Shifting the Focus: Finding balance in teaching and learning

Kevin Hawkins & Amy Burke
Churchill College, Cambridge
Wednesday, September 19th 2018
Creating Conditions for Success...

How does wellbeing help create conditions for ‘success’?

What role can mindfulness play in developing wellbeing in school communities?

Why is taking care of ourselves an essential factor in promoting wellbeing in our schools?
The eight richest people own the same wealth as the 3.5 billion poorest people.
In the past 50 years, humans have consumed more resources than in all previous history.

United States Environmental Protection Agency - 2009
Dominick Reuter/AFP/Getty Images
What do we really want?
Self-esteem
Compassion
Happiness
Excitement
Wellbeing
Fulfillment
Self-belief
Security
Curiosity
Imagination
Health
Joy
Resilience
Age of Onset of Major Depression

(N=4041; Zisook, 2007, American Journal of Psychiatry)

Mindfulness in Schools Project
Distraction…

WEAPONS OF MASS DISTRACTION
Mindfulness Advert – Mental Health Foundation UK
Understanding ourselves - our minds, our bodies, our emotions, - is a key life skill
Framework for 21st Century Learning

- Learning and Innovation Skills – 4Cs
  - Critical thinking
  - Communication
  - Collaboration
  - Creativity

- Core Subjects – 3Rs and 21st Century Themes

- Information, Media, and Technology Skills

Life and Career Skills
Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning

• Knowledge
• Comprehension
• Application
• Analysis
• Synthesis
• Evaluation

Cognitive: mental skills

http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html
Taxonomies of Learning

The Three Domains of Educational Activities
(Bloom, et al. 1956)

- **Cognitive**: mental skills
- **Psychomotor**: manual or physical skills
- **Affective**: growth in feelings or emotional areas

http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html
“We are committed to helping every learner develop as a whole person, fulfil his or her potential and help shape a shared future built on the well-being of individuals, communities and the planet.”
Neuroplasticity
...in sports

...in business
MINDFUL NATION UK

Report by the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group (MAPPG)

October 2015
“Mr Duffy lived a short distance from his body.”

(James Joyce, The Dubliners)
Two modes of mind

Sensing

Seeing   Tasting   Touching
Hearing   Smelling

Thinking

Conceptual

Comparing
Planning
Analysing
Goal-setting
Remembering

Mark Williams/MiSP
Mindfulness:

The awareness that arises when we pay attention... on purpose
in the present moment
with curiosity and kindness
...to things as they are

Jon Kabat-Zinn
After an 8 week mindfulness meditation program...

- found increased grey-matter density in the hippocampus
  *(learning & memory)*

- decreased grey-matter density in the amygdala
  *(stress)*

“Mindfulness Meditation Training Changes Brain Structure in 8 Weeks,” January 2., 2011
http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/01/110121144007.htm
Mindfulness Based Wellbeing

Self-Management
Self-Awareness
Social Awareness
Relationship Skills
Responsible Decision Making
Culture of Wellbeing

Students  Teachers  Parents

Support staff  Administration  School Nurses
“Mindfulness has given me a tool kit to manage my stress.”

KATHERINE ZHANG
Three Aspects of Mindfulness in Education:

- Being Mindful
- Teaching Mindfully
- Teaching Mindfulness
“Pay attention!”

"Parents and teachers tell kids 100 times a day to pay attention. But we never teach them how."

Stanford researcher Philippe R. Goldin
Mindfulness in UK schools
Large scale research study

WELLCOME TRUST

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
UCL
UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
Metacognition & Focus

‘Mindfulness training with adolescents enhances metacognition and the inhibition of irrelevant stimuli’ (2016)

- 16-18 year old students
- EEG’s measuring attention performance on computerised distraction tests

**Results showed:**
- better focus after the training
- able to ‘more efficiently inhibit irrelevant stimuli’
- reduced hypercritical self-beliefs compared with the control group.
“Students with training in social-emotional learning gained an average of 11 percentile points on standardized test scores compared with students who did not receive the training.”

_The impact of enhancing SEL_  
_A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions_


*Child Development, 82, 405–432.
“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

Aristotle
Three Aspects of Mindfulness in Education:

- Being Mindful
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- Teaching Mindfulness
“What we want for our children we need for ourselves”
Oxygen Mask Principle

“...Place the oxygen mask on yourself first before helping small children or others who may need your assistance.”
Teacher Retreats

CULTIVATING AWARENESS AND RESILIENCE IN EDUCATION

New York City Research (published 2017):
200+ teachers
36 urban elementary schools
5000 students

• Reduction of stress symptoms
• Reduced sense of time pressure
• Increase in emotional regulation
• Increased emotional support for students
• Improved classroom organization
Self-care
Autonomic Nervous System

Sympathetic NS

Normal

HOMEOSTASIS

Parasympathetic NS

Tim Burns
Educare
Three Aspects of Mindfulness in Education:

- Being Mindful
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- Teaching Mindfulness
Mindful Teacher Mindful School

Improving Wellbeing in Teaching & Learning

kevin hawkins
Body as Barometer
“Keeping our own wellbeing in mind is essential in creating an optimal learning environment”

Adapted from Daniel Siegel, forward to “Social Neuroscience of Education”
HOW WE TEACH IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT WE TEACH
Teaching Mindfully:

- Stress management + enjoyment
- Optimal Learning Environments
- Individual Student Attunement
Social Neuroscience
Neuro Scientific Sculptors
Behaviour Management ...
Stress and Learning

Learning (Speed and Quality)

Stress Levels

Sleep * Apathy * Concern * Relaxed Alertness * Anxiety * Distress * Chaos

Chart from "Teaching with the Brain in Mind" by Eric Jensen
Stress and Learning

Learning (Speed and Quality)

Stress Levels

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Chart from “Teaching with the Brain in Mind” by Eric Jensen
Individual Student Attunement
Ian Wright
shifting the focus

first in ourselves,
our teaching,
our students
and in our schools
Happy Teachers Change the World

Thich Nhat Hanh
Thank you!

mindwell-education.com
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