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The Munich Model

“Mindfulness and Meditation in a University Context”¹

This chapter will review the Munich Model’s various course offerings, its development and implementation as well as the program’s results to date. Conditions of participation, performance criteria and the teaching content of the “Mindfulness and Meditation” courses will also be covered. In particular, the model’s regular courses have gained recognition nationally and internationally, as such courses are rarely ever offered at universities as integral to the curriculum including grading and ECTS².

Regular “Mindfulness and Meditation” Courses

In the summer semester of 2010, I offered to teach a summer term, for-credit course called “Mindfulness and Meditation” in the department of Applied Social Sciences at the Munich University of Applied Sciences. It was my first offering of such a course, with space for up to 15 participants from the Social Work degree program. Sixty-five students applied. This marked the beginning of a program now titled, the Munich Model. This course, offered as part of “Creative Methods/1st semester” which ended in mid-July 2010 had 14 participants, who requested for the course to continue the following semester. The number of participants was sufficient to offer a new course. In addition, the course had a waitlist of 50 students.

Unfortunately, it wasn’t possible to add another course to the curriculum for the 2nd semester on such short notice. Instead it was decided that an additional course on the subject of “Meditation” be given in the 2010/11 winter semester, during the main study period. Compared to the course offered in the 1st semester, this course, entitled “Meditation II” in the main subject area “Creative Methods/ Deepening/5th semester” dealt with practical exercises, but above all with a larger range of research topics as well as field practice in the context of social work,

whereby mindfulness and meditation are already practically applied. In the 2011/12 winter semester, the first course was held at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) Munich³ under the title “Meditation at Primary School” as part of the “Elementary School Pedagogics” degree program.

The following semester, summer 2012, the course “Meditation at School” took place in the “Teacher Education” degree program. Both courses were also open to students of the “Pedagogics for Special Needs Education” degree program. In the 2013/14 winter semester, a further course was offered at the Munich University of Applied Sciences, in the Faculty of General and Interdisciplinary Studies under the title of the “Personal Competence” degree program, initially under the title “Stress Management and Stress Prevention”⁴. At this faculty, so-called elective courses are offered and can be taken by students of any faculty. From the very beginning, the student response was huge. Well over 100 students applied for 15 places. An additional course offering, in English, followed in the 2014 summer semester. As awareness of the two courses grew, the number of applicants also increased; after a few semesters, there were already over 700 applicants for the 15 places in each course.

In the summer semester of 2014, a course in “Meditation” was established for the 2nd semester of the part-time “Social Work” degree program. This course was also offered in the dual study “Nursing” program, in the “Practice in Body Perception” study program. During the 2014/15 winter semester, the course “Teaching classical music holistically” was added to the curriculum of the “Music Education” degree program in the Faculty of Arts (LMU) Munich. The course focuses on a technique based entirely on music meditation. In the context of the Munich Model, this course is part of a more specific theme: “Meditation and Art”.

In the 2015/16 winter semester, followed “Mindfulness and Meditation” in the “Early Childhood Education” degree program, under “Methods of Stress Management”. This was an important addition to the already

existing repertoire of mindfulness and meditation courses concerned with pedagogy. As this field of study relates to children from 0-12 years of age, students working with pre-school aged children could now participate in the Munich Model.

In the 2017/18 winter semester, an advanced course, “Meditation III” was inaugurated and offered during the main study period of the “Social Work” degree course. A course called “Stress management and Meditation”, which is held in English, supplemented the course offering of the Faculty of General and Interdisciplinary Studies.

During that same semester, at the Munich University of Applied Sciences, further teaching modules were integrated into the “Meditation and Art” theme. This time, the subject was “Paintings of the Great Masters”⁵, offered to students in the both the “Social Work” as well as the “Early Childhood Education” degree programs. Starting in the 2018 summer semester, a second course was added under “Courses in English” specifically for international students of the Munich University of Applied Sciences, to present them the opportunity to learn about the “Meditation and Art” approach.

The course program has continually expanded in the time period between the 2010 summer semester and the 2020 summer semester, with more than 150 students taking part in the programme each semester. Thus far, students from the following faculties and degree programs have participated in the courses:

Munich University of Applied Sciences

Faculty of Applied Social Sciences

- BA Social Work
- BA Social Work Part Time
- BA Early Childhood Education
- BA Care

Faculty for General and Interdisciplinary Studies

- Faculty of Architecture
- Faculty of Civil Engineering
- Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Automotive Engineering, Aircraft Engineering
- Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology
- Faculty of Supply and Building Services Engineering, Process Engineering Paper and Packaging, Printing and Media Technology

- Faculty of Applied Natural Sciences and Mechatronics
- Faculty of Computer Science and Mathematics
- Faculty of Geoinformatics
- Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Management
- Faculty of Business Administration
- Faculty of Applied Social Sciences
- Faculty of Design
- Faculty of Tourism

Ludwig-Maximilians-University (LMU) Munich

Faculty of Psychology and Education

- Teacher training for primary school pedagogy and didactics
- Teacher training for school pedagogy
- Teacher training for special education

Details for the various courses on offer are noted on the Munich model website: www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell. Also listed for each of the courses are the semester hours per week, the corresponding ECTS credits, the course semester, the number of applicants and participants, the subject specification, the start of implementation and the proof of performance.

Conditions of participation

A prerequisite for participation in most of the Munich Model’s courses and additional meditation offerings is a stable mental condition. Previous experience with meditation, stress management or relaxation techniques is not required. However, the “Meditation II” and “Meditation III” courses offered in the “Social Work” degree program do require prior experience with mindfulness and/or meditation. This is met by the successful completion of the basic “Meditation I” course, or on the basis of successful completion of an external meditation class. Students can register for nearly all the meditation courses online. The Munich Model’s website (www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell) indicates how many students have already applied for the available seats in each course, and how many of them have received a seat.

Course contents, proof of performance and grading

In the practical part of the courses students learn different mindfulness and meditation exercises. The theoretical building blocks of the course consists of research studies, background knowledge about the different approaches of meditation and the possible ways of implementing mindfulness and meditation in the students’ later professional occupations.

Schedule

As a rule, the course units last two semester hours per week (SWS), i.e. a total of 90 minutes (2 x 45 minutes). We begin with a sitting meditation, which includes, for example, focusing on the breath, on the area between the eyebrows or the inner recitation of a mantra (word, verse or syllable). In the beginning of the semester this exercise lasts only a few minutes. 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?

As the course continues, each lecture deals with a specific topic relevant to the course and degree program and includes practical exercises and theoretical input. 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 “Social Work” degree program course is three semester hours weekly. Because of this, the participants are offered a on-day daylong mindfulness block course, which includes eating and cooking mindfully, in addition to theoretical content.

Teaching contents

The following teaching content was imparted through the courses. For a detailed description of the practical exercises listed below, see p. 83 ff. and p. 101 ff.

Practical exercises (a selection)

- Mindfulness and breathing exercises
- Mantra meditation
- Mindful cooking/eating
- Mindful communication
- Body scan
- Loving kindness/metta meditation
- walking meditation
- Sutras
- Sound meditation

Theoretical building blocks

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

Other topics (selection)

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

Films (selection)

- Monks in the Laboratory
- The Altruism Revolution
- Free the Mind
- The Dhamma Brothers
- InnSaei – the power of intuition
- In Pursuit of Silence

For further examples of topics and films, see the section “Additional Offerings (Lecture and Film Programme)” (p. 62 and p. 74 f.).

For further literature references related to the various teaching content: www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell (section “Literature and Films”).

Acquisition of skills

The main objectives stated in the curricula:

- Promoting self-awareness
- Becoming aware of your own thought activities
- Increased concentration and attention
- Strengthening of self-confidence, self-efficacy, well-being and regulation of emotion
- Constructive stress management
- Promotion of creativity and intuition

The effects of the course units are discussed in the “Results to date” section (p. 64 ff.).

Proof of performance and grading

Students are graded on the basis of attendance in the course, regular participation, the writing of a personal meditation journal 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 journal. The composition of the entry includes:

- What: which exercise
- When: day/time
- Where: at home, in the park, on the train, at the bus stop etc.
- Other: potential additional materials (for example timer/cell phone app, seat cushion)
- Length of time: flexible
- Personal well-being before/after the exercise

The main aim of the journals is to give the participants more insight into their own meditation practice: When and where do I meditate well? What time of day is best for me and why? Which exercise is suitable when? It is not necessary to do every exercise at home exactly as many times as the other exercises. Usually certain exercises

emerge that become favorites as they generate a higher state of well-being. Likewise it's not necessary to repeat an exercise many times. It's important not to overstretch the practice time; too much of a good thing is not necessarily always productive. For example sitting meditation should be 15 to 20 minutes, once or twice a day.

Towards the middle of the semester, all meditation journals are submitted. I then go through them and have the opportunity to check on how the students felt about the exercises, to ensure they are doing them correctly and at times, to be able to share general feedback in upcoming lectures that the journals may generate. All information in these meditation journals is of course strictly confidential. After the exercises are introduced in class, the students have enough practice and knowledge to practice at home. As there are meditation forms that should only be practiced over a longer period of time under the guidance of an experienced teacher, it is recommended that students who prefer these forms contact reputable meditation schools.

In the “Early Childhood Education” course program, a 20-minute oral examination is held in addition to the above-mentioned performance assessment. The first part of the oral examination consists of a short presentation of a practical example that students have worked out themselves, e.g. how mindfulness can be practiced with children in day-care centres. In the second part, the topics of general mindfulness and, in particular, mindfulness and meditation research are examined.

Additional offerings within the framework of the Munich Model

Five key supplemental components have thus far also been anchored in the Munich Model:

- Additional course offerings for students
- Additional course offerings for university employees
- Additional course offerings for teaching staff
- Network meetings
- A public lecture and film program

For up-to-date information on these additional courses: www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell (section “Courses”).

Additional offers for students

Seminars and workshops

In addition to the regular courses at the LMU Munich, both a four-hour, and an eight-hour workshop, entitled “Mindfulness and Meditation at School” have been offered since the 2013/14 winter semester, at the Munich Center for Teacher Education (MZL) at the LMU Munich. From the 2015/16 winter semester and in the succeeding winter semesters up to and including 2018/19, a three-hour workshop “Meditation and Mindfulness in Counselling” was offered at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. This collaboration will continue in the 2020/21 winter semester with new offerings.

Meditation project for alumni

Since the 2016/17 winter semester there has been an ongoing meditation class for alumni of the Munich University of Applied Sciences, LMU Munich, TU Munich, Academy of Fine Arts Munich and the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich. No previous knowledge of meditation is required for participation, but a stable mental condition is a prerequisite. The meditation is offered on Tuesdays from 5:15 to 6:15 p.m.. A short introduction takes place in advance at 5:00 p.m. The venue is the “Room of Silence” at the Munich University of Applied Sciences.

Event “Calm for the exam – relaxation techniques before exam situations”

In cooperation with the student advisory service of the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, workshops for reducing exam anxiety have been held since the 2019 summer semester.

Coaching seminars and coaching retreats

From the 2020 summer semester onwards, coaching seminars and coaching retreats will be offered every semester for both current and former students who are conducting mindfulness and meditation projects as part of their studies or in their professional fields.

Participation in “The Toolbox is You” retreats

Former students are also able to participate in “The Toolbox is You” retreats under the direction of the mindfulness trainer and craniosacral bodywork practitioner, Maria Kluge at the Achtsamkeitszentrum Osterloh (www.achtsamkeit-osterloh.org).

Additional offerings for university employees

When staff members of the university discovered that there were meditation classes for students, they expressed the wish for something similar to be made available for university employees. The first such class, a mindfulness trial lesson was offered during the 2012 summer semester, as part of Health Day at the Munich University of Applied Sciences. Afterwards, the 15 participants asked whether there could also be a weekly course – whereupon 10 classes were offered. The structure of the classes at that time was: 20 minutes of meditation, 30 minutes of deepening a topic and then another 10 minutes of meditation. After the course, 14 participants continued this course weekly, on Friday’s from 7:30–8:30 a.m., for two years. Afterwards the class was changed to Thursdays 8.00–8.30 a.m. and continued by the university staff themselves. A similar course is planned for the Pasing campus from the summer semester 2020.

Additional courses for teaching staff

In the 2017/18 winter semester, workshops for teachers, on the topic of “Mindfulness and Meditation in Teaching” were also introduced as part of the program. In addition to theory and exercises, these workshops focus more on research on mindfulness and meditation as well as possible applications to their respective classes. The emphasis is on practice, so that the teachers are able to have their own experience and then authentically convey what they have learned. While a long and profound experience of meditation is needed to teach meditation techniques, especially those of inner contemplation, not much previous experience is required for a series of simple but already effective mindfulness exercises (see p. 87 and p. 169 f.). This is what makes short applications in regular classes so promising. Feedback from instructors shows that the overall atmosphere of the classroom changes, and in particular becomes more relaxed. In addition to teaching content, students are now also provided tools that affect self-awareness.

In the 2019/20 winter semester, a partnership was established with the DiZ – Center of Teaching and Learning in Ingolstadt (Bavaria) to include seminars on “Mindfulness and Meditation in a University Context” in the DiZ course program. The first two-day seminars will take place during the 2020 summer semester and will continue to be offered every semester should there be a positive response. The establishment of a working group is also planned in this case.

Network meetings

Network meetings have been held under the Munich Model since the 2017 summer semester. These are primarily intended for current students and former students who have participated in the meditation courses of the Munich Model. Those who are active in the field of education and are interested in the topic can also participate, by invitation.

The focus of the meetings is to facilitate an exchange for the sharing of experience from independently conducted mindfulness and meditation projects (for example in the context of internships and final theses) and about new findings in mindfulness and meditation research. The meetings last a maximum of two hours and are structured as follows: 20 minutes of meditation together, 30 minutes

of presentation on current developments (including “News from Science”, short project presentation(s), literature tips/ internet links). Afterwards there’s a discussion. The meetings take place several times per semester. The dates are announced on www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell.

Lecture and film programme

Since the 2014/15 winter semester, lecture and film evenings on the topic of “Spiritual Teachers and Their Teachings” have been held within the framework of the Munich Model. Originally, the idea was to give the students another opportunity, outside of class, to learn more about different meditation approaches, backgrounds, spiritual teachers and also about developments in neuroscience. Due to considerable interest, a free public event series has developed out of this.

On www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell the events and main topics of the program are announced; the current program flyer is available as a PDF download. For an overview of the topics covered so far, see “Lecture and Film Series – Spiritual Teachers and Their Teachings” (p. 74 f.).

Infrastructure

Rooms

Most of the courses at Munich University of Applied Sciences take place in the rooms of the Catholic and Evangelical University Community in Paaso. Courses for the in the Faculty of General and Interdisciplinary Studies are held at a different location, in the “Room of Silence” of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology. At LMU Munich, practical exercises are offered at the Catholic University Community (KHG) and the theoretical components of the courses take place in the regular classrooms at LMU Munich.

Workshops on the subject of “Calm for the exam” are held in classrooms at Munich University of Applied Sciences. So far, the additional courses for university employees has taken place in the “Room of Silence” of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering. Additional offers for teaching staff are mainly carried out in the DiZ – Center of Teaching and Learning.

Network meetings are offered in the Paoso or the KHG. The public film and lecture series takes place in the “Red Cube” lecture hall of the Faculty of Computer Science and Mathematics at the Munich University of Applied Sciences. Some events have also taken place at the Faculty of Design.

Materials

Pillows, mats, blankets and suitable cabinets for storage were purchased for the program’s meditation classes. These materials were initially furnished out of tuition fees, still charged at that time. When tuition fees were abolished, these materials were furnished through additional funds. For this, the necessary applications were submitted.⁶

Expert literature and films

As part of the Munich Model, an extensive range of books and films is available through the the Munich University of Applied Sciences’ library at the Pasing Campus. These can also be borrowed in other branches of the university and by other universities throughout Germany. In addition, there is an extensive collection of reference books in the Campus Pasing library. As well as the regular library codes, all books and films have an extra code, namely the abbreviation “MZ”, which stands for “Meditation Center”. Using this coding, all works on the subject of “Mindfulness and Meditation” that are available at the University of Applied Sciences Munich can be accessed on the website of the University Library via the field “Free Search”. Under the heading “limit hits” you can also select the various forms of publication, such as printed material or video (DVD).

The assortment now consists of over 700 book titles on the subject of “Mindfulness and Meditation” as well as numerous audiovisual media (CDs and DVDs). Several copies of most titles are available. There are even 35 copies of the books that serve as primary literature in some courses. These can be borrowed by the respective course participants on a per-semester basis.

A small inventory of books on the subject of “Mindfulness and Meditation” has also been assembled for the LMU Munich. However, these books are registered normally in the library (branch pedagogy/psychology) and

are not directly related to the Munich Model. On the website page: www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell, detailed literature recommendations are available as PDF downloads in the “Literature and Films” section. Interestingly, it has so far been shown that in addition to students from the Munich University of Applied Sciences and LMU Munich, students from other universities in Germany have also taken notice of the range of books and films available, and order these from the Munich Model via interlibrary loan.

Cooperation partners

In addition to the partnerships with Paoso and the KHG, which have existed since the 2010/11 winter semester, there have been numerous other collaborations established, in particular with universities, but also with some institutions that offer specific meditation courses. Some of the cooperation partners are described in the section “Results to date”; others are listed at www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell.

Program Announcements

The courses are listed in the online course catalogue of the respective faculty. The in the Faculty of General and Interdisciplinary Studies also has a printed course catalogue in which the “Stress Management und Meditation” courses are listed. Information about these courses is also provided in a flyer from the “Health Promoting University” program, which also lists additional meditation courses for students.

The public and free lectures and film screenings are announced via event calendars on the websites of the Munich University of Applied Sciences and LMU Munich, as well as on flyers and posters. There is also a distribution list with the contact addresses of those interested. All events can also be found on www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell.

Results to date

Student Feedback

In March 2016, a student, Isabel Braunger, interviewed the participants of the 2015/16 winter semester meditation courses as part of her studies in Integrative Health Promotion under the direction of Professor Niko Kohls, Coburg University of Applied Sciences and Arts.⁷ The pilot study, which was carried out using an online questionnaire, shows, among other things, significant differences between those participants who already have meditation experience compared to “newcomers”. The more stressed a person felt, the less mindful and self-effective he/she experienced themselves to be. The more mindful a person felt, the more self-efficacy they experienced. The study also asked, among other things, what the participating students thought about the following statement: “Meditation in a university context is a meaningful and profitable enrichment for students and should therefore be offered more often”. Of the surveyed students, 86.1 percent answered with: “I fully agree”.

Further feedback about the meditation courses also comes from students featured in the film *Shanti – Meditation in a University Context Using the Example of the Munich Model* by Katharina Nowack, Ramona Wegele and David Kutschi (p. 186 ff.). These students from the “Social Work” degree course produced the film as part of their final thesis, coming to all courses with their cameras over one semester.

From my own observations throughout the numerous courses since the 2010 summer semester, as well as through the reading of approximately 2000 meditation journals, each 25–40 pages long, it is clear that the courses offered help students to cope better with the hectic pace of today’s world, with uncertain future prospects, the general pressure to perform and the at times heavy workload of their studies. It can also be seen from the reports and feedback discussions in the classroom that the exercises of loving kindness and the compassion meditations lead to a better interpersonal understanding and more serenity. (See also the journal notes on loving kindness, p. 147 ff. as well as on reflections, p. 177 ff.)

As a further result, it is noteworthy that more than 75 final theses have already been written on the topic of “Mindfulness and Meditation”, among others on the application and implementation of one’s own mindfulness and meditation projects. As these were written in the con-

text of varying fields of study, many different areas of application and professional fields have been explored. Over the last few semesters, the number of students wishing to write their final thesis on these topics has risen continuously. Consequently, this can be expected to continue into the immediate future. For a selection of papers submitted so far see section “Theses within the Framework of the Munich Model” (p. 69 ff.). All final theses are listed on www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell (“Final Theses” section).

Last but not least, an important result is that several former students have already become lecturers themselves since completing their studies and have begun to take over the teaching of courses under the Munich Model. See: www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell (section “Program”).

Cooperation

In the meantime, a dynamic network has been established in cooperation with a number of partner organizations. First and foremost, this includes Paoso and the KHG, who make their rooms available for mindfulness and meditation course offerings (see “Infrastructure” section p. 62 f.).

Universities

Below is a list of some of the Munich Model’s cooperative partners. For an overview of all cooperative partnerships, including contact details see:

www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell.

Since 2016 there has been a close cooperation with Anna Caspersen, MSc., and Maaïke Rijken, MSc., of the Faculty of Social Work and Law at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. Within the framework of the ERASMUS programme, every year the Munich Model is introduced to the students of the Positive Psychology program. Lectures include the topics of mindfulness and meditation research, techniques and applications. As a result of this partnership, each year, two students from Munich University of Applied Sciences are also invited to take part in and benefit from this course.

Since 2015, a fruitful cooperation has been established with Professor Niko Kohls, of the Coburg University of Applied Sciences, particularly in relation to the exchange of current findings on mindfulness and meditation research and the joint supervision of theses.

In May 2015, a partnership developed with Susanne Krämer, Ph.D., from the Centre for Teacher Training and

School Research at the University Leipzig, on the occasion of a guest lecture: “Possibilities for training the mind: Meditation in a university context? – The Munich Model”. This is also when the name “Munich Model” was first coined.

In the same month, at the invitation of Daniel Holt, Ph.D., the Munich Model was presented at the faculties of Psychology and Medicine at the University Heidelberg. Since then, the first course units have taken place there.

Since 2016 an extensive exchange has been underway with the Ernst Abbe University of Applied Sciences Jena and the Friedrich Schiller University Jena. Under the direction of Professor Mike Sandbothe and Reyk Albrecht, Ph.D., these two universities – together with four other Thuringian universities, the Thuringian Ministry of Science and the German health insurance company AOK PLUS – have designed and evaluated the Thuringian model “Mindful Universities”. University teaching staff from several German states are currently involved in the further worldwide transfer of this first fully developed curricula set for the implementation of mindfulness training in the in a university context. The different courses developed in Jena for university students, lecturers, employees and managers have seen more than 10,000 participants between 2015 and 2019. In this context, a certified training called “Mindful University Teachers” has also been established. In addition, nearly 400 university members from Germany, Austria and Switzerland are already participating in the supraregional cooperation platform Mindful Universities, <https://achtsamehochschulen.de>, developed as part of the Thuringian model.

The platform explores the effectiveness of mindfulness and meditation in a changing, digitized university landscape. The aim is to clarify how target group-specific mindfulness trainings can improve the ability to deal with disruptive transformation processes (such as digitalization, globalization, corona and climate crises) in a prudent, sustainable and socially balanced way and strengthen the motivation to promote resilience in personality development at universities. At the European level, the cooperation platform is active in the Erasmus + training program, Embodied Critical Thinking (2020-2023). More information can be found at: <https://www.trainingect.com/>.⁸

The Munich Model was also presented in 2016 at the University of Applied Sciences in Vienna (FH Campus Wien); and in the same year, a fruitful collaboration was initiated with Santino Güntert and Silke Vlecken, Ph.D. of the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW).

In October 2016, a productive exchange began with Reiner Frey, Ph.D. of the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences. One year later, in 2017, the first mindfulness and meditation offerings were implemented here, together with Professor Gerd Döben-Henisch. With powerful support from the president Professor Frank E. P. Dievernich, the “Meditation and the Future of Education” congress was held in 2018. The following year another congress was held under the title “Meditation and the Future of Education 2019: Spirituality and Science”. The contents of the lectures and workshops were published in book form for both events.⁹ In January 2020, the Scientific Center for Personality Development and Social Responsibility (ZPG) was founded at Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences. It comprises three working areas, namely personality formation (through meditation and self-reflection), social responsibility (including social learning) and university didactics. These three pillars are to be incorporated into the curricula as an integrated whole and form the basis for research activities.

At Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, the Executive Board has also signalled their support for the implementation of a mindfulness and meditation program. On the initiative of the President Professor Andreas Bertram, a full-time position, “Mindful Leadership” (staffing: Christiane Leiste), was created in advance to develop, implement and coordinate such course offerings. The partnership with Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences began in 2018 with an exchange meeting in Munich. Shortly thereafter, Christiane Leiste spent several days in Munich to observe the Munich Model’s courses. In autumn of the same year, a public guest lecture and various workshops with students and university staff were held in Osnabrück. In the meantime, a comprehensive program on the topic of “Mindfulness and Meditation” has been implemented at the Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences. This includes a series of mindfulness training courses for students and teachers, as well as a certificate course entitled “Mindful University Teachers”, which has already taken place in Jena. Further information is available at: www.hs-osnabrueck.de/de/mindful-leadership/

Since 2018 there has also been a cooperative partnership Nils Altner, Ph.D., from the University of Duisburg-Essen. In addition to an exchange on research and the application of mindfulness and meditation approaches in daycare centers and schools, a joint publication on the topic of “Mindfulness at Primary School” was also produced.

With Ulrich Ott, Ph.D. at the Bender Institute of Neuroimaging of the Justus-Liebig-University Gießen, there is also a collaboration taking place in the context of research questions, particularly in the supervision of students writing their theses.

In 2018, a collaboration with Karlheinz Vaitl, Ph.D. from the Centre for Teacher Education at the University of Vienna was also established.

In cooperation with the universities of Leipzig and Tübingen the “(Research) Network Mindfulness in Education” has been initiated. This is an exchange platform for universities, schools and other educational institutions. The focus is on how mindfulness can be integrated into the respective professional fields. An overview of the projects in the German-speaking countries is available on the website www.netzwerk-achtsamkeit-in-der-bildung.de offers. The contact persons are located at the Universities of Leipzig and Tübingen.

Initial partnerships at the Universities of Bayreuth, Würzburg, Tübingen, St. Gallen and Constance, were arranged through student initiatives.

MBSR MBCT Verband [German association of MBSR and MBCT teachers]

There is a fruitful collaboration with the chairman of the MBSR-MBCT association, Günter Hudsch, particularly in the exchange of current findings on mindfulness and meditation research and the application of mindfulness and meditation in different professional fields.

Training organizations

At the DiZ – Center of Teaching and Learning in Ingolstadt (Bavaria), two-day seminars on the topic of “Mindfulness and Meditation” will begin in the 2020 summer semester. If the response is positive, the aim is to offer this course regularly every semester and to establish a working group.

In cooperation with the Pedagogical Institute in Munich, one-day seminars for educators and teachers are being offered. A first seminar on “Mindfulness for teachers” was held at the Academy for Teacher Training and Personnel Management in Dillingen (Bavaria).

In the Achtsamkeitszentrum in Osterloh former students can take part in the “Toolbox is You” retreats.

Schools and day care centers

In Munich and the surrounding area, there are numerous partnerships with schools and daycare centers. As part of their studies Students carry out such mindfulness projects here. In addition, many students continue to work with mindfulness and meditation after they have completed their studies, for example in their professional fields, through schools and day care centers.

Open child and youth work

After a first contact with the Munich County Youth Council in the 2019/20 winter semester, a practical workshop on the application of mindfulness and meditation approaches in open child and youth work is planned for the 2020 summer semester. Subsequently, corresponding seminars for the regular training program are planned.

Spiritual groups, associations and information centres

Through the lecture and film series “Spiritual Teachers and Their Teachings”, which takes place within the framework of the Munich Model, partnerships have developed with a variety of spiritual groups, associations and information centers, such as those of Thich Nhat Hanh, Krishnamurti, Mother Meera and Sri Chinmoy. For further information and links see www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell (under the heading “More Links”).

Lectures and Workshops

As a result of numerous guest lectures and workshops at universities as well as at conferences and congresses at home and abroad, the idea of the Munich Model has gained recognition both nationally and internationally. These presentations were intended for a variety of target groups, including social workers, youth workers, educators, teachers, university lecturers/lecturers, mindfulness trainers, medical doctors, artists, managers in companies and judges. In this context, the lectures and workshops listed below are particularly worth noting:

- In June 2017, the Munich model was presented at the World Forum for Ethics in Business in the panel area “Continuing Education for Ethics in Innovations” under the title “Possibilities of Training the Mind: Meditation at University? The Munich Model”, which also discussed the importance of promoting intuition in a university context.

- In November 2017, at the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum’s “Museum Guides Now!” International symposium, the new approach “Meditation and Art” was presented using a workshop and guest lectures. In the same month, following a lecture in London at the international World Goodwill Seminar “From the Unreal to the Real. Discerning Truth in Our Times ” the lecture: “The Revelation of Meaning: Meditation and Higher Education ”. Through the parallel transmission to two other locations, Geneva and New York, as well as on the Internet, an international audience was informed about the Munich model.
- In March 2018, there was an international workshop and lecture “Possibilities of training the mind: Meditation at university? – The Munich Model ” as part of the symposium “Studenten hebben dorst”. Immediately afterwards, two lectures on the Munich model at international conferences on mindfulness and meditation in Bern and Vienna, with Richard Davidson as the keynote speaker in neuroscience and a pioneer in mindfulness and meditation research.
- Lecture: “The Munich Model brings Mindfulness and Meditation to University Students” at the international conference “The Future of Education – Edition 8” in Florence in June 2018. Lecture in October 2018: “From intellect to intuition. Meditation in a University Context – the Munich model” and workshop “Practice Box – Meditation and Intuition” at the Frankfurt congress “Meditation and the Future of Education”.
- At the invitation of students of the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes – German Academic Scholarship Foundation –, the lecture and workshop “From Intellect to Intuition: Mindfulness and Meditation in a University Context – the Munich Model” took place in April 2019 at the event “Meditation from A to Zen – Theoretical Perspectives on a Contemplative Method”.
- Lecture: “Meditation and Art – The Conscious Perception of the Great Works of Painting” at the international conference “The 9th Edition of The Future of Education” in Florence in June 2019.

For all lectures, workshops and seminars see www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell (category “Events”).

Press Response

The Munich model has already attracted a great deal of press coverage. For all media coverage see www.hm.edu/meditationsmodell (under “Press”; as download or link).

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¹ The text is partly taken from: de Bruin 2017 and de Bruin 2019a.

² European Credit Transfer System: expressed in terms of credit points.

³ Further in the text: LMU Munich.

⁴ "Meditation" was included as a term in the title because the event dealt almost exclusively with mindfulness and meditation topics.

⁵ For a description of the "Meditation and Art" approach see de Bruin 2019b.

⁶ We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Advisory Committee of the Munich University of Applied Sciences, as they have financially supported the Munich model from the start.

⁷ For details on the survey and other results to date in the context of the Munich model, see Braunger 2016.

⁸ For an overview of developments to date, see: Sandbothe, Mike / Albrecht, Reyk (Eds.) (2021). *Achtsame Hochschulen in der digitalen Gesellschaft*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.

⁹ Dievernich / Döben-Henisch / Frey (2019) and Frey (Eds.) (2020).

