

The Effectiveness of Mindfulness in A Seventh Grade Classroom

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the implementation of mindfulness strategies inside a middle school classroom. The researcher's focus was to see if implementing mindfulness strategies in a seventh-grade classroom would result in positive behaviors. It was hypothesized that mindfulness strategies would moderately improve classroom behavior at the middle school level and lead to more efficient use of instructional time and improve students' self-efficacy. The research questions that guided this study were: How will mindfulness strategies effect classroom behavior at the middle school level? Will there be a measurable difference in the implementation of mindfulness strategies on boys' and girls' behavior? Participants included the seventh-grade student body, consisting of 25 girls and 28 boys ranging in ages from 11-12. Students were taught mindfulness strategies using the Calm Mindfulness Curriculum. The researcher implemented lessons in the first ten minutes of class. Student behaviors included: hard to settle down at the beginning of class, getting up during instruction, fidgeting, making noise during class, talking back to the teacher, head down during instruction, being off task during independent work, teasing each other in class, packing up before class ends, and needing redirection from the teacher. In week one, student behaviors were present every class period; however, student behaviors moderately fell by week six. The seventh-grade class learned to turn stressful situations into ones they could handle. Mindfulness strategies gave students a tool that could help them with their behaviors. Students learned how to be mindful of themselves and others.

Keywords: seventh-grade, mindfulness, behaviors

The Effectiveness of Mindfulness in A Seventh Grade Classroom

In classrooms across America, students are displaying an increase in behaviors that disrupt instructional time and interrupt learning inside the classroom. Middle school is known for its roller-coaster ups and downs as students face puberty, peer pressure, and more responsibility with higher expectations. DeJulius and McLean state, “Evidence indicates that today’s adolescents are coming into school with more complex social and emotional issues than at any time in history” (DeJulius & McLean, 2019. p. 75). As factors stack up together, they lead to an increase in stress levels and raise the odds for increased behaviors. While behaviors rise, students lack the skills necessary to understand how to cope with emerging issues. According to Clark (2020), “Implementation of mindfulness-based CBT at the middle school age may help to create positive coping skills as well as address neuro processes responsible for anger and aggression” (p. 1). Browning and Romer (2020) found the implementation of mindfulness as a promising approach in teaching educators and students self-awareness and self-regulation skills associated with success in school and through adulthood. In order for students to learn how to control behaviors, they must first learn coping skills, which can be done with the implementation of mindfulness.

Furthermore, ETTY-Leal, a mindfulness educator, found teaching mindfulness allows students to be equipped with a life skill that will empower them to recognize the value and power of making skillful choices and actions (ETTY-Leal, 2021). The school setting is one of the best places to teach mindfulness to adolescents (Norton et al., 2020). A mindfulness curriculum has the possibility to help students alleviate stress and learn how to be in tune with themselves and control behaviors/emotions. Since current research was limited on the effectiveness of

mindfulness in a middle school setting, further study was needed to determine if mindfulness would help student behavior.

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the implementation of mindfulness strategies inside a middle school classroom. The researcher measured the impact of implementing mindfulness strategies in the seventh-grade classroom, which may result to positive behaviors such as students being on task. Upon implementation of a mindfulness curriculum from Calm Schools, the seventh-grade class learned strategies to see if behaviors would improve. Research questions that guided this study were: How will mindfulness strategies effect classroom behavior at the middle school level? Will there be a measurable difference in the implementation of mindfulness strategies on boys' and girls' behavior?

The researcher hypothesized that mindfulness strategies would moderately improve classroom behavior at the middle school level as well as lead to more efficient use of instructional time and improve students' self-efficacy. With the implementation of mindfulness strategies, girls will moderately improve behavior positively more than boys.

Literature Review

According to Rapport and Minahan at The Child Mind Institute,

Ten percent of our school population – nine to thirteen million students- struggle with mental health problems, and in a typical classroom of 20, there is a chance that one or two students are dealing with trauma. Trauma can consist of poverty, domestic violence, abuse, neglect, or a psychiatric disorder (Rappaport & Minahan, n.d. para.1).

While navigating through the educational system, a student struggling to meet any level within Maslow's hierarchy of needs can significantly change the culture of a classroom or school

(DeJulius & McLean, 2019). As early as kindergarten, students start to feel increased academic pressure which inhibits less time for play and the arts. Students are losing out on interpersonal connections due to the demands of technology. Children today are faced with an extraordinary amount of stress and anxiety. By the time students are around 13- to 18-years-old, 25% will experience an anxiety disorder, according to the National Institutes of Mental Health (Gerszberg, n.d., para.5). As the dynamics of the family structure change, so do the demands on our students. Stressors are all around, and many students do not understand how to deal with them, leading to students acting out. Good behavior plans help teachers build new behaviors to interact with challenging students more positively and proactively (Rappaport & Minahan, n.d.). “Mindfulness-based practices have been promoted as a promising way to reduce stress and anxiety in students and improve their academic and behavioral outcomes” (Gutierrez et al., 2019, p. 5). Therefore, a vital goal of educational research is to evaluate techniques that promote positive behaviors in students that have yet to learn how to handle everyday stressors and self-control.

Browning and Romer (2020) found mindfulness practices cultivate attention, including self-awareness, self-knowledge of thoughts, feelings, sensations, and how they affect one's actions. Gutierrez (2019) notes, “Self-control allows students to regulate behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and attentional resources so they can accomplish a learning goal by enabling persistent focus, reduced stress, decreased aggressive behavior, improved cognitive performance, and enhanced resilience” (p. 6). Mindfulness strategies can be beneficial in helping to alleviate stress by letting one be in the present and taking note of how one is feeling. “More recently, mindfulness-based strategies have been promoted as a helpful tool for educators seeking to improve students' educational experiences and cognitive and social-emotional development,

which leads to better academic outcomes” (Gutierrez et al., 2019, p. 5). Educators need to equip students with the necessary tools to help them for a lifetime. Norton and Griffith (2020) discuss how mindfulness-based programs (MBPs) offer participants a chance to create awareness through 'training by bringing back their wandering attention to a particular focus while developing a nonjudgmental stance towards their experience. Mindfulness allows students to accept their emotions positively. By teaching mindfulness, strategies to students' educators can help students develop skills that will help to produce better outcomes in the classroom.

According to Warren et al. (2020), mindfulness helps with satisfying basic psychological needs. Students who develop mindfulness skills are better at adapting to everyday stressors. Students need to be taught skills to help them academically, socially, and emotionally. “Greater childhood self-control predicts better educational, health, and financial outcomes in adolescence and adulthood” (Gutierrez et al., 2019, p. 6). Thus, it is helpful to examine mindfulness strategies and how they influence students in a middle school classroom.

The principle of this literature review was to examine the benefits of mindfulness, associated programs, and implementations in a middle school setting. Overviews of each strategy, including theoretical foundations and historical context, are provided within this review. Throughout the research review, the context and themes were examined and highlighted. Last, research looked at the limitations in the existing literature and potential directions for future research.

Benefits of Mindfulness

Gutierrez (2019) defines mindfulness as “increased, purposeful, nonjudgmental attention to the present moment” (Gutierrez et al., 2019, p. 5). Merriam-Webster defines mindfulness as the practice of sustaining a nonjudgmental state of increased or full recognition of one's

emotions, feelings, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis (*Mindfulness*, 2021). It is essential to understand that mindfulness addresses the emotional element crucial in aiding stressors in life. Using mindfulness as a path to self-regulate, students have the potential to strengthen their skills to prevent overreacting, increase their ability to pay attention, and manage to stay in their classroom learning environment (Martinez & Zhao, 2018). For students, mindfulness can create pathways to self-regulate emotion and stress and refrain from impulsive actions. Mindfulness allows students to recognize their feelings and acknowledge how they are feeling. Warren et al. (2020) talks about environmental factors and how mindfulness can positively influence one's life. Positive effects include a greater sense of security, less anxiety, and experiencing the present moment. These positive effects happen when adolescents believe adults and peers in their lives accept them, respect them, and have faith in their abilities. "Coping mechanisms which emerge during adolescence have long-term consequences in that they may shape the coping mechanisms of adulthood" (Schussler et al., 2020, p. 431). The benefits of mindfulness are encouraging with so many positive factors.

Etty-Leal's (2021) experience is that with patience and consistency, combined with a range of creative approaches, most children respond positively to mindful practices over time. Schussler et al. (2020) state that one student "described mindfulness as controlling your emotions and learning more things about yourself and just concentrating on yourself" (p. 441). Another young student said, "When we are mindful, we are doing things on purpose with all of our mind" (Etty-Leal, 2021, p. 198). These positive notes from children show that students do not act out with the right tool, and they can deal with emotions in the right way. At The Child Mind Institute, Rappaport and Minahan (n.d) talk about how students need to learn a replacement behavior that is appropriate and serves the same function as the inappropriate behavior while

developing the skills needed to behave fittingly without accommodations. Mindfulness is a powerful tool that helps students relax, concentrate their attention, and interact successfully with others. The brain plays a crucial part in emotional development, and by equipping students with mindfulness strategies, they can build critical skills used for functioning well in school and life. In school, one can see how most students are unaware of what is going on around them. Yet, after learning mindfulness, one student stated, “paying attention, like watching everything in close detail, like observing everything that may be overlooked” (Schussler et al., 2020, p. 440). It is also crucial to mention the students who come to school with trauma from home and how learning mindfulness benefitted two students and stated, “When I breathe out, I can let go of the pain” and “I just try to be aware of my position in society..., just try and be aware of the consequences my actions have” (Ettly-Leal, 2021, p. 200; Schussler et al., 2020, p. 441). With all of the negative pressures in life, mindfulness strategies can provide light to push through.

There have been increased mindfulness-based programs due to heightened mental health awareness in youth and teacher burnout and stress (Norton et al., 2020). Mindfulness can help build relations between teachers and students. Research has shown that mindfulness practices are valuable for people of all ages in physical and mental health as well as education (Browning & Romer, 2020). As mentioned above, with teacher burnout on the rise, mindfulness can aid the student and the teacher. Studies have shown that students who practice mindfulness have better academic success, and they are able to increase positive effects while decreasing adverse effects (Browning & Romer, 2020; Norton et al., 2020). Students can reduce test anxiety, increase focus and concentration, develop better reading comprehension (Browning & Romer, 2020, p. 1), and relieve symptoms from depression, anxiety, stress, and burnout in school staff and students (Norton et al., 2020). Mindfulness can create a classroom where there is an awareness and

purpose. During her approach, Etty-Leal (2021) found that a holistic, creative, heartfelt, mindful curriculum engages every child to embrace kind, curious awareness and make conscious, thoughtful choices in life. Emotions are a way for students to communicate how they feel and when they are equipped with the right tools, they are able to deal with life's stressors. Therefore, the benefits of mindfulness allow students to learn lifelong skills to help them cope with everyday stressors in and out of school.

Mindfulness Programs

Research provided a couple of programs that several studies have validated. They are focused and designed explicitly for under-resourced public schools that face high turnover rates and high levels of stress (Browning & Romer, 2020). The programs offer research-based courses, curricula, training, and certification programs designed (Browning & Romer, 2020). The Mindfulness in Schools Project also provides training for educators working in settings serving students aged 7–18. It has online courses and other services available to school mindfulness leaders, other educators, parents, and community members (Browning & Romer, 2020). Learning to Breathe (L2B) is another mindfulness curriculum geared toward adolescents and has produced good student-level evidence (Browning & Romer, 2020). L2B is delivered through 6–18 sessions (Browning & Romer, 2020). MindUP is another program that focuses on students aged 3–14 and has proven to strengthen prosocial actions, reduce aggressive behaviors, and improve academic achievement (Browning & Romer, 2020). The Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) program increases prosocial behavior by enhancing educators' ability to provide students with emotional, behavioral, and instructional support. Through improved relationships between teachers and students, classroom climate is better, and students' prosocial behaviors are positive (Browning & Romer, 2020).

Learning to Breathe (L2B)

Learning to Breathe (L2B) is a mindfulness program developed to facilitate secondary students' emotion regulation and attention skills. The BREATHE acronym: B-Body awareness, R-Reflection, E- Emotions, A- Attention, T- Take it as it is, H-Healthy habits of mind, E-Empowerment. The program has three goals: (1) develop an awareness of thoughts, emotions, and physical experience, (2) use mindful, caring awareness when handling distressing emotions, (3) practice skills in a group setting (Schussler et al., 2020).

Schussler et al. (2020) used a mixed-methods approach applying qualitative and quantitative methods. Students were from two different 11th grade public high schools located in a suburban district of a Northeastern state in the United States. Students enrolled in health classes were divided into two cohorts. One hundred thirty-four participants were in cohort one and 255 in cohort two. Cohort one was a pilot trial with no comparison group, and cohort two was a pre-post design with students randomly assigned. Qualitatively, contextual information identified how data changed through interviews regarding students' experiences in the program. Quantitative data indicated where changes occurred across predetermined measures grouped under the following constructs: internalizing symptoms, stress, attention/self-regulation, and well-being through a collection of student self-report (Schussler et al., 2020).

Schussler et al. (2020) found a disconnect in the qualitative and quantitative data about perceived sources of stress and student management of anxiety. The data displayed evidence that students were becoming more mindful. Students who practiced conscious breath awareness and focused on the moment seemed to improve outcomes when they had more significant internalizing symptoms and difficulties with emotion regulation. Data showed a relationship between stress and mindfulness in students who reported practice; however, some students

experienced a stress increase. Both qualitative and quantitative data did not show much support that impacted students' academic engagement or well-being with interpersonal interactions, self-compassion, and a sense of belonging. Qualitative data showed better stress management, whereas quantitative data did not improve. During qualitative interviews, all students noted practices they learned helped them cope with stress. Mindful breathing was the most common practice used. Qualitative data showed improvements in mindfulness with self-awareness and body-awareness and suggested that students increase academic engagement awareness to a minimal degree. Five of nine target students experienced positive changes in their self-reported mindfulness, emotion regulation, and rumination. Qualitative data showed evidence of students becoming aware of their experience, employing practices, and describing a greater awareness of themselves. Quantitative data showed seven of nine students improved from pre to post or follow up. Quantitative data on social connectedness was mixed. Quantitative data showed seven of nine students had significant changes in mindfulness in either post or follow-up.

Integrating Mindfulness Throughout the School Day

“True mindful education is not prescriptive. It needs to be crafted and tailored to the needs of children over time, as respectful, collaborative relationships grow” (Etty-Leal, 2021, p. 192). Mindfulness practices/interventions can be taught as stand-alone strategies for teachers to use with students and be incorporated into current school structures and procedures (Browning et al., 2020). Integration of mindfulness practices by teachers can be tailored to fit the demands of individual students or groups of students or applied as a schoolwide commitment to focus on the whole child, teacher well-being, and positive school climate (Browning et al., 2020). According to Clark (2020), “teachers are best-supporting students by decreasing negative outcomes, increasing positive effects, and targeting neurobiological activity through mindfulness practice”

(p. 10). Mindfulness strategies can be implemented as stand-alone strategies to aid teachers', applied with students, and integrated into current school structures and routines (Browning & Romer, 2020, p. 1). Schools can use sensory rooms, calm rooms, and quiet spaces as an alternative to discipline referrals and suspensions (Browning & Romer, 2020).

When it comes to the delivery of MBPs, trained school staff may be more effective than outside trainers due to the existing rapport with students and established classroom management skills (as cited by Norton & Griffith, 2020). Schools can bring training to teachers, or teachers can seek training online. It is essential to note Ety-Leal (2021) found that students may suffer adverse outcomes if the teacher is neither trained to understand trauma nor knowledgeable in conducting mindfulness sessions. Teachers need to be aware of all factors with their students to help them. Teachers who are effective at mindfulness reap the benefits. Browning and Romer (2020) found that teachers can produce a better classroom environment by displaying "calm, clear, and kind" behaviors. Students are able to flourish in a classroom that is conducive to learning. For teachers, the benefits include job satisfaction, self-regulation, and self-compassion (Browning & Romer, 2020; Norton & Griffith, 2020). When talking about teaching students, a participant expressed, "Teaching them skills [...] to pass an exam [...] Almost like I was part of the problem, you know, it was causing them stress. Here I'm able to help them and possibly alleviate some of that stress and, you know, teach them ways in which they're able to cope with—cope with what life has to bring" (Norton & Griffith 2020, p. 2628). Another participant stated, "I would be more compassionate, more understanding [...] more aware of what they were bringing to the lesson. And just seeing them for what they are—what, what the problem was rather than seeing it as a deliberate affront to me; you know, me" (Norton & Griffith 2020, p. 2628). "My experience of teaching mindfulness to children is that a rich creative palette of

concepts, visuals, and experiences fully engages each child, puts smiles on faces, and touches their hearts” (Etty-Leal, 2021, p. 195). The experiences of the teachers show mindfulness is beneficial not only for students but for teachers as well. It allows for a different perspective and compassion for oneself and others.

Summary

Limitations of Existing Research

While mindfulness has been around and is just starting to be accepted, there is still not enough research on programs to become part of the curriculum. There is not enough research on implementing mindfulness at the middle school level. Research settings have taken place in the inner school setting, and nothing has been done in a rural area. While the educational environment is becoming harder for students in our ever-changing society, there is a disconnect among students who are dealing with more complex emotional and social issues. Research has shown mindfulness training can benefit a diverse population as part of the school curriculum and help support children who experience higher levels of early life adversity (Bauer et al., 2019). Research is limited in the secondary setting. “At its heart, mindful education is about developing connections and nurturing relationships between teacher and students” (Etty-Leal, 2021, p. 192). It is known that positive teacher-student relations are beneficial inside a classroom, but how mindfulness takes that to another level is limited. School is about discovery as an individual and learning what is possible. “Mindful connection to the senses brings about unexpected discoveries: helping people to become aware of the extraordinary in the ordinary” (Etty-Leal, 2021, p. 197). Therefore, with the limitations of existing research, more research is needed in the implementation of mindfulness and how it affects student behaviors in a secondary setting.

Directions for Future Research

First, future research should address how student behaviors change from implementing mindfulness in a group setting compared to a small group setting. Second, research should also include teachers' impact on students when implementing strategies while identifying their vulnerabilities. Last, it is necessary for more research on the effects of the mindfulness curriculum in various classroom settings.

There are additional concerns when interpreting the results of former studies and planning for future studies of these methods. For example, a lack of variation between urban, suburban, and rural students influences the overall findings. Though current data supports the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions, further research with larger control groups would strengthen the efficacy of intervention techniques. After correctly recruiting schools, teachers, and students over time, researchers will need to overcome the challenges of the ever-changing behaviors and stressors in the school system. These factors are exceptionally pertinent within the school setting because of the importance of promoting positive behaviors. Despite these challenges, continued research examining a mindfulness curriculum is crucial in establishing lifelong student success. The findings thus far are promising, and additional inquiry can ensure positive student behavior and success with the implementation of mindfulness.

Methods

This study used a mixed-method approach to collect, evaluate, and present credible statistical evidence and contribute to existing theories on the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions. Data collection included a pre and post questionnaire, a researcher-created interview questionnaire for students, student journals, and teacher observations over six weeks.

The data collected came from three seventh-grade English Language Arts classroom sections between February and March of 2022. Below is detailed information outlining the participants, setting, instruments, data source, and data collection procedures.

Participants and Setting

Participants in this study include fifty-three seventh-grade students from a general education classroom in central Illinois. The seventh-grade student body consisted of 25 girls and 28 boys ranging in ages from 11-12. Five students, two females and three males have an IEP and receive additional special education services. Cultural backgrounds vary among students, as well as their socioeconomic status. All of the students were in the seventh grade, and the study took place in an English Language Arts classroom. The majority of students were in the morning, where students were less likely to be tardy to school and more likely to be more alert. The researcher went into the English Language Arts classroom during reading classes in the 2nd, 3rd, and 8th periods. These times were chosen due to the availability of reading classes and the teacher's request. The teacher read *Touching Spirit Bear* and was able to discuss mindfulness throughout the story.

There are approximately 155 students that attend the middle school. According to Illinoisreportcard.com, for the 2020-2021 school year, the school does not have a diverse population where 96.1% of students are white, and 1.3% are African American. Additionally, 40.1% of the students are classified as low-income, and 13% have an IEP. The school has a 97.1% attendance rate, with 9% chronically absent (Illinois School Board of Education, 2022).

Instruments and Data Source

The student survey instrument design is the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire developed by Ruth Baer and modified by Ohio State University (see Appendix A). The Five

Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) is based on a factor analytic study of five independently developed mindfulness questionnaires. The analysis yielded five factors that appear to represent elements of mindfulness as it is currently conceptualized. The test contained 39 statements that measured the five facets related to our thoughts, experiences, and actions in daily life. The scores estimate where one stands in terms of mindfulness and self-awareness. The five facets are observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience. Under each facet, there were sum items that were totaled and averaged. Observing sum items included statements 1 + 6 + 11 + 15 + 20 + 26 + 31 + 36. Describing sum items included statements 2 + 7 + 12R + 16R + 22R + 27 + 32 + 37 (Note: R= reverse-scored item). Acting with awareness sum items included statements 5R + 8R + 13R + 18R + 23R + 28R + 34R + 38R. Non-judging of inner experience sum items included statements 3R + 10R + 14R + 17R + 25R + 30R + 35R + 39R. Non-reactivity to inner experience sum items included statements 4 + 9 + 19 + 21 + 24 + 29 + 33. Each statement was answered by (1) never or very rarely true, (2) rarely true, (3) sometimes true, (4) often true, and (5) very often or always true. The scale compared pre and post interventions and estimated the level of mindfulness of subjects at present.

The researcher created a questionnaire for interviews (see Appendix B). Random interviews took place throughout the data collection during the last period of the day on Fridays. The researcher created a daily journal for students to document the use of mindfulness interventions each day (see Appendix C). Data collection of the journals was taken on the last day. The researcher used Calm Schools Mindfulness Curriculum to implement mindfulness strategies (see Appendix D). Open-ended observational notes were made by the researcher each day. The researcher interacted, observed, and took notes about students connecting mindfulness

strategies to class behaviors. Did students seem happy or bored? Did students interrupt during class time? If so, why, and what was the interruption? Were students nice to each other?

Data Procedure and Collection

The study took place over six weeks, starting in February 2022. The researcher implemented mindfulness strategies and took observational notes each day. On the beginning day, the researcher had students take the FFMQ questionnaire to score how mindful students were compared to the end of the 30 days. The researcher read the questionnaire aloud to prevent misunderstanding in the statements. Students who were absent made up the FFMQ upon return during their study hall. The focus was to see if there was a difference between boys' and girls' mindfulness scores. Mindfulness sessions took place by the researcher at the beginning of class for the first 10-15 minutes. Students were given a journal to reflect on each mindfulness session and note each time they used a mindfulness strategy. The researcher used journals to record reflections on whether students found the mindfulness strategy useful and if the mindfulness strategy was practiced. After the session, the researcher sat near the back of the room to observe the whole class. During observation, the researcher took notes on student behaviors in class. Behaviors included being hard to settle down at any time in class, being off-task during working time, following teacher directions, student focus during teaching, and teasing between students. Anytime these behaviors happened in class, a note was documented. Interviews took place randomly during study hall at the end of the day by the researcher. Questions include 1. How often have you used a mindfulness strategy? In school? At home? 2. What is your favorite mindfulness strategy that you have learned? Why? 3. How has learning mindfulness strategies helped you? 4. How will you continue to practice strategies? 5. How has learning mindfulness

strategies helped with your behavior/ moods? The researcher looked for consistencies in helpful strategies and noted if students felt mindfulness helped them with their behavior/moods.

In Week 1, day one, a letter was sent home to parents and students to explain the purpose of the study that the researcher conducted. On days two and three, observations and notes were taken to look at student behaviors during classroom time. On day four, students took the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) (Appendix A). If a student missed the initial questionnaire, they received and completed it upon returning to school. The researcher took observational notes during the questionnaire. The Mindfulness program from Calm Schools (Appendix D) was introduced to the students on day five. The researcher analyzed and looked for any patterns from the data from the FFMQ and graph findings.

In Week 2, day six, students were given a notebook to record their month of mindfulness. Students learned the first mindfulness strategy, “Finding Calm.” On day seven, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Breathing Bubble.” On day eight, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Moving with Music.” On day nine, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Resting with Music.” On day ten, students learned the mindfulness strategy “The Senses.” A random sample of students were interviewed during the last hour of the day. The researcher created five interview questions (Appendix B). The researcher took observational notes during and after each mindfulness session for the class period. The researcher looked for behavioral changes in the classroom, analyzed observational notes, and graphed findings for week two.

In Week 3, day eleven, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Mindful Eating.” On day twelve, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Mental Fitness.” On day thirteen, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Meditation.” Students learned the mindfulness strategy “Morning Wake Up” on day fourteen. Students learned the mindfulness strategy “Squeeze and

Release” on day fifteen. During the last hour of the day, a random sample of students were interviewed using the interview questionnaire (Appendix B). The researcher took observational notes during and after each mindfulness session for the class period. During class time, the researcher looked for behavioral changes in students, analyzed findings from observational notes, and documented for week three. Interview questionnaires were recorded for weeks two and three.

In Week 4, day sixteen, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Walking Meditation.” On day seventeen, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Soundscapes.” Students learned the mindfulness strategy “Breathing Meditation on day eighteen.” On day nineteen, students learned two mindfulness strategies “Gratitude/Feelings.” Students learned two mindfulness strategies on day twenty, “Reflection/Heartbeat.” Using the interview questionnaire (Appendix B), a random sample of students were interviewed during the day's last hour. The researcher took observational notes during and after each mindfulness session for the class period. The researcher looked for student behaviors patterns, analyzed observational findings, and documented for week four.

In Week 5, day twenty-one, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Afternoon Reset.” On day twenty-two, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Counting the Breath.” On day twenty-three, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Mindful Bells.” On day twenty-four, students learned the mindfulness strategy “Remembering Joy/ Loving Kindness.” On day twenty-five, students learned “Quiet Time”. During the last hour of the day, a random sample of students were interviewed using the interview questionnaire (Appendix B). The researcher took observational notes during the class period. The researcher looked at classroom behaviors

patterns, analyzed observational findings, and documented for week five. The researcher reported the interview questionnaires for weeks four and five.

In Week 6, day twenty-six, students learned two mindfulness strategies, “Sky Gazing/ Focus Training.” On day twenty-seven, students learned two mindfulness strategies, “Weather Report/ Body Scan.” On day twenty-eight, students learned two mindfulness strategies, “Ocean Breathing/ Visualize Your Goals.” On day twenty-nine, students reflected on what they had learned about different mindfulness strategies and wrote a letter to their future selves. The researcher collected journals (Appendix C) at the end of class time. On day thirty, students took the FFMQ. Using the interview questionnaire (Appendix B), a random sample of students were interviewed during the last hour of the day. Interview questionnaires were documented for week six, and graphs were completed to compare boys and girls and pre-and post-scores. Observational notes were taken during and after each mindfulness session for the class period. The researcher analyzed journals to look for patterns between students. The researcher investigated if mindfulness strategies positively affected classroom behaviors such as being on task. The researcher analyzed data to see if the implementation of mindfulness strategies had a measurable difference between boys and girls. The researcher combined all documentation, studied the data, and completed all graphs.

Data Analysis and Results

Data Analysis

The data was collected quantitatively and qualitatively, including a pre-and post-assessment using the FFMQ, student interviews, researcher observations, and student journals over a six-week period. During the first week of this study, students took the FFMQ assessment

and were introduced to Calm School mindfulness lessons taught during the first fifteen minutes of reading. Students were given a journal to record daily lessons and completed random individual interviews. The researcher began daily observations and notes to look at classroom behaviors. Notes were written about the following behaviors, how long it took for students to settle down when class began, how often a student got up during instruction, if a student was fidgety during class time, if students made noises, whether students talked back to the teacher, if students put their head down on the desk, how often students were off-task during class if students teased each other in class, how often a student packed up early before the bell, and how often the teacher redirected students. In weeks two through five of this study, students continued learning a new strategy each day, reflecting in the journal after a lesson and randomly interviewing. The researcher continued teaching a new mindfulness lesson each day, observing students during reading, and randomly interviewing students during the last hour of the day on Friday. During week six of the study, the researcher had students complete the FFMQ assessment and turn in journals.

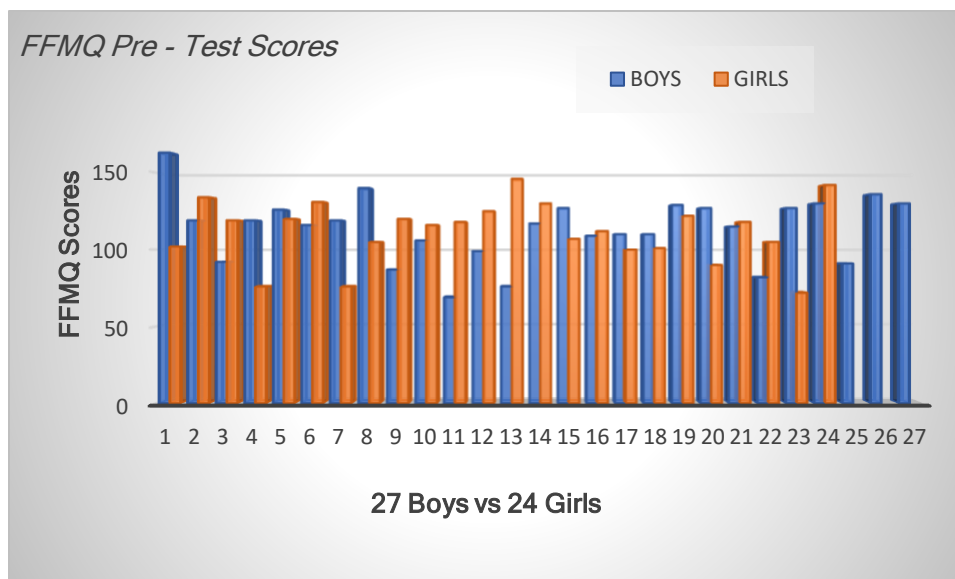
The researcher analyzed data qualitatively by observing the classroom and documenting findings over a six-week period. These findings were categorized by behaviors, coded, and put into a weekly graph. Interviews were analyzed by organizing questions, then coded and graphed. Student journals were evaluated and noted if completed or not completed. The researcher quantitatively evaluated data using pre-and-post-FFMQ assessments and was analyzed twice throughout the six-week study. Once at the beginning on the first day and once at the end on the last day. The researcher looked for the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation in both assessments and compared the results. A T-Test was performed based on the researcher's hypothesis.

Week 1

At the beginning of week one, students took the FFMQ before being introduced to mindfulness lessons. The assessment used a five-point Likert scale to assess the state of mindfulness with 195 possible points. Several students had questions about the assessment and did not understand what some questions were asking. During the second hour after students began taking the assessment, one boy stated, “This test asks some very personal questions.” In both the third and eighth hours, the FFMQ was read to students to help clarify any misunderstandings students were having. The top score for the boys was 163, and for girls, it was 146. The lowest score for the boys was 69 and for the girls was 72. In Figure 1, eleven female students were more mindful than the boys, and twelve male students were more mindful than the girls. In Figure 2, the boys had a slightly higher mean with 113.74074 when compared to the girls with 111.9583333. The median was tied at 117 for both boys and girls. The mode was relatively higher for the boys who rang in at 119 while the girls came in at 76. There was not much difference in the standard deviation with the boys at 21.13799458 and the girls slightly lower at 19.69657.

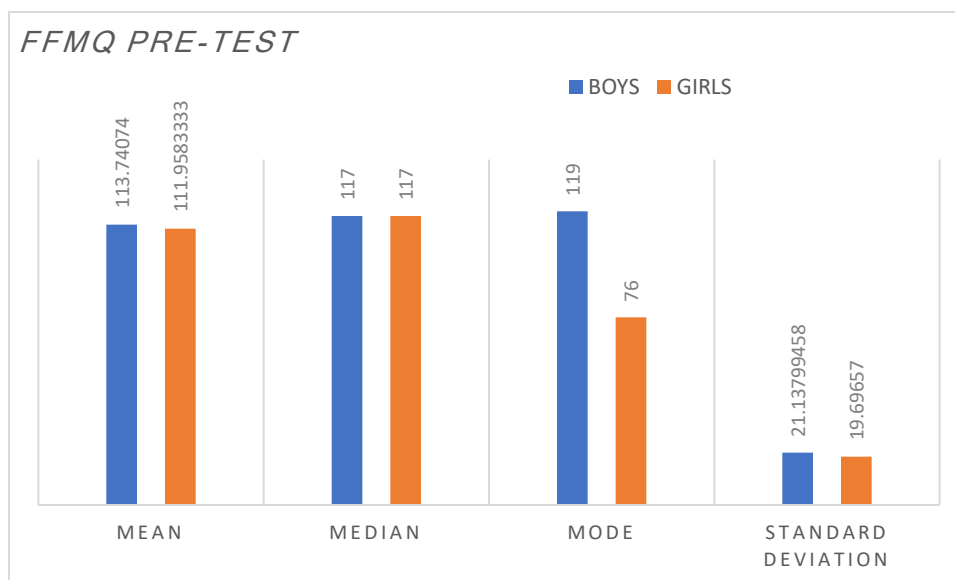
For the remainder of the week, students were introduced to Calm School mindfulness lessons which were implemented every day during the first part of reading class. As lessons were taught, students could practice the strategy taught before transitioning into reading after each mini-lesson and practice students wrote in a journal to reflect on the mindfulness strategy learned for the day. The researcher noted after the transition that most students were fidgeting in some way during instruction. Students were unaware and did not seem to be distracted by peer movements. The teacher noted all three reading classes to have notable student behaviors.

Figure 1



Note. 163/146 was highest test scores for boys/girls and 69/72 was the lowest test scores.

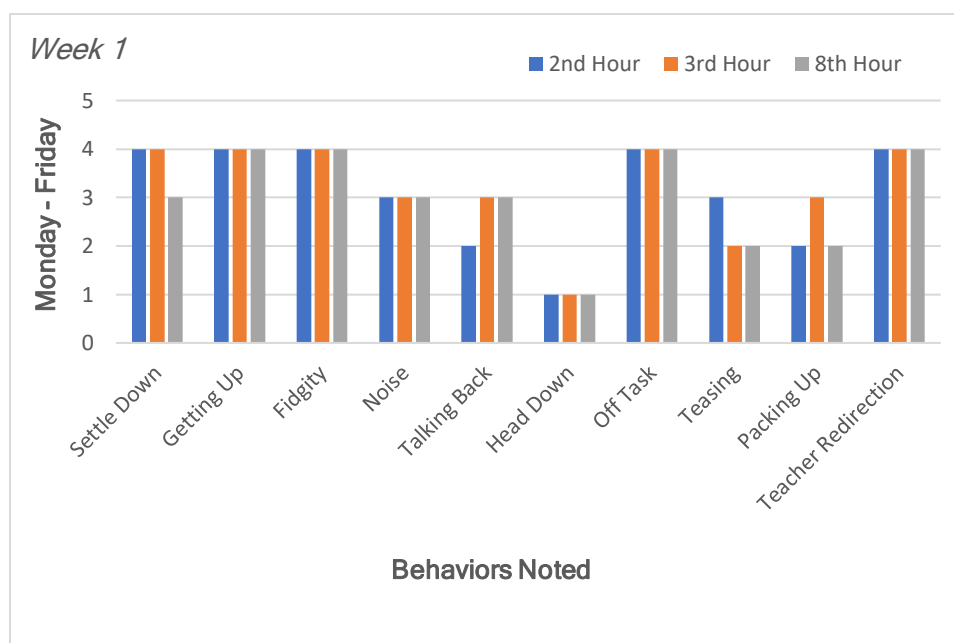
Figure 2



Note. Boys and girls were similar for the mean, median and standard deviation.

In Figure 3, student behaviors included: hard to settle down at the beginning of class, getting up during instruction, fidgeting, making noise during class, talking back to the teacher, head down during instruction, being off task during independent work, teasing each other in class, packing up before class ends, and needing redirection from the teacher. The researcher noted all behaviors were present during this first week. The last two days of school were remote, and lessons were taught online. Only half of the class showed up for remote learning. Students were more aware of their peers during online instruction and had difficulty practicing the strategy taught. Students did not work in the journal during these two days.

Figure 3



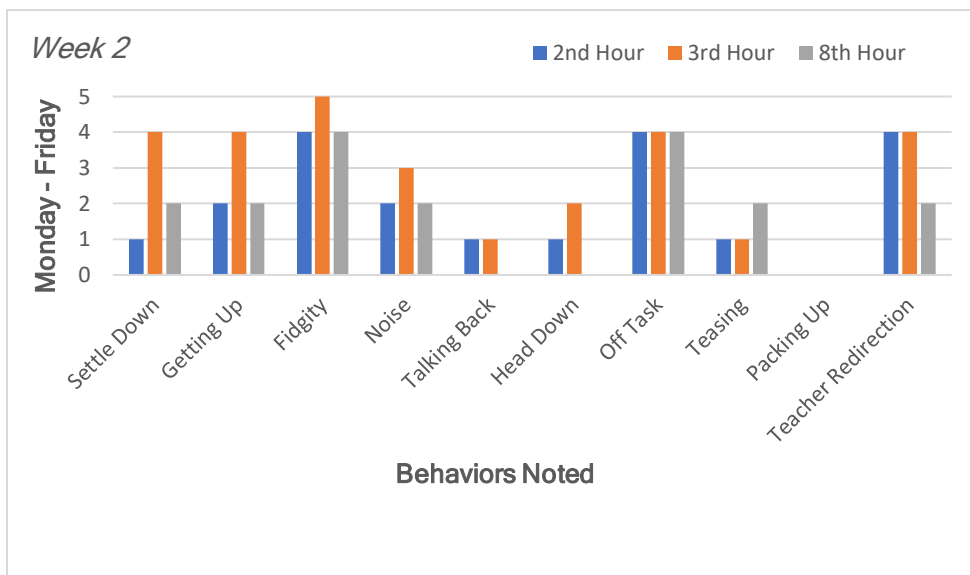
Note. All behaviors present.

Week 2

Week two is shortened due to a holiday at the beginning of the week. Mindfulness lessons continue throughout the week; however, student behaviors remain consistent. In Figure 4, during second hour, it took about five minutes for students to settle down at the beginning of class. In the middle of instruction, students were still getting up, making noise, fidgeting, teasing

one another, being off task, packing up early, and being redirected by the teacher. Talking back to the teacher is only noted twice for the week and having a head down once. The third hour class took five minutes to settle down. The researcher noted this class was faster to get into group work, although during group work, students were still getting up, making noise, talking back, packing up early, and being redirected by the teacher. Twice it is noted students were teasing each other and once for having their heads down. In the eighth hour, it took students about three minutes to settle down at the beginning of class. Three students talked about how they practiced the Breath Bubble and found it helpful. Students got up, fidgeted, made noise, talked back, got off task, and needed redirection during instruction time. Teasing and packing up before the end of class happened twice and having head down once. The researcher noted fidgeting and being off task went hand in hand. Students were constantly going and needed to move physically while sitting at their desks. In some cases, this lead to being distracted or off task.

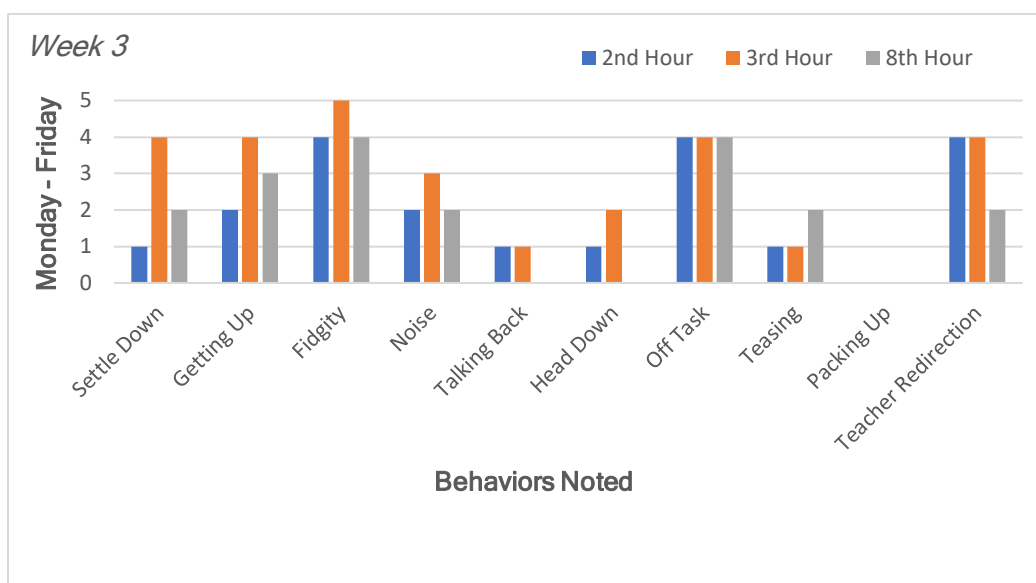
Figure 4



Note. 8th hour class has the least amount of behaviors and behaviors have slowed down.

Week 3

During week three, mindfulness lessons continue, and students continued to be responsive to lessons. In Figure 5, some behaviors had gotten better, and others were still persistent. There was only one day in the second-hour class when students had a hard time settling down. There were zero-days where students got ready to leave early. This was an improvement compared to the previous weeks. Talking back, having their head down during instruction, and teasing one another also improved and happened only once during the week. Getting up and making noise occurred three times, whereas fidgeting, being off task, and teacher redirection happened four days. Third-hour class was still struggling with behaviors. Fidgeting happened all five days, settling down, getting up, being off task, and teacher redirection happened four days. Making noise fell at three days, and having head down was at two. The researcher noted that when students had their heads down, they were still listening and answering questions when called on. Talking back and teasing happened once and getting ready early did not occur throughout the week. Eighth-hour class improved the most with behaviors, and students did not display talking back, having their head down, or getting ready early. Settling down, making noise, teasing, and teacher redirection happened twice during the week. Getting up happened three of the five days, and fidgeting happened four days.

Figure 5

Note. Behaviors are about the same as the second week.

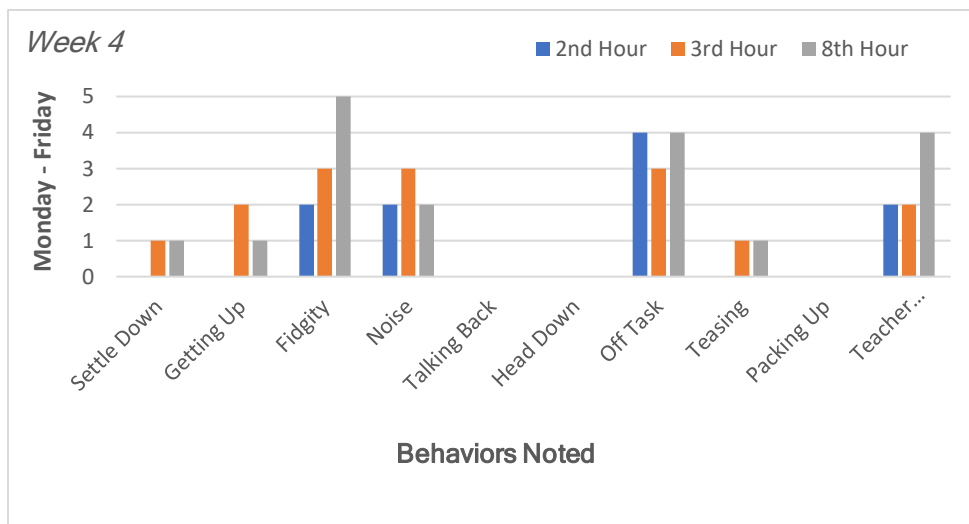
Week 4

During week four, behaviors were still present; however, they did improve in all three classes, as seen in Figure 6. Mindfulness sessions were still being taught, and students enjoyed practicing the breathing bubble. One girl stated she was calmer and nicer to her sister at home. Another girl said she used the breathing exercise during a game, which helped her focus. Not all students bought into the mindfulness lessons, and one boy stated that the lessons did not help. During second hour, no time was wasted at the beginning of class, and students were ready to go after the bell rang the entire week. Students also showed improvement in other behaviors and did not display getting up, talking back to the teacher, teasing peers, or packing up early the entire week. Fidgetiness, noise, and redirection from the teacher happened twice throughout the week. Being off task was the number one behavior displayed happening four out of the five days. Third-hour student behaviors tied with fidgetiness, making noise, and being off task, which occurred three out of the five days. Getting up and redirection happened two out of the five days, while settling down and teasing happened one out of the five days. Students improved, and they

did not exhibit talking back, having their head down, or packing up early the entire week.

Eighth-hour students had trouble being fidgety every day, being off task, and having redirection from the teacher for four out of the five days. Students made noise for two of the five days, and teasing, getting up, and being ready to go happened one of the five days.

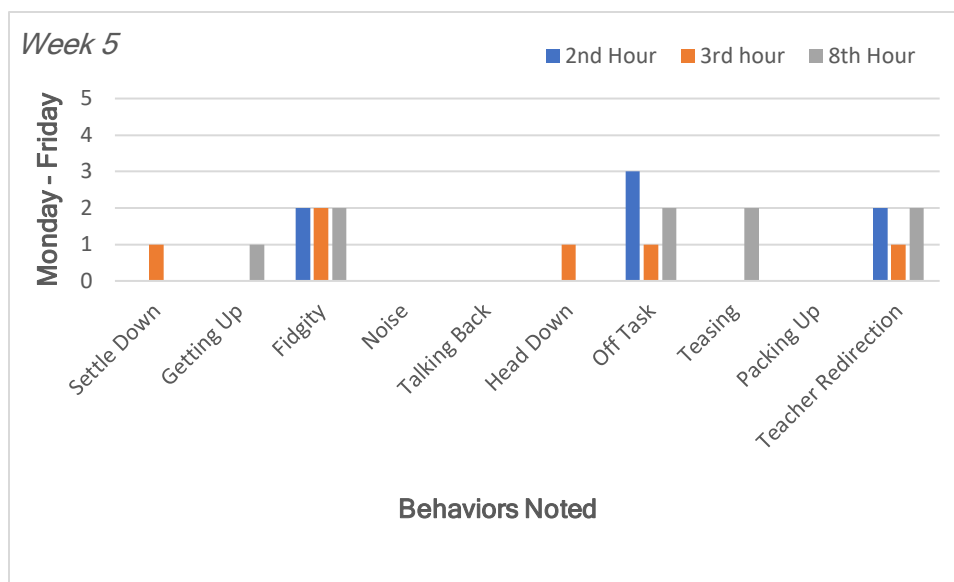
Figure 6



Note. More behaviors have slowed down.

Week 5

There was a noticeable difference in behaviors in the classroom during week five, as seen in Figure 7. In second hour, being off task during instruction happened three of the five days, while teacher redirection and fidgetiness occurred two of the five days. All other behaviors were not present for the week. In third hour, fidgetiness occurred two of the five days, and settling down, head down, being off task, and teacher redirection occurred one of the five days. In eighth hour, fidgetiness, being off task, teasing, and teacher redirection occurred two of the five days. Getting up happened one out of the five days, and all other behaviors were not present for the week.

Figure 7

Note. Behaviors have gotten better.

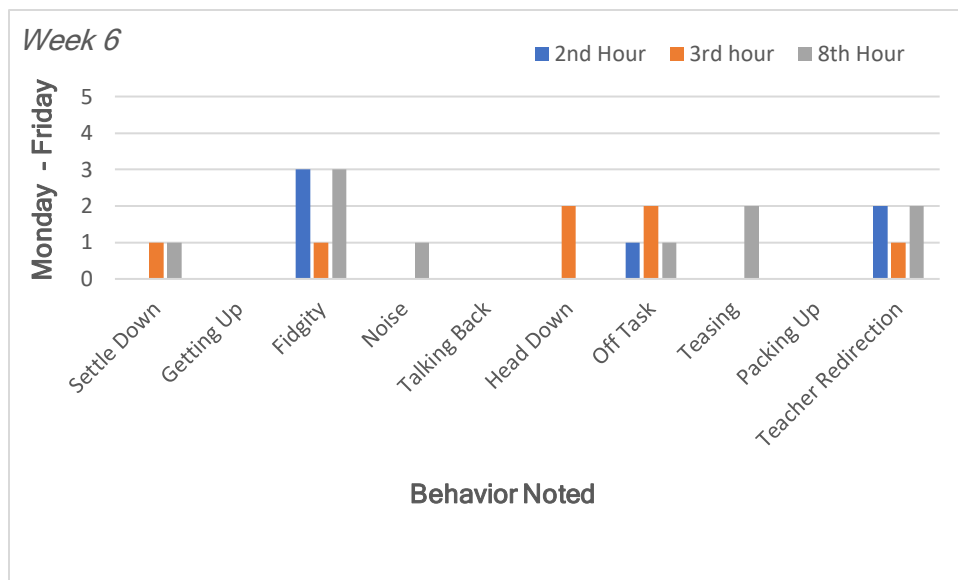
Week 6

In the final week of research, mindfulness lessons ended, and students learned how to lead breathing exercises in class. In Figure 8, second hour, fidgetiness took place three of the five days, teacher redirection two days, and being off task one day. All other behaviors were not present. In third hour, having their head down and being off task occurred two of the five days. Settling down, fidgetiness, and teacher redirection arose one of the five days. All other behaviors were not present. In the eighth hour, fidgetiness happened three days, teasing and teacher redirection two days, while settling down, making noise, and being off task occurred one of the five days. All other behaviors were not present.

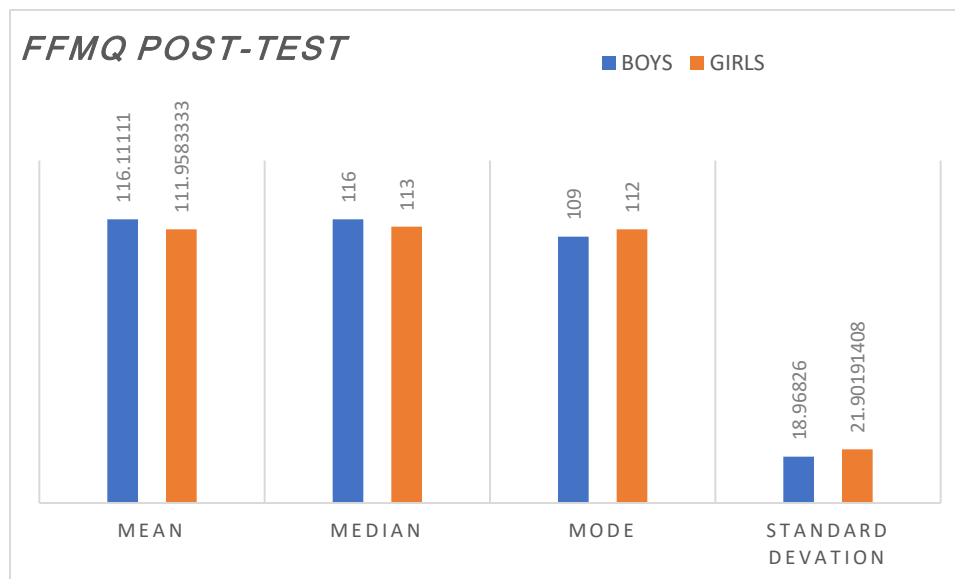
On the last day, students took the FFMQ assessment. The researcher read the assessment, and students filled in the circle. In Figure 9, the boys had a mean of 116.111, median of 116, and mode of 109. This was an improvement of 2.370371. The standard deviation was 18.96828959, which was down by 2.169735. Girls had the same mean as the first assessment of 111.9583333,

and the median was down at 113, which was a difference of 4. The mode was up at 112, which was a difference of 36. The standard deviation was higher at 21.90191408, a difference of 2.2053481. The researcher used data to complete a two-tailed T-Test to see if girls are more mindful than boys. The result of the pre-test was 0.756644705, while the post-test was 0.475482567. The researcher was wrong in the hypothesis, and girls' behavior did not improve more than boys. The boys and the girls were very similar in mindfulness, according to the FFMQ post-assessment.

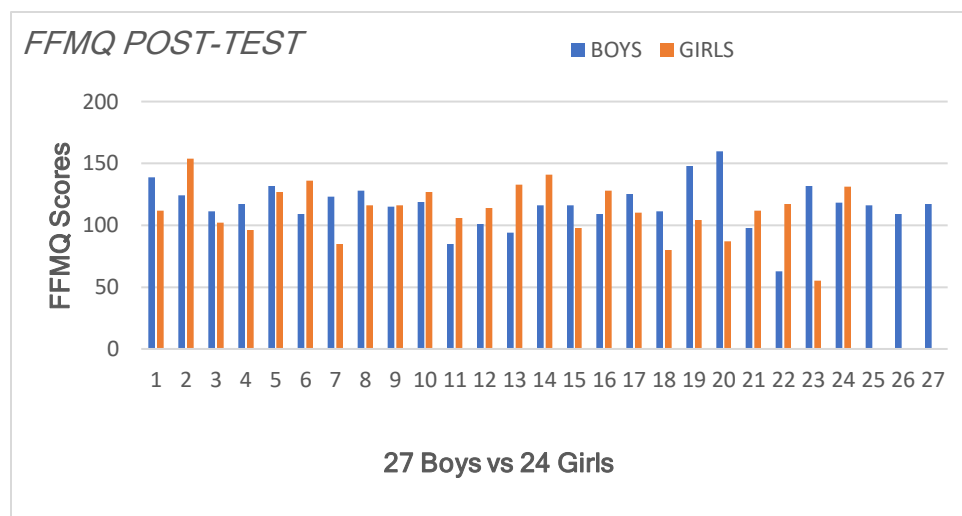
Figure 8



Note. Behaviors are better but still present

Figure 9

Note. The boys scores improved on the post-test.

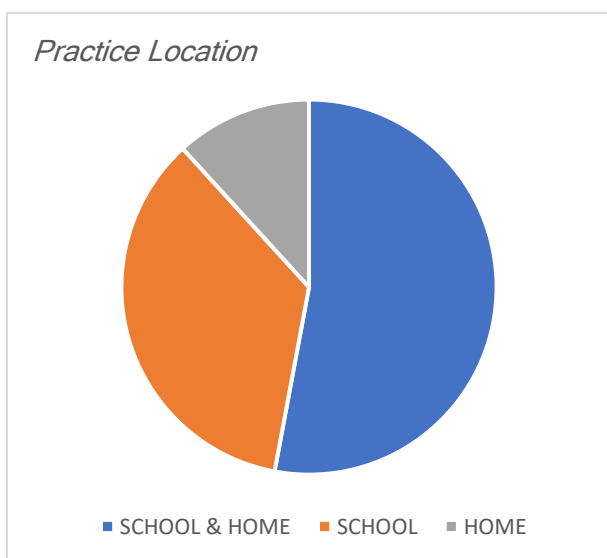
Figure 10

Note. More boys had lower scores compared to girls.

Interviews were wrapped up with 19 students who were randomly selected. Students were asked with a prepared questionnaire about where they practiced and used mindfulness strategies, how often they practiced, if they would continue to use mindfulness strategies, their

favorite mindfulness strategy learned, and what changes in their mood/behavior occurred. In Figure 11, nine students practiced mindfulness strategies at school and home, six practiced only at school, and two practiced only at home. In Figure 12, seventeen interviewees said they would continue using mindfulness strategies, while two said they would not. In Figure 13, eleven students chose breathing strategies as their favorite strategy, four chose walking meditation, three chose a quiet time, one chose mindfulness eating, and one chose focus training. In Figure 14, 12 students felt calmer, nine stated to have less anger, four indicated less stress, three felt better, two said there was no change, one said strategies helped to be in tune with self, and one stated just being kinder in general.

Figure 11



Note. Over half of the students practiced at home and school.

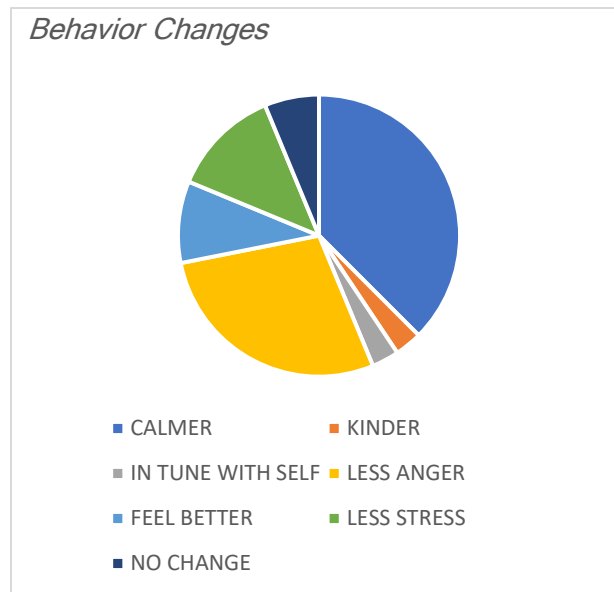
Figure 12



Note. The majority of students will continue to practice

Figure 13

Note. Breathing is the most practiced exercise.

Figure 14

Note. Feeling calm and having less anger are the most noted behavior changes.

Results

The focus of this study examined the effectiveness of the implementation of mindfulness strategies inside a middle school classroom. The researcher chose to measure behaviors based on observations after implementing mindfulness strategies from the Calm Schools curriculum. The goal was to see if mindfulness strategies would help students improve behavior in class, enhance self-efficacy, and create more instructional time. Behaviors included: hard to settle down at the beginning of class, getting up during instruction, fidgeting, making noise during class, talking back to the teacher, head down during instruction, being off task during independent work, teasing each other in class, packing up before class ends, and needing redirection from the teacher. All the students in seventh grade participated and practiced mindfulness strategies daily at the beginning of the class hour. This study resulted in improved positive behaviors by the end of the study. At the beginning of the study, behaviors were persistent and occurred four of the

five days during class. By week four, behaviors had started to improve. Settling down at the beginning of class had improved and went from four days to one day. Students had begun to enjoy learning and practicing mindfulness strategies. When the researcher was ready to start, the lesson students were prepared, which transferred over after the lesson to when the teacher was ready for the class; the students were also ready for class. Getting up during instruction went from 4 days to zero days. Fidgetiness did not go away and was present anywhere from five days to one day. Making noise during instruction time went from four days to one to zero days in classes. Talking back during class and packing up early went from four days and two days to zero days. Students who had their heads down during instruction time had improved, but the behavior did not disappear. Being off task during class time improved, but the behavior was still present at the end of the study. Teasing during class time changed a little during this study period. Student teasing happened anywhere from three days to two days and improved in 2nd and 3rd-hour classes.

Packing up early before the bell greatly improved and went from four days to zero by week two of the study. Teacher redirection did not change a lot and was persistent throughout the study. Redirection happened during all three hours and was present four to one day a week. During observations, it was evident that students had become calmer in class and enjoyed leading their peers in breathing sessions. Students had learned a way to relax and shut out distractions for themselves. Students had also discovered a way to calm down when they were upset. After sessions, while working in groups during reading, students had fewer distractions and more work time. Student participation was up, and discussion in class was mindful.

Findings, Implications, and Limitations

Findings

Throughout the six-week time period, as the study took place, behaviors changed for the positive, and more students were on task during instructional time. The dynamics of the students in the class influence behaviors, which can be seen in Figures 3 – 8. When mindfulness strategies were first introduced and implemented in week one, student behaviors were high. Once students started to learn and practice different mindfulness strategies during the second-week students became calmer during class. Not all students bought into mindfulness strategies which showed during practice. These students often laughed and sometimes sat watching their peers. The students who were engaged in mindfulness strategies would have their eyes closed, shoulders back, hands relaxed, and take deep breaths. Throughout the study, behaviors were better, and students were nicer to one another. Students were able to respect each other and have quality instructional time during reading class.

Implications

After implementing mindfulness strategies and practice in the classroom, the seventh-grade students in this study learned to turn stressful situations into ones they could handle. By allowing students to learn and practice mindfulness strategies, students learned that emotions are okay to have and that there are both positive and negative ways to handle them. Students also learned that they need to disconnect and take time for themselves. Students were calmer after sessions and often relaxed enough to be ready to learn. While not all of the mindfulness strategies taught are right for a classroom, students can apply what they have learned in all aspects of life. One implication from this study is that student behaviors will always be present,

but when students are taught strategies to help them, it allows them to be more productive both inside of school and out.

Limitations

There were several limitations during this study. The first being the student sample size was relatively small, with only 53 students. Having such a small population limits the results of this study. Including more schools with a seventh-grade student body could help researchers better understand the impacts of mindfulness. Second, time to implement strategies. Often the Calm Mindfulness Curriculum was more than ten minutes long. With 40 minutes for class, it was hard to finish the entire session from the curriculum. Sessions were limited to ten to fifteen minutes which always included a few minutes for students to reflect. Students always had access to the curriculum online and could practice sessions independently. If mindfulness sessions were given more time, they might have been able to help students build their mindfulness stamina better. Third, mindfulness journals and practice were not always completed by students. Without requiring students to be accountable for completing their journals, only about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the seventh-grade class completed the mindfulness journal or practiced. Some of these students still had blank pages due to a missed session or not filling in. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the mindfulness journal were incomplete and not filled in upon collection. Some students had talked about practicing strategies at home yet never recorded the session they had practiced. If accountability were present, journals could have offered more information, and students would have value in reflection.

Having students accountable might have persuaded those who chose not to buy-in. Fourth, student buy-in affects the data. Not all students bought into mindfulness strategies and therefore did not participate. Students need accountability to buy-in. Last, incomplete, and missed days. Students had to learn via computer for a couple of days because of remote learning.

Students did not have perfect attendance due to sick days. Remote learning resulted in a lack of attendance and a missed session. Any student who missed a day did not make up the day. The researcher had to double up on several days due to conferences and absence from illness.

Reflection and Action Plan

Reflection

The researcher believed this study went well overall. Student behaviors went down moderately after implementing mindfulness strategies, and self-efficacy had improved. By learning mindfulness strategies, students learned how to cope with everyday stressors. Students learned how to acknowledge how they were feeling and that emotions are normal. Students were calmer and more cordial to one another. Students learned how to be mindful of themselves and those around them. Incorporating mindfulness into the school curriculum at the beginning of each class would prove to be a valuable asset for students and teachers. Students enjoyed having ten minutes to destress before class began, which equated to better classroom behaviors and more learning time. As with all skills, mindfulness needs to be practiced for students to maintain and improve their mindfulness ability.

Action Plan

A continuation of the practice of mindfulness strategies was done with current students and future students, as this study exhibited an improvement in classroom behaviors. Mindfulness strategies will continue to be implemented to build stamina and establish lifelong coping skills. This information was presented to the researcher's middle school team and the building principal. The research study was also shared with the action research committee at Eastern Illinois University.

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Appendix A: Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)

Please rate each of the following statements with the number that best describes <i>your own opinion</i> of what is <i>generally true for you</i> .		Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
FFQM 1	When I'm walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body moving. (OBS)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 2	I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings. (D)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 3	I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions. (NJ-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 4	I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them. (NR)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 5	When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted. (AA-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 6	When I take a shower or bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body. (OBS)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 7	I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words. (D)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 8	I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted. (AA-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 9	I watch my feelings without getting lost in them. (NR)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 10	I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling. (NJ-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 11	I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions. (OBS)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 12	It's hard for me to find the words to describe what I'm thinking. (D-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 13	I am easily distracted. (AA-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 14	I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way. (NJ-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 15	I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face. (OBS)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 16	I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things. (D-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 17	I make judgments about whether my thoughts are good or bad. (NJ-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

FFQM 18	I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present. (AA-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
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		Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
FFQM 19	When I have distressing thoughts or images, I “step back” and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it. (NR)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 20	I pay attention to sounds, such as clocks ticking, birds chirping, or cars passing. (OBS)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 21	In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting. (NR)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 22	When I have a sensation in my body, it’s difficult for me to describe it because I can’t find the right words. (D-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 23	It seems I am “running on automatic” without much awareness of what I’m doing. (AA-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 24	When I have distressing thoughts or images, I feel calm soon after. (NR)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 25	I tell myself that I shouldn’t be thinking the way I’m thinking. (NJ-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 26	I notice the smells and aromas of things. (OBS)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 27	Even when I’m feeling terribly upset, I can find a way to put it into words. (D)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 28	I rush through activities without being really attentive to them. (AA-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 29	When I have distressing thoughts or images, I am able just to notice them without reacting. (NR)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 30	I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn’t feel them. (NJ-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 31	I notice visual elements in art or nature, such as colors, shapes, textures, or patterns of light and shadow. (OBS)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 32	My natural tendency is to put my experiences into words. (D)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 33	When I have distressing thoughts or images, I just notice them and let them go. (NR)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 34	I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I’m doing. (AA-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 35	When I have distressing thoughts or images, I judge myself as good or bad depending what the thought or image is about. (NJ-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 36	I pay attention to how my emotions affect my thoughts and behavior. (OBS)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

		Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true
FFQM 37	I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail. (D)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
FFQM 38	I find myself doing things without paying attention. (AA-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
FFQM 39	I disapprove of myself when I have irrational ideas. (NJ-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

Scoring:

(Note: R = reverse-scored item)

Subscale Directions	Your Score TOTAL	Your score item Avg.
Observing: Sum items 1 + 6 + 11 + 15 + 20 + 26 + 31 + 36		
Describing: Sum items 2 + 7 + 12R + 16R + 22R + 27 + 32 + 37.		
Acting with Awareness: Sum items 5R + 8R + 13R + 18R + 23R + 28R + 34R + 38R.		
Nonjudging of inner experience: Sum items 3R + 10R + 14R + 17R + 25R + 30R + 35R + 39R.		
Nonreactivity to inner experience: Sum items 4 + 9 + 19 + 21 + 24 + 29 + 33.		
TOTAL FFMQ (add subscale scores)		

NOTE: Some researchers divide the total in each category by the number of items in that category to get an average category score. The Total FFMQ can be divided by 39 to get an average item score.

Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Hopkins, J., Krietemeyer, J., & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment*, 13(1), 27-45.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. How often have you used a mindfulness strategy? In school? At home?

2. What is your favorite mindfulness strategy that you have learned? Why?

3. How has learning mindfulness strategies helped you?

4. How will you continue to practice strategies?

5. How has learning mindfulness strategies helped with your behavior/ moods?

Appendix C: Student Journals

Mindfulness Journal

Day 1: Finding Calm

What helped you to feel calm?

What other feelings came up?

What did you like about the object?

Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings. You can also try this in other rooms that you're in.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 2: Breathe Bubble

How do you feel after breathing deeply today?

Did you notice a difference before or after?

How does the exhale feel for you compared to the inhale?

Where in your daily life might it be helpful to work with the breathe like you did today?

Slowing down and taking a deep breath is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 3: Moving with Music

What did you like about moving to music?

What did you find challenging about moving to music?

What distracted you from paying attention to the music?

Dancing can help you from overthinking about too many things and help you narrow your thinking. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 4: Resting to Music

How did it feel to relax to the music like in our last session?

Calm music can help you to relax, sleep, focus. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 5: The Senses

What is your favorite sense?

What did you notice as you explored each sense?

Next time you feel stressed what might you look at, feel, touch, smell or taste that would help you feel calmer?

The next time you are jumbled in your thoughts find your way back using your senses. Remember to find something you like to look at, touch something soft, cook something you like the smell of. If you need help think back to the activity and write down 5 things you see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can taste, and 1 thing you can smell. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 6: Mindful Eating

What did you learn by slowing down and opening your senses while you were eating?

What was most difficult for you?

What did you like about the experience?

Remember food helps fuel and nourish your body so take your time when you are eating. Enjoy the different textures, tastes, and smells that are associated with food. Practice this strategy when you are eating. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 8: Meditation

What did you learn about yourself by meditating?

What did you enjoy about meditating?

What did you find challenging?

Meditating can help bring us back into focus. There is no right or wrong way to meditate. Find a comfortable spot and relax your mind. A link will be provided in your ELA classroom that you can use when you practice meditating. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 9: Morning Wake Up

How did you feel before and after the session?

Which movement felt good in your body?

What did you learn about your body today?

Mindful movement is about getting to know your body and treating it with care. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 10: Squeeze and Release

How did you feel before and after the session?

Did you notice where you tend to store a lot of tension in your body?

What did relaxation feel like in your body?

Where was it challenging for you to release?

By exaggerating tension we begin to recognize ways we unconsciously tense the body while also learning how to cue the body to relax. A link to the Deep Sleep Relax will be on your ELA Google classroom. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 11: Walking Meditation

What did you notice about your body when you were walking?

Did you see anything on your walk that you've passed by many times, but that you have never noticed before?

What's different about walking meditation and regular walking?

Slowing down and getting curious about an activity we do automatically or without awareness can offer us new insight into ourselves and the world around us. Find new opportunities to explore walking meditation such as walking to the fridge or going to the cafeteria. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 12: Soundscapes

What soundscape made you feel most relaxed? Why?

What else did you notice?

You can practice this with whatever sound makes you comfortable. Rain, ocean, birds, tapping etc.. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 13: Breathing Meditation

How did you feel after doing this breathing meditation?

Where in your daily life might it be helpful to try a breathing meditation?

Breathwork is a helpful way to settle nervous energy before important moments like tests, presentations, games, tough conversations, and new adventures. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 14: Gratitude

Write a note of thanks to someone you appreciate.

Practicing gratitude creates a sense of spaciousness by opening the heart, relaxing the body, and bringing a fresh perspective to the mind. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 15: Feelings

What did you learn about feelings?

Do you have any “shoulds” around what’s okay to feel and what’s not?

What judgements do you have about feelings?

Life is hard sometimes. Feeling our feelings builds resilience. Learning how to meet our challenges and digest our experiences makes us stronger and wiser. When we’re not pushing away our feelings because we are afraid of them, we also give ourselves the opportunity to feel joy more fully and invite greater happiness into our lives. Welcome, all of your feelings. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 16: Reflection

Reflection helps to clarify and integrate what we are learning so that we can experience greater confidence when practicing.

What have you learned about yourself during the first half of the *30 Days of Mindfulness in the Classroom*?

Where in your life have you noticed using what you have learned?

What have you found challenging?

What questions do you have?

What do you want to learn more about?

Day 17: Heartbeat

How did you feel before you moved?

What did it feel like to be in stillness after the movement?

What did you feel like after the activity?

A short burst of physical activity increases the heart rate, releases endorphins, and speeds up your breathing, and is a good way to shift your state of mind. Practicing for 60 seconds can transform our energy from tired to lively or anxious to calm. Choose an activity such as jump, jog, dance, swim, or stretch. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 18: Afternoon Reset

What exercises were most helpful for you?

What did you learn about your body doing these movements?

How did you feel before and after this activity?

Inviting energy into our system doesn't mean we have to leave our chairs. WE can move and stretch even if we are sitting at our desks. Taking five minutes to pause and let go of tension can help you improve productivity and focus. Practice this strategy anytime or when you are starting to feel a slump in the mid-afternoon. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 19: Counting the Breath

What breath count felt best for you?

How did the different counts change the way you feel?

When in your life do you notice changes in your breath?

If find yourself forcing or straining to keep up with breathing exercises, it is a sign that it is too much and you need to give yourself a break or go at your own pace. Try bringing a hint of a smile to your lips during the exercise to help you relax your jaw and bring ease. Your capacity to breathe deeper will increase as you continue to practice breathing. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 20: Mindful Bells

Did you notice where your mind tends to wander?

How did it feel to come back to the present moment with the bell?

How did it feel to take a deep breath?

What did you learn about your mind?

Bells are a simple tool we can use to help us shift from being lost in thought in mindful presence, to waking up. Each bell reminder is to remind you to come back to the here and now. Take a deep breath every time you hear a bell. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time relaxing or when you are feeling stressed. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 21: Remembering Joy

How did it feel to travel back in time?

Draw a picture or write down a list of all the things that made you happy in your memory.

Do you feel grateful for anything from that moment?

It is important to carve out a time for positivity daily. Recalling memories can reduce stress and build resilience. This is a great exercise to practice at bedtime. Try coming back to this strategy again when you want to have pleasant feelings.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 22: Loving Kindness

What's more challenging for you, to feel care for yourself or for others?

What did you learn from this meditation?

How did you feel when you were doing this meditation?

This practice can be an especially powerful way to turn towards ourselves with patience and friendliness when we are feeling disappointment, anger, or embarrassment. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time, feel disappointed, are angry or when you are feeling embarrassed.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 23: Quiet Time

Why did you choose the activity that you did?

How did you feel before, during and after quiet time?

Practice this strategy before your next class when you need to focus better. Remember to spend 15 minutes doing a quiet activity. Choose from coloring, reading, crafting, journaling, working on a puzzle or just rest your head in your arms.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 24: Sky Gazing

Draw the sky or write about how it made you feel.

Practice this outdoor strategy to help you connect to nature. Focus on an object and when you find your mind wandering off, focus back to the object in the sky. This is another way to be mindful of things around you.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 25: Focus Training

What thoughts do you tend to dwell on?

What helps you focus?

How do you feel when you noticed that you were distracted?

How do you feel after today's meditation?

Getting distracted and returning to meditation is what meditation is all about. Practice this strategy to strengthen the muscles of concentration. In time focus will become easier and the many distractions that occur will lessen.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 26: Weather Report

What did it feel like to tune into your thoughts and emotions?

What comes up for you when you look at your picture?

What do you think you need to do to take care of yourself after looking at your picture?

What did you learn about yourself?

Remember that just like the weather, we cannot always change how we feel. Sometimes we just need to let the storm blow over. Practice this strategy when you are having a hard time with your emotions. Coming back to this strategy again will allow you to let your emotions calm down.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 27: Body Scan

What did you notice about your body today?

What felt different than the day before?

Is there something you can do to support your body better?

Practice this strategy to strengthen your connection to your body. This strategy can help you pick up on early warning signs of stress and tension. More information allows us to take better care of ourselves.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 28: Ocean Breathing

How did this breathing exercise feel?

Did you enjoy listening to the sound of the waves?

What else did you notice?

Practice this strategy when you to help your body trigger a relaxation response. Exhaling longer can relieve stress and improve decision making.

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

What did you notice this time? How were you feeling before you practiced? Did this strategy help you?

Day 29: Visualize Your Goals

What challenges in your life helped shape who you are today?

What have you learned that has helped you?

What do you want to start envisioning for yourself?

Reevaluate your goals. What have you met? What do you need to change? What do you want to add?

Appendix D: Calm Schools Mindfulness Curriculum

Appendix E: Principal Letter



Central A&M Middle School Bond Primary School

Courtney Hiler, Principal

404 E. Colegrove St.
Assumption, IL 62510
Phone: 217-226-4241
Fax: 217-226-4442

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CAMMSRAIDERS
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January 26, 2022

Dear Institutional Review Board Members,

As principal of Central A&M Middle School, I approve the appropriateness of Kimberly Hilton's project study titled The Effectiveness of Mindfulness in a Seventh Grade Classroom. Kim shared with me the components of the action research project and I look forward to reviewing the outcomes. Conducting this project at CAMMS is feasible and should be completed before the end of the semester. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Courtney Hiler'.

Courtney Hiler

Appendix F: IRB Approval

EIU IRB <eiuirb@eiu.edu>

Mon 2/14/2022 9:15 AM

To: Amy D Davis <addavis7@eiu.edu>

Cc: Kimberly L Hilton <klhilton@eiu.edu>

February 14, 2022

Kimberly Hilton
Amy Davis
Teaching, Learning, and Foundations

Dear Kimberly,

Thank you for submitting the research protocol titled, "The Effectiveness of Mindfulness in A Seventh Grade Classroom" for review by the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has reviewed this research protocol and effective 2/11/2022, has certified this protocol meets the federal regulations exemption criteria for human subjects research. The protocol has been given the IRB number 22-024. You are approved to proceed with your study.

The classification of this protocol as exempt is valid only for the research activities and subjects described in the above named protocol. IRB policy requires that any proposed changes to this protocol must be reported to, and approved by, the IRB before being implemented. You are also required to inform the IRB immediately of any problems encountered that could adversely affect the health or welfare of the subjects in this study. Please contact me, or the Compliance Coordinator at 581-8576, in the event of an emergency. All correspondence should be sent to:

Institutional Review Board
c/o Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
Telephone: 217-581-8576
Fax: 217-581-7181
Email: eiuirb@eiu.edu

Thank you for your cooperation, and the best of success with your research.

John Bickford, Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
Telephone: 217-581-7881
Email: jbickford@eiu.edu