

Mindfulness in the College Classroom: The Impact of a Mindfulness Curriculum on Student Well-Being

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Abstract: This poster provides an overview of a mindfulness skills curriculum and presents student data related to self-reported impacts of mindfulness skills on stress levels, sleep quality, self-compassion, and general well-being. Data analyses comparing several student cohorts provide empirical support for the positive impact of this online mindfulness curriculum (which is offered as an academic course in a university program in Integrative Holistic Health and Wellness at a mid-sized university in the US). Mindfulness skills provide an opportunity for students to deepen their self-awareness, reflective thought, and a “taming of the mind.” Contemplative mindfulness practices, such as sitting and walking meditation, body scan, and mindful movement allow students to self-reflect while engaging in the curriculum and the learning process.

Research Question: Does participation on a mindfulness curriculum significantly impact pre/post self reported student levels of stress, sleep, self-compassion and general well-being?

Methods: Survey data was collected at the beginning and end of semester completion for students participating in a 14-week, 3 credit hour mindfulness course. A control group was also selected from students enrolled in another online course. ANOVAS and T tests were performed. **Participants:** University undergraduate students, N=61 for experimental group, N=31 for the control group.

Results: Statistically significant results for the experimental group for all self-reported areas measured, decreased stress levels, increased sleep quality, increased self-compassion and increased general well-being for students who participated in the curriculum versus those in the control group.

Conclusion: Mindfulness skills provide students the capacity to strengthen somatic awareness and self-regulation, which has associated impacts on wellness and a sense of well-being. Offering a university curriculum in mindfulness skills has the potential to positively impact not only students’ academic skills but also teaches a lifelong mindfulness practice that supports health and well-being in emerging adult populations.

Selected References (full available on request to lori.gray@wmich.edu):

Gray, L., Font, S., Unrau, Y., & Dawson, A. (2018). The Effectiveness of a Brief Mindfulness-Based Intervention for College Freshmen Who Have Aged out of Foster Care. *Innovation in Higher Education*, 43, 339-352.

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