

2015 Mindfulness in Education Conference

Foundations for Teaching and Learning

EIGHTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 26-28, 2015

Professional Development Grant Final Report

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Grant:

The Professional Grant provided the opportunity for Dr. Loretta Cochran to attend the 8th annual Mindfulness in Education Conference in June, 2015. The program included a variety of presentations on teaching methods that used tenets of mindfulness in their development. One full day of hands-on workshops allowed participants to experience these methods and develop exercises that would utilize these newly found skills in the classroom. The final day was one of reflection and awareness of the gap between current and ideal practice of mindfulness for each participant.

Activity

The conference was unlike any teaching conference offered by AACSB or other traditional professional organization in business. The Five Dimensions of Engaged Teaching include (1) cultivating an open heart, (2) engaging the self-observer, (3) being present, (4) expanding emotional capacity, and (5) establishing respectful boundaries. The challenge of creating balance amongst developing a reflective teaching practice, minimizing work stress, growing emotional intelligence, facilitating collegiality, and creating inclusive classrooms was addressed.

Experiences:

Hands on workshops were essential to gaining skills in mindfulness. Workshops on how to teach mindfulness, how to develop your own practice, and how to introduce the concepts to students were quite informative. Creating a physical campus with mindfulness as a focus and creating boundaries through mindfulness were especially helpful and thought provoking. The final day of practice received high marks. There is nothing like a mindful sunrise in Denver to motivate engaged thinking.

Recommendations:

This is a conference that a faculty member could attend on an annual basis and never have a repeat experience. All that is required to benefit from this conference is a desire to improve oneself and how one engages with students. It is the best professional development experience I have ever had the privilege to attend.