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Mindfulness in the classroom: research project summary.

BUCHANAN, N., HARRISON, I. and CRAWFORD, I.

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**ROBERT GORDON
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Mindfulness in the Classroom

Research Project Summary

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What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally (Kabat-Zinn, 2018).



Mindfulness Strategies

Focus Mindfulness:

The Breath

Body Scan

Object Meditation

Mindful Eating

Mindful Stretching

Visualisation

Awareness Mindfulness:

Thought watching, Worry or Urge “Surfing”!



Research Objectives

Part 1: To assess mindfulness, resilience, wellbeing and student perceptions of mindfulness with the higher education classroom.

Part 2: Design and implementation of a mindfulness intervention across stage 1 courses in the School of Health Sciences and School of Creative and Cultural Business at Robert Gordon University.



Participants and Sample

School of Health Sciences

Stage 1 students, 5 undergraduate courses,
different modules (n=200)

School of Creative and Cultural Business

Stage 1 students, 4 undergraduate courses, 1
module
(n=120)



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Summary of Findings



Factors affecting attention in class

- Length of class
- Interesting content
- Engaging lecturer



Meaning of Mindfulness

- General awareness
- Being in the present moment
- Clearing your head
- Reducing stress
- Lack of understanding about what it is



Interventions

- Muscle tensing and relaxing
- Visualisation
- Breathing exercises
- 3 minutes of silence
- Quiet reflection
- Counting things



Positive Comments

- Helpful, calming, tackles stress
- Exercises easy to do, convenient, and discreet
- Good to take a break
- Clears/organizes thoughts and improves focus
- Engagement increased with practice
- Techniques applied in practical settings



Negative Comments

- Hard to see the value to begin with
- Emotionally and cognitively difficult
- Distracting classmates
- Self-consciousness



Future Uses of Mindfulness

- Patient settings
- Exam revision / during exams
- At home
- Other activities have similar effect (e.g. sport)
- Classroom only if stressful (e.g. practical)



When?

- Group work
- Halfway through class
- Not at end of class
- Consistent approach to delivery needed
- Part of every class/routine



Content

- Variety of techniques best
- Short and simple
- Guided, structured exercises
- Unguided breathing exercises
- Some exercises unsuitable for classroom



Setup

- Optional participation
- Larger groups



Introducing Mindfulness

- Clear explanation / definition
- Learn by trying
- Staff must believe in its value



Other

- One size does not fit all
- Use technology
- Respect individual preferences



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Thank you for listening!

QUESTIONS