**International Froebel Society 10th Biennial Conference**

**Mindful writing as reflective practice for a relational model of pedagogy**

**Keywords: Mindfulness, Reflective Practice, Proprioceptive writing**

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In this workshop I operate from the twin assumptions that relationship is the foundation of all learner-centred pedagogy, and further that a nurturing relationship with learners is predicated on a caring relationship with oneself. I see mindfulness-informed reflective practice as a key resource for educators to support a relational model of teaching and learning, one that places care of the self, and of the other, at the core of our work.

I draw from models of mindfulness practice (Kabat-Zinn, 2013; Rodgers, 2020) and writing as a process of reflective inquiry (Bolton, 2014; (Metcalf & Tobin, 2002) in the emotional dimension of teaching and learning (Salzberger-Wittenberg, et al, 2004). Mindfulness involves paying attention in a sustained, flexible and non-elaborative way to present and direct experience, facilitating us to inhabit a beginner’s mind. We can create a solid, safe space for our own self-care which in turn supports us to create such a space for learners.

Writing offers a method of embodying a curious and kind relationship with our selves, fostering an attentive presence to the everyday demands of pedagogical experience, which can support and foster resourceful and wise practice. In educational settings that are increasingly shaped by instrumental and regulatory demands, underpinned by an insistent privileging of conceptual epistemologies, writing can bring a more intuitive, holistic way of knowing and being (Teasdale, 2022), in which the felt sense of experience can be a focus of our reflective inquiry. In this way, reflective practice can potentially open a gateway to our own transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000).

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