

Using Contemplative Practices with Teacher Candidates to Decrease Stress and Increase Flourishing

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By increasing special education faculty's self-efficacy and confidence to deliver contemplative practices, we hope to make a small contribution towards supporting special educator teacher candidates' well-being so that they can create contexts for comprehensive well-being/flourishing in their schools for generations to come.

ABSTRACT

Stressful working conditions continue to impact teacher shortages in special education. Although systemic changes are necessary to improve special educators' experiences in schools, offering explicit instruction on stress-reducing strategies in special education teacher preparation programs may support special educators' flourishing/comprehensive well-being and reduce burnout, thereby reducing teacher attrition and increasing retention. In this article, we describe an approach used by university faculty to integrate contemplative practices (i.e., mindful breathing, meditation, and gratitude writing) in special education teacher preparation courses. Implications for using this approach within and beyond special education teacher preparation coursework are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Burnout, contemplative practices, flourishing, intervention, special education, teacher preparation

On Sunday night, Dr. Johnson opened an email from a graduate student. It read, "I hope all is well. I am writing to find out if I can get an extension on this week's assignment. I am having a really hard time keeping up with assignments this semester. I have been working non-stop all weekend. I did not go to church today. Trying to get all of my assignments completed. I am so overwhelmed, I can't think straight and have a terrible headache. I was so stressed out that I got an upset stomach. I was up half the night." The next morning, she opened a similar email from a different graduate student. "Dear Dr. Johnson, I am so sorry. I was not able to submit my assignment last night. I'm under a lot of stress with all my classes. I just keep messing up. I couldn't go to work today. I'm trying to get myself together, mentally and emotionally. I have a doctor's appointment after work and then I need to finish the rest of my assignments. My scrambled brain continues. If you could please give me an extension, it will take some of the pressure off. Again, I'm so sorry."

Dr. Johnson had been teaching master's-level special education courses for five years, and she received similar emails over the years. Her graduate students often arrived at evening classes exhausted after a full day of working in their schools. Many of these students were conditionally-licensed special educators. Recognizing the stress they were experiencing, she knew she had to do something but was not sure where to begin. She knew a colleague who used several practices to support her students' flourishing/comprehensive well-being during class time and reached out.

As a teacher educator, Dr. Johnson has a unique opportunity to both support her special educator teacher candidates' well-being as they complete their master's degree, as well as provide them with strategies they can use to manage stress and maintain well-being throughout their career. It is no surprise that her students are struggling with high stress levels. They not only undertake a large cognitive load with the master's degree, but also often work an additional 10+ hours a week outside of the school-day on tasks like planning, grading, paperwork, and progress monitoring (O'Brien et al., 2019). In addition to working full-time and completing

graduate degree requirements, many graduate students are also attending to family and other outside responsibilities, thereby adding another major source of work/life imbalance for many teacher candidates.

Special educators report high stress levels (Antoniou et al., 2023; Haydon et al., 2018), especially novice special educators (Billingsley et al., 2011). Over time, that stress can manifest as emotional exhaustion, a key dimension of burnout (Brunsting, Morin et al., 2025; Maslach, 2003). Special educators also report high levels of emotional exhaustion at significantly higher levels than a national sample of general educators (Brunsting et al., 2022). Unfortunately, stress and burnout are associated with a range of negative outcomes including chronic sickness (Salvagnoni et al., 2022), lower mental health and well-being (Walter et al., 2023), reduced teacher self-efficacy (Brunsting et al., 2024), higher special educator attrition and intent to leave (Nguyen & Kremmer, 2022), and negative student outcomes (Madigan & Curran, 2021).

Teacher Educators' Opportunity to Provide Stress Management Skills

Given these challenging outcomes related to special education teachers' continued and overwhelming stress, it is critical for teacher educators, like Dr. Johnson, to provide skills, content, and practice related to reducing stress. Because stress occurs through an interaction of person and environment (Pithers & Soden, 1999; Van Vianen, 2018), it is necessary to consider both the person and their working and schooling environments when providing solutions. For instance, for special education teachers, there is a growing body of literature linking challenging or unmanageable working conditions (i.e., the imbalance between their substantial

job responsibilities and the inadequate resources that they experience associated with how their school is structured) with stress and burnout (Brunsting et al., 2026; Bettini et al., 2020; Brunsting, Giani et al., 2025; Cumming et al., 2022). Teacher preparation programs that omit the systemic challenges of working conditions risk placing the onus on highly stressed special educators to "self-care their way out" of an unmanageable workload. Additionally, as many students work full time while completing their preparation programs, the multiple emotional and cognitive demands they encounter can increase their stress (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2023). To address systemic challenges, researchers are adapting existing working condition interventions (e.g., Sanetti et al., 2022) to reduce teacher stress and burnout, and have included elements of advocacy, peer collaboration and support, preparation for difficult conversations, and goal setting in their interventions (Cooley & Yovanoff, 1996; Hirsch et al., 2023; Ruble et al., 2024).

However, given that (a) intervention development and systems change take time, and (b) stress occurs as an interaction between person and environment, there is a pressing need to prepare special educators with a range of stress-management skills so that they become fluent using them in pre-service training or during in-service certification and professional development, such as through Dr. Johnson's course. The skills that can help these teachers may include supporting personal resources (e.g., affective, behavioral, cognitive, physical, social, and spiritual; Salyers et al., 2022). Contemplative practices emphasize the affective, cognitive, and spiritual aspects of personal resources through self-awareness, self-regulation, and/or self-inquiry to bring about transformation and a state

of enduring well-being or inner flourishing (Davidson & Dahl, 2016).

To date, there are few intervention studies that focus on reducing special educator teacher attrition. One such research team, Ruble et al. (2024), developed an intervention called BREATHE-EASE for in-service special educators, which includes contemplative practices, goal setting, and preparation for difficult conversations. In their study, special educators participated in three workshops that lasted approximately 2.5–3 hours. Participants in the intervention experienced significantly reduced emotional exhaustion, higher mindfulness, and higher stress management skills from pre- to post-intervention. The BREATHE-EASE intervention, although comprehensive and beneficial in nature, takes a considerable amount of time, energy, and resources. In this article, we will outline a proactive intervention for teacher candidates that is quick and flexible in reducing stress and increasing well-being.

Teaching explicit stress management skills during teacher preparation can serve as a preventative intervention that builds resilience against the well-documented stressors in special education (Jackson & Parker, 2023). Unlike administrative solutions that depend on district resources and leadership buy-in, stress management skills can be personally implemented, provide immediate relief, and offer cumulative benefits over time (Csaszar & Buchanan, 2015). Special education teacher preparation courses offer a unique and proactive space to introduce and integrate concepts and practices to support self-care and comprehensive well-being/flourishing (Cancio et al., 2018; Chaturvedi & Larson, 2021; Jackson & Parker, 2023). Moreover, special education coursework tends to span the areas of psychology (human growth/ develop-

ment), pedagogy (effective, specialized instruction), and social, emotional, and behavioral growth (Council for Exceptional Children, 2020), making these connections to well-being and flourishing even more significant. Building future special educators' capacity to implement strategies to mitigate environmental stressors before entering the workforce can promote flourishing while preventing burnout and attrition.

In short, proactively teaching stress management skills to special educator teacher candidates is a promising approach that has received little attention (Csaszar & Buchanan, 2015). These practices can help future teachers develop emotional resilience, establish healthy work boundaries, and maintain well-being even in demanding educational environments (Avola et al., 2025). By integrating stress management skills as a core component of special education preparation, we may help reduce the burnout-attrition cycle before it begins (Jackson & Parker, 2023).

Beyond Reducing Stress and Burnout: Flourishing

In addition to reducing negative outcomes such as burnout and attrition, stress management skills may also enhance positive outcomes, such as flourishing. The term flourishing refers to “the relative attainment of a state in which all aspects of a person’s life are good, *including the contexts in which that person lives*” (VanderWeele et al., 2023, p. 3). According to VanderWeele et al., flourishing is different than well-being because well-being is more about those aspects of a person’s life that are good, “*as they pertain to that individual*” (p. 3). In addition to individual well-being, flourishing encompasses the *context* (i.e., community and environment) around the individual. In short, a person can have

a high degree of well-being but may not be flourishing because the context in which they are situated is not conducive to this aim—and when the context is full of adversity it is difficult to sustain flourishing over time (Lomas et al., 2025). When context is included, the term “comprehensive well-being” is synonymous with “flourishing.”

Context in education refers to the institutions and workspaces where educators, and related staff are situated (e.g., school buildings, district buildings), as well as the broader climate for education (e.g., funding levels for schools, societal appreciation for education in general and teachers in particular) and the social and political contexts in which this climate is situated. Sustaining flourishing over time matters, particularly in education, because educator well-being is related to school climate (Sohail et al., 2023) and is associated with students’ well-being and learning outcomes (Hine et al., 2022). Although scholars have begun to demonstrate how professional development might improve teacher flourishing in school contexts (Larson, Chaturvedi, & Tek, 2024; Larson, Dunn, et al., 2024; Larson et al., 2025), more information regarding specific practices to support teacher and teacher candidates’ flourishing and comprehensive well-being is needed.

Contemplative Practices as an Approach to Reduce Stress and Support Flourishing

When special educators experience chronic work-related stress, their capacity to flourish becomes significantly compromised, which in turn adversely affects the students they serve, as well as their colleagues and loved ones. Moreover, the cognitive load of persistent stress can obscure one’s sense of meaning and purpose, as immediate stressors demand attention that might otherwise be directed toward more

meaningful professional goals (Roeser & Peck, 2009).

Contemplative practices that reduce stress create the psychological and physiological conditions necessary for flourishing. By calming the autonomic nervous system (ANS), breathing exercises help restore physiological balance, directly supporting the physical health domain of flourishing (Brown & Gerbarg, 2009). Meditation practices cultivate present-moment awareness and emotional regulation, contributing to improved mental health and greater access to positive emotions (Hepburn & McMahon, 2017). Gratitude practices enhance a range of aspects of flourishing and well-being, including meaning and purpose, life satisfaction, and relationship quality by redirecting attention to positive aspects of one’s work and life, even amid challenges (Emmons & Stern, 2013). Collectively, these contemplative practices can provide teacher candidates with practical tools to counteract workplace stressors’ physiological and psychological impacts, thereby supporting their capacity to flourish across multiple domains.

Contemplative practices have been used successfully to reduce stress across several contexts with working adult populations, including health care and mental health professionals (Slemp et al., 2019). By integrating these practices into special education teacher preparation, faculty can help teacher candidates develop resilience that supports flourishing even in challenging educational contexts. Rather than merely surviving workplace stress, special educators equipped with contemplative practices can maintain the psychological resources necessary to find meaning in their work, sustain their health, and cultivate positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues—all essential components of flourishing, according to VanderWeele et al.’s (2023) framework. They are also better able to

TABLE 1: An Example of Procedures for Teaching and Practicing Contemplative Practices

| Session | Contemplative Practices | Duration |
|---------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Teach: Basic Abdominal Breathing (2 minutes). Start with natural breathing (1 minute); basic abdominal breathing techniques (4:4; 5:5; 6:6 ratio counts; duration: 2 minutes). Guide participants through Centering Prayer or modified version of the Centering Prayer (1 minute); Journal: "What are you grateful for today?" (1 minute) | 7 minutes |
| 2 | Review: Basic Abdominal Breathing (2 minutes). Start with natural breathing (1 minute); continue basic abdominal breathing techniques (4:8; 5:10; 6:12 ratio counts; duration: 2 minutes). Guide participants through Centering Prayer or modified version of the Centering Prayer (1 minute); Journal: "What are you grateful for today?" (1 minute free-write) | 7 minutes |
| 3 | Review: Basic Abdominal Breathing (1 minute) Teach: Alternate Nostril Breathing (2 minutes) Focus on their natural breath (duration: 1 minute); continue with basic abdominal breathing techniques (1 minute). Introduce alternate nostril breathing (1 minute). Guide participants through Centering Prayer or modified version of the Centering Prayer (1 minute); Journal: "What are you grateful for today?" (1 minute free-write) | 8 minutes |
| 4 | Review: Alternate Nostril Breathing (1 minute) Teach: Bhramari/ Humming Bee (2 minutes) Start with natural breath (duration: 1 minute); continue basic abdominal breathing techniques (duration: 1 minute). Continue alternate nostril breathing (1 minute). Continue Bhramari/ Humming Bee (duration: 1 minute). Guide participants through Centering Prayer or modified version of Centering Prayer (1 minute). "What are you grateful for today?" (1 minute free-write) | 9 minutes |
| 5 | Review: Bhramari/ Humming Bee (1 minute) Teach: Sheetali/ Sheekari (2 minutes) Focus on their natural breath (duration: 1 minute); continue basic abdominal breathing techniques (duration: 1 minute), alternate nostril breathing (1 minute); Bhramari/ Humming Bee (1 minute). Guide participants through Centering Prayer or modified version of the Centering Prayer (1 minute); Journal: "What are you grateful for today?" (1 minute free-write). | 9 minutes |
| 6 | Review: Sheetali/ Sitkari (1 minute) Focus on their natural breath (duration: 1 minute); continue basic abdominal breathing techniques (duration: 1 minute); alternate nostril breathing (1 minute), Bhramari (duration: 1 minute). Teach Sheetali/ Sitkari (1 minute); Guide participants through Centering Prayer or modified version of the Centering Prayer (1 minute); "What are you grateful for today?" (1 minute free-write) | 8 minutes |
| 7 | Natural breathing (duration: 1 minute); continue basic abdominal breathing techniques (1 minute), alternate nostril breathing (1 minute); Bhramari/ Humming Bee (1 minute), Sheetali/ Sitkari (1 minute); Guide participants through Centering Prayer or modified version of the Centering Prayer (1 minute); "What are you grateful for today?" (1 minute) | 7 minutes |

share these practices with students and colleagues, potentially helping them to flourish as well.

Dr. Johnson Learns about Contemplative Practices

Dr. Johnson met with her colleague, Dr. Jacobs, and learned that Dr. Jacobs began using contemplative practices with her students after becoming certified to teach yoga. Dr. Jacobs outlined three contemplative practice interventions that she uses in her courses to decrease students' stress

and increase their wellbeing. These practices include mindful breathing, meditation, and gratitude journaling. Dr. Johnson expressed concern about the amount of time these practices might take away from her class time. "We have so much to cover in the course and so little time." Dr. Jacobs reassured her that these practices could be done together or separately, and that providing students with time for these practices was better than offering them no time for self-care during the semester. Moreover, the cost

of attrition was too great to not use the first few minutes of class to allow students to center themselves and prepare for learning.

Mindful Breathing

A reciprocal association exists among an individual's breathing, ANS, and emotional state (Kreibig, 2010). Mindful breathing can enable individuals to manage their emotions more effectively and increase cognitive flexibility. Emotions can influence the rate, depth, and pattern of breath-

TABLE 2: Centering Prayer Vs. *Modified Centering Prayer

| Step | Centering Prayer (Keating, 2016) | *Modified Centering Prayer |
|------|---|---|
| 1 | Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to open and consent to God's presence and action within | Choose a word that is positive and short (e.g., peace, love, light, etc.) as a symbol of your willingness to be present |
| 2 | Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within | Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce the positive word as your willingness to be present |
| 3 | When engaged with thoughts, return ever so gently to the sacred word | When engaged with your thoughts, return ever so gently to your word |
| 4 | At the end of the prayer period , remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes | At the end of the meditation activity , remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes. |

*Note. The original version of the Centering Prayer can be found through the Contemplative Outreach Center (Keating, 2016). The lead author modified Keating's original steps to be more secular in nature. Changes between the original version and the modified version are noted in bold.

ing; further, engaging in voluntary breathing can change an emotional state (Brown & Gerbarg, 2009). Numerous studies show the benefits of this approach on reducing stress and improving emotional resilience and well-being (Hepburn & McMahon, 2017; Levendusky & Crippen, 2025). Beneficial effects of mindful breathing occur when individuals use a relatively short inhale and long exhale (Gerritsen & Band, 2018). Specifically, slow, deep breathing can decrease anxiety and arousal and increase calmness and focus (Wells et al., 2012; Telles et al., 2017).

After learning the importance of teaching students about various techniques to reduce stress, Dr. Johnson decided to use the first five minutes of her class to teach her students these techniques and allow them time to practice. During this time, she demonstrated a new breathing practice and then provided students with time to practice the strategy and reduce their heart rate. The five breathing exercises included: 1) natural breathing, 2) deep abdomen breathing, 3) alternate nostril breathing, 4) Bhramari/ Humming Bee breathing, and 5) Sheetal and Sitkari (see Table 1 for an example of the procedures for teaching and practicing contemplative practices).

At the beginning of each class session, Dr. Johnson taught her students one mindful breathing technique, then

she provided them with one to two minutes of practice time. This allowed her students to learn how to use the strategy and provided them with time to quietly calm their heart rate. In addition to teaching mindful breathing exercises, Dr. Johnson also began teaching about meditation and gratitude journaling based on her conversation with Dr. Jacobs.

Meditation

Meditation techniques develop mindfulness, or awareness and acceptance of the present moment (Blanton, 2011), and reduce stress (Ferguson et al., 2010). Some examples of meditation include focused meditation, which involves concentrating on a single point such as a mantra, a visual image, or a physical object (Ganesan et al., 2022; Lutz et al., 2008). Several studies, including a randomized controlled trial, have found a positive impact of meditation training on teachers' stress levels (Csaszar & Buchanan, 2015; de Oliveira et al., 2021; Valosek et al., 2021).

In addition to teaching her students the five mindful breathing techniques, Dr. Johnson also taught them how to meditate as another method to reduce stress. Specifically, she taught her students a secular version of the Centering Prayer (Keating, 2016; see Table 2). After the demonstration, Dr. Johnson provided her students

with two minutes of guided mindful breathing followed by a few minutes of guided meditation. She ended her contemplative practices session with a gratitude writing activity.

Gratitude Writing

Gratitude is positively associated with specific domains of flourishing, such as mental health and psychological well-being (Emmons & Stern, 2013; Kardas et al., 2019), life satisfaction, and close social relationships (O'Connell et al., 2018). Moreover, gratitude is positively associated with happiness and spirituality (Mahipalan & Sheena, 2019), higher levels of self-esteem (Lin, 2015), and better sleep quality (Jackowska et al., 2016). Although the role of gratitude is studied widely in positive and social psychology, only a few studies have examined teachers' gratitude specifically (Ansyah et al., 2021; Howells, 2014; Wilson & Harris, 2015). Teacher gratitude is associated with higher-quality teacher-student relationships (Ansyah et al., 2021). Moreover, increased gratitude among teachers positively impacts teachers themselves, as well as the classroom and the broader school climate (Howells, 2014). It is not surprising that one method to increase gratitude is by practicing gratitude (Emmons & Stern, 2013), which may include journaling, reflecting, and gratitude lists. A study by Wilson and Harris (2015) found

that teacher candidates who practiced gratitude journaling during fieldwork reported enhanced well-being, improved classroom climate, and increased resilience. Moreover, gratitude writing contributed to stronger relationships and a more positive teaching experience (Wilson & Harris, 2015). In their scoping review on reducing teacher burnout, Avola and colleagues (2025) found that gratitude practices, including journaling, were effective in reducing burnout and improving teacher well-being. Since gratitude practices are positively associated with reducing stress and burnout and increasing teacher well-being and flourishing (Avola et al, 2025; VanderWeele, 2020), it is important to offer special educator teacher candidates time to practice gratitude.

After breathing and meditation, Dr. Johnson gave her students one minute for gratitude journaling. Specifically, she asked them to journal about something they were grateful for. The students had the choice to write about one thing and go in depth about that one thing and why they were grateful or they could write a list of many things they were grateful for.

Putting it All Together

By the end of the fifth class, Dr. Johnson had taught all the mindful breathing techniques above. In addition, she had extended the time students meditated and continued to ask them to write a gratitude reflection. Below is a script she used based on Yoga Vidya Gurkul (2016):

Sample In-Class Script and Routine

Welcome/Introduction. *Welcome everyone! Before we get into our breathing activities, I invite you to sit in a comfortable position, relax your shoulders, open your chest, and gently close your eyes or soften your gaze.*

Natural Breathing. *First, we will do our natural breathing exercise. Become aware of your breathing; you do not need to change anything about the way in which you are breathing; just become aware of your breathing. Notice whether your breathing is shallow or deep; notice whether there is any sound with the breath; become aware of the temperature of your breath. *Time can vary.*

Basic Abdominal Breathing. *Next, we will do our basic abdominal breathing. Imagine your stomach as a balloon. Put your left hand on your stomach, breathe in through your nose, and fill your “balloon” with air, pushing your abdomen out. As you breathe in through your nose, expand your stomach. As you breathe out, your stomach will go in towards your spine.*

Alternate Nostril Breathing. *Now, we will move into our alternate nostril breathing exercise. Place your left thumb over your left nostril and breathe in through your right nostril. Next, cover your right nostril with your left ring finger; uncover your left nostril and breathe out through your left nostril. Next, breathe in through your left nostril, cover your left nostril with your thumb at the height of your breath in, uncover your right nostril, and exhale the air through your right nostril. *This process can continue for several rounds.*

Bhramari/ Humming Bee. *Let’s transition to our Bhramari/ Humming Bee breath. Push gently on your ears’ tragus with your thumbs, thereby closing the opening of the ear canal to block external sound. Close your eyes and cover your eyelids with your middle and ring fingers, elbows pointing out. Next, place your index fingers on your forehead and your pinky fingers on your cheeks. Take a deep breath in and, upon exhale, make the sound of “m” or a humming noise that vibrates your teeth. Instructors can have stu-*

dents inhale and exhale for several rounds or a pre-determined amount of time (e.g., 30 sec).

Sheetali and Sitkari. *During our last breathing exercise, we will move into sheetali or sitkari. For those doing sheetali, curl your tongue and take a deep breath in. For those doing sitkari, clench your teeth with lips open and take a deep breath in. Next, slowly exhale through your nose. *Time can vary.*

Modified Centering Prayer. *Take a moment to return to your natural breathing. Keeping your eyes closed, let’s move into our meditation. Choose a word that is positive and short (e.g., peace, love, light) as a symbol of your willingness to be present. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the positive word as your willingness to be present. When engaged with your thoughts, return ever-so-gently to your word. Thoughts include body sensations, feelings, images, and reflections. Remain in silence with your eyes closed for a couple of moments. [After a few moments]. Now, rub your palms together, feeling the warmth that is created between your hands. Take your hands and cover your eyes with the palms of your hands. Now, slowly open your eyes inside their palms. Spread your fingers, allowing the light to enter slowly into their hands, and return to the group when you are ready.*

Gratitude Journaling. *Take a few moments to write in your gratitude journal. Think about what you are grateful for today. You may want to free-write, create a list, or draw something that made you smile.*

Evaluating the Intervention

It is critical that faculty give students the opportunity to reflect on their experience with the practices and provide feedback. Specifically, instruc-

tors can begin with a pre-assessment, asking students questions about their knowledge of and comfort with each of the practices (i.e., breathing, meditation, and gratitude writing). Prior to introducing the activities, instructors can establish group norms, one of which is making the activity optional, and then use the script outlined in this article. After each session, instructors can collect student feedback in a manner that makes sense to them to help determine which practices to use and for how long, while paying particular attention to the impact of the feedback and students' comfort during the session. If a student says they were uncomfortable or that the session lasted too long, instructors can ask follow-up questions about how the student might suggest changing the activities in the future. Alternatively, the instructor can modify the intervention and continue to monitor students' feedback. In addition to adapting strategies based on student feedback, faculty can also modify these strategies based on the class time available and their own comfort guiding these types of activities. Below is the process that Dr. Johnson used, along with some feedback that she received.

After each session, Dr. Johnson asked students for their feedback in a 1-minute quick-write activity. One student wrote, "I think breathing techniques are an excellent way to revive the body and mind," while another wrote, "It was relaxing. Later in the day I had the opportunity to get mad at someone. Instead of yelling, I went to a quiet space to close my eyes and breathe." A third student wrote, "Calming. It was nice to have a quiet moment where I wasn't focused on what I needed to do next." Although some students shared challenges, especially with sitting still or almost falling asleep, the majority said they

felt more relaxed and less stressed. One student noted how grateful they were to be able to set this time aside and another student said that they will look forward to this each week. By the end of the course, students who shared challenges with the intervention said that engaging with the practices had gotten easier. One student wrote, "I was less distracted, and my mind was less frantic." Another wrote, "I enjoy these sessions to help me unwind and destress my busy life. Very relaxing and calming." Some students even noted that the intervention had impacted their work in schools. Another student wrote, "I feel like this is something I should do every day and continue to incorporate with my students." Dr. Johnson noted that students were submitting more assignments on time, and their rate of attendance improved.

CONCLUSION

Special education teachers have high rates of attrition often associated with elevated stress levels (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019; Hester et al., 2018). As such, it is crucial to proactively prepare teacher candidates to learn how to mitigate stress *before* they enter the profession. Although special education faculty at colleges and universities are in a unique position to prepare teacher candidates for challenges related to stress, they may not feel comfortable implementing these practices without a script or other supportive resources. By writing about how university faculty have implemented these practices in their courses, we hope to increase special education faculty's self-efficacy and confidence to deliver breathing, meditation, and gratitude practices (either together or individually). One of the most important benefits of these interventions is their time and cost-effectiveness (Bruce et al., 2018), which makes them feasible to implement. By

increasing special education faculty's self-efficacy and confidence to deliver contemplative practices, we hope to make a small contribution towards supporting special educator teacher candidates' well-being so that they can create contexts for comprehensive well-being/flourishing in their schools for generations to come.

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