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Effects of Mindfulness Based Teacher Training on Developing Teachers

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Lesley University

May 2017

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Acknowledgements/Dedication

I would first enjoy acknowledging the patience and guidance of the integral educators from Lesley University, Nancy Waring and Melissa Jean along with former professor Kim Nolan. I would be remiss if I did not also acknowledge the supporting and willing teachers and students, with whom I engage with every day at school, who allowed me to practice and work through the many applications and operations I undertook to make this a very authentic piece of work. Finally, it is not possible to put to words and adequately express the love my family has endlessly provided me with to give me the space, time and support to pursue this endeavor. With pure gratitude and my full love always, thank you Liam and Stephanie.

Abstract

Interest in the effects of mindful interventions in school settings continues to draw increasing interest. Mindfulness techniques for students as well as mindfulness training for teachers are consistently producing encouraging results. This study focused on teachers and support staff at the middle and high school levels. Specifically, teachers and staff who were within 0-5 years of teaching or 0-5 years new to a teaching position. Because other studies have produced positive results of mindfulness interventions on teachers, this study is focused on evaluating the impact of mindfulness training on teachers in the formative years of teaching and in new environments. This study involved nine subjects who held positions as art teachers, teaching assistants, special education teachers, wellness teachers and math teachers. Teachers were asked to complete the Beginning Teacher's View of Self Questionnaire (BTVoSQ) as a pre and post evaluation tool. A focus group interview session was also scheduled for pre and post intervention. The intervention was a 6-week, online Mindfulness Based Teacher Preparation (MBTP) course. The primary influence on the construction of the MBTP curriculum was Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course. Other influences included Patricia Jennings *Mindfulness for Teachers* along with Laura Weaver and Mark Wilding's, *The 5 Dimensions of Engaged Teaching*. These developing teachers' view of self produced an increase in total score with a self-reported score on 13 items from the BTVoSQ questionnaire. These teachers also showed a noticeable improvement in self-attunement along with a recognizable improvement in the awareness of students' emotional and attentional states during a closing interview session.

Keywords: Mindfulness, self-attunement, developing teacher

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Introduction

This study is interested in the effects of mindfulness training within education. The focus throughout this study is on teachers, specifically teachers who are new to the profession and or new to a school system. How might mindful meditation training and mindfulness training specific to teachers' everyday experiences influence their view of themselves as teachers as well as their performance within the school system? A small sample size of nine teachers and teacher assistants at the middle school and high school levels agreed to participate. Through a 6 week on-line course, lead by the researcher, teachers were initially introduced to fundamental mindfulness principles and practice in the first half of the training to prepare a particular understanding of mindfulness. The second half of the training consisted of teaching and outlining activities that these teachers were to bring mindfulness concepts and practices into their everyday, in school, experiences.

What follows is a review of relevant literature. The review is partitioned into particular themes relevant to the important influences mindfulness is having on education. The first theme explores the state of mindfulness in the field of education, leading next to the presentation of literature expressing the novelty or newness of the literature. The next theme presented in the review is expressing the importance of the teacher as a barometer of the social and emotional climate within the classroom. The teachers' role as the touchstone for mindful attitudes and behaviors with their students is also presented. This review next points out areas where the relevant literature indicates how mindfulness training would benefit new and developing teachers. Next, the universal practice of borrowing from Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction clinics or similar versions of it, to construct mindfulness intervention for teachers is explored. Concluding the review of literature is an extensive look at the way many of

the prominent voices in the field of mindfulness in education are defining what it would mean to be a mindful teacher.

The methods section outlines the execution of the study followed by the results of both the questionnaire and focus group interviews. The results section will first include the pre and post Beginning Teachers' View of Self Questionnaire (BTVoSQ) outcomes followed by the opening and closing focus group interview comparisons. Following the results is a discussion and conclusion section that compares the findings and observations to the research used to support this study. Finally, included in the discussion section limitations of the study are noted, along with suggestions for future studies.

Literature Review

The research reviewed for this study yielded various themes. A brief introduction to the nature of the applications of mindfulness within education will first be presented and followed by a summary of how leading scholars in the field of mindfulness in education have defined what a mindful teacher is. The modernity of the current research as well as ways in which the teacher is recognized as a central figure towards determining the degree of mindful outcomes for the class are first reviewed. Studies calling for early intervention of mindfulness training for developing teachers are covered in this review. Finally, it is notable that the influence and practices of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction clinic (developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn) has had considerable influence on the research conducted for this review, with regard to mindfulness training for teachers.

The Nature of Mindfulness in Education

Mindfulness is primarily having an impact on the institution of education in one of three areas: mindfulness for the student, mindfulness for the climate or culture of schools and

mindfulness for the teacher (Gold, E. et al, 2010; Jennings, P. A., Foltz, C., Snowberg, K. E., Sim, H., & Kemeny, M. E., 2011; Lantieri, L., 2008). The intention of this review is to focus on literature concerning the teacher. This review of literature will, however, recognize the influences of all three of these areas as they relate to teacher effectiveness, teacher retention, and teacher growth. The specific area of interest concerning mindfulness and teachers will be to take a closer look at developing or new teachers. For the purposes of this study, developing teachers will include any teacher within the first five years of an initial teaching position as well as any teachers within the first five years of teaching in a new environment regardless of the number of years of teaching. Finally this review intends to make clear what would define a ‘mindful teacher’ in scope and sequence.

A fair amount of focus on teachers and mindfulness appears to be about the need to improve a teacher’s ability to manage the growing divergent demands of the profession and an increasingly complex learning environment influences these demands. An increased focus on social justice issues, born of an ever-increasing appreciation for diversity within public schools, aides in the considerations associated with the need for more mindful approaches. Other areas of interest requiring the institution’s attention come from the influx of technologies’ influence on the learning process as well. When considering the complexity of the environment, it is the teacher who is in the driver’s seat when it comes to the most significant influences on student outcomes and experiences. Providing the teacher with the ability to help manage and improve their individual mental and emotional states appears to me the main purpose of the literature review.

The research presented here is an attempt to chronicle the use of mindfulness interventions within the institution of education, while occasionally recognizing the similarities

to other social service professions. Cultivating awareness in teachers is the aim of Jennings, P. A., Frank, J. L., Snowberg, K. E., Coccia, M. A. & Greenberg, M. T. (2013) with the way they are designing programs to observe the effects of mindfulness training, provided through professional development formats, on minimizing stress, anxiety and burnout in. Similarly, Fortney, L., Luchterhand, C., Zakletskaia, L., Zgierska, A. & Rakel, D. (2013) have investigated the effects of mindfulness training on the emotional, mental and physical stressors having an impact on the quality of life of primary care physicians as well as their compassion towards their patients. The approach of mindfulness training effects on physicians mental and emotional faculties and the connections to its impact on the relationships of their ability to be effective caregivers draws an appropriate parallel to the aims of mindfulness training for teachers. O'Donnell (2015) extends this type of investigation by exploring how institutions can promote the benefits of mindfulness throughout the entire system of education, rather than just discrete methods applied to individuals or cohorts. O'Donnell (2015) is appreciative of the effects mindful techniques and practices can have on the individual but urges a longer and broader view of the usefulness of mindfulness by recognizing the ethical, more holistic and expansive understandings of the practice. However grounding a 'long view' may be, for any institution, it is this researchers opinion that within the school setting, the teacher is the first impression as to how the student and the community supporting the student, views the entire educational experience. For this reason, a significant amount of research is being conducted specific to the curious nature of how to promote teachers' performance and wellbeing with mindfulness training (Jennings et al., 2013; Fortney et al., 2013; Gold, et al., 2010).

Teachers receiving mindfulness training has certainly been trending, however, when teacher and student are both being influenced by the training this starts to influence the school

climate and culture (Nocero & Beckerman, 2013; Hornich-Lisciandro, 2013). Burk (2009) identifies research thus far that has presented a base of support for the rationality and feasibility of mindfulness based interventions for children. Identifying the usefulness or necessity of mindful interventions for children and adolescents introduces the consideration of the contextual nature of stressful or challenging environments with which mindfulness training would benefit them. Broderick and Jennings (2012) outline an understanding of programs that are of quality design and appropriately implemented that can help students better channel attention, reduce conduct problems in school, improve interpersonal relationships and contribute to the betterment of emotional regulation in school aged kids. Programs of interest that are adding to the experience, and research, of mindfulness in education as far as the students are concerned include Learning to BREATHE (to be specified in an upcoming section), Mindful Schools and The Holistic Life Foundation.

Adolescents and school age children are not the only students testing out the benefits of mindfulness training. Students in higher education social work programs, pre-service and in-service teacher training programs have discussed the need for and reported on the use of mindfulness training (Goh, 2012; Murray, 2010; Grace, 2011). Murray (2010) has discussed ways in which developing teachers can emerge from the transitional period of student teaching to teaching as a career and gracefully accept their fallible nature as neophytes though still maintain their position of teacher who has competence. Mindfulness training in pre-service course work has a place to manage this conundrum. Goh (2012) reports on ways in which mindfulness training along with reflection exercises improved the relationship skills training for undergraduate social work students. Changing traditional teacher tactics to include more mindful elements and exercises has shown to improve the students' awareness of habits and relationship

styles that would have normally impeded their ability to harmoniously relate to others (Goh, 2012). Goh (2012) is investigating the relationship between mindful pedagogy and mindfulness of students' behaviors with regard to their training as social workers. Grace (2011) examines the impact of contemplative (mindful) teaching and its ability to influence contemplative learning for liberal arts students. It is appropriate to investigate the symbiotic relationship between mindful teaching and mindful learning by asking questions similar to Grace's (2011), "How do we prepare students to cultivate their own inner resources or spirit and moral courage" (p. 99)?

The Novelty of the Literature

Notably the literature under review, as with most mindfulness interventions, is new. Though, Ellen Langer was first publishing on mindfulness in the late 80's and through the 90's about 'conditional teaching' and mindful learning, her studies and writings were from a more psychological perspective. Langer (2000) defines mindfulness primarily as one's ability to realize or observe novel distinctions. Whether mindfulness was applied to psychology, politics, communication processes or education Langer (2000) found these four outcomes: "(1) a greater sensitivity to one's environment, (2) more openness to new information, (3) the creation of new categories for structuring perception, and (4) enhanced awareness of multiple perspectives in problem solving" (p. 2).

Much of what is reviewed here begins from the early 2000s but becomes more robust after 2010. Also, because the empirical research on this subject is new and novel, this has influenced teachers, at the grass roots level to report, anecdotally, on benefits they are experiencing. Some teachers are reporting, subjectively, on the literature for mindful teaching and the attitudes and practices that are changing as a result of their abilities to implement the practices suggested by the research. Rogovin (2010) supports the influence of Mindful Teaching

to guard against teacher burnout as well as enhancing their capacity to return to the idealism, fulfillment and long-term sustainable growth. Another teacher, Byo (2004), advocates for mindfulness training as an antidote to the mindlessness present in a rote style of learning. Langer (2000) explains that basing all learning episodes on distinctions and categories from the past regardless of current circumstances can constitute as mindless behavior. Byo (2004) speaks to the “clear vision” provided by a mindful teacher approach as well as an improved sense of the relational aspects of teaching (p. 43). Byo, highlights the mindful teaching abilities to guide students toward more opportunities to “make reasoned and appropriate decisions about expressive performance” (2004, p. 43) in the classroom. Richard (2004) supports the literature with explorations of real practices to support characteristics of a mindful teacher. Burrows (2011) provides descriptions of the transformational potential of mindfulness training and practices on educational communities at large. Burrows (2011) describes through her study a desire to deviate from the quantitative design to a more “qualitative relational phenomenological research approach” (p. 26). Burrows contributes to our understanding and vocabulary of the characteristics of the mindful teacher with attributes such as; “being open, receptive, grounded, present, engaged, curious and empathetically attuned” to self and other (2011, p. 26).

When the focus is turned on the students and the effects related to mindfulness intervention, practical issues of adaptation from adult programs to comparable programs that would be developmentally appropriate adolescent age students are often raised (Burke, 2009). Burke (2009) reviewed 15 studies and concluded that most results initially presented as positive though methodology needed to be more closely scrutinized. Burke (2009) is careful to point out that there have been a number of measures constructed to validate mindfulness outcomes for adults though the same cannot be said for children. The researcher then calls for a close look at

creating future mindfulness methodologies with a specific suggestion for the adherence ‘to standardized intervention formats’ for use with children and adolescents (Burke, 2009).

One of these novel programs introducing a developmentally appropriate design to mindfulness training or intervention for adolescents is Learning to BREATHE (L2B). Broderick and Jennings (2012) introduce and present this program as a quality example to “increase emotional regulation, improve stress management, and promote executive functions in order to promote well-being and support learning” (p. 117). According to Broderick and Jennings (2012) the acronym BREATHE expresses the six themes to the program which support the curriculum and instruction:

B (Body): body awareness.

R (Reflections): understanding and working with thoughts.

E (Emotions): understanding and working with feelings.

A (Attention): integrating awareness of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations.

T (“Take it as it is”): reducing harmful self-judgments and increasing acceptance.

H (Healthy habits of mind): cultivating positive emotions and integrating mindfulness into daily life.

E: The overall goal of the program, to cultivate emotional balance and inner empowerment through the practice of mindfulness, an advantage referred to as gaining the “inner edge.” (p. 118)

Broderick and Jennings (2012) conclude the introduction of this new and innovative program by generally reporting on a multitude of benefits and improvements for the adolescents involved to include improvements in emotional regulation skills and improved coping abilities. Providing teachers with programs like L2B to introduce and support their ability to teach students ways to

help access their own inner reserves for emotional balance can be timely for new and experienced teachers experiencing any kind of difficulty in the classroom.

Teacher as Barometer

Teachers and all human services professions provide aid and support to and for others. Jennings (2011) reports a significant relationship to the cultivation and promotion of teachers' social and emotional competencies (SEC) as it relates to overall "school health." These SEC are widely identified as self-awareness, social awareness, decision-making, self-management and relationship management, which will be defined in an upcoming section. The strength and quality of these competencies for the teacher show positive effects on over all school health as it concerns student and teacher relationships, effective classroom management, overall classroom climate and eventually the students social and emotional learning (SEL) outcomes (Jennings 2011). When teachers are influenced by mindfulness training to improve their own SEC which are in turn impacting the students SEL and therefore providing a noticeable improvement on the institutional climate as a whole, feelings of burnout and attrition rates are declining (Roeser et. al., 2013). Thich Nhat Hanh (2006) promotes the importance of teachers and individuals to cultivate this type of self-care by stating: "Caring for your self, re-establishing peace in yourself, is the basic condition for helping someone else" (p. 47).

A teacher's ability to cope with environmental stressors and feel that she or he has met the necessary needs of such an environment leads to a high degree of resiliency (Roeser et al., 2013) in the work place. This ability to cope with a more nuanced 'modern' environment has also been studied specifically in relation to primary school teachers. Gold, Smith, Hopper, Herne, Tansey and Hulland (2010) self-selected teachers who were identified as suffering from emotional distress and depression due to factors associated with deficiencies in motivation,

confidence and concentration. The mindfulness training they received aided in them feeling reduced stress, depression and anxiety. Positive results were also recorded in these teachers, when as a part of the study they were asked to begin by identifying a ‘main problem’ with regard to their teaching. These problems ranged from “Too many things in my head and not enough time to deal with them” also “Lack of belief in my abilities, fear of the unknown” or “No relaxing time, always on the go, too much to do.” Based on this problem laid out by each teacher, the researchers asked the teachers to also identify a ‘main goal’ and most of the teachers’ goals were in some fashion related to their stated ‘main problem’. The teachers, on average reported that they felt as if they had moved more than 60% percent of the way toward improving on the goals they had set for themselves. As a result, the teaching of mindfulness skills to this group of primary teachers was identified as an appropriate intervention to counter teacher stress and burnout (Gold et al. 2010).

Lantieri (2008) points out, when students experience feelings of anxiety, depressive behaviors or fear and stress, from themselves, the environment or others it reduces their ability to learn. Conversely, Burrows (2011) study recorded participants’ comments and reflections, after having completed mindfulness training, which reported their ability to better feel grace in themselves and in turn could also see that grace reflected in other people and students they encountered. To show how and when a teacher can and does influence the feelings and behaviors of their students supports the investigation of how mindfulness training for teachers will also benefit their students. A teacher’s ability to project mindful attitudes and behavior goes a long way in aiding disruptive students to learn self-control and maintain on-task behavior in a classroom (Jennings, 2011). What is of importance in these reports is that when the teacher changes from what might have been typical punitive or browbeating tactics for managing

challenging or disruptive behaviors the students often reflect that change with less resentment and defensiveness. Obvious as it might be, a quality teacher-student relationship is a significant component to creating a rich and rewarding classroom climate.

Other factors Jennings (2011) identifies as supporting a health climate are classroom management and the introduction and facilitation of the above mentioned SEL skills. Jennings (2011) contends, good classroom management “encourages cooperative and pro-social behavior” (p.135). Each of these three key factors needed to encourage the creation of a healthy classroom environment has a common denominator, the teacher. Jennings explains, “a healthy classroom climate may reinforce a teacher’s enjoyment of teaching and his or her sense of efficacy and commitment to the teaching profession” (p.137). This is a statement used to inspire this current study to further record mindfulness training benefits for teachers’. For the teacher to be the barometer of this type of environment the research reviewed supports the teachers’ development to be supported by mindfulness training.

A Call for Early Intervention

How and when we train teachers to improve their mental and emotional flexibility is of interest for those studying the effects of mindfulness on teachers. Many of these researchers are emphasizing that their discoveries and their insights have implications on early teacher development. Francesconi and Tarozzi (2012) have made efforts to discern what *embodied education* would look like. This embodiment of education as Francesconi and Tarozzi (2012) describe it would influence pedagogy in a way that would ground the teachers and student in lived experience. The tools to be developed would be an appreciation of the subjective experience, fostering intentionality and a social sensitivity to perception (Francesconi and Tarozzi, 2012). Francesconi and Tarozzi (2012) suggest professionals that the cultivation of

such attributes would provide the individual with the ability “to be able to stay in the flow of experience without losing the ability to understand what is happening there on a broader level.” (p. 274). Influencing the development of these mindful elements along with elevating teachers’ mindful habits would require having influence in the formative aspects of a teachers training.

Pedagogy for training undergraduate social worker students designed by Goh (2012) investigates the effects of mindfulness practices on active listening. Goh (2012) identified that these social worker trainees were better able to identify their bad habits when listening to others as “mind wandering”, “multi-tasking” and “thinking ahead” (p. 595). The insightful conclusions Goh (2012) arrives at can be useful to teachers who learn to become aware of ‘bad habits’ with regard to their attention and awareness before learning novel techniques for active listening. Much as the institution of public school appears to support and reward students and teachers who can multi-task, Goh (2012) finds that teaching these mindful skills to future social workers, such as ‘single tasking’ on active listening, comes across as counter cultural. It is just these skills as they relate to teacher student relationships that appear to be most integral to a teacher’s performance.

It is these two elements of relationship and performance or execution of one’s duties and responsibilities as a teacher that bring to bear the climate of the classroom. Jennings et al. (2011) study the effects of mindfulness training for teachers and its effects on the climate of the classroom. The researchers first tested a self-created program called Cultivating Emotional Balance (CEB) on 20 teachers as an intervention for improving classroom climate. Secondly, they studied 35 teachers, also looking at classroom climate effects but in addition considering the well-being of the teacher and the teacher’s attitudes towards challenging or disagreeable students.

Though the study fell short in showing improvements and or differences in the improvement of classroom climate, the teachers in the first study did show improvements in productivity. While the second study again showed no difference in climate or attitudes it did report an increase in mindful observing (Jennings et al., 2011). Jennings et al. (2011) reveal and discuss the general nature of the curriculum for CEB as being, “not specifically designed to improve teacher classroom performance and/or attitudes towards students” (p. 19). Addressing these limitations led the researchers to suggest many improvements in the structure and function of the intervening mindfulness training to include application of techniques to specific challenges of teaching. It is this investigation that has significantly influenced and supported the questions related to the current researcher’s study of Mindfulness trainings influence on developing teachers. Of most interest Jennings et al. (2011) pointed out:

To effect changes in teacher behavior may require that the emotion awareness and mindfulness training be more explicitly linked to the specific challenges of teaching such as dealing with challenging behavior, establishing a warm but firm classroom presence, being aware of and responding to individual student’s feelings and needs, and generating and applying the practice of caring for students, their parents, and colleagues. For example, classroom management may be improved if teachers learn to recognize and regulate the emotions and emotional patterns they experience when they interact with challenging students. In so doing they may be able to pause, reflect, and respond to the situation with awareness and compassion rather than automatically reacting which may trigger an intensification of the student behavior that provoked the teacher’s emotional response in the first place. (p. 19)

It is the intention of this researcher to use these specific instructions to influence and guide the creation of the intervening curriculum for this study. The establishment of a strong formal mindful meditation practice will be of most importance. After setting this foundation the remaining weeks of the designed practice will be geared directly towards integrating their formal practice into the everyday informal moments that occur for the teachers within their classrooms and their schools.

The curriculum created will take into account more than just “discrete interventions focused on the self and wellbeing” (O’Donnell, 2015, p. 187). O’Donnell (2015) expresses that mindful interventions for education, when done appropriately could allow for education as an institution to return to a more authentic and holistic endeavor. Grace (2011) provides an avenue to incorporating this type of approach by investigating Contemplative Pedagogy. Contemplative pedagogy can take a number of forms but as with all contemplative practices it includes a personal, inner investigation (Grace, 2011). It would be the aim, Grace (2011) reports, to understand Contemplative Pedagogy as a journey, not a destination, with intention to better know oneself, to have an authentic relationship with the practice of meditation in order to become a ‘beneficial presence’ to the classroom climate.

The Kabat-Zinn Effect

The studies reviewed which appear to provide valid results all used some version of Jon Kabat-Zinn’s Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) clinic protocol (Santorelli 2014). Burke (2009) explicitly recognizes “there are distinct advantages in researchers adhering to standardized intervention formats, as is the case with adult MBSR and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), as this can allow for replication studies, from which meaningful comparisons can be made” (p.143). Modeling an intervention after a MBSR clinic would

typically include a weekly class meeting, for up to 8 weeks, various mindful meditation trainings and a variety of other self-investigatory activities including journal reflections. The popularity of the eight week MBRS course has inspired this investigation as it seems to have done so for a number of the research examples which support this investigation.

First, one of primary school teachers reporting suffering significant levels of emotional distress reported improvements in depression and stress levels through an 8-week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Course (MBSR), (Gold, Smith, Hopper, Herne, Tansey & Hulland, 2010). However quantitative the study, Gold et al. (2010) recorded such qualitative reports as a teacher stating, “It (mindfulness) is very useful in times of crisis, like an invisible tool box you can carry around with you” (p. 188). When teachers feel confident and in control the students are more apt to reciprocate with appropriate on task behaviors. Teachers who entered an 8-week MBSR course announced a 60% improvement rate on the attainment-desired goals of self-improvement and effectiveness in the classroom (Gold, et. al.2010).

Roeser et al. (2013) were also interested in the effectiveness of mindfulness training but interestingly were also investigating the feasibility of such a program within public schools. The vehicle of choice to deliver the intervention was also an 8-week mindfulness training program modeled after MBSR. Of interest for Roeser et al. (2013) with regard to their teacher subjects were: focused attention, occupational self-compassion, occupational stress, occupational burnout, and symptoms of anxiety and depression and teacher absences from work. The larger category that the above elements of this study offer insight into is habits of mind or mind set. Roeser et al. (2013) discovered, mindfulness training for teachers increased understandings in teachers, with regard to the effects of one’s mind-set on their teaching. Roeser et al. describes it this way:

This mind set was characterized by a diminishment of self-judgment, self-criticism, and the personalization of stressful events and by an increase in self-acceptance, self-kindness, and a recognition of the shared experience of difficulty and setbacks that teachers experience in their daily lives on the job (2013, p. 799).

Roeser et al. (2013) also investigates the implementation of mindfulness training through professional development opportunities, for existing teachers and for teacher education programs. Questions such as these have influenced the development of this study. The positive effects of mindfulness training for teachers has inspired the question for this research as to where might the training be best placed, during student teaching, after student teaching or one year after first teaching job? The intention is to study the effects on developing teachers.

Jennings et al. (2011) investigated the effects of an eight-week program designed to cultivate emotional balance for primary and secondary teachers. Their two pilot studies were inquiries into the improvement of teachers' social and emotional competencies with hopes of making inferences about the impact that this type of teacher training might have on the overall classroom climate. The curriculum for both studies was focused mainly on empathy and compassion training. The empathy and compassion training was firstly supported, as with MBRS, by developing the subjects' concentration, attention and mindfulness. Though the results were minimal, productivity and self-awareness indicators improved. For reasons to be explained later, this study produced more beneficial outcomes for this study.

Though not specific to teachers of public schools, this next study put to use an eight-week mindfulness course for caregivers of a different kind. Fortney, Luchterhand, Zakletskaia, Zgierska & Rakel (2013), were testing the effects of a modified MBRS program on 30 primary care clinicians. Related to the clinician's occupation come the researchers evaluated the effects

of the mindfulness training on job satisfaction, quality of life and compassion. Fortney et al. (2013) reported improved scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization indicating positive benefits on job satisfaction. The modified/abbreviated mindfulness program also improved the subject's scores on anxiety, stress and depression measures (Fortney et al., 2013). The investigators encouraged the subjects to bring their mindfulness training into their exam rooms and use the attention and compassion training from the MBSR course with their patient being the center of attention. These researchers also reported on sustained improvement on the clinicians' well-being and job satisfaction after a nine month follow up suggesting that even an abbreviated mindfulness training course might provide long term effects.

Tapping into the Mindful Teacher

There is an element of teaching related to the social and or interpersonal factors associated with the profession that make the stress and or anxiety of starting out in the profession unique. Gregory Kramer (2007), in his book *Insight Dialogue* suggests a necessity for practicing meditation with others, as opposed to in isolation, due to the fact of how much of our daily stress comes from being with other people. Kramer (2007) identifies, "Tension distorts the lens through which we see the world by framing everything in terms of that which makes us tense" (p.100). If most individuals entering any profession but specifically teaching, are assumed to enter with a certain degree of anxiety, fear and uncertainty, these types of 'tension' are going to distort their interactions with all of the major elements of their school day as to have a significant impact on their view of self as a teacher and their effectiveness. There are studies and texts that have investigated key elements attributed to qualities a mindful teacher would possess to alleviate these tensions and assist in manifesting a climate of ease, calm, productivity and enjoyment within the classroom and school. Roeser et al. (2013) defined the purpose of their study as

attempting to discover a way to aid teachers “in developing their self regulatory resources (e.g., higher order skills and mind-sets) for coping and being resilient” (p.789). What follows is an attempt to describe and define what is a mindful teacher.

To aid in the defining of what a mindful teacher would be, Tinney (2011) starts with describing what it would mean to be a beneficial presence in the classroom. A beneficial presence is engaged in a way that draws out the students’ interest and natural curiosities (Tinney, 2011). It becomes clear in subtle ways that this type of teacher is teaching from the heart and in doing so is developing emotional intelligence in their students as well as in themselves. Lantieri (2008) reports on Social and Emotional Competencies (SEC), first developed by Daniel Goleman, as the foundation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to foster the growth of emotional intelligence. Lantieri (2008) reflects on the significance of Goleman’s work by stating, “He made the connection between our feelings and our thinking more explicit by pointing out how the brain’s emotional and executive areas are interconnected physiologically, especially as these areas relate to teaching and learning” (p.17). Of note here is the mention of the influence of emotional intelligence on both teaching and learning. The first hint of the symbiotic nature of the teacher and the student to create the most effective learning environment appears as areas of skill development for a mindful teacher. The Social and Emotional Competencies are:

Self-Awareness: Identifying your thoughts, feelings, and strengths, and recognizing how they influence choice and action

Social-Awareness: Identifying and understanding the thoughts and feelings of others, developing empathy, and being able to take the perspective of others

Self-Management: Handling emotions so that they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand; setting long- and short-term goals; and dealing with obstacles that may come our way

Responsible Decision Making: Generating, implementing, and evaluating positive and informed solutions to problems, and considering the long term consequences of your actions for yourself and others

Relationship Skills: Saying no to negative peer pressure and working to resolve conflicts in order to maintain health and rewarding connections with individuals and groups (Lantieri, 2008, p. 18)

When teachers can cultivate and emulate these SEC it can create an environment where their students can begin to emulate these skills as well. Ronald Siegel (2010) explains how children and students alike can generally only manage an emotional level or capacity equal to the caregiver present with them. Therefore, a mindful teacher with the skillful capacity to successfully manage their own SEC can influence the SEC of their students. A mindful teacher with these competencies developed is then in position to lead in a very different way in the classroom.

Tinney (2011) urges teachers to notice when and if we are leading with authority in the classroom and to rely on a deeper knowing of our compassion, loving care and innate goodness. Johnson and Neagley (2011) explore the notion of being the yogi in the classroom: “As a teacher, I want my authority to live in my compassion and my clarity, not in my position” (p. 93). In so doing we are able to allow for the equal exchange of curiosity and investigation to lead the way for what we can learn together (Tinney, 2011). As a yogi is creating a union of body and

mind, a mindful teacher is finding the symbiotic relationship between teacher, student and content.

Weaver and Wilding (2013) continue to define this yoking through developing particular dimensions of what they call Engaged Teaching. The engaged teacher, as far as Weaver and Wilding (2013) are concerned, leads from the inside, out. The way to lead or teach, from the inside out, according to Weaver and Wilding (2013) contains five dimensions:

Cultivating an open heart: Expressing warmth, kindness, care, compassion; cultivating connection (teacher-student and student-student); and intentionally engaging in practices that build trusting, inclusive learning communities

Engaging the self-observer: Cultivating the aspect of ourselves that can notice, observe, and then reflect on our thoughts, beliefs, biases, emotions, and behaviors to make more conscious choices about our actions; includes fostering self-observation or self-science in students as well

Being Present: Engaging in the on going process of bringing attention to the present moment and learning to manage distractions so we can be responsive, aware, focused, and creative in the classroom; includes supporting students to develop learning readiness – the capacity to pay attention, focus, and engage

Establishing respectful boundaries: Respectfully establishing clear and compassionate boundaries for ourselves (self-discipline) and with others – the classrooms and in our school communities; includes supporting students and the learning community with a proactive approach to classroom management

Developing emotional capacity: Developing emotional intelligence, expanding our emotional range, and cultivating emotional boundaries so we can effectively address a

range of feelings in ourselves and others; includes supporting students in developing their capacity to express and manage emotions (Weaver & Wilding, 2013, p. 13)

According to Weaver and Wilding (2013) this type of engagement is meant to be “the integration of the inner and outer capacities, practices and skills that lead to effective teaching and student achievement” (p. 2). Understanding these inner and outer capacities can translate to developing a deeper appreciation for what Patricia Jennings calls, “the emotional life of a teacher” (p. 26). In a little more detail, Jennings explains, “The more we understand our emotions and our emotional patterns, the better we can manage them” (Jennings, 2015, p. 26). A mindful teacher can in a sense survey or sweep the emotional landscape within themselves as well as throughout the class to better know and prepare the self as well as having a better or truer knowing of the students to equally prepare them (Jennings, 2015). Knowing self and the desire and curiosity to know the other begins with compassion.

Daniel Rechtschaffen (2014) illustrates that a devoted mindfulness practice develops particular qualities within a teacher that, over time, naturally manifest. Rechtschaffen describes five qualities a mindful teacher would possess: compassion, understanding, boundaries, attention and authenticity. Compassion is the first described by Rechtschaffen to be cultivated towards self and student. Rechtschaffen (2014) echo’s Ronald Seigel’s findings of how students’ relational and emotional capacity tend to reflect the emotional states of their teachers when he reports, “The manner in which we offer our knowledge is always relational, and therefor the level of care or coldness in which we offer it will have great effect on the way the information is received and integrated” (p.89). Understanding, as Rechtschaffen says, is cultivated through ones mindfulness practice as a deeper knowing. A deeper knowing of our own thought patterns and emotional regularities not only helps us understand ourselves better but leaves us better prepared to open

our hearts to wanting to better know our students in fresh ways day in and day out (Rechtschaffen, 2014). Next, he identifies Boundaries as the fourth quality of a mindful teacher. Rechtschaffen, like Johnson and Neagley, is not identifying boundaries as authoritarian limitations over the students, rather he states that respectful and appropriate boundaries, “offer students the space in which they can feel secure enough to learn, be creative, and thrive” (p.91). Attention and authenticity round out the qualities that Rechtschaffen details for defining a mindful teacher. A highly developed focus of attention provided by a regular mindfulness practice provides one with the ability to be intently present for the students allowing them the greater chance of being truly seen and truly heard (Rechtschaffen, 2014). Finally, a teacher that is able to bring their authentic self to the classroom and model a type of transparency of self can provide an inspiring space for students to enter and feel a freedom to also be themselves (Rechtschaffen, 2014).

One may, on some level already possess a personality or characteristics similar to much of the above mentioned qualities but it is the deliberate cultivation of said qualities that ultimately influence their ability to fully function as a mindful teacher (Jennings, 2015, Weaver & Wilding, 2013 & Rechtschaffen, 2014). Roeser et al. (2013) observed this type of cultivation increasing these three elements for a mindful teacher: (a) mindful self-awareness, (b) a suspension of self-judgment and criticism in favor of self-kindness and acceptance, and (c) an understanding of the universal nature of challenge, setbacks, and difficulty in human existence (p.789). Roeser indicates that a mindful teacher possesses this type of “occupational self-compassion” (p.789).

A final theme addressed in much of the literature, which seems to encapsulate many of the above mentioned qualities, traits, states and skills is the practice of embodying ones teaching.

As Jennings (2015) explains, this embodied awareness relates to living our teaching from the inside out. To further articulate and give deeper context to the concept of embodiment

Francesconi and Tarozzi (2012) explain it this way:

Mental activity depends not only on the brain, but also on the body. The body is both a lived experience structure and a context for cognitive mechanisms. Cognition is not considered as the result of a series of cerebral functions that somehow and somewhere interface with the body of the thinking subject. Instead, it has to be better seen as a result of the constant and structural interface activity between the body and the environment, the result of the sensorimotor information that creates the background from which the mind can emerge and the horizon to which the mind can attend. The body constitutes cognition itself, it generates it, and it is its phylogenetic and ontological matrix. (p. 268-269)

In this way, embodiment can be understood as a greater sense of knowing that is a seamless and equal combination of cognition and bodily function which creates, along with ones surroundings, ones sense of the lived experience (Francesconi & Tarozzi, 2012). A particular attention is given to the sensations within the body, to gain a greater sense of how one is relating to the happenings around them. Rechtscheffen (2014) devotes a portion of his book *The Way of Mindful Education* to embodiment lessons. These embodiment lessons begin with learning what he calls “Language of the body”, to include sensation exploration, body scans and conclude with dialogue around “the miraculous experience of having a human body” (p.161). Weaver & Wilding (2013) refer to these lessons associated with teaching or leading from the inside out as a way for our mindful tendencies to have influence by modeling these emotional capacities for our students and our

school, while ultimately providing the potential for creating a shift in the educational institution from the inside out.

Methods

Of primary interest in this research project is the observation of the effects of mindfulness based interventions on developing teachers. How might we mitigate the stressors associated with starting out or relocating within the profession of teaching? How can teachers be supported in the way they apply these mindful tendencies toward developing mindful habits of teaching?

Participants were recruited from a local suburban public middle and secondary school system. Potential subjects from this one school system were presented with a brief introduction to what mindfulness is and what mindfulness in schools has entailed as reported in current literature. Emails were sent to all teachers new to the school system inviting them to participate in the study. Twelve teachers replied and nine teachers, including classroom teachers, special education teachers and teacher assistants with five or less years teaching experience or with five or less years experience within the system were able to commit to the proposed research structure. This method of sampling was based on the desire to infer the effects of mindfulness interventions on new and newly relocated teachers. Participants ranged in age from late 20s to late 40s. Participants were initially asked to complete a Beginning Teacher's Views of Self Questionnaire (BTVoSQ) (Mager, Neveline & Gao, 2008) and to participate in a focus group interview to begin the study. At initial interview, only one of the nine participants had expressed experience with martial arts and other meditative practices. At the conclusion of the opening interview all participants were given an access to join a Google classroom (an on-line, virtual classroom) titled 'Mindfulness for Teachers'. It should be known that the website provided has

been wiped clean of class comments and discussion from all participants to leave only the core course content and sequence of classes for those who choose to view it currently.

The Google classroom that was created provided an on-line venue for course content to be reviewed and processed at a time that was convenient for the participants to engage with, in a timely manner that was appropriate for the class structure. The virtual classroom provided the opportunity for video and audio lectures as well as interactive dialogue, via discussion board, with comment and response style postings. The participants received notifications via email of Mindfulness Based Teacher Preparation (MBTP) course material for a 6-week program via the Google classroom webpage. The structure and content of the curriculum was designed and facilitated as original material by the researcher. The curriculum for the MBTP course was inspired by Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction clinic (2014) as well as Patricia Jennings (2015) work with Mindfulness for Teachers, along with Laura Weaver and Mark Wildings work in *The Five Dimensions of Engaged Teaching* (2013). The class was structured with weekly objectives and course content presented in the form of video and audio-recorded lectures every Sunday. Throughout the week participants received supplementary content and motivational prompts to maintain their assigned meditations daily, throughout the week. In addition to video lectures, instruction and meditation demonstrations, subjects were asked to maintain a written journal and to participate in an on-line discussion board to record progress, ask questions and facilitate a sense of community with all involved.

Significant elements of the course included the introduction of both a formal and informal mindful meditation practice. Participants were also exposed to fundamental mindfulness theory along with a brief introduction to mindfulness elements in the world of neuroscience. In Week 6, participants were supported in creating a 6- to 8- hour self-directed

silent retreat; the researcher designed the structure for the day. Finally, an attempt was made to inspire the specific facilitation of mindful methods with each teachers varied interactions with students under their tutelage. To conclude, participants were asked to participate in a closing focus group interview session and to complete the post BTVoSQ questionnaire.

Results

Data collected from the focus group interviews and the completed pre and post questionnaire tool were analyzed separately. The opening interview results were compared with the closing interview results. Similarly, the pre questionnaire results were compared with the post questionnaire results. All results were analyzed for their relevance to the conclusions presented within the relevant research reviewed for this study.

Focus group interview results are presented separately here to show the themes that emerged from both. The opening interview produced themes around difficulties the participants could recall from either student teaching or their very first teaching opportunities which led into them exploring challenging transitions they had from their teacher training to their first teaching positions. Next, participants were prompted to explain what factors they attribute most to the disruptions they encounter the most during a difficult lesson or throughout their day. The final theme that emerged was their considerations of what types of larger contributions they were providing to the community at large, from their efforts of teaching.

Beginning Teacher's View of Self Questionnaire (BTVoSQ)

Items of interest in the BTVoSQ were selected based on their degree of mindfulness content. Items with terms specifically or generally investigating attention, focus, intention, self-awareness and social/student awareness were singled out for comparison from pre to post test results. Of similar interest were items with a focus on a teacher's reaction or response to stimuli

within the school day. Each item required a Likert score between 1 and 7 with 1 equaling a low/weak score and 7 equaling a high/strong score. Thirteen items were chosen for comparison (See Appendix D).

The average score for the 13 pre-test items was 5.4 while the average score of the same 13 post-test items was 5.6. The average pre-test total score for the 13 items was 48.2 while the average post-test score for the 13 items was 50.7. Of the 13 items, participants' total scores improved for 11 out of the 13 items (See Appendix E). Of the 11 items to report an increase from pre to post-test, six of the items scores improved by four or more points with the highest improvement being an eight point difference. Item number 14, the feeling of creating engaged students, pre-test score of 45 improved by a difference of six with a post test score of 51. Item number 27, teachers having varied ways of seeing their effectiveness, pre-test score of 39 improved by a difference of six with a post-test score of 45. Item number 29, teacher feeling self-responsibility for student learning, pre-test score of 48 improved by a difference of five with a post-test score of 53. Item 33, the feeling of improved self-awareness through teaching, pre-test score of 50 improved by a difference of five with a post-test score of 55. Item number 40, a feeling of flexibility and responsiveness, pre-test score of 51 improved by a difference of four with a post-test score of 55. Item 22, with the eight point improvement (pre-test score of 34 and a post-test score of 42), was specific to the developing teachers ability to report on results associated with their ability to plan and teach with intention, towards positive results. Of the remaining four items showing an increase from pre-test score to post-test score three showed a difference of one point while one showed a difference of 2.

Two of the 13 items showed a regression in total score. Item 25, the feeling of self-expression through teaching, pre-test score of 52 regressed by a difference of two with a post-test

score of 50. Item 32, the feeling of having caring relationships with students, pre-test score of 61 regressed by a difference of six with a post test score of 55.

Participants reported improved scores for encouraging student engagement as well as for being organized in a way that led to efficient and effective behavior in their students. These teachers also reported an increase in their ability to appreciate the varied ways of seeing their own effectiveness. Subjects also reported higher total scores for the ability to self-assess, for teaching with intention toward desired results for their students, also for improved scores of self-responsibility for student learning. Other areas in which participants' total scores improved included efficient use of time and development of resources to improve student engagement, self-awareness through teaching, flexibility and responsiveness along with ease of relationships and a sense of a quality school to work balance. Due to the small sample size, it would be difficult to make the findings generalizable to a larger population.

Opening Focus Group Interview

The opening focus group interview was broken into two small groups because of participants' conflicting schedules. The first group included seven of the participants while the second group consisted of the remaining two. Through both of the interview sessions, the themes that emerged related to challenges associated with student teaching and teacher prep programs to making the transition from graduation to the profession of teaching to things they identified as reasons or contributions to disruptions within their teaching episodes. The final common theme the participants explained, was, ways they were finding their place within the system and their relevancy to the community at large.

Early difficulties

All of the participants had similar stories to tell about how they were drawn to teaching. Most began with a wish to help others, starting with feelings of joy being around children/kids. Many of the participants also mentioned having strong role models in coaches and teachers from their background. Participants referenced often being reminded of these individuals when involved in their own student teaching episodes or first teaching positions. It was common for most of them to refer to a time when their role model came to mind during a difficult time in these formative moments. When remembering the strengths of their teaching mentor, one participant mentioned, “How they could manage the structure of the lesson and focus on the relationships with the kids I don’t understand. It was all I could do to write a good, or not, lesson plan let alone relate to where the kids were at.” A number of other participants affirmed this hurdle of getting through the management, instruction and transitions associated with a quality lesson and having little to no regard for the relational aspects of their beginning teaching episodes.

Managing the classroom was a clear difficulty for these developing teachers but managing their own time also surfaced as a difficulty early on. A couple mentioned remembering feeling so completely emotionally invested in the planning and executing of lessons that they recall it having a negative effect on their personal lives, losing connections with friends and family members along with draining time for recreation. Ultimately these types of difficulties led to exhaustion and confusion. One participant recalled it this way: “I consider myself to be a patient person, but when I was overworked my patience was disappearing dramatically.” The recognition of the effects of their exhaustion on their teaching would ultimately leave them confused.

Challenging transitions

Next, these developing teachers were to consider the types of difficulties and or challenges that might have followed them into their first teaching job. When participants were asked to reflect on the challenges and difficulties they already knew they were coming into the profession with, adaptability and relations or connections to students stood out. The participants expressed minimal adaptability or flexibility with regard to their execution of a typical lesson. This realization was followed with surprise at how this lack of flexibility and adaptability seemed to manifest in quite a rigid way. One participant expressed this clearly by explaining how he noticed he was trying so hard to, “stay the course with the ‘text book’ lesson plans”, the ones he had honed in college prep courses and student teaching episodes. Another theme for many was a difficulty with relational aspects of teaching, specifically with the students. Some of the participants described the ‘relational aspects’ of teaching as, a way of getting to know the students, while others expressed it as treating every student as an individual. This last element, many agreed, seemed to contradict some of their teacher training that told them to treat everyone as equal and to not pick favorites. The participants all agreed this was a conflict they had realized early on, the conflict of having an equal and inclusive atmosphere while allowing for uniqueness and individual student needs. Similarly, other relational aspects that challenged most participants was finding a place of mutual understanding, with their students, around the content being taught. This, they expressed, often led to having difficulty motivating students.

A final theme that most expressed when discussing their initial challenges was held on a difficulty finding balance between structured and routine behaviors and flexibility and spontaneity. One participant mentioned, “We have been talking about going through these structured programs and then you have to learn to be flexible but I think maybe in the past month

I've been too flexible and I need to rein it back in. Finding that happy medium. Building relationships, developing report but I think I might have done too much of that." Apparent in this quote is the desire to find balance along with self-doubt as it relates to how the teacher has performed to date.

Part of these teachers' transition difficulties also lay in their planning and preparation. The expressed rigidity of their training seems to have left them concerned about "preparing for the unknown." They expressed difficulties preparing a lesson that would help their students succeed or at least practice non-tangible elements, things outside of the traditional curriculum. More than a few identified broad ideas such as, feeling as though they were not able to impart, "realistic skills" and "real life skills". The way they expressed these items, it was clear they were identifying things for later on, more exalted qualities or outcomes in their teaching.

Attribution of disruptions

When things are going awry with their class, with a student, with a peer or just the day at school, most of the participants attributed this to external factors. Overwhelmingly all participants spoke exclusively about the disruptions in their days associated with their time with their students more so than with peers, administrators or parents/community members. Of mention by some was the 'baggage' that the students can come to class with; stress from relationships, previous or upcoming tests in another classes and stressful situations coming from their home life. Also, the significant distractions provided by the students' smart phones and other technologies were unanimously decided to be a significant distraction as well.

One participant provided a little more of an introspective perspective when attempting to decipher reasons for disruptions in class. "For me, I always tend to think what could I have done differently with the lesson or what am I not doing that is causing the disruption and always put it

back on myself first.” The focus for this individual was on himself or herself and what they created; lesson structure, instructional delivery or even class set-up. These were elements they mentioned they could possibly alter or manage better to minimize the disruption in the future.

Finally, a few of the participants spoke about how they too noticed they can end up putting a lot of burden on themselves with regards to stressful and difficult conversations at school. The conversations they referred to related mostly to relationships at school with peers, administrators and parents. There were those who were careful to mention that they could reflect on times when they realized they were “busily struggling managing difficult conversations” and they also said, “I get really nervous about having those conversations because they can be stressful”. These particular participants were referring to feelings associated with advocating for their students to either an administrator or a cooperating general education teacher. To highlight this challenge one of the participants described it this way:

Especially when advocating for kids with special needs, generally the teacher does not see eye to eye on your perspective and I begin to think I am trying to maintain the relationship with the general ed. Teacher because we are colleagues and we want to respect their perspective but also support the student. It is a really challenging line to go on and of course it depends on the teacher or administrators personality as well, so you're trying to manage that persons personality and control your own emotions because it can be stressful trying to facilitate a lot of the conversations I have to have. And then I always end up putting things on myself and making it more stressful than it has to be.

Other participants supported feelings of anxiousness around difficult conversations when they mentioned they try not to see these relationships as too personal. This was supported by other

participants when others remembered supporting themselves with self-talk similar to “it’s not personal.”

Contributions to community

All participants expressed a particular amount of uncertainty with how much impact they, as teachers and support staff, were having on the students but also the community at large, not to mention the institution or public schools. A few agreed with a student-focused approach on this topic by expressing the ways in which the student might feel or realize an impact on them now but they might ‘down the road’. These participants focused on the facts in front of them that seemed to tell them that the students are not seemingly appreciating the time they have with them now but could hold out hope that someday they will. One participant put it this way, “You know that you’re helping deep down inside somewhere inside you know that you are making a difference and they know it ... but you don’t always have a direct impact.” This type of uncertainty was common among the majority of the participants, possibly strongest among one participant who, when following the conversation of others around this notion of impact to students, community and institution, responded with, “I’m still waiting for an answer. That’s the problem...I can’t find an answer!”

Closing Focus Group Interview

Similar to the opening interview, the closing interview met with scheduling conflict where three participants were not able to join the group. These three participants were supplied the same questions as those who were able to attend the group interview and asked to submit typed (emailed) responses. Two of the three were able to submit responses, though there was one who was unable to submit completed responses due to a family emergency. The themes apparent to this interviewer were an increased attunement to self, a heightened awareness of student’s

emotional states as well as to the students varying states of attention. Finally, participants' identified the recognition of their ability to make applications of the mindfulness practices to life outside of teaching.

Engaging the self observer

When asked if they noticed if anything about their mindfulness training had any application to their time with their students many of the participants had immediate affirmative responses. A number of the participants made reference to being more attuned to escalating tensions in themselves and the environment. An example of this came from one participant explaining a "...first bad day of teaching in a while" when explaining how one class in particular was going very poorly. She said:

I was like, I am truly ready to strangle you people, you are driving me crazy! But it was good to just kind of like take a deep breath myself and re-center and realize it's not every single person in this room, it's not every single person I interact with, it's one kid and I need to check myself and I think some of that came from the mindfulness and that I shouldn't be frustrated with all these people, I just need to have this one conversation with this one student, so refocusing has been helpful.

A couple of the participants at this point in the interview began nodding their heads and also spoke of times when they caught themselves taking a deep breath or multiple breaths with the intention to slow things down and as the quote above explicitly states to "re-center". Another participant felt as though they were struggling to recall moments to share but then mentioned they noticed there were definitely times of "additional reflection or stepping out for a second mentally to be able to better assesses the situation." A number of the participants were using different vocabulary throughout the closing interview, which was a strong indication of engaging

the self-observer. Two participants in particular used “I realized” and “I noticed” often enough when they became more aware that they were observing themselves a lot more closely. “This mindfulness practice has made me realize how much of my school day I actually struggle to control”. Another example of this heightened awareness of self and situations arose when one participant said, “I also noticed that I was less stressed or frustrated from student interactions.” The participants had a number of ways to express this heightened attunement to self.

Being present

The heightened attunement to self also manifested into a more compassionate presence to their students as well. The participants made reference to shifts in focus away from just the lesson to more of a focus on the students first. Similarly, communication or ‘the way’ elements of the lesson were being transmitted seemed of more interest for the participants than strictly just the amount or type of content presented. An example of this shift is when one teacher said “Internally looking in my own thoughts and perspective towards clear and linear instructions for all students.” Another participant mentioned how, when working one on one with a student who was struggling, a deliberate tuning in to this student's emotional state seemed to present some clarity, he said, “I have been watching him more closely and it is really hard for him to focus.” Said in a different way by another participant, this tuning in to students in a different way, he expressed it this way, “following the redirection I had made, I sensed an ease and openness about the class as a whole.” Yet another comment towards being more focused on the student's emotional and attentional states came from a participant who stated, “Hitting the pause button [for the class] has allowed us to come together and have deeper conversations around trust.” This mention of the pause comes directly from the training all the participants experienced, which

opens the door to the fact that the participants were bringing the training directly and openly into the classroom.

In and out of school

Throughout the closing interview there was, quite clearly, a sense of accomplishment having completed the Mindfulness Based Teacher Preparation training. There was a sense of lightness in most participants but also an appreciation. They recognized this appreciation by noticing how this training was affecting them outside of school. Participants said, "...ultimately that helps you in your day to day life moving forward." Another mention of this pseudo-appreciation appeared with this comment, "I can't say if this course has influenced my approach to teaching but it has influenced the way I approach other aspects of my life. I noticed that very early on." This particular participant declared how they noticed when they were being mindful in their relationships outside of school, specifically with their friends. And another chimed in at this mention to declare to the group that his girlfriend had noticed a change in him and that she said she had been waiting for him to start meditating. Others were in agreement with this outside of school influence when they mentioned, "I am pulled from many regions across my professional and personal life but I have noticed moments of stillness and observation, taking more time to address the little things, the defusing of stress positively and smiling more often." These types of responses support the findings of Gold et al. (2010), who declared, "our results indicate that benefits may accrue following mindfulness training in terms of personal well-being, reduction in mental health difficulties, achievement of personally relevant goals, and enhanced ability to cope with the demands of teaching" (p.189).

Discussion

This research was primarily designed to observe the effects of mindfulness-based meditation training on teachers in their formative years of teaching as well as teachers who were new to a school system. Furthermore, this research was interested in the effects of mindfulness training on new and developing teachers view of self and effectiveness in school. What would the effects of mindfulness training (training both general to mindfulness techniques as well as mindfulness training specific to teachers' everyday encounters at school) be on teachers new to teaching as well as teachers new to a school system? Overall, the results of the selected BTVoSQ items along with the focus group interviews suggest that for this small sample of developing and relocated teachers, (a) that mindfulness training can produce incremental increases in one's ability to teach with intention towards positive results for students, and (b) that this type of training can increase a teachers attunement to self with regard to emotional regulation as well as provide the teacher with an increased awareness to their students emotional and attentional states. Anecdotally, the teachers involved in this study, at closing interview, expressed a desire to have been more devoted to the training throughout and were disappointed it was ending. They were also candid enough to admit they were slow to commit to the expected meditation times assigned in the first two weeks of practice.

Limitations

During this study, three participants were affected by family tragedies. Two of the three had their participation and continuance of the mindfulness curriculum compromised. Both participants were upfront and clear about their inability to maintain the scripted protocol the curriculum was expecting but admitted to making their own attempts to modify the practice to what they could manage. Though they originally expressed an interest to recuse themselves with

the immediacy of their tragic news, they returned the next week with expressions of hope to continue. They did continue and joined our closing interview. The third subject, whose participation was compromised, was unable to participate in the closing interview due to a family emergency.

Slight changes were made to the protocol of the group interviews, as mentioned above, due to scheduling difficulties but also from indirect feedback by participants of the opening interview. Simply, the participants were struggling to answer the questions. They expressed at the close of the opening interview, “wow, those were great questions but they were hard. It would have been great to have had a copy of the questions before hand.” A copy of the questions was provided to the participants two days before the closing interview.

The results of this study can forecast implications specific to this cohort of teachers, special education teachers and teaching assistance due to the small sample size. As Roeser, Skinner, Beers, and Jennings (2012) found, some smaller mindfulness training programs can have noticeable effects for adult populations. Though the sample size is small and a quality representation of the variety of ‘new’ faculty and staff to any public school, projecting benefits of this study to the larger population of developing teachers needs to be reserved for a much larger sample size. It can, however, be gathered from this study that with the minute benefits afforded to the participants of this study that an application of similar methods to a larger sample size of developing teachers would be warranted. Of interest to future studies would also be the effects of a longer intervention period of mindfulness based teacher training content. Even though Roeser et al. (2012) suggested that shorter mindfulness training programs, like this one, could produce positive results,

they too support the notion of experimenting with studies of various lengths using similar measures. Also, as flexible, accommodating and 'new-age' the on-line approach was to this study, it was limited in the following ways. First, there was no way to observe or directly verify if all participants were following through with all aspects of the lessons provided. Second, the ability to provide real time direct feedback to the participant's meditation practice was quite limited. Finally, there was an element of devotion and community expected from this type of practice which was weak/almost non-existent in the group due to the lack of in-person physical presence during instructional and practice sessions.

Additionally, because this study was conducted without a control group it restricts the ability to infer that the intervention presented was the sole reason for any change. Along with a larger sample size, as mentioned earlier, presenting a second treatment to improve teachers view of self and effectiveness would provide the opportunity for researchers to draw comparisons between interventions. Also, conducting a follow-up measure, be it interview or survey, would strengthen any findings related to long-term benefits of mindfulness training on developing teachers.

Finally, results from the BTVoSQ provided both positive and curious results provoking consideration for future studies. Because the BTVoSQ is a self-reporting measure it falls prey to most self-reporting measures, in the manor where participants may simply be responding in the way they want to be perceived rather than how they actually are. Participants may also develop a better understanding of the terms and content due to familiarity with the tool from first to second completion of the measure. Future studies might consider looking more closely at the specific content of each of the items presented for scoring. Each item could inform specific tailoring of the curriculum. The curriculum designed for this

study devoted the later three weeks of the six-week intervention towards supporting the participants in making specific applications of mindfulness practices to their everyday teaching experience. If content related to items of the BTVoSQ, which showed a regression in total score such as, item 32, the development of caring relationships with students was isolated for specific inclusion in MBTP curriculum design it might be easier to observe better causation.

Hitting the Mark

For this small cohort of developing teachers, newly hired teachers, teaching assistants and special education teachers, a new approach to their job and their time with students showed signs of improvement. The many references the teachers made in their closing interview of noticing the improved awareness of self and, of equal importance, noticing the lack of awareness in others, became clear impacts of the effects of their mindfulness training. This element of evaluating the teacher's ability to notice lack of awareness or mindlessness in others was unexpected and potentially provides another element for observation for future studies. Similar to how the participants were identifying noticing states of awareness in others, some participants mentioning how, at times, they felt heightened states of awareness around being able to better notice the emotional states of their students. This became a contagious agreement among most who were present for the closing interview. With this increased awareness some made reference as to how they would first use a breath or a moment of pause for themselves before attempting to intervene on a student's heightened state. These results support findings from Jennings et al. (2013), as to how mindfulness training in teachers not only improves student teacher relationships but also supports improvement in teacher efficacy and teacher well-being. Similar to these findings one subject mentioned, "this practice definitely gave me a new

way to see how I handle difficulties at school and that how, the way I approached interactions with his kids [students] totally matters.”

When teachers in this study identified the perceived benefit of their mindfulness training on their ‘real’ life or life outside of school it created a larger picture for the effects of this type of training for most involved. Three teachers identified how they had not realized how much stress they were under throughout their school day. This shift in perspective and increased awareness was said by some to be noticeable, where as by others it was said to be noticed on a couple occasions. Roeser et al. (2013) also reported on similar results of basic evidence that self-reported mindful awareness improved teachers’ anxiety, depression and reports of occupational stress.

Missing the mark

Some of the participants, at times, seemed to miss the intention of the training altogether. One participant summed up, “I’m just trying to find something that works consistently for the kids. Maybe this is something that can work for them in smaller doses.” Similarly, one participant opened the closing interview with, “I didn’t formally do the mindfulness stuff yet with them [students] like the breathing and like focusing on your breath when kids are overwhelmed and stressed, but whatever might help them calm down.” These types of remarks can indicate a significant disruption in the communication of the intent of the MBTP curriculum. These comments identify that the teachers knew in some way that they were the intended recipients of the training but at times seemed to misunderstand by thinking they were expected to be teaching their students mindful meditation practices. This indicates to future researchers the need for more explicit introductory directions.

There was also plenty of evidence in other ways that the training was not having a significant impact on some of the participants. At times it became obvious that a couple of the teachers were still stuck in quite obvious non-mindfulness attitudinal modes. Expressions of no patience for difficult students, blaming curriculum, school schedule and other external factors for their current anxieties of teaching. Though this does present as missing the aims of this study I would submit that it is also an indication that future studies might increase the mindfulness training intervention to a minimum of 8 weeks. Future studies would also be better served to increase the sample size as well as get even closer to teachers' true formative years of teaching.

The element of community support around the participants' development and practicing of their mindful meditation activities was missing due to the lack of in-person meetings along with the lack of commitment to a request for a minimum of one comment post per subject per week. The requested commitment to posting comments weekly on the Google classroom discussion board fell short of expectations. Seven out of the nine posted comments for the first week while only six other total comments were posted on the discussion board for the remaining five weeks of the training regardless of the consistent prompting by the researcher. It is then presumed but not verified that the participants might also have fallen short of the requested weekly recording of reflections of the weeks practice in a personal hand written journal based on weekly prompts by the researcher. These two elements of community building and personal reflection recordings are considered to be significant components associated with supporting the development of a deep and impactful mindfulness practice (Rechtschaffen, 2014; Jennings, 2015; Weaver & Wilding, 2013).

Vocabulary as Evidence

Without being an intended component of this investigation, an interesting observation around rhetoric arose during the closing interview. Participants continually used words and or phrases like, “realize”, “new perspective” or “new understanding”, this presents as evidence of insights arising from their mindfulness training. It has been a constant message from many, but maybe most notably, Jon Kabat-Zinn that the most notable outcomes of one’s mindfulness practice might be insights arising along with the wisdom they provide. More vocabulary changes became evident throughout the interview. Participants chose phrases such as, “I was neutral” to describe a balanced and non-reactive state. Others expressed their strengthened mindful attitude of patience by saying, “I just waited” or “I got really quiet.” Another vocabulary adjustment worth noting sounded like a re-scripting of Gregory Kramer’s (2007) insight dialogue’s beginning instructions; pause, relax and open, which the participants were presented with during the training. This particular participant said, “it was good to just take a breath,” (pause) “and re-center,” (relax) “and realize.” (open) Not all of the participants were able to use these types of mindfulness expression but for those that were, it was clear they had adopted a few of the intended benefits related to outcomes reported on in previous research. Gold et al. (2010) reported similar findings of participants producing unexpected and revealing mindful statements, particularly around the impact that mindfulness training had on them.

This change in vocabulary, potentially brought about by insights from the practice of mindful meditations and the applications to their everyday experiences at school, could present a shift in boundaries for some teachers. If the teachers previous understandings were the foundation for the boundaries they would normally set for themselves and for their classes, it would seem appropriate to consider that with a shift in understanding would come a shift in

boundaries. Weaver and Wilding (2006) identify the establishment of respectful boundaries as a key component toward the development of an engaged (mindful) teacher. This element of understanding boundaries according to Weaver and Wilding, include four dimensions quite similar to a for mentioned components of mindful teaching These components include: Self-discipline, managing ones responses without falling prey to habitual behaviors; Discernment, the awareness to identify whether the reaction is past or future based and whether it can be dealt with introspectively or if others need to be involved; Skillfulness, when a boundary does get crossed, this entails a capability to respond in a way that best serves the situation; Courage, the heartfulness applied to situations we would not want to enter but know we must (Weaver & Wilding, 2013).

This holistic approach to understanding how a shift in vocabulary can impact ones mindset to alter the perception of their surroundings or environment can prepare teachers to perceive a new understanding of their own boundaries and the ones they would set for their students. This type of knowing prepares teachers for what Weaver and Wilding (2013) identify as “engaging in proactive classroom management” (p. 73). Ultimately a teacher’s ability to establish these types of respectful boundaries ensures their ability to support and honor their own needs and intentions along with appropriately providing for the needs of their students in a corresponding way.

Conclusion

Starting any new job can be stressful and challenging until routines and protocol become familiar and better understood over time. Professions with a constant involvement of social interactions can introduce a different degree of difficulty and challenge. And the profession of teaching, where children and adolescents are nearly exclusively those under one’s supervision

and tutelage, the demands for balance and equanimity on one's emotional and attentional capabilities is high. The methods and efficacy of applying mindfulness techniques, attitudes and practices to the art of teaching needs further investigation. As mindfulness finds greater understanding with the general population and small studies like this one turn into larger more encompassing investigations, the opportunity to support educators and students alike will have greater potential. Providing this type of support for teachers during their early educational training or in their formative years of teaching can support the development of a solid foundation, fostering a compassionate and responsive teacher. It is the intention of mindful teaching to best serve individual situations while having an impact on whole of education.

Teachers have both personal and professional relational habits that have developed over time, some good some bad, mindful teaching would enable the teacher to be aware of both and prepare an appropriate response to any situation to best serve the situation at hand. The mindful training for the teachers in this study reported small improvements in their view of themselves with regard to specific aspects of their teaching. These teachers also expressed and displayed more mindful vocabulary when referencing their teaching episodes. Finally, these teachers were also able to describe ways in which they were more attentive to their students' emotional and attentional states. It would be the aim of mindfulness based teacher training to aid educators in the cultivation of these types of peaceful, attentive, compassionate and responsive habits.

The implications related to this study find an audience with any person or persons currently teaching, new or tenured, or anyone training to become a teacher. It is the later which holds the most promise. It holds the most promise in reaching the most teachers to ultimately have the most impact on the most children over time. Teacher training programs, particularly pre-practicum and full practicum student teachers could benefit tremendously from infusing

mindfulness training and reflection practices directly into their course work. Finding stronger more enduring ways to develop teachers who can better teach students as opposed to better teach the curriculum is an intention of mindful teaching. Another intention is to foster teachers who teach from the inside out as to perpetually be aware of the influence of their inner presence and the effects it can have on those who experience it.

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Appendix A

Mindfulness Based Teacher Preparation (MBTP) Curriculum Block Plan

The MBTP curriculum is influenced by Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction clinic curriculum as well as Laura Weaver and Mark Wilding's, *The Five Dimensions of Engaged Teaching; A practical guide for educator's* also by Patricia A. Jennings, *Mindfulness for Teachers; Simple skills for peace and productivity in the classroom.*

Each week consisted of the systematic distribution of course content via Google classroom. Course content was presented to participants by way of video lectures every Sunday evening and typed instructional prompts dispersed throughout the week to motivate the establishment of a routine for all participants. Below represents the progression and outline of the MBTP curriculum, as presented to these studies participants.

MBTP Week 1:

The outline of the videos will be...

Highlight the objectives of the week

Detail the practice for the week

Guide the practice for the week

Detail the 'homework' for the week

Ex. Post one comment about your practice and reply to one post in the week.

Set the journal prompts for the weeks practice

(You should have an index card and your journal ready for note taking during this video.

Press pause to record prompts and notes needed for your week of mindfulness practice following this video.)

Objectives:

Definition of Mindfulness

Traditional methods of Mindful meditation

Sitting instructions

Nature of the wandering mind

Development of the “mindful muscle”

Opening question is... Is it possible to pay attention to **what** you pay attention to?

If so?...Is it possible to pay attention to **how** you pay attention?

Introduction to the definition of Mindfulness...according to Jon Kabat-Zinn:

Mindfulness is the ability to pay attention, on purpose, in the present moment...non-judgmentally.

-Mindfulness is formally practiced – sitting, standing, lying and walking

Sitting Practice:

Sitting...

- Present instructions on how to sit-
- Chair, floor, cushion (alignment instruction)

P=Practice: For a timed 2 minutes, follow your breath in and out wherever you feel the sensation of breathing the strongest (belly, chest or nostrils).

-When the mind wanders, gently invite it back to the focus of attention (the breath), without judgment. This is the development of and strengthening of...**the mindful muscle**

Introduce Journal:

All participants receive a journal book. Suggestions of elements to include: Date, Time, location, attitude, as well as anything that is lingering with regards to current states of feelings and emotions.

Week 1 journal prompt:

Record formal mindful meditation moments and incorporate any thoughts, feelings and anecdotal information that accompanied the practice.

Homework for the week:

20 minute sittings everyday

- breaking up the sitting throughout the day is fine for this first week

examples: 2min. 10x

5min. 4x

10min. 2x

MBTP Week 2:**Objectives:**

Continue to establish and strengthen formal mindfulness practice

Introduction of the 7 pillars to mindful living

Introduction to the 5 hindrances

Introduction and instructions for standing meditation

Introduction of the seven-attitudinal factors associated with Mindful Living:

-Non-judging

Begins with noticing our judging moments

-Patience

Allowing things to slow down, telling oneself to 'pause' before reacting

-Trust

In self and situations

-Beginners mind

As if seeing/feeling things for the first time

-Non-striving

Noticing the wanting/desire or pushing too hard for something

-Acceptance

Letting things unfold as they do/will

-Letting go

Notice the logical impermanence in all things

...Add these 2 midweek

*Gratitude

A deep sense of appreciation and reverence for everything/everyone

*Generosity

Giving oneself over to life is the largest form of this

All are imbedded and adoring to each other and all attitudes lead to heart-full living! All are interconnected.

Your experience is the curriculum!! (JKZ)

Dropping the anchor into the present moment and using the body to access the present moment.

What the present moment...

Feels like

Smells like

Sounds like

Tastes like

Looks like

Name it to tame it:

It is the nature of the mind to wander or ruminate on things. The intention is not to eliminate the wandering but simply to become aware of it and then to monitor it. Introduce the concept of 'name it to tame it'. Label whatever arises for what it is, from "thinking" to "worry" to "future thought", etc.

-Close class with 12 min sitting meditation-

Introduction of the 5 Hindrances:

1. Doubt – uncertainty/fear
2. Ill Will – Disliking, animosity, anger
3. Sloth & Torpor - Lethargy/ sleepiness of body and or mind
4. Desire – Clinging, wanting or needing
5. Restlessness - Body...fidgety, need to move

Mind...wandering, thinking, future and past ruminations

Emotions...rollercoaster ride from joy/pleasure to sadness or anger

Homework:

Everyday, until next class increase meditation time to **30** minutes a day.

Set aside 30min to perform a sitting or standing mindful meditation periods.

-For the second week it would be preferred to perform this meditation at the beginning of your day and to attempt the 30 min all at once.

-However, do not be discouraged should you have to break it up and perform the meditations for smaller bouts of time throughout the day.

-All the while you are aspiring to sit for an extended period of time in a routine way at the beginning of your day.

-Please journal about your experience upon completion, however brief.

MBTP Week 3:

Objectives:

-Introduction of the Body Scan.

-Connect with the sensations of the body.

-Develop a practice of delivering attention to specific locations of the body.

-Introduction of ways to manage the Hindrances with...R.A.I.N.

-Introduction of walking meditation instructions mid-week.

Lying Meditation (Body Scan):

First audio recording provided to guide Lying meditation through body scan.

Savasana or Corps pose instructions (photos provided on class discussion board)

Introduction to R.A.I.N.:

Recognize- Identify it (hindrance), notice it's presence. Don't move away from it or deny it's presence.

Acceptance- Notice if you are trying to reject it. Make a mental declaration of accepting it.

Investigate- Offer it curiosity. Ask investigative questions. How does it manifest physically, emotionally, mentally or energetically?

Non-Identification- Notice this as a passing process. No permanence to it and it is not who you are.

Walking Meditation:

Video recording presenting the instructions provided mid-week.

Basic instruction, video will provide more.

-Select a path to span a distance of between 15-20 paces.

-Slow it way down, almost slow motion.

-Spend the walking being particularly focused on the very sensations associated with walking.

-When the mind wanders from this focus, stop walking, gently invite the attention back to your object of attention and resume the walking back and forth for the 15-20 paces you selected.

Homework:

Follow video instruction to vary your meditation times with the body scan audio and the walking meditation video to maintain **40** minutes of meditation per day.

Reflect in your journal your different experiences with sitting, lying, standing and now walking meditations.

MBTP 4:

Objectives:

-Pivot towards bringing your practice from your 'cushion' to school.

-Introduce Metta meditation and how to incorporate it at school.

-Assign specific tasks to bring your practice into your school experience.

-Increase formal 'sitting' time to **45** min.

Metta Meditation:

Video provided with specific instructions.

What the practice needs-

- Bigger sense of self and who are students and co-workers are
- An established mindfulness practice

Components-

- Comfort, selection of beings and the 3 phrases
- Selection of beings (all school related relationships)

Select an Ally, Neutral, Disagreeable and your self

- Phrases

“May you be...”

Happy and healthy, Safe and free from harm, Peaceful and at ease

Homework:

Increase formal meditation time to **45** minutes.

Include Metta in your formal practice.

Reflect in your journal about the beings you have selected for your practice.

MBTP 5:

Objectives:

- Introduction to Insight Dialogue (ID) and mindful communication
- Present the concept of teacher as servant leader
- Present and discuss article...Help/Fix/Serve
- ID practice schedule
- Silent self retreat - 4-6 hours, schedule provided

Introduction to ID guidelines:

- Pause
- Relax
- Open
- Trust Emergence
- Listen deeply
- Speak the truth

Calling each of these to mind, saying them internally for informal practice.

- Formal schedule provided as an attachment on discussion page
- Assignment is to find a colleague or ally at school to practice the formal ID schedule with.

Mantras to support your ID practice:

Mantras are repeated phrases used internally and in this case, 'Loving Speech', when in conversation with another.

1. I am here for you.
2. I know you are there and I am very happy.
3. I know you 'suffer' and that is why I am here for you.
4. I 'suffer' to, please help.
5. This is a happy moment.
6. You are partly right.

A few Mantras of Loving Speech from Thich Nhat Hanh for you to close out your school week . See, when in conversation, if these help or support your Insight Dialogue Guidelines (pause, relax, open...etc).

Homework:

- Maintain the **45** minute formal practice with whichever form you prefer. Being sure to incorporate Metta.
- Reflect in journal about your ID practice.

MBTP 6:

Objectives:

- Explore what does/will it mean to 'embody' your teaching
- Provide strategies to explore expanding your practice at school
- Explain/Outline silent self-retreat
- Plant the seed for our closing interview

Embodying teaching

Being present

Cultivating an open heart

Activating the self-observer

Teaching from the inside out

Mechanics of Mindfulness to support embodying your teaching:

1. Bodily regulation
2. Attuned communication - Feeling felt
3. Emotional balance
4. Response flexibility
5. Fear modulation
6. Empathy
7. Insight

8. Moral awareness

9. Intuition

Silent Retreat Schedule:

Asking for you to perform this schedule for anywhere from 4 - 6 hours. The schedule below equals 5 hours so feel free to adjust this schedule in a way that fits what you can do and what you prefer to do. If you would rather sit or walk or whatever for longer, make the necessary adjustments. Remember it is always about intention and attention, focus and relax. Finally, I too will be practicing with you at some point this week, when I will make time for a 4 - 6 hour silent retreat as well.

20 min. Sitting

20 min. Walking

20 min. Body Scan (lying)

15 min. Mindful movement - Yoga - Sun Salutation (watch attached video)

20 min. Sitting

20 min. Walking

20 min. Body Scan

15 min. Eating meditation (watch attached video)

20 min. Standing

20 min. Walking

20 min. Sitting

15 min. Mindful movement - Yoga - Sun Salutation

20 min. Standing

20 min. Walking

20 min. Body Scan (lying)

15 min. Eating Meditation or sitting

Now, go make a cup of tea and reflect.

Appendix B

Focus Group Interview Questions

Purpose: What follows is an investigation into self-regulation as well as the regulation of the management of a learning environment for developing teachers (0-5 yrs. teaching experience) as well as teachers new (0-5 yrs. hired) to an institution of learning.

Focus Group Interview Questions

- What drew you to teaching/ work in schools/ work with children?
- * What are some of the things you hope to impart to children throughout your time in schools?
- What were the most prominent things that you struggled with during student teaching or your first few episodes of teaching in your new environment?
- How is your job in school now different from your practicum or teaching assistant position?
- * When planning for your time with your students what would you say is of primary focus?
- * What are your primary areas of challenge, currently at school?
- * How do you prepare for difficult students or classes?
- * When things are not going as planned with a student or the class at large, to what do you attribute the difficulty/challenge the most?
- * How do you react to difficulties with individual students?
- * How do you react to difficulties with an entire lesson?
- * How would you describe your attitude or internal dialogue when approaching a parent conference, email, phone call or face to face?
- * How do you see your role in your current position having an impact on the students and the district at large?

Additional Post Mindfulness Training Questions:

- If the Mindfulness Training Course influenced how you approached your teaching, at what point in the training did you notice?
- Was there anything about the training that you were able to apply to your approach with children? If so, what and when?
- Have your students responded in a way that surprised you or others based on a new approach or perspective you have taken to them?
- How might a supervisor or peer notice that you have been through a Mindfulness Based Teacher Training program?

* Questions marked with an asterisk will be repeat questions for the pre and post focus group interviews.

Appendix C

**Beginning Teacher's Views of Self Questionnaire
(BTVoS Questionnaire)**

Respondent Code Number: _____

Consider your own development as a beginning teacher. Describe your development using the following 53 items. Circle the number that best corresponds with where you would place yourself on the following continuum:

- 1
2 = I am just beginning to look at this matter
3
4 = I have made substantial progress on this matter
5
6 = I have developed this matter into one of my strengths
7

	Items	Scale						
1. I have established a good rapport with my student as individuals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. I use a variety of instructional methods appropriate to the content I teach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. I understand the general procedures (e.g., attendance taking; accessing materials and supplies; filling out forms) used in the building(s) in which I teach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4. I identify individual differences among my students and adjust for those differences in my planning and teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. I communicate with parents and families in ways that are positive and productive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6. I turn to those in the school(s) who can help when I need to resolve problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7. I pace my lessons so that students are neither overwhelmed nor bored.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8. I regularly reflect on my own teaching performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9. I use various technologies to help student learn.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

10.	I feel that through my efforts, I can enhance the quality of the school and district in which I teach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	I feel comfortable in approaching and working with other teachers, the school administrators, and other staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I work productively with support staff and teacher assistants in helping students learn.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	I teach in such a way that students are engaged and perform as I would like them to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	I feel like I have found a place for myself with the faculty and staff in the building(s) in which I teach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	I differentiate instruction for individual students and maintain high expectations for all students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	I connect the content to prior student learning and to real world contexts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	I successfully engage parents and families in their child's education.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	I feel I am a participant in the profession (through organizations and associations), which enhances my sense-of-self.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	I am well organized for carrying out my work efficiently and effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	I take time to self-assess my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	I plan daily, consistently resulting in lessons which turn out the way I intend them to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	I collaborate regularly with my colleagues regarding planning and delivery of instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	I use the curriculum guides for my content area(s) which are available in my district.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24.	I can see that teaching is work through which I can express myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	I assess how my students learn and use that knowledge in planning and teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.	I use several different approaches to monitor the effectiveness of my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27.	I regularly discuss student performance with my colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28.	I take responsibility for student learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29.	I use instructional technologies as a regular part of my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30.	I teach students with special educational needs such that they achieve the goals set for them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31.	I have caring relationships with my students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32.	I feel that through teaching I have developed a sense of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33.	I sequence activities such that students follow along and learn as planned.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34.	I establish a good rapport with the parents and families of my students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35.	I manage classes to make good use of time and resources, to minimize interruptions, and to keep students engaged.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36.	I work in partnership with one or more colleagues to think about my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37.	I establish expectations for students' behavior that they understand and meet.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38.	I can draw on assistive technologies to aid students who use these devices to learn.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39.	I adjust a lesson in the midst of teaching it if it is appropriate to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

40.	I have relationships with students that are respectful and friendly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41.	I feel I am part of the district as well as my school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42.	I feel comfortable in exchanging ideas with the people with whom I work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43.	I establish class routines which students understand and follow.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44.	I have a good working relationship with my class(es).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45.	I engage in collaborative teaching or co-teaching as needed to support student learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46.	I participate in professional development activities to improve my knowledge and skills as a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47.	I support students as they use technologies in their learning processes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48.	I build partnerships with parents and families that are mutually supportive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49.	I manage well the demands of teaching along with the demands of my personal life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50.	I adjust the curriculum and my teaching to accommodate the needs of English language learners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51.	I discipline students in ways that are appropriate and effective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52.	I see that as a teacher, I will be able to make an important contribution to society.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53.	I can make reasonably accurate judgments about the progress my students are making.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Describe yourself as a teacher by indicating how much experience you have in this professional field. Check the one line that most closely describes your current status:

- in practica experiences
 in student teaching experiences
 about to begin my first year of teaching

 in the first three months of teaching
 in the first six months of teaching
 completing my first year of teaching

 about to begin my second year of teaching
 in the first year-and-a half of teaching
 completing my second year of teaching

 in the third year of teaching
 in the fourth year of teaching
 in the fifth year of teaching
 completed _____years of teaching

Indicate your sex: female male

At what grade level is your current primary teaching assignment?

- pre-school, early childhood
 elementary school grades
 middle school grades
 high school grades
 a combination of grade levels

Describe your present level of commitment to teaching as a career. Check the one line that most closely describes your current commitment:

- I will soon be looking for another career to pursue.
 I may eventually look for another career to pursue.
 I want to be a teacher but I will also keep other options open.
 I am firmly committed to a career in teaching.
 I am absolutely committed to a career in teaching.

Developed for the New York State Mentor Teacher-Internship Program Statewide Evaluation, by Dr. Gerald M. Mager, Syracuse University, in 1986.
 Revised by Thomas B. Nevelidine, Doctoral Student, and Dr. Gerald M. Mager, Syracuse University, in October 2002.
 Revised by Dr. Gerald M. Mager, with Wei Gao, Doctoral Student, Syracuse University, in 2008.

Appendix D

BTVoSQ Items Isolated for Mindfulness Consideration

Below is a list of the 13 items isolated from the Beginning Teachers' View of Self Questionnaire for analysis. Below each item is the abbreviated phrasing given to each item.

14) I teach in such a way that students are engaged and perform as I would like them to.

Creating engaged students

20) I am well organized for carrying out my work efficiently and effectively.

Well organized for efficient and effective behavior

21) I take time to self-assess my teaching.

Make time for self-assessment

22) I plan daily, consistently resulting in lessons which turn out the way I intend them to.

I plan and teach with intention

25) I can see that teaching is work through which I can express myself.

Self-expression is part of my teaching

27) I use several different approaches to monitor the effectiveness of my teaching.

Varied ways of seeing my effectiveness

29) I take responsibility for student learning.

Self-Responsibility for student learning

32) I have caring relationships with my students.

Caring relationships with students

33) I feel that through teaching I have developed a sense of who I am.

Self-awareness through teaching

36) I manage classes to make good use of time and resources, to minimize interruptions, and to keep students engaged.

Efficient use of resources and time to increase engagement

40) I adjust a lesson in the midst of teaching it if it is appropriate to do so.

Flexibility and responsiveness

41) I have relationships with students that are respectful and friendly.

Ease of relationships

50) I manage well the demands of teaching along with the demands of my personal life.

School/work balance

Appendix E

Thirteen BTVoSQ Items Pre, Post-Test Total Score Results

