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The Effects of Mindfulness on Students Attention in an Early Childhood Classroom



Context and Method

- My action research project examined the effects of mindfulness orientated meditation on students concentration and attention among Year 2 students.
- The primary methods of data collection included incidental observations, checklist observations, journal notes, class meeting notes, student star chart rating system, and questionnaire's that were given to the students at the end of each month.
- My observational data was only collected for the morning session from (9.20am to 10.20am), meditation periods gradually increased over the 7 months from 5 minutes to 15 minutes.
- I led the students in mindful meditation three days a week in the morning for 7 months. I called the sessions MOM (Mindfulness-Oriented Meditation) Crescentini *et al.* (2016). The mindfulness practices and methods I used mainly aligned with the work of John Kabat-Zinn (1994), the founder of the MBSR approach.
- Meditation Apps that I used were -Insight Timer, Smiling Minds, Headspace. Also I used my own guided meditation script with meditation music.
- I used Breathing Buddies, Meditation Stones, Lavender Eye Pillows and Meddy Teddy to mix up the MOM sessions.



Findings and Observations from the Action Research

- After two months of the students doing the Mindfulness-Oriented Meditation three times a week, the data was beginning to show there was an increase in students attention span. The data from the checklists on student behaviour revealed that on the days that the students didn't meditate, it took the students longer to settle at a task and their concentration span was shorter.
- Furthermore the students through their star charts that they used to rate their concentration after a MOM session, and also they rated their concentration the same way on the days MOM wasn't used. Eighty percent of the students revealed in their star rating charts, that on days that they had MOM they could concentrate better.
- Over the course of 7 months I observed that the students ability to focus and maintain mindfulness meditation increased and they were able to sustain meditation for longer periods of time.
- At the end of the 7 months the data from particularly my observations and the questionnaires that I had given to the students, revealed mindfulness orientated-meditation did promote and enhance focus and concentration. Which then had a flow on effect, to the students behavioural regulation, social-emotional development, and academic skills.



Take Aways

- The mindfulness practices, I believe created a more positive classroom culture.
- Biggest take away is that the Early Years is when the foundation for learning happens. So if we as educators help young students acquire these mindfulness practices in the early years, these habits can continue on over their life time.
- I believe that mindfulness practices are a powerful preventative tool and a means to improve the academic and social emotional development of students even in the 1st years of school.

