minutes input (e.g. “News from the science”, short presentation of projects, new literature and internet links). Finally an exchange/ discussion ensues. These meetings take place several times each semester. Meeting dates are announced on the Munich Model’s website.

Program for talks and films

Since the 2014/15 winter term, a series of regular talks and film evenings called “Spiritual teachers and their concepts” was organized under the auspices of the Munich Model. The initial idea was to get more expert knowledge about the different approaches to meditation, the origins of meditation, spiritual teachers, neuroscience, etc., across to the participants in the courses. Due to popular demand, a public and free series of events was initiated. These events and their key topics are announced on the Munich Model’s website . The program’s latest flyer is available to download as a PDF.

Supplemental meditation project for (former) students

Since the 2016/17 winter term, a regular meditation event is offered for (former) students of the Munich University of Applied Sciences, the LMU Munich, the TU Munich, the Akademie der Bildenden Künste Munich as well as the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich. No previous knowledge is necessary to participate, but participants must be in good mental health. The meditation takes place every Tuesday from 5.15 to 6.15 pm. A short introduction is offered starting at 5 pm. The venue is the „Room of silence” at the Munich University of Applied Sciences.

Additional offer for employees of the Munich University of Applied Sciences

Employees of the University heard about the supplementary meditation offer for students and asked that a similar offer be made for them. We began with a trial lesson in the context of a Health Day at the Munich University of Applied Sciences in the 2012 summer term 2012. Fifteen participants were interested in a course offered on a weekly basis, so I offered a course with 10 lessons. The structure at that time was: 20 minutes of meditation, 30 minutes of thematic focus and finally of 10 minutes meditation. 14 participants continued this course.

6. Previous results

In March 2016 a student named Isabel Braunger surveyed the participants of the meditation courses (winter term 2015/16) for her Bachelor's degree Division of Integrative Health Promotion under the guidance of Professor Dr. Niko Kohls, University of Applied Sciences Coburg. The pilot study she carried out through an online questionnaire indicates significant differences between the participants who already had meditation experience, compared with beginners: the more stressed a person felt, the less mindful and self-effective they experienced themselves to be. The more mindful a person perceived her or himself the more self-effective they felt. The students were asked what they thought about the following statement: "Meditation at university is a meaningful and successful enrichment for students and should be offered at a larger scale." – 86.1 per cent of the students answered: "I completely agree." Students also gave their feedback about the meditation courses in the film "Shanti - Meditation im Hochschulkontext am Beispiel des Münchner Modells." produced by Katharina Nowack, Ramona Wegele and David Kutschi. These three students of the "Social Work" degree program accompanied all the meditation courses for one semester with a camera, producing a film for their final theses. Having taught in various degree programs since the 2010 summer term and having read about 1300 meditation diaries, each 25-40 pages long, I can say from my own perspective that the courses appear to help students to deal in a more healthy way with the hectic nature of today's life, with uncertain future prospects, the overall pressure to perform and the often high workload in their studies. The reports and feedback talks throughout the courses also indicate that the exercise of Loving Kindness and Compassion Meditation leads to a better understanding for others and more inner emotional balance for the students. Additionally, since the advent of the Munich Model more than 40 final theses have been written by my students on the topic of "Mindfulness and Meditation. This includes the creation and implementation of the students' own mindfulness and meditation projects. As they were composed of students in various degree programs,

many different forms of implementation in a variety of professional fields have been explored. The number of students who want to write about these topics has risen continuously in recent semesters and the trend is continuing. The titles of all theses are listed on the Munich Model's website under the category: "Final theses".

Cooperation

Meanwhile a dynamic network with a number of cooperative partners has grown. I wish to acknowledge Paoso and KHG, who offer their rooms for the meditation courses (see "Content of the courses, certificate of performance and grading"). Another cooperative partner is the University of Applied Sciences in Amsterdam where I have been teaching each spring for one week through the ERASMUS program. I give lectures on topics like meditation research, meditation techniques and fields of implementation for mindfulness and meditation. Thanks to this cooperative effort two students of the Munich University of Applied Sciences are able to attend this degree program every year.

We also have a fruitful cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences Coburg, especially for the supervision of final theses. Since 2016 this has been extended to the Ernst-Abbe Hochschule Jena and the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, as well. These two universities created a special mindfulness training called "Mindful university teachers". A cooperation with the Universität Leipzig began in May 2015 on the occasion of my guest lecture "Ways of training the mind: Meditation at university? - The Munich Model". It was in this context that the program was dubbed the "Munich Model". In the same month the Munich Model was presented to the Departments of Medicine and Psychology at Heidelberg University. Meanwhile first courses have since been offered at those faculties. In October 2016 we began an exchange with the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences and the first steps of implementation have also begun there. In 2016 the Munich Model was also presented at the University of Applied Sciences Wien (FH Campus Wien), and in the same year a fruitful cooperation with the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) also developed.

Press

All press articles and interviews are available at the Munich Model's website (Category "Press").

Talks and workshops

The Munich Model has become more popular as a result of guest talks and workshops I have presented not only at other universities but also at symposia and congresses in Germany and abroad,. On 26/06/2017, I gave a presentation at the World Forum for Ethics in Business called “Possibilities of Training the Mind: Meditation at University? The Munich Model.”. Throughout this talk the significance of promoting intuition in the context of university learning was discussed. (Further information about the talks and events are available at the website of the Munich Model.)

7. Perspectives

To be given the green light to implement an offer for meditation at university, as the Munich Model does, may require a lot of convincing at other universities. Right from the start, many decision-makers cannot see the value of mindfulness and meditation in such a context. What can be helpful and persuasive is a profound knowledge of the research and results available in relation to the subject of meditation for students in a university context. Pedagogical considerations are also important criteria to be addressed. The expanding of a university’s curricula for such an offering may be necessary in order for such a program to be implemented successfully and sustainably. Another question is whether mindfulness and meditation courses are offered in addition to studies, on a voluntary basis or are offered as obligatory courses. Learning objectives, assessment criteria, grades and credits (ECTS)⁷ must all also be considered. The Munich Model demonstrates what is possible.⁸

Important criteria...

Mindfulness and especially meditation have an essential impact on our mental hygiene and the results are very individual. In providing instruction, teachers should be conscious of their responsibility. For teaching meditation techniques, especially those that require inner contemplation, one should have long and profound meditation experience, but also knowledge about various meditation approaches in order to ensure a diverse offering for students. Additionally one must create a suitable infrastructure for such courses; normal college classrooms with tables and chairs are only at times appropriate. A peaceful room that can be furnished with cushions, blankets and mats is necessary for the practical exercise of meditation. It’s also useful to have a locked cabinet for materials and expert literature and films that the students can borrow.

More than 1300 students have participated in the Munich Model’s courses. Many of them

⁷ European Credit Transfer System: Amount of work in the form of graduate credit.

⁸ I would like to thank the Financial Advisory Committee at the Munich University of Applied Sciences as they supported the Munich Model financially from the beginning.

wish to continue meditating after the course, however, this can be a challenge without a continuing group. Some of these students continue on their own and attend meditation schools to learn more about various meditation techniques, but this number is relatively small. Former participants often request to have meditation courses each semester that commence at the beginning of their studies. They also request additional offers at university where they can meditate in a group. The survey of the University of Applied Sciences Coburg (see passage “Previous results“) shows that the participants of the Munich Model find the meditation offers meaningful and would like to have more of them. The need for exchange and communication is huge, especially for students who create their own mindfulness and meditation projects in the context of their final thesis or who want to realize those projects in their professional field after their studies, e.g. in kindergarten or at school. Against this background it is preferable to create a space at university where students can continue meditating and exchanging their experiences. In Munich that would be a meditation center that is part of the Munich University of Applied Sciences and LMU. I am convinced that such a space would be a big gain for students. As meditation and mindfulness begins to attract more interest and become more accepted in our society, such a center would be a flagship for our universities.

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