English and Welsh Teachers' Perceptions of Mindfulness in Schools: Modalities of Implementing Mindfulness in Schools

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Abstract

To date, most of the research on Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) in schools in the UK context and worldwide has focused on the benefits of short and standardised mindfulness programmes for pupils and teachers from a positivist and quantitative perspective. Thus, many studies have reported cognitive, emotional and academic improvements in pupils and general well-being enhancement in teachers. However, in light of the increasingly critical literature within the field, it is possible to observe that a more profound and complex approach is needed. This study explores how these instrumental implementations are perceived by teachers from England and Wales with different degrees of expertise in teaching mindfulness.

This qualitative study was informed by an itinerant rather than an iterative form of the action research cyclical model. Also, an onto-epistemological approach to observing and explaining data is adopted, informed by a phenomenological-hermeneutical philosophical perspective from which meaning is understood as a combination of teachers' voices and my own interpretations and reflections. After an initial literature review and the design of some interview questions (cycle one), data collection was realised in two stages, (cycles two and three) through interviews and focus groups. These explored participants' perspectives concerning current, generally more instrumental, implementations of mindfulness in schools, and more integral alternatives, respectively. The main findings show remarkable limitations of the instrumental approach and suggest the potentiality of implementing mindfulness more integrally, i.e., including cognitive, emotional, somatic, relational and spiritual dimensions alongside educational, philosophical, ethical and societal implications.

These findings offer insights to inspire more integral and transformative ways of implementing mindfulness in schools. As a conclusion and vision for the future (cycle four), two significant and novel ideas worthy of emphasis are: (1) Integral and transformative implementations of mindfulness in schools should have educational rather than therapeutic purposes; (2) The fragile task of implementing mindfulness from a whole-school approach implies a systemic

and evolving process, patiently and persistently permeating all sub-systems and levels of the school, starting with adults first. Thus, researchers in this field are challenged to develop more creative, complex and phenomenologically respectful approaches to teaching and researching mindfulness.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the memory of my much loved and enormously missed brothers, Alfredo and Juan, who passed away recently in 2023. I know they would be proud and happy of this achievement and experience. You both will live in my heart forever.

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Published Work Arising from Thesis

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“We are not merely calling for another educational reform effort […] What we are calling for is a complete transformation of the educational system. While reforms attempt to improve the condition of an existing system, transformation involves changing the very nature of the system itself.”

Jennings, DeMauro and Mischenko, 2019

“How can schools educate students if they fail to support the teacher's inner life? To educate is to guide students on an inner journey toward more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world.”

Palmer, 1997

“[…] when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.”

Cohelo, 1988

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Motivation and research purpose

My interest in mindfulness started in 2010 when I attended a 10-week course that combined Buddhist ideas with psychological theories in Chile while doing my Master's study in clinical psychology. This was the milestone for discovering the power of this practice and a deeper understanding of how to alleviate human suffering. It was also the point from which I established a regular formal sitting meditation practice and a soft yoga routine, contributing to reducing my previously high anxiety and rumination levels. In sum, I realised that transforming personality traits and physical conditioning was possible and desirable for cultivating an authentic lucid life.

At the same time, in my role as a psychotherapist, I found a path to helping people in a useful and meaningful way, mainly in group formats. For this reason, in 2013, I took five full days of training to teach the MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) programme with Fernando de Torrijos, a close collaborator of Jon Kabat-Zinn, who has been in charge of the formation of Spanish-speaking people. Since then, I have offered dozens of MBSR workshops to the general public and people dealing with anxiety and stress. At that time, the book *Full-Catastrophe Living* (Kabat-Zinn, 1990) served as a guide and inspiration for my own mindfulness teaching.

Furthermore, over the last ten years, I have attended several mindfulness retreats, most with monks from the Plum Village tradition, whose leader was the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh (1926-2022). This master has inspired me in at least two relevant directions. First, I have understood the relevance of applying full and kind attention to everyday life beyond formal practices. Second, I have incorporated a view of this perspective as socially oriented beyond individual wellbeing. Two books by this author offered me further inspiration and comprehension in my path through mindfulness: *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (1975) and *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching* (1999).

During this personal journey, I also encountered the Chilean psychologist Claudio Naranjo's (1932-2019) teachings on the Enneagram and his call to transform society through education. One of the major influences of this master on my life was his pioneering view of the need to incorporate therapeutic insights into the educational process, emphasising the central role of meditation for consciousness development. His book *Changing Education to Change the World* (2016) was one of the most influential in my decision to transfer to education.

Furthermore, there is a much older intellectual inspiration for my motivation to consider education a privileged transformative human domain. In my adolescence, during my secondary schooling, an old book with a strange title fell into my hands. This was *Summerhill* by A. S. Neil (1960), which opened up a new world for understanding education, far more meaningful than the education I had received. In it, I found relevant and inspiring ideas about how a transformative education should be. A place of freedom and learning from meaningful experiences in a setting of trust, acceptance, love and self-government, where the whole school community is in the same process of learning to live a flourishing life in a healthy democratic society, are ideals that have inspired me to this day. Reflecting retrospectively, my interest in introducing mindfulness in schools is perhaps an attempt to contribute to transforming an educational system (beyond Chile and the UK) that has suffered a progressive degradation of its desirable transformative function.

However, beyond all these intellectual milestones, a couple of inspirational interpersonal encounters are at the base of my motivation for education. The first of these occurred when I was 16 years old, when for the first time I had classes in philosophy and psychology delivered by a teacher whose lucidity, irony, closeness and warmth touched me very deeply. For the first time, I found meaning in attending school and started to read and study with motivation and a genuine sense of purpose. This teacher became a friend whose kindness and wisdom taught me fundamental things about life and inspired me regarding the path I wanted to follow. After this school experience I had another significant encounter at the university while studying for my philosophy degree. At that time, at the age of 19, I had the fortune to attend the lessons of a great Chilean

philosopher, who was the second translator of Heidegger's *Being and Time* from German to Spanish (the most-cited version to this day). In his module we spent five years reading and reflecting only on that book, during which I became not just his assistant but also his friend. He was a brilliant teacher, but more importantly, he was a kind, present, generous and appreciative master. Both teachers showed me something meaningful: that education can be transformative if teachers establish an authentic connection with their students. This is not a matter of knowledge, but of supporting students in being themselves and offering meaningful opportunities to reflect on real-life challenges. Since then, I have realised that education is fundamental for social change; as the celebrated Irish poet W. B. Yeats said, education "is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire".

Thus, several years before I decided to do this PhD in education, I started to work for various schools in my country, offering talks and workshops on wellbeing and self-care for teachers. A strong feeling of serving society through education, starting with teachers, grew until I resolved to do this doctoral research to investigate how to contribute to schools from the mindfulness perspective. During this period I have deepened my understanding of mindfulness and discovered the need to understand how the education system works in order to find skilful ways of introducing a transformative dimension for school communities.

Behind my motivation for doing this research was the realisation that our societies are ill in several complex senses, namely, anxiety, depression and a pandemic of stress; individualistic materialism; generalised loss of connection with others and nature; increasing technology use-related issues; and climate emergency. Moreover, the current education system is not responding to what in my view should be its more significant purpose: personal, inter-personal, societal and ecological flourishing. Along with this, I also realised that from my role as a psychotherapist, I had little chance of contributing to rectifying these alarming trends with a broader impact, and that education could be the right place from which to attempt to make a more systemic and sustainable contribution.

In 2017 I discovered the Mindful Initiative, carried out in the UK since 2015. I was particularly impressed with its political commitments, as expressed in the UK Mindful Report proposed by the UK Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group (https://www.themindfulnessinitiative.org), led at that time by the MP Chris Ruane and fostering the introduction of Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) in the areas of education, health, workplaces and the criminal justice system. Also, in the educational arena specifically, I met the MYRIAD (My Resilience in Adolescence) project (https://myriadproject.org), in which a cohort of UK universities (led by University of Oxford) were researching the impact of a mindfulness programme on adolescent (age 11-16) mental illness prevention in an eight-year project, the largest in the world. All these initiatives inspired and motivated me to come to the UK to investigate how these experiences work first-hand, with the intention to learn from this case to eventually boost something similar in my own country.

1.2. Research rationale

Although I will offer a more comprehensive definition of mindfulness in the next chapter, it is helpful to state a simple definition from the beginning to clarify the main topic of this research. According to Kabat-Zinn (2005), mindfulness is the psychological ability to stay intentionally attentive to the experience of the present moment, with a non-judgemental attitude and engendering a friendly openness and curiosity. This capacity should be understood as a human potential, as the everyday default state of our mind means that most of the time our attention wanders and that reaching more prolonged states of focused attention requires consistent practice over time. The great American philosopher William James, in his *Principles of Psychology* (1995/1890), established that the cultivation of attention should be the primary goal of every conscious life, but the medium to achieve it is not obvious. Then, mindfulness can be seen as a response to that old western crucial awareness.

When I started the literature review on the field of mindfulness in education, I found two relevant and unexpected topics of discussion. On the one hand, the research results are ambiguous regarding the real impact of MBIs when

implemented within schools (Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). According to Simpson (2017), although the benefits of these interventions seem to be clear about improvements in "behaviour, mood and social skills in students" (p. 48), their impacts on the school climate and the ethical development of pupils and teachers, i.e. on individual and systemic flourishing, are less evident. On the other hand, I discovered a heated scholarly debate around two different paradigmatic approaches to understanding and implementing mindfulness in schools, differently-named by different authors: mindfulness 'in' versus 'as' education (Ergas, 2019; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020), 'thin' and 'thick' approaches to mindfulness (McCaw, 2020) and 'neoliberal' versus 'liberatory' mindfulness (Cannon, 2016). Thus I needed clarification on whether the current mindfulness implementation in countries such as the UK and the US is a beneficial or potentially harmful initiative. In other words, more questions than answers emerged from this stage.

As is usual for a doctoral thesis my introduction was written at the end of the research process. The nature of this section is therefore a bit tricky insofar as I now have much more information than at the beginning. That said, in 2022 an important report was published by the MYRIAD project mentioned above, which concluded that after eight years of implementation of a specific mindfulness programme to prevent mental health problems for over 28,000 adolescents in UK schools, there is no demonstration of better impact compared with the usual social-emotional learning provision, although improvements in the classroom climate and teacher burnout were found (Kuyken et al., 2022). After this controversial conclusion, more reports have emerged offering insightful possible explanations. One relevant conclusion refers to the fact that the current Dot b programme as a universal intervention for adolescents is not indicated, having reported iatrogenic effects even for young people at risk of mental health issues (Montero-Marin et al., 2022). This means that the current trend to design standard programmes for everyone without consideration of local and contextual conditions needs to be modified into more meaningful and creative alternatives. In this vein, considering the findings from the MYRIAD project along with the critical mindfulness literature which anticipated these issues regarding these kinds of programmes (see Ergas, 2019; Forbes, 2019;

Hyland, 2016; Reveley, 2016; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020), this research is particularly timely and necessary in order to shed some light on the future of mindfulness in schools worldwide. A more detailed rationale for this research can be found in Section 2.5 in the next chapter.

My project thus has two aims: (1) To offer a clear distinction between what will be called instrumental and integral approaches to mindfulness in education (Brito, Joseph and Sellman, 2022), making the case in favour of the enduring advantages of the latter, and (2) to contribute to making more explicit the pertinence of doing qualitative research in a 'minor key' (Ingold, 2017); for example, giving voice to teachers committed to this specific topic, and offering a more complex and nuanced view without the intention of reaching universal and simplistic outcomes. The core purpose of science in a minor key is to cultivate a 'patient experimentation', whose aim

> […] is not to test a preconceived hypothesis but to open a path and follow wherever it may take you. It is not so much iterative as itinerant; a journey undertaken rather than a cycle of returns on a fixed point. It works more by intuition than by reason; opening from within rather than penetrating from without. It is prospective rather than retroactive, improvisatory rather than prescriptive, speculative rather than confirmatory (Ingold, 2017, p. 41).

1.3. Research question, sub-questions and aims

Based on the motivation and rationale behind this study, I now make explicit the research question, sub-questions and aims that guide this research.

The principal research question was: What is the teachers' perception of the implementation of mindfulness in English and Welsh schools?

The sub-questions derived from the central question after the literature review process were:

- What is the teachers' perception of the current most typical implementation of mindfulness in English and Welsh schools?

- How do teachers imagine a more integral implementation of mindfulness in English and Welsh schools?

The key aims of this study are:

- To understand the perceived connection between teachers' mindfulness practice and the impact of its implementation in the classroom.

- To explore personal meanings of mindfulness in schools for participants.

- To recognise teachers' perceptions of facilitators and obstacles to implementing mindfulness in the current education system in England and Wales.

- To understand the principal benefits and limitations of the current most usual mindfulness programmes (Paws b and Dot b) in teachers' experience.

- To explore teachers' experiences of and reflections on a potentially more integral mindfulness implementation in schools.

- To understand how the participants evaluate the most typical current mindfulness training courses for teachers.

- To articulate, in collaboration with participants, general guidelines for an integral mindfulness implementation in schools.

1.4. Personal position

According to Reich (2021), positionality is a core and intrinsic dimension of every qualitative research project, meaning that the experiences and knowledge of researchers and participants are sociohistorically situated, influencing

understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This idea is a fundamental principle of the hermeneutical approach in which this research is grounded, specifically a conception of understanding whose nature is the 'art of interpretation' (Gadamer, 1960). The original philosophical background supporting this perspective is found, as will be explained more extensively in Chapter 3, in the thought of Heidegger (1927) and Gadamer (1960). For these thinkers, human beings are interpretive beings whose ontological structure is featured by a hermeneutical circle, which means that every endeavour to understand a phenomenon is pre-conditioned by a set of personal and cultural prejudgments that work as an interpretive lens. Thus all understanding is rooted in an ontological (a priori) interpretive background, making the ideal of absolute objectivity illusory.

In Bourke's (2014) words: "We can strive to remain objective, but must be ever mindful of our subjectivities. Such is positionality. We have to acknowledge who we are as individuals, and as members of groups, and as resting in and moving within social positions" (p. 3). This positionality is composed of two aspects: (1) our identities, i.e. the biases shaping every perception and reflection of the world, and (2) our reflexivity as a researcher, i.e. the need for self-scrutiny and to remain aware of the relationships we establish between ourselves, others and phenomena. This reflexivity is an essential part of the whole study process expressed in this thesis, implying a necessary entanglement between the participants' voices and my own experiences and reflections. In this sense, the impossibility of achieving objectivity in this qualitative study is not a limitation but a condition of possibility of reaching a shared meaning about a complex topic, like the phenomenon here investigated.

Thus my experience practising and studying mindfulness for over ten years, particularly in its connections with education, position me in a background from which I understand mindfulness ethically as a way of being rather than a mere technique to improve separate competencies and skills. This understanding has been growing along with my practice, the study of contemplative traditions, especially Buddhism, and critical and socially engaged approaches to mindfulness in education. From this background I have elaborated a

comprehension of mindfulness as a form of education in itself rather than a discrete programme to be implemented into an educational system, in line with Ergas (2019) and Forbes' (2019) proposals, and very close to Jennings' (2015) and Jennings, DeMauro and Mischenko (2019) view of mindfulness as a way to educate pupils integrally with teachers' wellbeing and a mindful school climate. All this has shaped my view in the direction of considering the transformational potential of mindfulness regarding the very purpose of education, beyond a perspective in which it is seen as an auxiliary intervention to prevent or remedy specific aspects of the educational process, such as mental health, social-emotional learning, or behavioural and academic improvement. Fundamentally, my position on mindfulness is in line with Byung-Chul Han's (2023) reflection on the need to rectify our current societal trends of valuing performance and hyper-activity toward an understanding and embodiment of a contemplative (non-active) attitude to ourselves and the world. I believe our schools should cultivate more presence and appreciative attention, and reduce the saturation of information and the demand for an endless cycle of achievements for pupils and teachers equally.

1.5. The itinerant path of this thesis: a brief guide for this journey

As explained previously, this study began with one general exploratory question regarding teachers' perception of mindfulness implementation in schools in England and Wales. Insofar as most of the participants are mindfulness teachers with experience of teaching mindfulness in schools (two from Wales and 13 from England), I was finding relevant nuances across the process, which made me take decisions about how to continue the research which I had not considered at the beginning. Also, owing to the hermeneutical and contemplative attitudes adopted from a methodological viewpoint – which means that this process was founded on what emerged from each conversation (individually and in focus groups) and from my own mindfulness experiences and interpretation of the information expressed by participants (see Chapter 3 for a detailed explanation of the methodology) - the whole research process can be seen retrospectively as a sequence of four core spiral cycles. Each cycle has a central goal and meaningful achievements, which inform the next step.

There are some fundamental aspects of this study worthy of mention. (1) The findings apply to the English and Welsh educational context, although a significant part of them can be applied, with the necessary re-contextualization, to other countries. (2) The literature review (Chapter 2) is shorter than usual for a doctoral thesis because the whole process of the literature review also comprises Chapters 5 and 7. (3) Chapters 5 and 7, which can be considered a deepening of the literature review, were the basis for the publication of three articles led by myself and written in collaboration with my two supervisors. These will be referenced across the thesis and can be found in the references.

A broad picture of the four cycles can be expressed as follows:

- In the first cycle, the main goal was to elaborate the interview questions, and the principal achievement was to write a first draft of the literature review, which is expressed in Chapters 2 and 3 (see Figure 4 in Chapter 3).
- The main goal of the second cycle was to conduct the interviews and analyse the data collected. As the central achievement of this stage, I wrote a discussion chapter based on that analysis from which I published two articles, in collaboration with my supervisors, in high-impact journals, and designed the focus group structure and questions, which is expressed in Chapters 4 and 5 (see Figure 5 in Chapter 3).
- In the third cycle, the main goal was to realise four focus-group sessions and analyse the data obtained. Relevant achievements were writing in a new discussion chapter based on that analysis, publishing a new article derived from that chapter in another high-impact journal, and elaborating a Finding Summary and a Vision Statement on Mindfulness in Education to be shared with participants and other scholars, part of which is expressed in Chapters 6 and 7 (see Figure 6 in Chapter 3 and Chapter 8). This Vision Statement condenses the core insights of the research participants expressed in my own interpretative words through nine proposals for an integral implementation of mindfulness in schools. As this statement was in my own words, there may be some forms of expression worthy of discussion; for instance, in point eight, the phrase

"dominant neoliberal policy framework of performativity" has provoked discomfort for some participants and scholars.

- Finally, in the fourth cycle, the goal was to write the thesis conclusion. One achievement of this stage was to summarise the main findings and contributions of this study to knowledge in the field of mindfulness in schools, discuss implications, and suggest future directions for implementation and research. Another accomplishment was incorporating the Vision Statement and a brief reflection based on it, which it is found in Chapter 8 (see Figure 7 in Chapter 3). This is the route of this itinerant study.

The thesis is therefore presented in eight chapters. This introductory chapter offers the background from which this study emerged, providing its motivation and purpose, the research rationale, the research question, sub-questions and aims, and my researcher positionality.

Chapter 2 offers a literature review, which represents - alongside the next chapter - the first cycle of the research, beginning with a state-of-the-art reflection on the relationship between mindfulness and education and presenting provisional definitions of 'mindfulness', 'education', and other key words. The chapter explains the main characteristics of the UK education system from a critical perspective, the highlighted points of encounter between the education and mindfulness traditions, and the hits and pitfalls of mainstreaming implementation of mindfulness programmes in UK schools. The chapter also posits why Heideggerian thinking has been chosen as a philosophical foundation (although not exclusively) to explain different aspects of this study, such as methods, the critique of the grounds of the modern education system, and the proposal of a contemplative approach to education. Finally, it reflects on the gaps this study aims to address, stating the need to carry out this research and critiquing the risk of 'methodological monism', i.e. the dominant view in the field of mindfulness that the quantitative and 'objective' approach to research is the only valid one.

Chapter 3 explains different aspects of the methodology, beginning with a reflection on the underpinning onto-epistemology, namely phenomenological hermeneutics and social constructionism. The first of these states that there are no facts but only interpretations in the human world. The second postulates that all meaningful knowledge is co-constructed in conversational interactions. The chapter then describes the methodological approach to this study, specifically that it is informed by action research, which considers collaboration, self-reflection and orientation to offer problem-solution actions. Furthermore, the study is inspired by a contemplative perspective, i.e. considering a first-person approach to the phenomenon from an attitude of openness, curiosity, kindness and self-awareness. I then describe the methods of data collection (interviews and focus group) and analysis (thematic analysis), illustrating both processes through specific examples, and explain the research design, which flows through four research cycles, representing this chapter as the first cycle. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations for sensible research and some contextual considerations due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chapter 4 provides the findings from the second cycle of this study, i.e. the interview process. At this stage, I present the findings regarding the first sub-question (see Introduction and Chapter 1), which is divided into four aims summarising most of the aims declared in the Introduction. Considering the four aims, 10 themes and 37 sub-themes emerged as pertinent to both research questions after the thematic analysis (see Figures 10 and 11 respectively). I present the teachers' perceptions of the most usual implementation of mindfulness programmes in England and Wales, such as Paws b and Dot b, through pertinent quotes and a phenomenological-hermeneutical reflection interwoven with a further insightful literature review. The conclusion distinguishes between instrumental and integral purposes for implementing mindfulness in schools based on the participants' voices, emphasising the limitations of a general instrumental approach.

Chapter 5 critically reflects on some potentially negative side effects of mindfulness programmes in schools when these are implemented in an instrumentalised form. This reflection draws upon the participants' views of the

most typical school mindfulness programmes' limitations and offers an interpretation that highlights what I consider to be potentially the most detrimental of these side effects, namely, iatrogenesis. In this vein, the chapter states that every effect of mindfulness practices (either positive or negative) can be considered a side effect of awareness in a simplicity paradigm. However, the principal focus of this chapter is a sort of effect which can only be understood in a complexity paradigm, which addresses the phenomenon from a systemic perspective. This iatrogenic effect means that while instrumental mindfulness programmes have some benefits for individuals (e.g. enhancing resilience), they can foster unreflective conformity and adaptation to the school system, which causes the problems these programmes are supposed to solve (e.g. stress, burnout, negative emotional climate). Thus, applying critical and systems theories, the chapter analyses the cultural and socioeconomic context of mindfulness in schools in the UK to discern how it can become iatrogenic. This chapter has been published as an article in *Journal of Transformative Education* (see References Brito, Joseph and Sellman, 2021a). Also, part of this chapter has been published as another article in *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (see References Brito, Joseph and Sellman, 2021b).

Chapter 6 presents the findings from the third cycle of this research, i.e. the four focus group sessions realised with six of the 15 participants. This cycle emerged as a result of the previous one, in which the relevance of inquiring in greater depth about a potentially more integral approach to mindfulness in schools arose as a need for participants. The emergence of this third cycle necessitated the formulation of a second sub-question for this study (see Introduction and Chapter 1). In this chapter, I present general guidelines derived from a focus group process of four sessions of 1.5 hrs each for a more integral implementation within schools. The seven themes and 34 sub-themes of these guidelines are organised in a pre-established structure of three dimensions which cover wider to narrower implementation aspects, namely 1) contextual conditions, 2) key principles, and 3) key strategies. The conclusion reflects upon some core implications of these guidelines. For instance, considering that there were participants from both England and Wales, issues regarding how educational policies influence the form of implementation and their outcomes emerged as

essential. In addition, discussions about the need to have comprehensive mindfulness curricula rather than a set of activities, and the challenge of thinking about how mindfulness could generate societal change, are provided.

Chapter 7 purposefully reflects on the distinction between the instrumental and integral implementations of mindfulness in schools, developing the last modality based on the guidelines co-constructed with the participants. After considering the relevance of the context for any mindfulness implementation, the chapter provides a phenomenological-hermeneutical reflection on essential aspects to be considered from an integral perspective. Thus it discusses the format and focus for a more comprehensive implementation, offering pertinent ideas from integral approaches based mainly on the theories of Heidegger (1996/1927, 1993), Wilber (2016), Esbjörn-Hargens et al. (2010) and Ergas (2019). The conclusion suggests the incorporation of ethical and contemplative approaches which consider systemic and evolving perspectives on mindfulness implementations for individual, interpersonal, institutional and societal flourishing. This chapter has been published as an article in *Journal of Studies in Philosophy and Education* (see References Brito, Joseph and Sellman, 2022). Also, part of this chapter has been published as another article in *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (see References Brito, Joseph and Sellman, 2021b).

Chapter 8 presents an overview of the study's main findings and a reflection on the more relevant contribution to knowledge in the field of mindfulness in education. In general, based on the participants' view, we can observe two modalities of implementing mindfulness in schools: one more instrumental, understood as a therapeutic external intervention to improve pupils' and teachers' wellbeing and performance, and another more integral, understood as an organic implementation of mindfulness to enhance the educational process comprehensively, considering individual, relational, communitarian, cultural and institutional flourishing. Then, the chapter reflects on the study's limitations and relevant implications and suggested future directions are offered. Among the implications are the need for a paradigmatic shift towards a relational approach, concrete suggestions about how to do this implementation into practice and the role of teachers in this process. Regarding recommended future directions for

research in this field, I suggest considering the implementation contexts, the teachers' roles, and the implementation's pertinence and significance over methodological requirements, which stand out as promising paths. Also, the chapter reflects on what I learned from this research journey as a researcher and offers a reflection based on a Vision Statement that summarises the most significant messages of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Before introducing the main topic of this literature review, which alongside the next chapter represents the first cycle of the research, I would like to offer a reflection on how I will understand and apply this fundamental process. As I will explain in more detail later, from a hermeneutical point of view, when we are in the task of understanding a phenomenon (linguistic or factual), we are already inserted in a tradition of conversations regarding it in such a way that its understanding presupposes a conditioning from this historical dialogue (Gadamer, 1960). With this in mind, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) affirm that any literature review has diverse purposes relevant to the research, among which I highlight the following: (1) it allows us to not have to 'reinvent the wheel' in order to contribute with meaningful knowledge; (2) it legitimates the research, showing key issues on an up-to-date basis; (3) it clarifies the core concepts and problems and their meanings for the research; and (4) it identifies gaps in the research field, providing a justification for the research. Finally, a relevant aspect of every literature review is its necessary imperfection and partiality due to our inevitable subjective perspectivism (Hart, 1998) and the impossibility of covering every aspect of an enormous topic in development like this.

The implementation of Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) within schools, and its research, is a phenomenon which started more systematically with the turn of the millennium, predominantly in the US and the UK contexts (Ergas and Hadar, 2019). This brief history has been marked by promising achievements, revealing pitfalls and insightful debates, which shed light not only on the implementation of MBIs in schools but also on the nature and purpose of the mainstream education system as a whole. In the UK in particular, since the 2015 publication of the Mindful Nation Report by the UK's Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group (MAPPG) with the goal of fostering human flourishing in hospitals, prisons, workplaces and schools (Simpson, 2017), there is a vast ongoing process of implementation of and research into MBIs in primary and secondary schools. This implementation has been created by the charity

Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP), including a curriculum for primary children (called Paws b) and another for secondary adolescents (called Dot b). In parallel, there has been long-term research on the impact of this intervention on adolescents' mental health over the last seven years, known as the MYRIAD project (My Resilience in Adolescence), including more than 28,000 adolescents, 650 teachers and 100 schools (https://myriadproject.org), and led by Oxford University.

There are many studies supporting the benefits of MBIs in schools for teachers and pupils, such as psychosocial and physical wellbeing, improved self-care, reduction in mental health problems, improved social and emotional skills, behaviour, cognition and learning, and academic performance (Weare and Bethune, 2021; Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz and Walach, 2014). However, for some years there have also been increasingly critical voices warning about more subtle problems that these naïve implementations imply for education as a system and individuals interacting within it. This chorus of voices chiefly reflects on the meaning of implementing an instrumental programme into an intrinsically problematic educational system based on, and at the service of, a neoliberal agenda (see a more detailed explanation on this in Chapter 5, particularly in section 5.3), for which skills, competencies, productivity and material success are the golden goals (Brito, Joseph and Sellman, 2021a, b; Forbes, 2019; Reveley, 2016). Thus, in a context like the UK, and particularly England, the intended benefits of the current most popular MBIs in schools could be having the unintended and undesirable effect of supporting an educational system whose purpose is far from focused on individual and societal flourishing.

Before introducing some fundamental ideas regarding this topic, I would like to offer a first approach to what mindfulness means as a human quality that we can cultivate for a flourishing life. This approach is based on Gilbert's evolutive perspective on the nature of the mind. Gilbert (2009) and Gilbert and Choden (2013) state that our brain has evolved over millions of years in successive layers with only the evolutive goal of improving our ability to survive, starting with the reptilian brain, which is in charge of our primordial physiological functioning (breath, cardiac rhythm, circadian cycle, reproduction, basics instincts and

impulses). After millions of years, a new layer developed, and the mammalian brain appeared, whose main function is the manifestation of emotions in response to the environment (the limbic brain is in charge of primitive emotional experiences such as anger, anxiety, disgust, sadness and excitation). Finally, in the last two million years, the cognitive brain has emerged as the newest layer, which, in the case of humans, is in charge of reflection on the experience (thinking, imagining, planning, mentalising, empathising). Thus this triune brain is a very complex organ with diverse and contradictory motives that tend to make our experience in the world conflictive and likely unsatisfactory owing to its natural state of non-integration; this is why Gilbert coined the term 'tricky brain' (see Figure 1). This scientific perspective can be summarised by the idea that evolution does not care about our happiness but our better environmental adaptation.

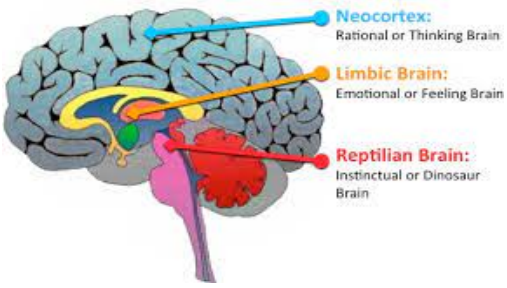


Figure 1. Our evolutive triune tricky brain

Furthermore, Gilbert affirms that evolution has equipped our brains with an emotional regulation system constituted by three differentiated systems in the service of our adaptation to the world. As we can see in Figure 2, the brain has a threat system (red) focused on scanning potential dangers to activate self-protection responses (fight, flight and freeze); a drive system (blue) aimed at achieving desirable and rewarding experiences for motivating our lives; and a soothing/affiliation system (green) oriented to gain an experience of calm, contentment and caring connection with others, which is developed initially in our childhood from a nurturing, safe and empathetic relationship with significant others (e.g. our parents). From this perspective, mindfulness is an intentional practice to allow us to cultivate "a particular type of attention and awareness, and to become a skilful observer of what's going on in this tricky mind of us" (Gilbert and Choden, 2013, p. 181), minimising the conflicts that can emerge

from the threat and drive systems (e.g. excessive worrying rumination or addictive desires and behaviour, respectively), fostering a deep sense of inner balance and awakening a compassionate motivation toward ourselves and others.



Figure 2. Model of Paul Gilbert's emotional regulation system (Gilbert, 2009)

I now offer a preliminary, educationally relevant explanation of the meaning of mindfulness. As will be explained in more detail later (see section 2.3 in this chapter), the word 'mindfulness' comes from the combination of the Pali words 'sati' and 'sampajaña', meaning "awareness, circumspection, discernment, and retention" (Shapiro, 2009, p. 556). Drawing upon Wallace and Bodhi's (2006) comprehensive definition, mindfulness means "to remember to pay attention to what is occurring in one's immediate experience with care and discernment" (Shapiro, 2009, p. 556). In this conceptualisation we find three essential mindfulness aspects relevant to the educational context: (1) the cultivation of awareness, which enables us to remember to bring our naturally distracted attention to the present moment's experience; (2) doing this with a caring and kind attitude, i.e. with friendly and compassionate patience; (3) developing the capacity to do this with discernment, i.e. with a clear, observing mind able to reflect, decide and take wise actions. In this vein, Shapiro also highlights that mindfulness is two phenomena simultaneously: a state of mind featured by mindful awareness (observation free of mental conditioning) and a process of mindful practice (systematic cultivation of intentionally attending to the experience here and now) (see also Shapiro et al., 2016).

2.1. Main features of the current education system in the UK

The current mandatory schooling system in the UK (incorporating England and Wales) has essentially remained quasi-unmodified since it was established toward the end of the 19th century in the UK, the US and Prussia. It was designed to respond to the demands of the industrial capitalist socioeconomic logic, i.e. to form people as workforce equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to keep this enormous machinery functioning (Thomas, 2013). From an educational policy perspective, Ball (2003, 2018) asserts that in the UK a process of educational disintegration has occurred, owing to which it is impossible to affirm that there is a system at all, only an apparatus dedicated to a sort of 'deliverology' based on outcomes, assessments and competition under the umbrella of a 'performativity' regime - "a form of performance management derived from business practices rather than educational principles" (Ball, 2018, p. 208). Reflecting more globally and going back in time, Rogers and Freiberg (1994/1969) stated at the end of the 1960s, in relation to the US context, that

> When we combine certain elements into one scheme - a prescribed curriculum, similar assignments for all students, lecturing as almost the only mode of instruction, standard tests that externally evaluate all students, instructor-chosen grades as the measure of learning - then we can almost guarantee that meaningful learning will be at an absolute minimum. (p. 37)

As a complement, according to Naranjo (2016), our Western education has the stamp of patriarchy, meaning that only intellectual and rational thinking are valued as genuine and relevant goals of any rigorous education, neglecting all the rest of our human dimensions - instinctual, emotional, relational, artistic, and spiritual, among others - and renouncing from the beginning an integral orientation. In short, following Naranjo (2016) and Neil (1944), in the dominant education system, there is an excess of brain and a dangerous lack of heart and soul. This is expressed in a process focused almost exclusively on the transmission of information from the past to new generations under the assumption that what was meaningful and pertinent in the past will be so in the future (Thomas, 2013), in order to adapt young people to the demands of work and productive life. It is illustrative, as well as ironic, to hear what successful

and famous people have said about their experience of schooling. The 19th-century US writer Mark Twain, for instance, quipped that 'I have never let my schooling interfere with my education'.

In Thomas' (2013) *Introduction to Education*, there is a classical distinction between two main forms of educational system: the mainstreaming formal and the rarer progressive. Among the principal differences between them are that (1) the aim of the formal is the child's acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary for life, while that of the progressive is for the child to learn to think critically and be independent; (2) the orientation of the formal is teacher-directed, while the progressive is child-centred; and (3) the motivation of the formal is competition for better grades and obedience to teachers' demands, while the progressive seeks cooperation and satisfaction with the work itself. In relation to this traditional distinction, Biesta (2022) offers a third path better aligned with the purposes of implementing mindfulness in schools; namely a world-centred education, the core purpose of which is that pupils know themselves in order to achieve an existential freedom in which their own desires and the essential requirements of the world find balanced articulation in a lifestyle enabling of a flourishing personal and interpersonal life in harmony with the world. I will return to this fundamental idea in Chapter 7.

More specifically, although the discourse of social and emotional learning (SEL) has been part of the formal education system in different countries for a couple of decades, mostly inspired by the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) initiative created in the US in 1994 (https://casel.org/about-us/our-history), the school curriculum has largely remained the same, rooted in a similar worldview of the purpose of education. In order to explain the main features of the current school system, with the aim of briefly outlining the context in which mindfulness is being implemented, I will present three fundamental ideas which capture the essentials of our topic, the first two critical and the third more positive. The first idea refers to Ball's (2003) concept of 'performativity' as the primary culture and logic of the current educational system and as one of the three 'policy technologies' (alongside the market and managerialism) to control and assure the educational process.

Performativity is a regime that defines what counts as a good outcome under specific rules of measurement from a technocratic judgment which is oriented by the principle of efficiency over true educational quality, understood as something meaningful and pertinent. In this sense, every successful educational process is related to performance and competition, installing a constant and oppressive testing regime over teachers and students which has had the effect of exhausting, demotivating and rendering insecure the whole school community, limiting their freedom to reflect on the educational process and generate more meaningful educational experiences.

Another relevant idea is offered by Biesta (2015), for whom there is an alarmingly predominant 'learnification discourse' in education. The main problem with this is not the phenomenon of learning itself, but its vague understanding and use in all levels of education from primary to university. The author states that the principal goal of education is not that students learn but, more precisely, that they learn 'something', 'for a reason' and 'from someone' - i.e. those who dedicate themselves to thinking about education need to consider its contents, purposes and relationships carefully. Following Ball (1998), the last 40-50 years have seen a considerable shift in educational policies globally, but especially in countries in which neoliberalism has taken deeper root, such as the US, the UK and Chile. According to Chomsky and Waterstone (2021), neoliberalism is a philosophical view, led by the American economist Milton Friedman in the 1970s, about how the world should work, and which states that wellbeing means 'individual entrepreneurial freedom', the role of the state is limited to assure 'free market' and 'private property rights', and the ideal social order must be oriented to the privatisation of every sphere of life, including education, health and environment, guided by the gold purpose of increasing productivity. This shift has implied a transition from a welfare to a market model, distinguished by privatisation, notions of efficiency and competition (Hill and Monzó, 2015). Biesta (2015) has shown how his three questions about learning have been responded from this neoliberal view: the purpose of education is to enhance employment-related skills and competencies; the contents are chosen in reference to market needs and measured under a managerialist regime in which the excellence of processes is more relevant than the specific contents; and the

relationship between pupils and parents with the school has become one of the consumers. For Biesta (2013, 2015, 2022), the critical issue here is that the education system lacks an educational (or existential) response to these questions, and has been replaced by an economic view disconnected from the existential needs and potentialities of children, adolescents and adults in charge of the educational process.

The last feature of the current educational system I want to mention is the policy consideration of general wellbeing and mental health in school contexts, which arose with the turn of the millennium (Lindegaard Nordin et al., 2019). Indeed, in England, the Green Paper on mental health in schools (DfE/DoH, 2017) reported that one in ten children and adolescents faces mental health problems. Interestingly, this report offers no information about teachers' mental health, despite it being well known that stress in teachers is pervasive worldwide, and that this implies high levels of burnout and low levels of job satisfaction (Glazzard and Rose, 2020). On the other hand, wellbeing is a complex concept which comprises several dimensions, such as emotional, social and cognitive (Forgeard, Jayawickreme and Kern, 2011). Complementarily, wellbeing can be understood as the resulting balance between the set of personal resources and the challenges people have to cope with in specific contexts (Dodge et al., 2012). Considering this, Hyland (2009) observed a 'therapeutic turn' in the field of education, precisely to address learners' common issues with emotions, motivation and confidence. Nevertheless, although this turn seems justified from a pragmatic view, Hyland (2009) recognises two main critiques: (1) the emphasis on personal development can neglect the educational purpose of schooling, thus 'disempowering learners'; and (2) an over-focus on individual wellbeing can overlook citizenship education for cultivating sensitivity to, and critical thinking for, social and political issues. It is into this broader context that mindfulness has been implemented, most often without critical consideration of these biases of the therapeutic in education.

2.2. Origins, definitions and history of mindfulness in the West

When we talk about the origins of mindfulness, we assume there are at least two historically significant moments for understanding the current uses of

mindfulness in general and in education in particular. The first goes back to the Buddhist spiritual context from which this idea and practice emerged in India in the 5th century BC, taking part of the core of Buddha's teaching about the Four Noble Truths (FNTs) and the Eightfold Noble Path (ENP) (Bodhi, 2011; Feldman and Kuyken, 2019). The FNTs are the first form by which the Buddha taught his essential realisation that (1) life is suffering (*dukkha* in Pali, more accurately understood as *unsatisfactoriness*); (2) this suffering has an origin (compulsive desire); (3) it is possible to end suffering; and (4) there is a path by which to realise that possibility (ENP) (Hanh, 1999). Here the Buddha operates as a therapist, identifying the problem and its causes, evaluating its possible solution and prescribing a treatment. In this case, the treatment is very integral, including three fundamental dimensions of an integral and ethical human life: morality, meditation and wisdom (Keown, 2013). Within each of these dimensions there are specific factors which, if followed correctly, enable a fulfilled and balanced existence. Therefore, the term 'right' should be understood not in a prescriptive sense but in a pragmatic one, i.e. as the best way to find a genuine and wholesome satisfactory life.

Thus, following Hanh (1999), within wisdom we find the right view (the ability to understand the deepest roots of any phenomenon, especially suffering) and right thinking (the ability to cultivate clear and beneficial mental reflection). Within morality are included right speech (the ability to talk and listen with truth and compassion), right action (the ability to behave respectfully toward life and with non-violence), and right livelihood (supporting yourself and your family without producing suffering). Finally, within meditation, we have the right effort (the ability to put our energy into forms of practice which generate real flourishing), the right mindfulness (the ability to bring us back to the present moment), and the right concentration (the ability to focus our attention on one point). Among the eight paths, mindfulness is considered the core gateway to developing the other factors, as we can only realise these if our attention is entirely in the present moment.

The second historical moment was the second half of the 20th century, when, as a result of different wars (in Tibet, Vietnam and Japan, mainly), great Buddhist

masters emigrated to Western countries (D. T. Suzuki to the USA, T. N. Hanh to France, T. Deshimaru to France, the Dalai Lama to India) and the freedom to establish dialogues with Western scientists, among others (Keown, 2013). In this context, I want to highlight two milestones in the introduction of mindfulness to the West. The first is the significant influence of Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh in the understanding and spreading of mindfulness around the world, most significantly with the publication of his book *The Miracle of Mindfulness* in 1975 and the settlement of his Buddhist monk community of Plum Village in France in 1982. Hanh's teaching significantly impacted how Western science understands mindfulness as a practical path to alleviate different kinds of suffering.

A second enormous influence in this second historical stage was work on the secularisation of mindfulness by the American biologist Jon Kabat-Zinn, who in 1979 created his well-known MBSR programme firstly for the management of chronic pain and then, more popularly, for stress reduction (Bishop et al., 2006). The elaboration of a secular programme which combined key Buddhist ideas and practices with psychological knowledge for training the mind into an eight-week accessible pack, plus the publication of the book *Full Catastrophe Living* in 1990, made Kabat-Zinn a pioneer and the foundation for almost every subsequent mindfulness programme in diverse fields, from medicine to education (Sun, 2014). Kabat-Zinn's main intention of secularising mindfulness, as he has explained (Kabat-Zinn, 2011), was to avoid any ideological resistance to a specific spiritual tradition (Buddhism) in the context of the 1970s, when meditation was associated with another 'new age' fashionable phenomenon (Sun, 2014). The consequences of this decision can be observed in two different directions: (1) it fostered the scientific acceptance of mindfulness and its implementation in different contexts such as healthcare, organisations, and education, with clear benefits for millions of people around the world. However, on the other hand, (2) it implied an important decontextualisation from at least two fundamental aspects of mindfulness within the Buddhist context: its ethical (the whole view of the ENT) and relational (the belonging to a community of meditation practitioners or Sangha) frameworks (Condon, 2019).

In terms of the concept of 'mindfulness', we find a complex landscape in which, in the Eastern Buddhist tradition as in the Western secular scientific view, there are many different definitions depending on the specific functions or applications of the concept in myriad settings (Analayo, 2019), which makes the endeavour of offering a definition a critical task. In its original Buddhist tradition, what we today call mindfulness comes from two key words, 'sati' (in Pali) and 'smrti' (in Sanskrit), referring to meanings associated with memory, reminiscence and recollection (Gethin, 2011). According to Boddhi (2011), the first Buddhist texts (so-called sutras) offer more than one understanding of this concept, suggesting the sense of 'lucid awareness of the present' alongside memory. In this respect, Feldman and Kuyken (2019) state that memory, in this context, does not mean historical reminiscence, but a reminder to come back to the experience of the present moment, recovering from distraction. Also, we can understand 'recollection' as the call of our awareness to recover the unitarian mind-body experience of the present moment from our automatic tendency to be dispersed in some kind of multitasking mode. Much later, in the 19th century, Rhys Davis published his translation of the Mahaparinibbana Sutras, in which he introduced the English word 'mindfulness' as the translation of 'sati', meaning an "activity of mind and constant presence of mind which is one of the duties more frequently inculcated on the good Buddhist" (Davis, 1881, p. 145, quoted in Gethin, 2011, p. 264). Thus we could summarise mindfulness (sati) as a quality of mind in which we, as human beings, are able to remind ourselves to return our attention to the experience of the present moment from a primary state of distraction.

Following many other developments, in the 20th century Kornfield (1977), a Western Buddhist monk and psychologist, offered a very influential definition of mindfulness as the "attitude of non-judgmental, direct observation [which] allows all events to occur naturally. By keeping attention in the present moment, we can see more clearly the true characteristics of our mind and body process" (Kornfield, 1977, p. 13). As we can see, here is the basis for Kabat-Zinn's operational definition, according to which mindfulness consists of "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). In turn, this short and precise definition

has been the basis for further applications, theorisations and measurements of mindfulness in the psychological field and beyond (Sun, 2014). Kabat-Zinn's emphasis on training the mind to focus attention on the present moment and his famous standardised eight-week programme has permeated the majority of other influential implementations, such as the Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) programme created by Williams, Teasdale and Segal in 2002 for the treatment of depression in the UK, offered free of charge in the UK's public health service for almost 20 years. Thus the focus on bare attention and a format of eight weeks of theme-based sessions are the main features of most current mindfulness programmes worldwide.

Feldman and Kuyken (2019) offer a helpful synthesis regarding the different facets implied in all these definitions of mindfulness, organised into the three categories of what, how and why. Mindfulness is a state, a process and a faculty by which we regulate attention to focus on a point and to be more widely aware (what). At the same time, this redirection of our attention is made from specific attitudes, such as curiosity, care and kindness (how). Finally, an essential aspect of mindfulness practice is doing it from the right motivations, based on the intention to develop an ethical way of living in the world (why). This ethical dimension of mindfulness is expressed in the Buddhist distinction between the two modes of existing in the world (words, thoughts and acts), i.e. wholesome or unwholesome (Feldman and Kuyken, 2019). A wholesome way of being in the world means to live in such a way that we alleviate suffering in ourselves and others while reaching more understanding and freedom about ourselves and the world. This fundamental and pragmatic distinction manifests mindfulness in its ontologically relational nature, for which true flourishing is always and necessarily co-flourishing or flourishing together. In this vein, an in-depth view of mindfulness implies its understanding as a way of being rather than as a mere technique for individual improvement of our productivity in particular areas of our lives.

Regarding the main milestones of the contemporary history of mindfulness in the West in the last four decades, I offer key scientific contributions to the field. As mentioned earlier, Jon Kabat-Zinn's (US) creation of the MBSR programme

for stress reduction in clinical contexts was the first main scientific contribution, which was consolidated with the publication of his book *Full Catastrophe Living* in 1990. Later, the neuroscientific research on the neuropsychological effects of mindfulness can be considered a second influential contribution, particularly that of Richard Davidson (US creator of the Centre for Healthy Minds in 1984) on the benefits of these practices for a flourishing life. One of his most relevant books is *Altered Traits* (2017), published in collaboration with Daniel Goleman. Another significant landmark was the creation of the MBCT programme by Zindel Segal, Mark Williams, and Jhon Teasdale (UK) in 2002 for the treatment of depression, and their main book *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression: A New Approach to Preventing Relapse* (2002). Two further remarkable contributions related to mindfulness and compassion were made with the turn of the millennium: firstly, Paul Gilbert's (UK) research on compassion, his creation of Compassion-Focused Therapy in 2000 to treat shame and self-criticism and the publication of *The Compassionate Mind* (2010); secondly, Kristine Neff's (US) research on self-compassion and the book *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself* (2011), focusing on the challenge of how to practise kindness to ourselves. Thus we can discern a historical trend in the development of mindfulness from a more individually-focused to a more relationally-focused approach in different contexts of application.

On the other hand, it is relevant to consider the other side of this rich and promising introduction of mindfulness to the western world, i.e. the increasing criticism that this kind of implementation has awakened in the last two decades. Many mindfulness practitioners and theorists have worried about the instrumentalisation and commodification of mindfulness programmes being implemented in reductive, decontextualised and individualistic terms (Forbes, 2019; Purser, 2019; Brito, Joseph and Sellman, 2021a, 2022). This critique has been subsumed under the satirical notion of McMindfulness, meaning that mainstream mindfulness interventions are in the service of self-optimisation and self-adaptation to exploitative and decadent societal conditions dominated by the ideology of neoliberalism (Reveley, 2016). Purser (2019) states that McMindfulness represents a new sort of ‘capitalist spirituality’ in which any

psychological and societal problem should be solved in the field of the mind, training the capacity to focus on the present, reducing anxiety and keeping fit to maintain the current economic system. In the same direction, Forbes (2019) affirms that these instrumental mindfulness interventions are intended for individualistic self-improvement overlooking institutional and societal toxic logic, identifying a barrier to genuine and needed social transformation, which is an essential part of the original ethical Buddhist approach. In this sense, the last years have seen a vigorous defence of the idea that mindfulness has to consider, alongside attention, the cultivation of a compassionate attitude toward ourselves, others and the world, which, in Gilbert and Choden's (2013) words, can be considered the two wings (wisdom and compassion) of an authentic flourishing life in its belonging to the natural and societal world.

2.3. Mindfulness and education as the encounter of two traditions

According to Ergas (2019a), the relationship between mindfulness and education should be understood as the encounter of two traditions, a notion defined as a set of knowledge and practices in development across time and in different places in response to specific human interests. Contemplative and educational traditions have a long history, which can be traced back a couple of millennia to both Western and Eastern cultural traditions (Stock, 2006; Hart, 2004), such as Greek (Plato and post-Platonism, especially Stoicism), Indian (Buddhism and yoga), Roman (Christian prayer), Middle Eastern (Sufi metaphysics) and Jewish (Kabbalah) (Hart, 2004). Morgan's (2015) synthesis affirms that the main feature of every contemplative historical form of education is its integral approach, meaning contemplation implies an educational focus on the whole person from the principle of interconnectedness. In this vein, contemplative traditions have always offered an experiential and transformative path for making education a meaningful existential process.

In more recent times, Morgan (2015) has observed a renaissance of the relationship between contemplation and education in the West, identifying five fundamental influences, which I summarise as (1) Buddhist philosophy, (2) transpersonal psychology, (3) medicine, psychology and meditation research, (4)

Western yoga, and (5) the neuroscience of meditation. Morgan affirms that this renaissance has evolved through three consecutive waves. The first wave occurred when Chinese Buddhist immigrants entered the USA in the first half of the 19th century. The second wave came when relevant institutions of higher education were established in California, USA, in the 1950s and 1960s (e.g. California Institute of Integral Studies, Naropa University, among others). The last wave started in 1995 with the establishment of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (CCMIS) in Massachusetts, USA. Based on what was explained in the last section, the mindfulness tradition initiated by Jon Kabat-Zinn can be also understood as a part of the third wave with a considerable influence from (3) and (5) above, although the Buddhist influence can never be underestimated as its fundamental underground inspiration.

On the other hand, the education tradition in the West also has a similarly large history which, according to Thomas (2013), started with Plato's Academia and Aristotle's Lyceum in Greece in the 5th century BC, with an emphasis on reading and arithmetic but also a conception of education as leisure and time for contemplation. In the 8th century AD, Roman education was aimed at becoming able men (not women) for public life, teaching grammar, logic and rhetoric as its main subjects. In the period of the Renaissance, after the invention of printing, an interest in art, philosophy, literature and science emerged which provided the blueprint for the curriculum elaborated during the Enlightenment epoch, when education adopted the rational orientation it has to this day. The last relevant change came in the 19th century, when education, in the form of schools (as we know it currently), became mandatory in several countries (UK, US and Prussia) as a servant of the new capitalist economic system, transforming schooling in the process of preparation for working life. One of the consequences of this instrumental form of education was the loss of its meaning for a flourishing personal and civic life beyond any productive goal.

This mainstream form of education is known as its formal or traditional version; in parallel, an alternative, progressive form of schooling has been developed. One of the most influential cornerstones of progressive education was the book *Emile*, published by Rousseau in the 18th century, and arguing that children have

a natural curiosity and plasticity for learning and that the best way to do that is through their own experience (Thomas, 2013). This is the path followed by Montessori, who emphasised practical tasks and the achievement of autonomy for children, and Dewey, who stressed building a cooperative community as essential for democratic civic life. Since then, the debate on what form of schooling is the best option has remained lively, posing key questions.

In our times, Biesta (2015, 2022) has stated that the current education system used to take the purpose of education for granted, assuming this question was already answered and putting effort into keeping the curriculum running for achieving 'excellence' according to some measurement apparatus. For this author, we must carefully consider three key questions regarding education's purpose. The most accepted function of education is the qualification, i.e. the process of transmission-acquisition of skills and knowledge in order to make students functional persons in the world of work. Another well-recognised function is socialisation, i.e. the process by which people are integrated into a larger cultural and traditional pre-existing worldview. However, the third purpose, the subjectification function (arguably the most significant), the process of becoming a self with agency and freedom able to establish authentic relationships with others and the world, is currently the most neglected dimension. This deficiency is precisely the point at which strategies for human flourishing, such as mindfulness, appear fundamental and urgent.

Biesta's (2022) existential approach to education finds suggestive ground in Heidegger's thought, especially in his magnum opus, *Being and Time*. In fact, Biesta (2016) has reflected on the potential of Heidegger's philosophy for education from a critical perspective. Despite this critique, I think some Heideggerian ideas apparently influence Biesta's conception of a world-centred education, a connection on which I will reflect later (see Chapter 7). Although I will return to Heidegger's ideas on several occasions later in this thesis (see Chapters 3, 5 and 7), at this stage I will present a preliminary explanation of Heidegger's (1996/1927) conception of being a human and its general educational implications. For this philosopher, being a human means being-in-the-world, i.e. being thrown into a world of possibilities regarding which we

must build our existence between the risky potentialities of authenticity or inauthenticity. In this sense, there is no specific nature or essence for our existence, which is ontologically open, but the task of articulating a meaningful (or meaningless) relationship with ourselves, others and the world. In doing this our existence is equipped by a call, namely a voice always calling us from inside to respond to the different calls the world posits to us. This call is a silent invitation to adopt a decision and take action regarding a particular demand from the world. Based on this, Yosef-Hassidim (2017) affirms that the existential purpose of education should not be related to the transmission of content (knowledge and skills), but to the cultivation of questioning and taking decisions regarding our possibilities in and with the world. This purpose is in line with Biesta's calls for a world-centred education, which will be developed later (see Chapters 5 and 7).

Since Heidegger's philosophy will have a relevant place in different parts of this thesis, I will say a few words about why and how I will use his thought in these different contexts. Heideggerian thought has received increasing attention from scholars in the field of education in the last two decades (D'Agnese, 2019). The main reason why Heidegger's philosophy represents a promising ground for education, and particularly for mindfulness in education, is its comprehensive reflection on human 'nature' and its ethical potentialities for flourishing in and with the world (Standish, 1992; see also Brito, 2018). Thus, his thought will be referenced in the methodological chapter (see Chapter 3) as one of the principal exponents of the phenomenological-hermeneutical approach (Huttunen and Kakkori, 2020). Later, in the critical discussion of the first findings (see Chapter 5), Heidegger will be used to root the whole critique of neoliberal performativity in education based on his understanding of our modern age as a technique (Mertel, 2020). Finally, in a purposeful reflection on the potentiality of an integral/contemplative path in education regarding the findings from the focus groups (see Chapter 7), I will reflect upon the Heideggerian conceptualisation of meditative thinking as an alternative to the dominant calculative thinking in education and mindfulness implementation in schools (Lewin, 2015; Thomson, 2001). In order to establish from the beginning the place and meaning of Heidegger's philosophy in this thesis, part of his thought will be offered as

grounds for the reflections of other scholars related to our topic, which aspire to be a creative and inspiring contribution to understanding of the crossroads of mindfulness and education. It is pertinent to say that I have published a book in Spanish on ethics in Heidegger's masterpiece *Being and Time* called *Heidegger and the Authentic Existence* (2018); this will serve as a reference for most of what I will develop about Heidegger philosophy in this thesis, recontextualised and positioned in connection with the topics of mindfulness and education.

In this regard, the introduction of mindfulness in education in the last two decades finds its ground and rationale. In the context of UK school education, following Simpson (2017), mindfulness has been implemented at a large scale since 2009 through the creation of the Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP) by Chris Cullen, Richard Burnett and Chris O'Neil, in particular through two programmes, Paws b (for primary students) and Dot b (for secondary students). These programmes were based mainly on the model of the MBCT curriculum (co-created by Oxford Professor Mark Williams), which in turn derives from the original MBSR training (created by Kabat-Zinn). Later, in 2015, a group of parliamentarians known as the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group (MAPPG) generated the Mindful Nation UK Report, which fostered the introduction of mindfulness in fields as diverse as hospitals, prisons, workplaces and schools. Additionally, the University of Oxford has led extensive research on the impact of the Dot b curriculum on adolescents through the MYRIAD (My Resilience in Adolescence) project, led by Professor Kuyken. The main goal of this process has been to prevent mental health issues in adolescence and adulthood with a clear focus on individuals.

In addition, mindfulness programmes have been combined with other similar approaches to human development, such as SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) and character education, in school settings. Regarding SEL, mindfulness has been implemented to contribute to the goals of the CASEL, which proposes the cultivation of five competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and responsible decision-making (Jennings, 2016; Mischenko, Nicholas-Hoff, Schussler, Iwu and Jennings, 2022). Another recent area of intersection with mindfulness is the more

traditional character education approach. According to Little (2022), virtue cultivation implies three cyclical phases: (1) pre-acquired character, i.e. the moral disposition that someone has by nature or habituation, without reflection; (2) developmental character, i.e. intentional and conscious virtue cultivation; and (3) second nature, i.e. the acquisition of virtue as a personality trait, which is based on the previous phase. Little suggests that mindfulness practices can be helpful for the first phase owing to their present-moment focus and non-judgemental nature. In my opinion, this view of mindfulness is quite limited, as its contemplative quality is understood from a passive perspective (as the focalisation of attention only) and overlooks its active potential, such as the cultivation of compassion and critical thinking - what Ergas (2019b) calls mindfulness 'as' and 'of' education. In any case, the point is that mindfulness is being introduced in overlapping educational fields relevant to human flourishing in general.

I would like to point out that the overall contemplative potential of mindfulness in education has been poorly considered. In sum, according to the current specialised literature, some of the problematic features of this implementation in the UK context are that (1) it has been focused on pupils, neglecting teachers' wellbeing (Schonert-Reichl and Roeser, 2016); (2) it has been offered in an over-standardised and short-term curriculum (Brito et al., 2021a, 2022); (3) it has had an excessive focus on individual self-improvement in the aspects of cognitive and emotional self-regulation (Simpson, 2017); and (4) it has overlooked relevant human dimensions such as interpersonal, ethical and civic development, demonstrating a lack of interest in societal change (Forbes, 2019). In the next section I will explore in more detail the pros and cons of this mainstream implementation, arguing for the higher educational potentialities of mindfulness beyond its therapeutic benefits.

2.4. Potentialities and pitfalls of mindfulness programmes in schools

As mentioned above, the implementation of mindfulness in school settings is a relatively recent phenomenon. However, to date, a large body of research seems to demonstrate the benefits of this implementation (Flook et al., 2013; Weare

and Bethune, 2021). The most reported benefits for teachers and pupils can be categorised into different dimensions. Following Jennings (2015), Shapiro, Rechtschaffen and de Sousa (2016), Weare and Bethune (2021), and Zenner, Herrleben-Kurz and Walach (2014), it is possible to recognise these benefits as: (1) cognitive, i.e. improvements in attention regulation, concentration, meta-cognition, problem solving and academic performance; (2) emotional, i.e. anxiety, stress and depression prevention; emotional regulation, improvement of resilience and optimism; enhancement of empathy and (self-)compassion and promotion of general wellbeing; (3) attitudinal, i.e. the cultivation of fundamental human dispositions such as acceptance, non-attachment, non-judging, trust, warmth, friendliness, and kindness, among others; and (4) relational, i.e. the generation of a more connected classroom climate, better teacher capacity to respond to challenging behaviour, prosocial behaviour in pupils, and trustworthiness. In support of these benefits the evidence shows, in general, that long-term practices are related to more lasting changes (Parsons, Crane, Parsons, Fjorback and Kuyken, 2017). Furthermore, these impacts seem to be more evident in primary children and teachers (adults in general) than in secondary adolescents, requiring nuanced and careful consideration.

In order to develop a comprehensive map of the diverse ways in which mindfulness has been implemented in school settings, I will use McCaw's (2020) conceptual distinction between 'thin' and 'thick' forms of implementation. According to McCaw, thin mindfulness is conceived "in psychological, ethically-neutral terms, configured around a teleology of individual self-improvement" (p. 263). This conception, which represents the mainstream, focuses on most of the benefits mentioned above, i.e. attention enhancement, anxiety and stress reduction, individual wellbeing and academic performance, from a secularised approach. On the other hand, thick mindfulness is understood in "ontological terms and is configured around an ethically-grounded teleology of transformation" (p. 265). In this rarer case, the focus is on a deep comprehension of self and its transformation regarding alleviating suffering and fostering human flourishing, taking into consideration the Buddhist "three sails of the law": the impermanence of everything, the conditioning of existence toward unsatisfactoriness, and the non-essential nature of self or

interdependence. In sum, while the first conception aims to implement mindfulness to equip people to navigate the school system with more resilience, the second approach seeks to position mindfulness at the core of the educational process for personal, educational and societal transformation (Loy, 2003; Forbes, 2019; Brito et al., 2022).

The categorisation explained above has some similarities with the distinction established by Ergas and Hadar (2019) between mindfulness ‘in’ and ‘as’ education, derived from their meta-research based on 447 peer-reviewed papers published between 2002 and 2017 (see also Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). This work offers a map of the academic discourse to distinguish two ‘patterns’ or modalities of implementing mindfulness within schools, which is particularly useful for the purposes of this research. I have taken and adapted a table from these authors to show some essential characteristics of each form of implementation (see Table 1). In a similar vein to other scholars in this field (Cannon, 2016; Ergas, 2019b; Hyland, 2016; Forbes, 2019; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020; Simpson, 2017), Table 1 shows a relevant distinction between two different approaches to mindfulness in education. Briefly, mindfulness 'in' education (what in this research is called instrumental) refers to a type of intervention which tends to be external to schools, with a focus on individual mental health delivered through an over-standardised short-term programme, with the purpose of fostering better adaptation of pupils and teachers to a school system left unquestioned as such. In contrast, mindfulness 'as' education (what in this research is called integral) implies the transformation of the educational process into a mindful path of existential development embedded into the whole school curriculum and implemented organically from the inside; a long-term process of cultural transformation with the purpose of cultivating the self-transformation of the whole school community in resonance with societal and ecological problems.

Dimension	Mindfulness *in* Education	Mindfulness *as* Education
Focus	Effects-oriented external tool	Process-oriented integrated in education
Framing of implementation	Psychological (cognitivism and neuroscience)	Contemplative (mainly Buddhism) and critical approaches
Role in education	Wellbeing, physical and mental health, SEL, academic performance	Processes of teaching and learning, self-knowledge, transformative and life-long learning, critical pedagogy and social inclusion
Modality of Implementation	MBIs (over-standardised)	Contemplative pedagogy and whole-school approaches
Research method	Empirical (mostly quantitative)	Diverse (mostly self-study and conceptual)

Table 1. Two main modalities of mindfulness within education. Adapted from Ergas and Hadar (2019)

In the same vein, Green, Cross and Woodall (2015) propose a helpful distinction between two broad approaches to mental health and wellbeing promotion in schools: (1) a biomedical perspective, from which mental health is understood as a consequence of biological and personal factors affecting individuals, and (2) a socio-ecological perspective, from which individuals' wellbeing is comprehended more holistically as emerging from contextual and social conditions. This second approach includes how the school's own institutional conditions can generate mental problems for pupils and teachers. Although these classifications could be of utility in theory, it is essential to consider Langer's (2022) call to avoid dichotomising discourses in this field in favour of a more realistic and critical approach to the problem of implementing mindfulness in education. Langer offers some suggestions in this regard, drawing upon Biesta and Stams' (2001) reflection on critical thinking as a deconstructive exercise which implies self-awareness of one's own position and a focus on justice rather than pure rationality. Thus Langer's principal suggestion refers to avoiding any external explanation about what mindfulness supposedly does to the school

community, giving voice to pupils and teachers to answer this question from their own experience.

To date, most mindfulness implementations in UK schools, particularly in England, have followed the thin approach. In this respect, one of the most recent reports from the MYRIAD project (Kuyken et al., 2022) concluded that the implementation of the Dot b programme did not have a positive impact on preventing adolescent mental health issues (its principal goal) in comparison to the usual social and emotional learning provision. However, it positively impacted teachers' wellbeing and school climate. We can therefore ask if this result should be interpreted as a death warrant for mindfulness in schools, or as an opportunity to reappraise whether the way in which mindfulness is currently implemented in schools is the most appropriate. Based on the literature to date, what seems to be needed are approaches to mindfulness in schools with an explicit systemic focus or a whole-school approach, and sensitivity to the fact that mindfulness should not be considered a panacea to solve every problem in schools. On the other hand, these outcomes should not be interpreted hastily towards discarding mindfulness, but taken as an invitation to rethink mindfulness in schools not from a mental health paradigm but as an integral educational approach (Brito and Corthorn, 2018; Forbes, 2019).

Thus the reported benefits of School-Based Mindfulness Programmes (SBMPs) represent a complex phenomenon needing careful and nuanced interpretation. A meta-analysis of 66 randomised controlled studies of MBIs with children and adolescents (Dunning et al., 2022) found "small but significant improvement over controls in mindfulness, attention, executive functioning, negative behaviour, depression and anxiety/stress", while "no improvements were found for wellbeing or social behaviour" (Jennings, in press). On the other hand, a meta-analysis by Zarate, Maggin and Passmore (2019) of 18 studies involving teachers found significant improvement in teachers' wellbeing. One fact we can observe from these findings and from the MYRIAD project is that MBIs have a better impact on adults than on young people. These findings also show the complexity of implementing MBIs in schools from a universal model and the need to understand more deeply what works for whom and where. In the context

of this study, when I focus on instrumental implementations I will have in mind programmes that suit with this thin approach such as the MiSP programmes (Paws b and Dot b, particularly) in the UK setting.

Turning the reflection to the main features of the dominant research in this field, it is possible to conclude that there are relevant limitations. For instance, the study conducted by Semple, Droutman and Ann (2017), which reviewed ten mindfulness programmes for schools running in the US, concluded that "we simply do not know which of these programs (or their varying components) is effective, for whom, how, or why. Given the limited evidence, we are unable to make any confident assertions about [their effectiveness]" (p. 49). On the other hand, Roeser, Greenberg, Frazier, Galla, Semenov and Warren (2022) affirm that most of the research in this field is delivered from weakly built experimental designs and a split meta-theory. A meta-theory is an epistemological perspective from which theories and methods are constructed (Overton, 2007). According to Overton (2007), there are two fundamental meta-theories: split and relational meta-theories. Split meta-theory is a Cartesian approach to investigation characterised by reductionism (mono-causality of phenomena), linear causality (A produces B), dualism (a dichotomous view of reality, e.g. mind/body), and based on mechanical metaphors. Based on this distinction, Roeser et al. (2022) suggest that what is missing in most of the current research in this field is a relational or more holistic approach which considers schools systemically and from a developmental perspective: "More qualitative, interpretative, and action research on implementation in whole schools are needed" (p. 10). Roeser et al. (2022) recommend improved experimental research complemented by more developmental research, which considers the relational, cultural, contextual, ethical and developmental dimensions of the impact of mindfulness programmes in schools.

2.5. Why is this research needed?

As shown in the last section, most of the current research in the field of mindfulness in education has been realised from a quantitative, individualistic and split perspective (Roeser et al., 2022). This means that, generally speaking,

most of these studies ascribe to an unquestioned ‘methodological monism’ which, following Feyerabend (2010/1975), refers to the paradigmatic belief that one specific scientific approach is able to access and offer a complete understanding of every phenomenon: specifically that a quantitative-experimental perspective should be enough to tell us all we need to know about the complex interactions between mindfulness and education. Several researchers have noticed and manifested the usual limitations of the research in this field, among which are: (1) the need for more and high-quality qualitative research (Shapiro, Rechtschaffen, and de Sousa, 2016); (2) the need to complement qualitative description from participants with insightful interpretations to find deeper meaning, e.g. through thematic analysis (Singh, Lancioni, Winton, Karazsia and Singh, 2013); (3) the need to connect this topic with broader relevant educational problems regarding the nature of teachers' work and the purposes of education from a more critical perspective (McCaw, 2020); (4) the need to address these questions from multiple research perspectives (Ergas and Hadar, 2019); and (5) the need for more comprehensive explorations of teachers' benefits and how these benefits are manifested in the whole school process (Emerson et al., 2017).

Of particular interest is the last report of the MYRIAD project (described above) in which Kuyken et al. (2022) share their findings on the potential prevention of mental health issues in adolescents through a mindfulness programme they have conducted in the last eight years. The main finding of this research is the impact of the implemented mindfulness programme was similar to the usual social-emotional learning provision. From here, Boyce (2022) published a non-scientific article with relevant conclusions derived from interviews with key persons involved in the project. Although the implementation failed to prevent adolescent mental health problems, it showed benefits for teachers’ wellbeing and the school climate. Among Boyce’s conclusions, we can identify two crucial ideas regarding this investigation: (1) the need to investigate with a focus on a whole-school approach, and (2) the need to start with adults, i.e. teachers, before scaling the implementation to pupils. In this sense, the present study’s approach of exploring the characteristics and potential impact of an integral

implementation and giving voice to teachers' perspectives is a pertinent and meaningful contribution.

Wigelsworth and Quinn (2020), on the other hand, conducted qualitative research on teachers' perceptions of MBIs through interviews with ten English teachers, and arrived at some conclusions relevant to this study, as follows. (1) It is necessary to give more voice to teachers for a more comprehensive understanding of the potential benefits of mindfulness in schools. (2) Including teachers with prior experience of offering mindfulness training in schools in studies is relevant. (3) It is necessary to consider the context in which mindfulness implementation occurs. Given the partial similarities between this research and the recently quoted study, it is possible to observe that this investigation covers all the suggestions of these researchers. This study (1) focuses on teachers' perceptions of the current mindfulness implementation in school contexts; (2) includes teachers from England and Wales with different degrees of experience offering mindfulness training in schools; and (3) in the third cycle of this research, it focuses on the teachers' views regarding a more integral implementation of mindfulness in schools, from which valuable and meaningful guidelines arose. In this sense, this research explored, from the teachers' perspective, the usual current implementations and the potential for a more systemic and evolving implementation, covering to some extent the gaps derived from the research suggestions mentioned above.

Thus, considering what has been said regarding the limitations of current research in the field of mindfulness in education, this study represents a contribution in at least three dimensions. Firstly, the focus is on the experienced mindfulness teachers' perspectives of the pro and cons of mainstream implementation and the potential for a more integral implementation in schools. Secondly, the method was based on an exploratory and dialogical onto-epistemological perspective of access to the phenomenon through hermeneutics and contemplative approaches, a methodological approach informed by action research and a qualitative data analysis based on thematic analysis, and the use of reliable online databases for the different stages of the literature review, such as Google Scholar, Web of Science and the University of Nottingham online

library. Finally, my attitude as a curious, engaged, respectful and self-conscious researcher was inspired by an itinerant rather than iterative dynamic in the investigative process. This distinction offered by Ingold (2017) is a core seal of my research attitude to this qualitative study, meaning that I have kept the focus on the phenomenon and the changing interactional process of conversation with participants rather than on following pre-established methodological steps and procedures, and implying a personal engagement with the topic, the research process, participants' experiences, and a meaningful contribution to the field of human flourishing in school education. In this sense, this study can be understood not just as qualitative but as the execution of this method in a minor key (following Ingold, 2017), emphasising the experience of/with the phenomenon, interpersonal interactions and interpretations, instead of rules, procedures, phases and objectivity.

2.6. Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the state-of-the-art of the relationship between mindfulness and school education to date in order to justify the need for this research and frame the findings and discussions that will be developed later in this thesis. I have provided a preliminary definition of mindfulness, an explanation of its origins, a brief contemporary history, and the principal modalities in which it has been implemented in schools and researched in the last two decades. I have also portrayed some of the most significant features of the current education system and the most common ways through which mindfulness has been introduced into it, considering the positive and critical dimensions of this relationship. Finally, I have included a critical approach to the research in the field, explaining the predominance of a therapeutic model focused on individual wellbeing to the detriment of a whole-school approach focused on systemic flourishing. I have thus made a case for the need for qualitative research like my study, which can address some of the historical gaps and limitations of the mainstream quantitative and over-simplified research in this field.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

Introduction

As was explained in the Introduction, this research investigates teachers' perspectives on the current implementation of mindfulness programmes within schools in England and Wales. This general question implies two different and complementary queries: one regarding the pros and cons of mainstreaming mindfulness programmes, and another relating to the potentiality of a more integral implementation. As most of the research in this field has taken a quantitative approach (Crawford, Joseph and Sellman, 2020), overlooking depth from research participants' responses (Van Dam, Earleywine, and Borders, 2010), the methodology adopted in this study has two particularities: (1) it is based on a broad qualitative approach to investigation, and (2) its methodological dimension is subordinated to a philosophical hermeneutics orientation. This means, following Gadamer (1960/1991), that openness to learning from others through a genuine process of conversation supercedes any narrower methodological approach, i.e. the methodology is at the service of this existential attitude to the research.

The general question expressed previously is divided into four more specific aims: (1) understanding teachers' perspectives on the importance of a personal mindfulness practice for their personal and work lives.; (2) understanding teachers' perceptions of the current most common school mindfulness programmes in England and Wales; (3) exploring teachers' ideas regarding the potential of a more integral implementation; and (4) gleaning teachers' evaluation of the current most common mindfulness training for teachers in England and Wales. These four aims were the principal focus in the second cycle of this process, while in the third cycle I explored in depth the third aim of generating an alternative more integral view for contributing to the field of mindfulness in education.

In order to accomplish these aims, this chapter presents the different central aspects of the methodology adopted to undertake this investigation and their rationale. Its purpose is to make clear how the research has been conducted and why I have chosen to carry it out in this particular way. Thus I will discuss (1) research context; (2) my onto-epistemological position, i.e. my preference for an interpretive and qualitative approach to understanding reality over the reductive and objective positivist worldview; (3) my choice of action research and a contemplative approach as more appropriate methodologies to orient the research process; (4) the pertinence of using interviews and focus groups as the most suitable methods to give voice to participants, incorporating my reflections through a conversational process; (5) the choice of thematic data analysis as a flexible and respectful form for accessing and interpreting data; (6) the research design informed by action research, in which four cycles took place; and (7) ethical considerations. This chapter, alongside the previous one, represents the first cycle of the research.

My deep aspiration for this investigation, and my methodology aligned with this, has been to walk a path in which relational encounters through authentic dialogue allow meaningful insights from teachers who have already undergone a journey in the territory of mindfulness in schools. I have kept close to Ingold's (2017) suggestion that any significant research process should be 'with' instead of 'about' people.

3.1. Research context

There are some contextual considerations worth mentioning in order to understand the nature of the research process regarding its opportunities and limitations. Firstly, data collection was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic (over 2020 and 2021), affecting the initial plan to do interviews and focus groups in a presential format and incorporating field observation. After the start of the pandemic every interaction with participants was virtual, losing part of the intended interpersonal connection and making the process less fluent. Also, the pandemic made it challenging for participants to find time to commit to the research. One important benefit of this condition was the opportunity to

meet and interview teachers from several places in England and Wales, which otherwise probably would not have happened.

A second condition relates to the diversity of people participating in this research, which included school and external teachers with different degrees of expertise in mindfulness. This diversity is also expressed in the mixture of public and private schools involved in the research. In fact, the incorporation of teachers from Wales, although not considered from the beginning, was a suggested plus for the findings of the study, highlighting the relevant influence of cultural and policy factors at the base of mindfulness implementation in schools.

A last factor was the uncertainty derived from the pandemic situation in terms of the participants' availability and the concomitant stress this placed on me as a researcher. Although I had to face a changing and unpredictable period, it also opened up an opportunity to be more creative in the generation of encounters, the focus group being the best example of this. Indeed, I think that having had four long sessions with some participants was only possible owing to the virtual modality. Finally, this virtuality posed the challenge of taking measures regarding confidentiality and maintaining trust and fluency in our interaction.

3.2. Onto-epistemological perspective

Based on the following reflections, I will argue for the nature of, and rationale for, the qualitative approach this research has adopted. While positivism (the philosophical basis of scientificist and quantitative methodology) affirms that there is no difference between understanding natural and social phenomena, for which experiments are needed in order to achieve general and objective laws (Oldroyd, 1986), qualitative approaches to research stress "the world of experience as it is lived, felt and undergone by people acting in social situations" (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p. 24). Among the several variants of qualitative approaches (e.g. phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, constructionism), this research is grounded in an onto-epistemological perspective based on phenomenological hermeneutics and social constructionism, qualitative methodology informed by action research and

contemplative approaches, the use of semi-structured interviews and focus groups as methods for data collection and thematic analysis as the primary method for data analysis. The onto-epistemology of this research can be called interpretive, which means that the reality experienced by humans takes meaning only from an interdependent, contextualised and shared world, and the unique way to understand that reality is through interpretive conversational interactions, in contrast with the positivist affirmation of the independence of reality and the objectivity of knowledge (Cohen et al., 2018). This approach is synthesised by Nietzsche's (2020) celebrated sentence according to which there are not facts but interpretations (Nietzsche, 1967/1901) and developed later by Heidegger (1996/1927) through the core idea of human existence as openness of a world already interpreted from a particular historical-contextual perspective. From here, it is possible to establish a clear distinction between the reality meant by human interpretation, which we can understand as a world, and the reality that inexorably is beyond every human comprehension. Thus, in this context, ontology refers to a conception of reality as an implicitly significative/interpreted world of human existence, while epistemology signifies the interactional means by which we can access understanding of that world from a specific, explicit scientific community's perspective (Kuhn and Hacking, 2012/1962).

In particular, the principal interpretive approaches I used to support my chosen methodology are the traditions of phenomenological hermeneutics and social constructionism. Let us start with the second, to develop more fully the hermeneutical perspective on which constructionism, in my view, is based. Among the hugely complex scenario of different types of constructionism, this research is based on Gergen's (2001) view, according to which "[f]or constructionists, all claims to 'the real' are traced to processes of relationship, and there is no extra-cultural means of ultimately privileging one construction of reality over another" (p. 8). This means that every attempt to understand phenomena necessarily involves an interpersonal process of co-construction through conversations situated in specific sociocultural contexts. Therefore, it is impossible to aspire to objective knowledge with universal value. From this definition, it is possible to find four core features of all knowledge: (1)

indeterminacy, i.e. knowledge is always open to new re-signification; (2) polyvocality, i.e. our voices are composed of many other, usually unrecognised, voices from the past; (3) contextualisation, i.e. meaning emerges from a specific material and symbolic context; and (4) pragmatics, i.e. language is not a mere instrument of transmission of information but a constitutive characteristic of relationships (Gergen, 2001).

On the other hand, the phenomenological-hermeneutics tradition is based, in this setting, on the main postulates of three of the most influential twentieth-century philosophers: Husserl, Heidegger and Gadamer. For Husserl (1997/1927), phenomenology consists of the effort to go "back to the things", going beyond the natural assumptions of our everyday life by putting in brackets our common-sense understanding to contemplate phenomena as they manifest to our consciousness in a method called *epoché*. This implies personal training to take some distance from our habitual mental functioning to open a phenomenological attitude of openness or "beginner's mind" (one of the core attitudes of mindfulness practice). The main problem with the Husserlian position, for the effects of this research, is related to his belief in the possibility of objective knowledge, although his key ideas on the interference of our "natural attitude" and the necessity of self-transformation remain relevant for this investigative path.

At this point, it is possible to cite the main contribution of Heidegger (1996/1927) to this methodological approach in at least three veins. Firstly, Heidegger affirms that human beings are ontologically hermeneutic, meaning that every understanding is an interpretation featured by a circularity. This circularity means that when we try to understand any phenomenon, we have a previous interpretive position with three main dimensions: fore-having (we already have a specific context in which we are dwelling), fore-sight (we already have a specific point of view from which something is comprehended), and fore-conception (we have already a specific set of concepts and ideas taken from our cultural background from which we are theorising on some phenomenon). However, the opposite is also true: when we interpret something, we always have a previous implicit understanding of what we want to know. Secondly, in

Heideggerian thought, every interpretation of the world starts from a self-interpretation of the human being themselves. This is why the degree to which existence reaches some ethical integrity or authenticity is a fundamental part of every endeavour to understand some aspect of the world. In this sense, Husserl's phenomenology is transformed into a phenomenological hermeneutic in which both careful and mindful observation and interpretation are fundamental aspects of every understanding (Grondin, 1994; Orange, 2011). Thirdly, Heidegger states a conception of truth as *aletheia*, i.e. as uncovering and unconcealment of the being of beings, which is rooted in the ontological structure of human existence as being-in-the-world, i.e. as an openness able to disclose worlds of meanings. This locates truth at a more primordial level than its usual conception as representation, i.e. as the reflection of things out there in the real world in ideas in the mind, representing the epistemological paradigm dominant in modernity since Descartes established the dualism of subject-object, mind-matter, and its aspiration for objective knowledge about the world (Heidegger, 1996/1927).

Following Huttunen and Kakkori (2020), this conception has relevant implications for qualitative research in general and this investigation in particular, insofar as the search for truth is utterly based on the existential, contextual and historical situation from which a specific researcher opens (uncovers) an aspect of the world from their particular biographical and historical situation. In this sense, truth "can be described only as dynamic happening, not as a stable correspondence between sentences and things" (Huttunen and Kakkori, 2020, p. 10). Thus instead of searching for an objective and universal truth, this has to be understood as the simultaneous discovering and concealment of a facet of a phenomenon in its relationship to specific modes of being in the world in the dynamic process of existing (Heidegger, 1996/1927; Inwood, 2010). Thus we can affirm, following Heidegger, that ontology, epistemology, and ethics are interwoven in each project of experiencing and comprehending ourselves and the world, transcending dualism toward an integrated onto-epistemological perspective.

Inspired by this view and the dialogical approach of Plato's philosophy, Gadamer (1991/1960) makes a crucial step forward to transform hermeneutics into an interpersonal and conversational process. Firstly, hermeneutics is something previous to any methodological approach, being an ontological constitution of human existence in the form of language as "the medium in and through which we exist and perceive our world" (Gadamer, 1977, p. 29). From a Gadamerian perspective, every understanding is only possible in a conversational process when this is a genuine one, which means that we are available to be transformed by the other's point of view and we follow the spontaneous way that the conversation unavoidably goes while we have a clear and decided will of understanding:

> We say that we "conduct" a conversation, but the more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. Thus, a genuine conversation is never the one that we wanted to conduct. Rather, it is generally more correct to say that we fall into conversation, or even that we become involved in it. (Gadamer, 1991/1960, p. 383)

According to this, from our starting point of misunderstanding, or even of not understanding, it is possible, if we are in the right hermeneutical attitude, to be open to the possibility of being willing to learn from the other, to arrive at an unknown territory and to expand our experiential and cognitive world. This happens when the hermeneutical horizons of each one participant are put into interaction and a fusion of horizons takes place, a moment from which we are aware not only of what the other is communicating but also the specific lived context from which that other says what they say, allowing the creation of a third common horizon within which understanding and empathy can emerge. This is the core of a "hermeneutical attitude" in which we put ourselves in a genuine disposition to learn from others:

> Hermeneutics is the art of reaching an understanding of something or with someone [...] this "coming to an understanding" of our practical situations and what we must do in them is not monological; rather, it has the character of a conversation. We are dealing with each other. Our human form of life has an "I and thou" character and an "I and we" character, and also a "we and we" character. In our practical affairs we depend on our ability to arrive at an understanding. And reaching an

understanding happens in conversation, in a dialogue. (Gadamer, Dutt, and Palmer, 2001, p. 79)

Two essential ideas derive from this hermeneutical view. Firstly, in contrast with the positivist defence of methodology and its supposed objectivity, is that the most crucial approach for investigating any aspect of the world (especially human dimensions) should be this existential openness and commitment to the truth beyond (even before or independently) any specific 'scientific' methodology. In this regard, a core sail of Gadamerian hermeneutics is his conception of understanding as an 'event' rather than as something derived from a 'procedure' (Gadamer, 1991/1960), which means that understanding is an emergent experience from the encounter with an aspect of the world (see also Grondin, 2005). As Caputo (2018) states: "[h]ermeneutics itself is neither a method nor a meta-methodology that monitors particular methods but a philosophical meditation upon the sort of truth that emerges in the various humanistic disciplines" (p. 89). Secondly, this ontological and dialogical perspective of understanding implies a fallibilist hermeneutical attitude (Orange, 2010) toward research, which means developing a high sensitivity to every perspective as contextually and historically conditioned, inspiring openness and flexibility in our orientation to knowledge.

This orientation is in line with Ingold's (2018) reflection on the relevance of scientific research in a 'minor key' as the most genuine access to the complexity of reality. In contrast with the scientist conception of research as a process of trying to prove or disprove pre-conceived hypotheses based on standard and replicable procedures in order to achieve universal outcomes (science in a 'major key'), a scientific approach in a minor key takes into consideration that real problems are very complex and do not admit a simple solution, but necessitate a 'patient experimentation' through which the researcher has to be attentive to the unpredictable directions that phenomena take, leaving space for authentic surprise and transformative understanding. This approach to research requires an open attitude to the spontaneity of the investigative process, rather than the pursuit of control and predictability (see section 1.2.).

As stated above, the question and the aims of this research, which imply the endeavour of understanding teachers' experience and perspective of the current mindfulness programmes implemented within schools, required a methodology of openness (i.e. oriented to the other's subjectivity) and flexibility (i.e. sensitive to the nuances of the interactions). I have found this methodology in the philosophical ground of what is usually called 'qualitative research', which, in my view, is closer to a philosophical position than to a scientific perspective. In this vein, my whole approach to this research is closer to an attitude of beginner's mind than to an expert role, although my positionality is clear from the beginning, assuming from a hermeneutical point of view that I cannot start this journey from a tabula rasa but recognising my own assumptions about the problems and questions I intend to address in this investigation. Thus, being aware of my own beliefs, I adopt the role of a learner willing to give voice to the participants of this research, leaving the process of conversation to orient each next step.

3.3. Methodological approaches

Following the distinction stated by Cohen et al. (2018) between *methodology* and *methods*, the former refers to the general approach to accessing the understanding of phenomena and justifying the methods chosen, while the latter are the instruments through which to collect and analyse data. Thus, based on the reflections of the last section and the aims of this investigation, among the several qualitative methodologies (e.g. case study, (auto)ethnography, grounded theory, narrative, biography, phenomenology, hermeneutics), this research has been informed by a specific attitude from action research and contemplative research. However, both these approaches will only be considered partially, i.e. at the point at which they are helpful for the purpose of this research. Among the many definitions of action research, the Piggot-Irvine, Rowe, and Ferkins (2015) perspective is helpful in this context, according to which action research is "a collaborative transformative approach with joint focus on rigorous data collection, knowledge generation, reflection and distinctive action/change elements that pursue practical solutions" (p. 548). In the context of this research, the idea related to the pursuit of 'action/change' is the most delicate to explain

insofar as this research has a clear transformational purpose which has been realised in a way that can be considered indirect, i.e. not in 'real' fieldwork within concrete schools, but through the co-elaboration of a guideline for potential integral implementation of mindfulness within schools and of a Vision Statement supported by participants and other scholars in this field (see Chapter 8).

Furthermore, three main traits of action research have been considered to foster consciousness and transformation. Two of these, suggested by McNiff (2010), are self-reflection and a commitment to improving the conditions of the phenomenon we want to research. While the first term implies locating attention not only on others but also on ourselves to be aware of our assumptions and each step of the research process, the second refers to a motivation to enhance understanding and transformation in the praxis of practitioners, in this case, teachers implementing mindfulness within schools. The third trait is collaboration in the research process (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992), which implies establishing a relationship of trust and co-participation in the process of knowledge generation and possible transformation, making transparent from the beginning what level (the personal, the professional or the political) is intended to be transformed by research (Townsend, 2013) and achieving a sufficient degree of agreement on this. To summarise in Townsend's words: "action research […] aspires to generate knowledge and improve social action simultaneously" (p. 334).

There were some relevant reasons why action research informed this investigation. Firstly, this methodology is explicitly intended to meet the purpose of giving voice to teachers. Another reason refers to the nature of this research, which is processual (made in stages) and dialogical (made through interaction), which fits well with features of this method, such as being cyclical and collaborative. Finally, a third justification for the use of action research is related to the transformational purpose of this research, one of the main aspects of this method. As stated before, although this study intended to fit only partially in this method, these core ideas fitted well with the spirit of this investigation.

As examples of the aforementioned attitude informed by action research, I would like to share a couple of processes conducted in this research which were not considered from the beginning. The first is the design and execution of a focus group after a process of individual interviews, with the purpose (emerging from the interview phase) of co-developing general guidelines for a more integral implementation of mindfulness within schools, after the analysis of the first set of data and the conclusion on the over-instrumentalised way of implementing mindfulness in schools from the mainstream approach to this. These general guidelines (see Chapter 6) were co-constructed in a collaborative process with some participants, with the clear motivation of contributing to improving the current implementation of mindfulness within school contexts, and as a result of self-reflection related to the interview process linked to my critical literature review. The second process is represented by the Vision Statement on Integral Mindfulness, which my supervisors and I wrote as a brief statement that exposes the main ideas for an integral approach derived from the whole research process (see Chapter 8, Section 8.5.). This was shared with participants and other scholars, receiving insightful feedback that allowed me to refine it and to take a political angle. Once again, the process undergone to achieve this outcome followed, in general, the three action research principles explained above.

On the other hand, from a contemplative perspective, I took basic ideas as inspiration which informed a core contemplative attitude as a researcher toward the investigation process. As a definition of this contemplative research attitude, I share the following words by Konecki (2018):

> Contemplation is a kind of activity that leads to a certain state of mind, and at the same time, it is a method of obtaining knowledge about some objects at the present time, and also about getting knowledge itself, here and now, by mindful insight into perceived (and also imagined) phenomena or objects, and also into the self. (p. 21)

This attitude has been one in which a first-person approach was considered seriously as a fount of knowledge, taking into account my own experience as a researcher and my own level of self-knowledge from which a mindful disposition has been applied to each step of the research in the relationship with others (Lin, Oxford, and Culham, 2016). In the 1980s Varela, Thompson, and

Rosch (2016), pioneers of this approach to research, stated that good science should combine a rigorous third-person approach to phenomena with an open, focused and clear introspective first-person approach to experience. Thus, instead of trying to control and predict the results, researchers cultivate an attitude of "openness, receptivity, kindness, and moreness" (Lin et al., 2016, p. 19), transforming the research process into an existential adventure in which not only cognitive but emotional, relational, ethical and spiritual dimensions are implied. This cultivation of awareness by researchers plays a significant role in the process of data collection regarding the results of the research, which is aligned with the Heideggerian idea of hermeneutics as originally self-surveillance, integrating ontological, ethical and epistemological approaches in only one investigative attitude: "We believe that we need to link knowledge to our awareness level, energy level and virtue level" (Lin et al., 2016, p. 144).

Similarly, there was an important reason why the contemplative perspective informed this investigation. I have developed the whole research process from a presence and attention entirely focused on the present moment, incorporating mindfulness practices explicitly in the focus group phase. Also, the way in which I analysed and wrote the findings and discussions took into consideration not only the participants' perspectives but also my own experience and reflection regarding their experiences and our relationships. The first-person approach of this method has been a relevant part of every stage of this study.

As an illustration of my own experience of developing this contemplative attitude of openness and curiosity toward the experience from a first-person perspective, I can mention that I have personal experience of practising mindfulness for over 12 years, training in MBSR which certified me as a mindfulness teacher, work experience of offering several mindfulness workshops for the general public and for schools particularly for over eight years; and that during the research process, I have been engaged with several courses of mindfulness, such as 'Compassion Cultivation Training' (an 8-week course offered by Nirakara in June 2021), 'Compassionate Mind Training for Education' (a 6-week course offered by the University of Derby in November 2021) and 'Living in the Present' (an 8-week course co-created by Sarah

Silverton in September 2022). Two of these programmes came to my awareness because I have kept in contact with some of the participants of my research, helping me to understand progressively and in greater depth the potentialities of mindfulness for education. A couple of points I would like to share here are that (1) I have been transitioning from a clinical approach (my background is clinical psychology) to mindfulness to an educational approach, from a beginner's mind; and (2) I have been taking part in a great network of people interested in implementing mindfulness in education from a more transformative and meaningful perspective, contributing actively to the exchange of ideas and experiences, and being receptive to new experiences and possibilities.

3.4. Research Methods for Data Collection

The interpretive approach followed in this investigation, considered one of the main aspects of postmodern thought and its social constructionist conception of knowledge (Kvale, 1996), oriented my decision to use, and informed how I understood, the interview and focus group processes within the context of this qualitative research. According to Cohen et al. (2018), the principal benefits of interviews are their flexibility and the possibility to explore phenomena in more depth, compared with more quantitative instruments such as surveys. For Kvale (1996), there are four core features of the type of knowledge that emerges from an interview: conversational (through the dialogue between two persons on a common topic of interest), narrative (in stories told), linguistic (as the medium in which reality is constituted) and contextual (from specific and idiosyncratic interpersonal settings). The interview process can be seen, to use a travel metaphor, as an adventure through uncertain territories in the company of the interviewee, in whose experience both can be transformed: "The journey may not only lead to new knowledge; the traveller might change as well" (Kvale, 1996, p. 4).

The construction of the interview questions was informed by the hierarchical focusing approach proposed by Tomlinson (1989). According to this approach, interviews have to accomplish two goals simultaneously: to gain new knowledge from participants and to cover the whole research agenda. Some of the strategies

followed were: (1) to choose the main aspects of the research topic to be elicited from participants; (2) to maintain a gradual progression from open to closed prompts; and (3) to keep the interview as open-ended as possible in a non-directive style of interaction. This approach requires the researcher to have a clear focus on the phenomenon under exploration alongside high sensitivity and curiosity regarding participants' experiences, knowledge, reflections and backgrounds.

Also, based on a contemplative perspective, an interview can be understood as a process of meditation itself, which means that the interviewer can adopt a disposition of “beginner’s mind”, allowing enough space and time for the interviewee's expression (including periods of silence), avoiding any interference and promoting a relaxed and enjoyable experience for both participants (Janesick, 2015). In this sense, an interview seems to have an affinity with the Gademerian conception of a genuine conversation outlined above, which can take an unexpected direction enabling the emergence of new knowledge and personal transformation for both interviewer and interviewee. Thus an interview can be the best way to make the research a process of co-participation and co-construction of new experiences and knowledge instead of a mere external excursion into the other’s world. In this respect, Ingold's (2017, 2018) ideas support this perspective on interviews and the research process as a whole. Firstly, Ingold (2018) explains that the best anthropology, which we can extend to the best educational research, is an investigation 'with' rather than 'of' people, which implies a deep process of human relationship. Secondly, every transformative educational process, and therefore every research project, can be understood as a shared attentional experience rather than a pure transmission of information (Ingold, 2017). For this author, the word 'attention' implies specific attitudes and behaviours such as caring, waiting, being present and going along. These ideas have been essential in each step of this research process.

In the case of this study, I chose to use semi-structured interviews because open-ended questions allow for covering the research aims and collecting new information simultaneously (Cohen et al., 2018), in line with the hermeneutic and constructivist orientations.

As the focus group can be considered a group interview, most of those qualities mentioned above apply to this process. However, the main contribution of a focus group is that it is based on the interaction of several people from whom richer of data can be obtained in a shorter time, offering more diverse and nuanced information on a specific topic (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Also, my experience as a psychotherapist for over 15 years has been beneficial in conducting both interviews and focus groups. Further reasons for using complementary focus group interviews will be offered below, in the Research Design section of this chapter.

The sample consisted of 15 teachers, 13 women and two men. Seven teachers work at state schools, two at private schools and six as external mindfulness teachers. Two participants are from Wales and the rest are from England. The recruitment of participants was carried out using the snowball model: thus the first participants were contacted based on my principal supervisor's networks, then these persons referred me to other potential participants. Each interview lasted one and a half hours and took place between October 11th 2020 and May 15th 2021. In general, most participants are experienced practitioners and teachers of mindfulness in schools, representing a select and purposive sample whose value is their specific knowledge of mindfulness practices within schools in England and Wales. Interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The design of questions for the semi-structured interview was informed by the hierarchical focusing approach (Tomlinson, 1989). This strategy seeks to build questions that generate pre-planned and spontaneous responses simultaneously from participants so that the main research questions and aims are incorporated into a clear and explicit interview agenda (see Table 2).

Research Aim	Interview Open Question	Key References
Aim 1 Recognising the participants' perception of benefits of their mindfulness practices for their personal and work experiences.	**Question 1** How is your experience with mindfulness in your personal and work everyday life?	Hanh and Weare, 2017 Hyland, 2011 Jennings, 2015 Shapiro et al., 2016

	Prompts 1. What kind of practices do you do? 2. How often do you practice? 3. What benefits do you perceive from these practices? 4. What obstacles do you perceive to doing them? 5. Do you see any link between your own practice and your way of implementing mindfulness within the classroom? 6. Could you offer a personal definition of mindfulness from your experience?	
Aim 2 Understanding the participants' evaluation of the most common current implementation of mindfulness programmes within school contexts.	**Question 2** How is, in your perspective, the most common current implementation of mindfulness within the school context? **Prompts** 1. What is the main purpose of the current implementation of mindfulness programmes within schools? 2. Could you describe the main features/characteristics of these current programmes? 3. What benefits do you see to this implementation regarding pupils and teachers? 4. What limitations do you see to this implementation regarding pupils and teachers?	Ergas and Hadar, 2017 Simpson, 2017 Weare and Bethune, 2021
Aim 3 Understanding the participants' view / imagination of a more integral / holistic way of implementing mindfulness within school contexts.	**Question 3** How would you envisage a more integral/holistic implementation of mindfulness in schools? **Prompts** 1. What would be the main purpose of a more integral implementation of mindfulness within schools?	Berila, 2016 Ergas, 2019 Forbes, 2019 Reveley, 2016 Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2019

	2. What would the main features of this more integral implementation be? 3. What would the benefits and limitations be to this kind of implementation? 4. How feasible do you think this more holistic/integral implementation would be? Why?	
Aim 4 Knowing the participants' evaluation of the most common current mindfulness training courses for teachers.	**Question 4** What do you think about the current programmes for training teachers in mindfulness in the UK? **Prompts** 1. What are the main merits? 2. What are the main limitations? 3. Would you make any change in these programmes for teachers? What changes specifically?	Crane et al., 2020 Forbes, 2016 Jennings, 2015 Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2019 Simpson, 2017

Table 2. Interview questions and their derivation from initial research aims and literature review

On the other hand, the focus group process included six participants, and its design was based on reflection on the previous cycle. This process took place between June and July 2021 in four fortnightly sessions of one and a half hours each, with the exception of session three, which lasted two and a half hours. This design considered the title of each session, its purpose, its structure and the topics/actions planned to organise the process, as shown in Table 3.

Title	Purpose(s)	Structure	Topics / Action
Session 1: Introduction to the process (1,5 hours)	1. Defining the purpose(s) 2. Personal presentations	1. Introduction to the process 2. Mindfulness practice (5 min) 3. Personal presentations	1. Double purpose: for research and for us as teachers 2. For research: to develop together general guidelines for a more integral implementation of Mf in schools

		4. Discussion about the proposed purposes 5. Closing: next steps	3. Metaphor for this process: a 'trellis' to be filled 4. Formal aspects: recording, confidentiality (fake names in transcriptions), potential use of information, external transcriber 5. Setting: confidentiality, trust, freedom, creativity, collaboration, respect, kindness, speak slowly, email communication for missing or complementary information 6. Questions for personal presentations: a) Motivation b) Work role c) Why mindfulness in schools? d) How to implement Mf in a system with other goals? Any conflict? 6. Organisation of next sessions: dates, times, text to read, roles, etc.
Session 2: Sharing experiences and reflections (1,5 hours)	To share experiences and reflections from own implementations and from articles	1. Welcome and brief summary of the last session 2. Mindfulness practice (guided by a participant) 3. Sharing meaningful experiences with mindfulness in the school 4. Sharing reflections from articles 5. Closing: sensations about this session	1. Initial practice guided by me 2. Summary: - Motivations - Topics discussed - We finished with a short and beautiful Mf practice kindly guided by Jo 3. Topics for this session: Could you share with the group some meaningful experiences from your implementation of Mf in schools, please? 4. Reflection from articles: a) What do you think about the idea that an instrumental implementation

			of Mf can generate an "iatrogenic effect"? b) What do you think about the distinction between Mf "in" and Mf "as" education? 5. Closing comments
Session 3: Guideline elaboration (2,5 hours)	To design a general guideline for implementing mindfulness integrally	1. Mindfulness practice (guided by a participant) 2. Instructions for this session: a) Recognising key contextual conditions (policies, institutional, etc.) b) Defining core principles and ideas c) Defining key procedures of implementation d) Sharing examples from real work life 3. Closing	1. Initial Mf practice guided by Silvia 2. Brief explanation of the purpose and the plan for this longer session: a) Purpose: co-constructing together a general guideline from your experiences about how to do a more integral implementation of Mf in schools, useful for any school inside and outside of the UK. b) Plan (trellis): to share ideas and experiences based on some key questions. Anyone can suggest other questions as well. 3. Main topics and questions: - What do you think? - Do you have any experience on this to share with us? (1) What **contextual conditions** are required for a more integral implementation of Mf in schools? (Government and institutional policies, for instance) (2) Which can be considered **key principles and ideas** for a more integral implementation? (purpose and meaning of this implementation, for instance?) (3) Which can be considered **key procedures**

			for a more integral implementation? (how to do it and what to do in real school life?) 4. Next time: Discussing some relevant and slightly controversial points and sharing experiences and conclusions from this process 5. Closing: Any words or phrases about how you are leaving the session today?
Session 4: Conclusions and closing (1,5 hours)	To discuss some key relevant and controversial points and share some personal conclusions	1. Mindfulness practice (guided by a participant) 2. Final pending ideas 3. Final key pending questions 4. Closing words	1. Initial Mf practice guided by Mrs Mindfulness 2. Some controversial ideas emerging from previous sessions 3. Some pending key questions derived from previous sessions: a) What does a systemic implementation of Mf in a school mean? b) Explore further the idea of an evolving and spiral Mf curriculum. What does this model imply? c) What can be considered realistic expectations for mindfulness in education? What can it do and what can it not do? 4. Sharing personal experiences from this process: what has been valuable and what else may remain as a potential future path? 5. Closing words: a) Expression of gratitude b) Explanation of next steps in the research

			c) Future contact d) Final words from participants

Table 3. Structure of the focus group process based on the previous cycle

3.5. Research Methods for Data Analysis

In line with my intention to keep an open and flowing method for a rigorous and, at the same time, meaningful and creative analysis and interpretation of the information collected from the interviews and the focus groups, I chose thematic analysis as a method and used NVivo software for organising the data. In general, one of the principal challenges of qualitative data analysis is to reduce a vast amount of information into "manageable and comprehensive" categories (Cohen et al., 2018). The process of coding is one of the most common procedures for this, which means basically to ascribe a name or label to a set of data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). According to Braun and Clark (2006, 2019), thematic analysis is a flexible and useful instrument which can “provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data” (p. 78) alongside paradigmatic and theoretical freedom, allowing the use of this tool in the service of the research purpose rather than of the method itself.

This study used reflexive thematic analysis, which is defined as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 79). This emphasises that themes are not something objective but the result of our own interpretations, implying decision-making and creativity and in line with the hermeneutical onto-epistemology underpinning this study. An important feature of this method for this research, whose sample is small and in which my positionality as a researcher has been clear from the beginning, is that its validity does not depend predominantly on the size or prevalence of themes but on what Braun and Clark (2006) call their ‘keyness’ concerning the research question and the aims of the research. Also, following classifications by the same authors of different types of thematic analysis, this research can be understood chiefly as conducted from a theoretical rather than inductive approach, which means that the questions I had from the beginning oriented my observation, coding and choice of themes and sub-themes, with some exceptions

regarding some questions raised during the research process. Furthermore, in this research, I have developed a reflective approach to thematic analysis, insofar as my reflections on the data and the theme generation go beyond mere description toward complex and interwoven interpretations, which can be found particularly in the reflection chapters following the findings chapters (see Chapters 5 and 7).

On the other hand, the six phases for the process of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clark (2012) were particularly useful as a guide to approaching the data collected, avoiding the risk of losing focus and freedom in my relationship with the data and their connection with the experience of the participants. In this regard, I followed these steps:

(1) Familiarising with the data. Although the interview and focus group transcripts were realised by an external person for purposes of rigour and owing to my English level at that time, before and after transcription I read all material carefully, highlighting and taking notes about different aspects linked to my research question.

(2) Generating initial codes. In each phase of the data collection I read all the material, making a preliminary selection of codes in reference to my research question and my investigative aims, which was refined in a second reading in order to generate more precise, more pertinent and broader material.

(3) Searching for themes. As mentioned above, the election of themes was based, primarily, on the research aims, which allowed me to generate a consistent and coherent set of themes and sub-themes within which to gather the many diverse codes.

(4) Reviewing themes. This stage allowed me to elaborate on a narrower theme selection that was more accurate for the purpose and aims of this research. This process implied the task of interpreting what counted as pertinent/non-pertinent themes in this specific context in order to maintain a sustainable research focus.

(5) Defining and naming themes. Once themes and sub-themes were established, I did the work of naming them clearly, in order to make the task of defining them unnecessary and making the reading more accessible and fluent.

(6) Producing the report. This step was the part of the analytical process in which I invested more time and in which the interpretive approach of the research is revealed more explicitly. In fact, in each of the findings chapters I offer a reflection in which the literature review, participants' perspectives and my own thinking are interwoven to generate valuable and insightful meaning for the field of mindfulness in education. Furthermore, after each findings chapter, I have added a reflection chapter offering a more complex interpretation in which some key ideas are explained in detail, rooted both in participants' perceptions (with a third-person approach) and my own experience of and reflection on these (with a first-person approach). These two Reflection chapters were published in high-impact specialised journals, as shown later in the description of the respective research cycles.

Now, in order to clarify how data analysis was carried out in each phase, I will illustrate these processes for each research cycle, starting with the analysis of interviews and then continuing with focus groups.

3.5.1. Data Analysis of Interviews: An Illustration

As mentioned above, interview questions emerged from the research aims alongside the first literature review. Once all interviews were delivered, I coded them using NVivo software in order to organise emerging data in a more explicit form. Thus 96 codes emerged, which were organised into 12 initial categories. Comparing these categories with the research aims raised the task of reflecting on how they offer relevant information related to these aims. After this process, from the 12 categories it was possible to obtain ten pertinent themes. Looking carefully into the initial categories, it was possible to find 37 sub-themes within the main themes. Figure 3 summarises this coding and analysis process. The detailed interview data analysis can be found in Chapter 4, where relevant themes and sub-themes linked to the research question and aims are explained.

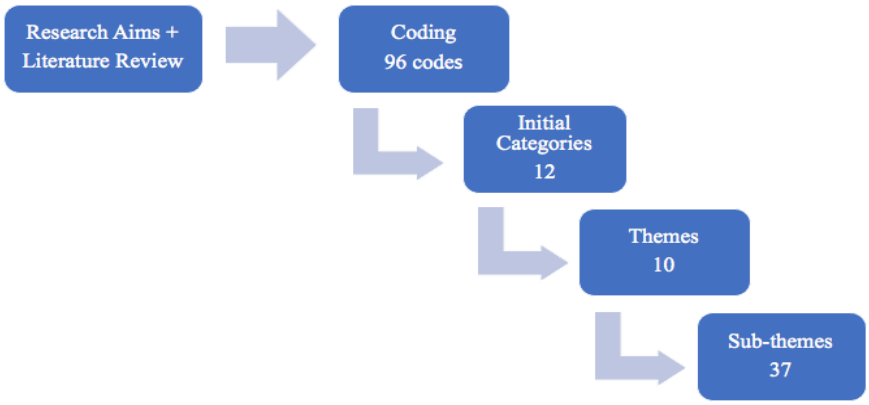


Figure 3. Analytical process to obtain themes and sub-themes from interviews

In what follows, I will illustrate the coding and analytical process to build themes and sub-themes in the second cycle of the research based on interviews by taking a particular example, i.e. the process through which I arrived at the theme 'Limitations' and its five sub-themes regarding the second Research Aim (see Table 7 in Chapter 4). This process is an essential part of the second cycle of this research (see Table 3 in this chapter), in which I followed the six steps suggested by Braun and Clark (2006). After familiarising myself with the whole dataset from the interviews, I returned to the research question and the four aims to guide the coding process. I ordered diverse data into specific initial codes, most of them related to the main topic, although some linked with other broader educational dimensions. Following this, again with my gaze focused on the research aims, I organised-interpreted multiple codes into broader pertinent categories. Then, with a lower set of categories, I reflected on them and created-interpreted the themes that appeared relevant, choosing a concise and accessible name for each one. Also, within each theme, I selected the most meaningful codes from the categories, giving them a self-explanatory name. This process is illustrated in Table 4 by showing one specific example of arriving at one theme with its sub-themes. In essence, I followed the same procedure to find-create the rest of the themes and sub-themes in this phase.

Research Aim	Emergent Codes	Extract Interview Transcript	Initial Category	Theme	Sub-themes
2. Participants' evaluation of current mindfulness programmes in schools	Difficult access for teachers	Silvia - you know what challenges schools is always money, um, you know if the training is expensive, they can´t afford it or they´ll only send one person, and then that person is so isolated in school that it´s almost impossible for a single person to, you know, continue with implementations	Disadvantages	Limitations	Budget constraints
	Lack of depth	Stewart - So I actually lead 8-week courses for adults. And I did that just because I wanted to personally have more, and I personally felt that the Mindfulness in Schools project was incredibly basic	Disadvantages	Limitations	Superficiality
	Lack of continuity	Rosa – we're lucky, we… we can do a six-week course, but then I think they should, perhaps give us the chance to… to improve our practice or do another course	Disadvantages	Limitations	Short duration
	Things to improve	Jo - And sadly, I have seen people deliver ".b" who don't, who don't necessarily, who have said that they have a mindfulness practice or training, but they're literally it's just a resource they can use in their lessons, and they're not really clear of the the underlying	Obstacles	Limitations	Over-standardisation

	Teachers' disengagement	themes and and so, therefore it's just the delivery then and there is a script, I have seen people read off the script, I personally don't feel any lesson should be scripted. Silvia - there´s the model of where mindfulness teachers you know who aren´t educated, come into schools and deliver the programme, and the teacher just gets a bit of time off while the external person is coming in and, and I can see that that, you know, having someone externally initially might be the beginning of something, but in a way it, all it does it´s just, uhm, not give the best introduction cause the person coming in doesn´t know the classroom, doesn´t know the children so um, the teachers are kind of "great I can go and do some marking" so they might not even sit and watch you know what´s happening and get involved themselves, so, you know there needs to be something that feels like it´s a relevant development for… you know for the whole of the school	Obstacles	Limitations	Over-focused on pupils

Table 4. Example of the coding and analysis process for finding themes and sub-themes from the interview phase

3.5.2. Data Analysis of Focus Groups: An Illustration

The design of the four focus group sessions arose from a reflection on the complete data analysis of the previous cycle, especially from those themes and sub-themes related to the third research aim, alongside a new literature review on 'integral mindfulness'. This design also resulted from an agreement with participants concerning the number and length of sessions. Thus the focus group consisted of four sessions, whose purposes were: (1) to define the purpose of the process, mainly regarding the co-construction of the guidelines; (2) to share personal experiences of implementing mindfulness within schools; (3) to provide a key (and longer) session in which we discussed the three Dimensions of the guideline (A. Contextual conditions, B. Key principles and C. Key strategies); and (4) to discuss sensitive topics emerging from previous sessions. Six of the 15 participants took part in this process.

Once the four sessions were completed, similarly to the previous cycle, I coded the new dataset using NVivo software. 102 codes emerged, which I organised into the previously defined three Dimensions. Then, reflecting on the connection of these Dimensions with the research question and its third aim, I elaborated-interpreted a total of seven themes. After this process, looking carefully at the codes within each theme, it was possible to find 34 sub-themes. Figure 4 summarises this coding and analysis process.

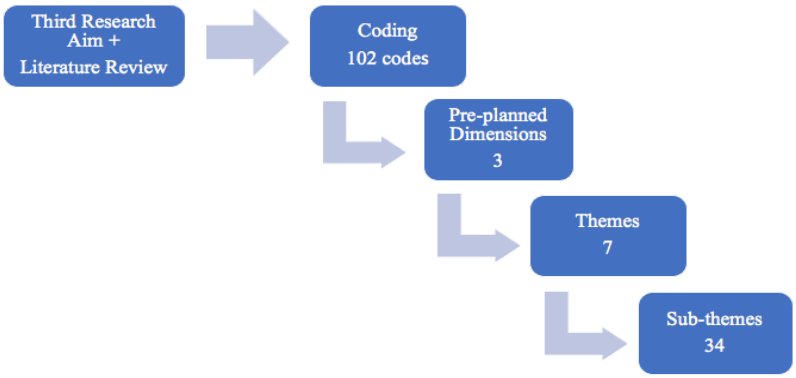


Figure 4. Analysis process to obtain themes and sub-themes from focus groups

Now, similarly to the preceding analysis, I will illustrate the coding and analysis process to build themes and sub-themes in the third cycle of the research based on focus groups by taking a particular example, i.e. the process through which I arrived at the theme 'Purpose(s)' and its four sub-themes regarding the third Research Aim (see Table 16 in Chapter 6). Reflecting on the previous cycle, I realised that the research could be enriched by incorporating a purposeful aspect through the co-construction of general guidelines about implementing mindfulness more integrally within schools, in line with the transformative nature of action research. In order to do this, I designed the focus group process explained above on a fortnightly frequency. This process is an essential part of the third phase of this research (see Figure 4 in this chapter), in which I again followed the six steps suggested by Braun and Clark (2012). In this case, reflecting on the previous cycle, I decided to pre-organise the guidelines into three main dimensions, from which arose themes and sub-themes (see Tables 14, 15, 16 and 17 in Chapter 6).

After familiarising myself with the whole dataset from the focus groups, I returned to the research question and the three Dimensions to guide the coding process. I ordered diverse data into specific initial codes, most related to the main Dimensions. This time, particularly taking into consideration the third aim of the research, I organised-interpreted multiple codes in their pertinent Dimensions. After that, reflecting on these and considering the new literature review, I created-interpreted the themes that appeared relevant, choosing a concise and accessible name for each one. Also, within each theme, I selected the most meaningful of the codes contained in the Dimensions, giving them a self-explanatory name. This process is illustrated in Table 4, which shows one specific example of arriving at one theme with its sub-themes within Dimension B. In essence, I followed the same procedure to find-create the rest of the themes and sub-themes in this phase for each Dimension.

To apply a metaphor from one of the participants of the focus group, the whole structure of this can be understood as a 'trellis' through which diverse plants grew with different colours and in multiple directions. The design of the four sessions thus served as a general orientation or an empty structure to be completed during

the process of conversation in which six participants were implicated over two months. It immensely stimulated the broad agreement reached about the guideline construction as well as the few disagreements or lack of consensus regarding some suggested points, e.g. the extent to which an integral implementation should be flexible or more standardised, which represents a challenging topic in the real-world implementation of mindfulness in schools. In this sense, the resulting general guidelines can be seen as myriad beautiful plants interwoven in this trellis (see Chapter 6).

Research Aim	**Guideline Dimension**	**Emergent Codes**	**Extract Interview Transcript**	**Theme**	**Sub-themes**
3. Participants' view of a potentially more integral implementation of mindfulness in schools	B. Key Principles	Cultural change	Stewart - the idea of just removing grades and payment and competition in regards of academic as an achievement, until they´re older… and can maybe rationalise that more… that creates a condition where… everyone is mindful… without even needing to teach mindfulness… um, just because the culture is different, and… you know there´s no striving, there´s just "ok we´re learning for the sake of learning, we´re learning cause we want to learn, love learning" and you decide what you study and you know, you enjoy what you do	Purpose(s)	Transforming school culture

		Educational, not therapeutic	Mrs Mindfulness - we´re talking about mindfulness in schools for the general public, you know it´s general, it´s about, yes it´s about intervention but it´s also about living a better life, yes it´s about self-regulation, but it´s also about flourishing and about creativity and taking better decisions, it's across the whole of our lives, this is not therapy, and MBSR and MBCT are too medicalized for what we are talking about, they´re too hot and heavy and too boring to be absolutely honest, in that dominion	Purpose(s)	Educational approach
		More than attention	Jo – because there´s a huge part isn´t there with mindfulness, it´s not just about focus, control of, you know, bringing your attention back, sort of calming down, there´s the whole side of compassion, agency, support in the community, connecting, and it´s that sort of side that we´re hoping to develop a bit further, but it does feel a little	Purpose(s)	Cultivation of attitudes

		Improving quality of life	bit like climbing a mountain, and baby steps Jo - I´d like to use the word enrichment… bringing a sort of a richer detail and sense to everything that´s going on… enriching lives rather than just going through emotions and getting stuff done	Purpose(s)	Enriching pupils' lives

Table 5. Example of the coding and analysis process for finding themes and sub-themes from the focus group phase

At this point, it is important to clarify the notion of 'validity' applied to this research. In this vein, I agree with Maxwell's (1992) argument that this requirement is derived from a positivist view, aiming to achieve controllability, replicability, consistency, predictability, generalisability and objectivity. In contrast, in qualitative research, as researchers are part of the phenomena that they are investigating, it is more appropriate to use other terms, such as 'understanding' (Maxwell, 1992) or 'authenticity' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989), based on an ethical honesty and transparency by researchers as a meaningful criterion to make findings reliable. The principal point is to ensure that researchers engage with deep embodiment and reflection regarding participants' experiences and views, being simultaneously aware of their own inner experiences and interpretations. This is another way to express what Ingold (2017) means by making science in a 'minor key', as previously mentioned.

3.6. Research Design

As mentioned above, this research has been informed by the cyclical model of action research proposed by Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014), in which there is a simple processual and cyclical structure with some key general stages - planning, action, reflection and re-planning (see Figure 5) - and emphasising

that this process is more fertile when it is carried out collaboratively and in an itinerant way. In tune with this last idea, for these authors, the principal point is not to follow a strict order but that the whole process be significant and follows an organic flow from which authentic experience and knowledge can emerge:

> […] the criterion of success is not whether participants have followed the steps faithfully, but whether they have a solid and authentic sense of development and evolution in their practices, their understandings of their practices, and the situations in which they practice. (Kemmis et al., 2014, pp. 18-19)

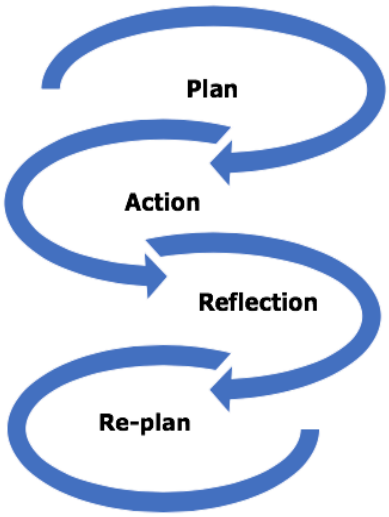


Figure 5. Action Research cyclical process adapted from Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon (2014, p. 19)

Based on this model, the research followed four cycles, each derived from a reflection on the previous one in a pathway that can now be understood as organic. At the beginning, I started with an initial question I had had for some years, derived from my work on mindfulness within schools in my own country (Chile), which can be expressed in this way: are the current most popular implementations of mindfulness programmes in schools the most pertinent for educational purposes? From this general question, I began to do a literature review on two different levels: (1) a general search about the topic 'mindfulness and education' in order to gain knowledge regarding the main features of the

field and the core potential relevant gaps in this area, and (2) a critical search emerging from the first review in which two different approaches to the implementation of mindfulness within schools seemed to be in debate: the mainstream approach, usually called 'instrumental', and another contesting it, usually called 'critical', but what I prefer to call 'integral' or 'holistic'. In both cases I used well-known academic web search tools such as Google Scholar, Web of Science, and other more specific tools, such as the library search tool at the University of Nottingham. After this literature review, the interview questions emerged not only considering the initial research aims but also other relevant views in this field, making the questions more precise and meaningful. Hence, this chapter alongside the previous one represents the first cycle of the research (see Figure 6). In general, I followed Cooper's (2010) suggestion about the primary purposes of a literature review in terms of (1) integrating others' work, (2) making links between related topics, and (3) identifying relevant problems in the field. Another relevant part of this stage was the participant recruitment process, which started with two primary "gatekeepers": my principal supervisor and the headteacher of the primary school of one of my children. Then, as mentioned above, following a snowball model, I contacted new persons from the first group. This sample was purposive instead of random (Cohen et al., 2018), owing to its convenience for the purposes of this study. All communication with participants was through email, and the entire process of interviews and focus groups was carried out online via the Microsoft Teams platform.

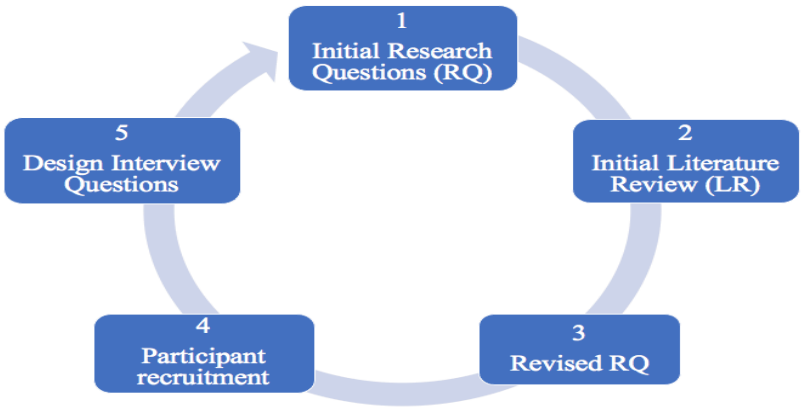


Figure 6. First cycle of the research process: Toward the interview questions

The second cycle considered several months of interviews, followed by further literature review and thematic data analysis, which was conducted, as mentioned above, using the NVivo software. Then, based on the research aims, I organised the many codes raised into a few concise and pertinent themes and sub-themes (illustrated in Figures 10 and 11 in the next chapter). The review of new literature, linked with data collection, offered me the opportunity to write a first draft of the first Discussion chapter of the first set of findings from which, in collaboration with my supervisors, an article was published, which collected some core critical perspectives from participants (see Chapter 5), and which was published in 2021. As a further result of these reflections, questions emerged for a new phase that took the form of a focus group, the purpose of which was not only to find out participants' perspectives but also to co-construct with them a set of guidelines for a more integral implementation of mindfulness in schools. Thus the focus group was designed in four sessions of one and a half hours, with one session (the third) running for two and a half hours, in which six people participated on a fortnightly basis (see Figure 7).

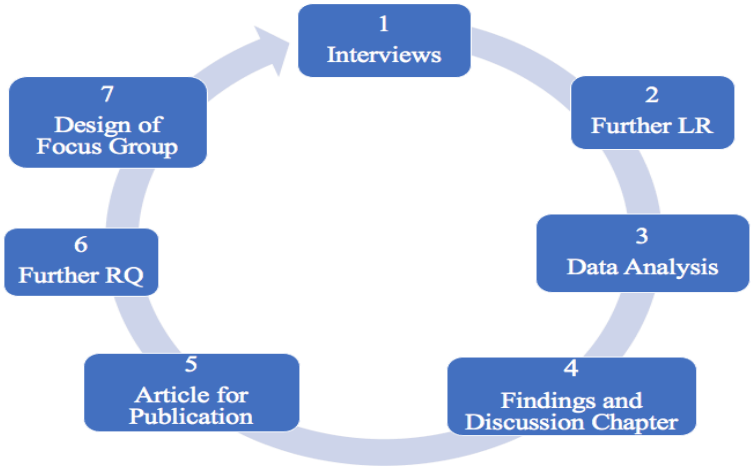


Figure 7. Second cycle of the research process: Toward the focus group design

In the next phase, I delivered four focus group sessions with six participants to reflect on some of the points derived from the interview process and to collaboratively elaborate general guidelines for a more integral implementation of mindfulness within schools. After this, alongside further data analysis, the literature was returned to in order to write a second discussion chapter, from which, a second paper for publication emerged in 2021. Once I had both the

analysis and discussion chapters, I reflected and synthesised the research's core findings, expressed in a brief Findings Summary (FS) of the two phases of data collection (interviews and focus groups) and a Vision Statement (VS) with nine fundamental principles for any integral implementation of mindfulness in schools (see Figure 8).

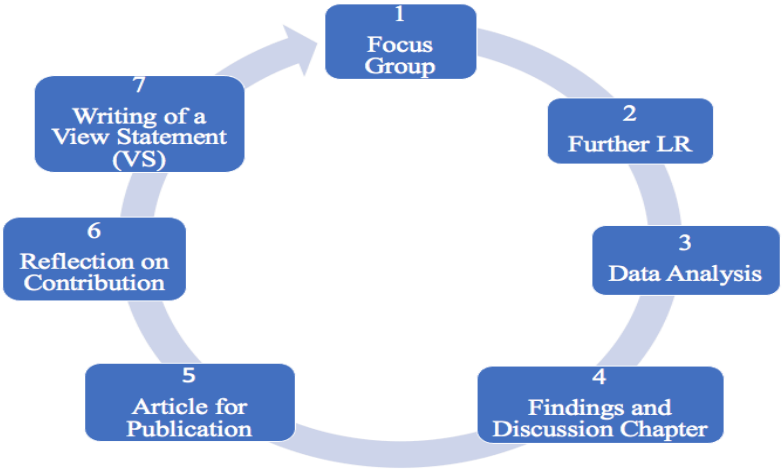


Figure 8. Third cycle of the research process: Summary and Vision Statement

The final stage of the research consisted of sharing the FS and VS with participants for final feedback. In addition, the VS was also shared with other scholars in the field of mindfulness and education to enrich the document and obtain academic support. This final process allowed me to talk with experts from different parts of the world and enrich the conclusions of the thesis (see Figure 9).

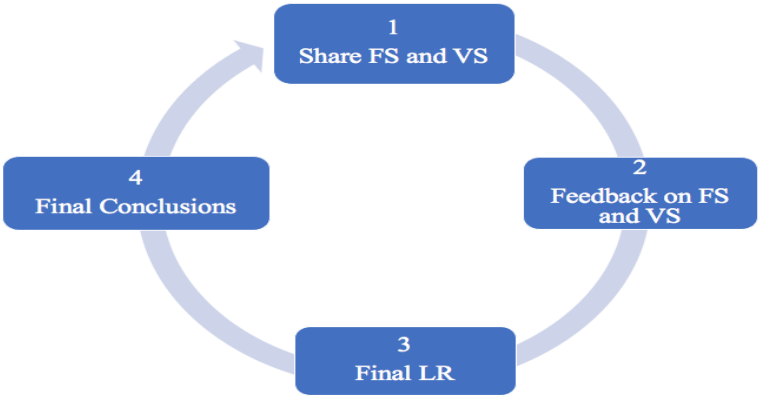


Figure 9. Fourth cycle of the research process: Toward final collaborative conclusions

3.7. Ethical Considerations

As a PhD student at the University of Nottingham in the UK, my attitude and conduct were guided by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) and the Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics of the University of Nottingham. These guidelines can be summarised as expecting behaviour and participant (and eventually institutional) relationships of respect (acceptance and non-judgment of each participant), caring (promoting wellbeing and minimising any possible harm), freedom (being clear from the beginning about the voluntary nature of participation and the possibility of withdrawal at any time), accurate information (keeping participants informed throughout the research process on every relevant action and its implications) and data protection (to be clear about how, and for how long, information will be stored and confidentiality ensured). These guidelines aim to ensure as far as possible the physical and psychological safety and beneficence of participants, minimising any detriment and keeping sufficient balance of cost/benefits for participants (Cohen et al., 2018).

More specifically, and mainly within the context of this research being informed by action research, according to Locke, Alcorn and O'Neill (2013) there are further key aspects to be considered: (1) maximising the inclusion of all participants; (2) maximising participation and consensus on different aspects of the research process; (3) maintaining the option of renegotiating participation or of withdrawing from the research at any time; (4) maintaining clear communication understandable for every participant; (5) both researcher and participants should be transparent about their assumptions about the topic and the research procedures; and (6) appropriate recognition of the status and role of each participant as part of the whole research process. Given this, it was important from the beginning to be explicit about what exactly participation and collaboration meant for this research, as well as what my positionality was regarding this research topic; these can be found in the literature review and the discussion chapters.

I also followed Noddings' (2013) proposal of an ethics of care, which implies the recognition and apprehension of others' needs based on a reciprocal relationship

of caring about the wellbeing of both persons in a particular human encounter in a specific context. This idea is akin to Rogers's (2007) ethical necessary and sufficient conditions for therapeutic change, including therapist congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathy regarding the other. In addition, I followed the principle of an explicit asymmetric mutuality (Aron, 2009) with the participants, which means that despite the researcher and participants being equals in terms of participation and generation of knowledge, there is an unavoidable difference in power regarding the design and use of the resulting knowledge of the research for academic purposes.

As this research involved potentially sensitive topics related to participants' mental health, they were informed about this eventual risk from the beginning. However, in all cases, there were no problems in this regard, mainly because most participants had a personal mindfulness practice. Perhaps owing to this, they are very aware of our imperfect humanity and open to sharing personal difficulties. In any case, only a few personal experiences related to stress and anxiety appeared in the individual interviews.

In order to enact the previous considerations, I completed an ethics form and designed information sheets for the participants (teachers and headteachers), according to the guidance of the University of Nottingham, to inform them about the research purpose and procedures, as well as to obtain from them informed and voluntary consent to participate in this process. All these documents were sent to the Education Research Ethics Department for approval, thus warranting the correct process for this investigation (see Appendices 1 - 7). In this regard, I took the following measures to ensure the ethical ‘validity’ or transparency of this study:

- Before starting the interviews and focus groups, participants received an Information Sheet and were invited to give their consent by signing a Letter of Informed Consent. The first document explained every aspect of this research, such as the research question, purpose, participant role, potential benefits of taking part, confidentiality and freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. The second document described briefly how

the research was delivered, how data can be used, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and gave an explicit opportunity for participants to agree with the research conditions and accept participation (see Appendices 3, 4, 5 and 6).

- Before starting the interviews, participants received an invitation to the interview via email, in which the recruitment process was made explicit (see Appendix 2). At the beginning of the interviews and focus groups, relevant information about confidentiality, voluntariness and the data analysis process was reiterated and agreed.

- After the interviews and focus groups, I sent participants the transcripts for their information and offered them the option to modify (remove, change or add) any aspect. The same procedure was delivered with other products from the data collection process, e.g. the final Findings Summary and the Vision Statement.

- The transcription of every interview and focus group session was realised in two parts. First, I made a transcript from the audio and the automatic transcription made by the Teams software. Then I sent every transcription to an external transcriber. Before the transcriber started this job, she received an Ethical Agreement for Transcribers in which the role and conditions were established, particularly regarding data protection and the deletion of the information (see Appendix 8). This process was explained to participants before starting the interviews and focus groups.

3.8. Summary

This chapter has provided the rationale for the research methods chosen and reflected on the benefits of adopting a qualitative approach to the research in a minor key (Ingold, 2017), which means that the search for an in-depth interpretation of the participants' experiences in order to offer both teachers' voices and personal insights are the main characteristic of this study. In this vein, I have offered a philosophical argument supporting a phenomenological-

hermeneutical onto-epistemological approach. I have proposed a methodology informed by action research in a more flexible version that aims to be itinerant instead of iterative, whose action aspect implies an indirect rather than direct contribution to the topic, along with a contemplative approach from which my personal meditative practice and view is incorporated into the whole research process. Additionally, I argue in favour of thematic analysis as a meaningful and flexible method for data analysis. Following the principal idea of cyclical research from action research, I exposed the research design, explaining the four cycles through which this study was conducted and exemplifying how the interview and focus group cycles were carried out. Finally, I addressed ethical considerations regarding potentially sensitive aspects of this research, showing that ethical consideration goes beyond observing rules and procedures toward an understanding of my positionality as a researcher in terms of integrity based on an ethics of care (Noddings, 2013).

Chapter 4: Findings from the Second Research Cycle: Interviews

Introduction

As discussed in the Literature Review (see Chapter 2), it is well-known that mindfulness programmes in the UK school context seem to offer a wide array of benefits for pupils and teachers in areas as diverse as cognitive functioning (e.g. concentration, executive functions), emotional regulation (e.g. stress reduction), pro-social behaviour (e.g. empathy, compassion), mental health (e.g. prevention of depression, anxiety, stress and burnout), psycho-social wellbeing (e.g. resilience, optimism and happiness) and academic performance (Ergas, 2019; Flook et al., 2010; Weare and Bethune, 2021; Zenner et al., 2014). However, alongside these positive effects, there is a lesser-known field of experience related to the subjective side of mindfulness implementation in schools. This field seems to show a more complex and even contradictory world of perceptions and interpretations regarding not just specific, separate and standardised outcomes, but also relating to broader and more profound dimensions connected to mindfulness and human flourishing within the educational process from teachers' perspectives (Ergas, 2019b; Simpson, 2017; Wigelsworth and Quinn, 2020), as explained in the literature review (see also Brito et al., 2021a, 2022). In this vein, this chapter presents findings on different aspects of mindfulness teachers' perceptions of the benefits and limitations of both the current most popular mindfulness programmes for pupils and the current most popular mindfulness teacher training in England and Wales, alongside other emergent themes and sub-themes.

The vast majority of research in the field of mindfulness in education has been delivered from a psychological perspective (emphasising improvements in mental health and general wellbeing) or from a behaviourist perspective (emphasising concentration and social behaviour) via quantitative approaches (Crawford et al., 2020; Semple et al., 2010; Zenner et al., 2014). Alongside this, most of the research in this field has taken into consideration quantitative-objective factors, commonly used to refer to pupils, which are more easily measurable, such as stress levels or pupil behaviour, overlooking qualitative-

subjective experiences from teachers' perceptions (Bowden, Norton and Griffith, 2021; Wigelsworth and Quinn, 2020), which, until recently, has represented a considerable gap in the field. Thus the first phase of this research contributes to a deeper and more detailed understanding of the rich sphere of meanings of the implementation of mindfulness in schools from the subjective perspectives of qualified mindfulness teachers.

At the heart of this study there is a distinction between two modalities by which mindfulness can be implemented in schools, which can be understood as the investigative position from which I started and delivered this research. On the one hand, we have the most usual and mainstream implementation of mindfulness as an instrumental intervention within schools, what Ergas (2019) and Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020) call mindfulness "in" education; and on the other, we can think in a rarer and more incipient integral/holistic approach within, with and from schools, what Ergas (2019) and Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020) call mindfulness "as" education. In this phase of the research, the main goal was to explore and understand how mindfulness teachers perceive the current most common implementation of mindfulness within schools in England and Wales. This general objective was divided into four more specific aims: (1) to explore what aspects of participants' personal mindfulness experiences are recognised as the most significant in terms of benefits for their teacher performance; (2) to understand how participants evaluate the most common current implementation of mindfulness programmes within school contexts; (3) to explore how participants imagine the idea of a more integral/holistic way of implementing mindfulness within school contexts; (4) to understand how participants evaluate the most common current mindfulness training courses for teachers. These aims are based on the aforementioned distinction between mindfulness 'in' and 'as' education, particularly explicit in the second aim ('in') and in the third aim ('as'), from which emerged meaningful differences between these two modes of understanding mindfulness in schools.

In this chapter, which represents the second cycle of this study, after a summary of the methodology of this research and its foundations, I will develop the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interviews with participants based

on the four aforementioned main aims at this research stage. Within the first aim (Aim A), two themes emerged: 1. the relevance of a regular personal mindfulness practice; and 2. the importance of a good understanding of the nature of mindfulness (see Table 6). Within the second aim (Aim B), three themes emerged: 1. positive effects of mindfulness on teachers and pupils; 2. purposes of the implementation; and 3. limitations of the mainstream implementation (see Table 7). Within the third aim (Aim C), three themes emerged: 1. the purposes of a potential integral/holistic implementation; 2. the main features of an integral/holistic implementation; and 3. the challenges of an integral/holistic implementation (see Table 8). Finally, within the fourth aim (Aim D), three themes emerged: 1. the merits of the current mindfulness training programmes for teachers; 2. the limitations of the current mindfulness training programmes for teachers; and 3. challenges regarding the current mindfulness training programmes for teachers (see Table 9). As we will see, within each theme several sub-themes emerged, offering a wide range of relevant ideas for reflecting on both the current and potentially more integral mindfulness implementations in schools (see Figures 10 and 11 for an overview).



Figure 10. Overview of themes by Aims for the first phase of the research



Figure 11. Overview of sub-themes by aims and themes for the first phase of the research

4.1. Methods

As explained in chapter 3, this phase of the research is grounded in a specific onto-epistemological perspective, with a qualitative method informed by action research and a contemplative approach and conversational methodologies for data collection; the data has been analysed thematically.

The onto-epistemological approach that supports this research can be described as interpretive, in the sense that access to the participants' world of experience is mediated for the interaction, the context and my own possibilities for understanding. This is in line with Gergen's (2001) idea that all knowledge emerges from a contextualised relationship and with the phenomenological-hermeneutical assets by which every understanding emerges from a conversation based on the self-interpretation of each interlocutor, which shapes the kind of experience and knowledge we hold (Heidegger, 1996/1927; Gadamer, 2013/1960).

The methods which have informed this research process are a softened version of action research and a contemplative approach. Regarding the first, this phase has partially followed the spiral flow suggested by action research (Kemmis et al., 2014), in the sense that each new step has shed new light on the previous stages, reconfiguring the emerging knowledge. The active part of this approach will be more evident in the third cycle when I present the resulting guidelines for an integral implementation of mindfulness in schools co-created with some of the participants, although it is not an action in the traditional sense. Related to the contemplative approach (Lin et al., 2016), this phase has been inspired by its proposal of a first-person orientation to the data analysis which aims to adopt an attitude of openness and authenticity in the way the data is observed and reflected, interweaving participants' views with my own experience and understanding. This is also in line with a hermeneutical approach, as expressed in an analysis in which participants' perspectives are expressed through my own personal reflection.

As has been mentioned, the data analysis has been informed by thematic analysis, a flexible methodology allowing the creation and report of meaningful themes and sub-themes within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Mainly, I have followed a reflective or theoretical mode of this methodology, starting with some general relevant aims in line with the research question and under the criterion of the pertinence of the data concerning the general orientation of the research goal. In this sense, the themes and sub-themes that emerged are based on a combination of how meaningful they are for participants and my own positionality as a researcher in this field.

4.2. Research Design

The research was informed by the cyclical action research model. In the case of interviews, it was enacted in the fact that each new interview ran slightly differently from the last, owing to a constant process of re-planning and reflection based on previous interviews. During the process there were also email

exchanges with some participants, from which some ideas were refined collaboratively.

The sample consisted of 15 mindfulness teachers, 13 women and two men. Six teachers work at state schools, two at private schools and six as external mindfulness teachers. Two participants are from Wales and the rest are from England. Each interview lasted one and a half hours, and was conducted between October 11th 2020 and May 15th 2021. In general, most participants are experienced practitioners and teachers of mindfulness in schools, representing a selected and purposive sample whose value lies in its specific knowledge of mindfulness practices within schools.

4.3. Findings and Reflections

As shown in the introduction to this chapter, the main goal of the second cycle of the research was to explore and understand how mindfulness teachers perceive the current most common implementation of mindfulness within schools in England and Wales. This general objective was divided into four more specific aims related to participants' perceptions of: A. the relevance of their own mindfulness practice for their role as teachers; B. the current mainstream implementation of mindfulness programmes in schools; C. a more integral/holistic potential implementation of mindfulness in schools; and D. the current most common mindfulness training for teachers in England and Wales. Within each of these aims themes and sub-themes emerged, all of them relevant for a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of the current mainstream implementation of mindfulness programmes within schools and the potentiality of mindfulness for a more integral/holistic approach.

4.3.1. Aim A: Teachers' personal experience with mindfulness

Two themes emerged regarding this aim. The first refers to the importance of having a regular personal mindfulness practice. The second refers to the relevance of a good understanding of the nature of mindfulness for good implementation within schools. The first theme is expressed in three more

specific sub-themes: 1. the importance of one's *own modelling* for pupils; 2. the benefits of *coping better* with multiple challenges in school interactions; and 3. the priority of *starting with teachers* before introducing mindfulness with pupils. The second theme, on the other hand, is expressed in a set of implicit definitions of mindfulness that orient towards its provision to the pupils (see Table 6). In what follows, we will present the participants' perspectives and understandings of each theme and sub-theme, reflecting on this to clarify the meanings that can be expressed in a shorter and/or more implicit way.

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Regular personal mindfulness practice	1.1. Modelling 1.2. To cope with challenges
2. Understanding of the nature of mindfulness	2.1. Implicit orientating definitions a. Way of being b. Authenticity c. Flourishing d. Empowering actions

Table 6. Themes and sub-themes from participants' personal experiences with mindfulness

4.3.1.1. Regular personal practice

We can find three key sub-themes regarding this aspect: 1.1. Modelling, 1.2. To cope with challenges, and 1.3. Starting with teachers.

4.3.1.1.1. Modelling

Teachers recognise their own personal practice as the basis from which to teach mindfulness to pupils at the school, insofar as their own personal wellbeing and mental stability are the primary source for a mindful attitude toward pupils, in line with what research suggests (Eva and Thayer, 2017; Flook et al, 2013; Shapiro et al, 2016). The development of this personal practice implies, firstly, their own modelling as the most powerful way to teach mindfulness to pupils. In this sense, teaching mindfulness is more than replicating a standard programme

with pre-fixed content and practices, requiring a kind of teacher's presence from which talk, actions and interactions emerge in an attentive and caring way. In Hyland's (2011) words, modelling is the most powerful strategy, "and mindfulness will not flourish without the commitment, enthusiasm and example given by teachers" (p. 116).

> *It's really important. It's about the modelling. It's about why it's important for teachers to model, you know, people hear your music, not your words. And that happens at home as well.*
>
> Mrs. Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher at primary and secondary schools in Wales

> *I think the key for it for us in that and what I advocate even now, is that it really needs to be a whole school thing, it needs to be who you are, it needs to be how you act on a day-to-day basis in front of the children, how you model that mindfulness in the classroom, how do you model that to your parents that see you on a day-to-day basis?*
>
> Victoria, headteacher at a state primary school

4.3.1.1.2. To cope with challenges

Teachers' daily practice can help them cope with multiple challenges that arise every day at the school, especially related to pupils' behaviour. Calmer, more balanced and less reactive teachers can respond more wisely, considering more empathically the personality of each child and adolescent as well as the context of each person and interaction (Becker, Gallagher and Whitaker, 2017; Eva and Thayer, 2017; Grant, 2017). In this sense, mindfulness practices give teachers (and pupils, of course) an opportunity for self-observation, which is an essential component of a genuine process of self-knowledge. This can generate an emotional climate of trust, warmth and peace which, in turn, can lay the foundation for a mindful culture and mindful learning.

> *I think that your personal practice helps you to be able to navigate those sorts of difficulties as well, when there's behavioural issues in the class. And I think the other thing that my practice has helped me with is responding to how the children are.*
>
> Liz, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary

> *[…] because with every interaction you have with a young person or an adult, your actions/reactions have an impact on that. So, of course, taking that moment to observe where you are, what you're experiencing, does have an impact on those people you're working with. So that's, yes, it does impact the work that I do, being very able to connect more deeply with young people, because your own thoughts and beliefs are observed but not put on those young people, if that makes sense.*
>
> Louise, external mindfulness teacher

4.3.1.2. Understanding of the nature of mindfulness

4.3.1.2.1. Implicit orientating definitions

This theme refers to participants' understanding of mindfulness and its role in education. This understanding is expressed by definitions that participants have offered from their own experiences implementing mindfulness in schools (see Table 6), most of which were implicit before the interview, and are especially pertinent for educational contexts. It is interesting how the participants' reflections on what mindfulness in schools is about is connected to reflection on the purpose of education as a whole. In this sense, from these definitions, we can make the hermeneutical effort to understand the main purpose of any mindfulness implementation and, simultaneously, the educational process as a whole. From these definitions, we can discern four main qualities that mindfulness can contribute to cultivating in teachers and pupils.

a. Way of being

This means that mindfulness is not only a tool for training separate skills, but a whole approach to life from which attitudes such as awareness, appreciation, kindness and balance can emerge (Ergas, 2019; Han and Weare, 2017; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2019). All these attitudes must be displayed in the experience of the present moment as they are not merely conceptual goals, but traits (Goleman and Davidson, 2018) to be trained on a daily school-life basis. From this perspective, mindfulness in schools can be understood as something other than an instrumental intervention to improve learning processes toward the

cultivation of a set of high human virtues in the service of self and social flourishing (Brito et al., 2022; Forbes, 2019).

> *Mindfulness to me is a life approach rather than meditation, meditation is a way of exploring it and a way of sort of coming back to yourself […]*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher

> *I would say it's being mindful, being… it's… for me it's about being in the moment being in the here and now and also appreciating what you've got.*
>
> Mary, teacher and leader at a state primary school

> *I can be aware of all the body sensations; I can be aware of how I feel about the world and the appreciation of my own part of that little cosmos. Um yeah, so, bringing my attention and awareness and appreciation of who I am into just this moment now.*
>
> Steve, leader at a private secondary school

b. Authenticity

This quality refers to ourselves and our relationships, and means that mindfulness can foster a sense of greater connection to our bodies and minds as well as to others around us. By cultivating more awareness of ourselves, we are more able to regulate thoughts and emotions and thus be less reactive and more responsive, showing our more genuine self, which is genuinely spontaneous instead merely impulsive. Additionally, this more responsive way of being impacts positively on every relationship we hold with people around us, from the most to the least familiar. These aspects can be considered two of the most important fruits of self-knowledge: the authentic display of our beings and the cultivation of more authentic relationships throughout life (Ergas, 2017; Joseph, 2017; Sellman and Amrhein, 2022). In turn, it can be considered one of the greater purposes of the entire educational endeavour. It is relevant to say that

there is still little research on the relationship between mindfulness and teacher authenticity in educational contexts.

> *If you feel ok on the inside then that is a more peaceful place to be. And you start to not really worry so much about the outside. And then you're able to be more authentic in yourself and your relationships with other people and also take a bit of responsibility for your own actions […]*
> *I feel it… it's definitely about showing up and being connected to my authentic self as I show up, with a sense of kindness, friendliness and curiosity, not just to my own judgments, but also to other people's judgments as well.*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher

c. Flourishing

This quality is understood as a sense of joy and balance in life. When we systematically cultivate awareness of the present moment, one of the experiences that occurs is that we start to notice and recognize every tiny beautiful thing present within and around us. As a result, we stop taking for granted our life, the life of our loved ones and the existence of every detail that supports our daily life (Albrecht, 2019; Han and Weare, 2017). Thus it awakens in us an attitude of appreciation and gratitude, giving us a sense of meaning and profound wellbeing, not because of the big things but because of the simpler and more ordinary things.

> *Mindfulness for me is about enjoying the moment in time that you're in right now and recognizing the good things that are around you and rejoicing in that, because when you do that, it makes you happy and if you're happy then life is easier.*
>
> Victoria, headteacher at a primary state school

> *And into flourishing, I put appreciation, gratitude, trust. So, you know, just that… a business, the business of being here and now, and experience a bit of all-in-one time looking out of the window now and seeing the blossom coming out on a cherry tree in the garden. There, you know, it's amazing, isn't it?*

Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher at primary and secondary schools in Wales

d. Empowering actions

This is a more active aspect of mindfulness, which some participants have called 'empowering actions'. Besides fostering attitudes, mindfulness also implies cultivating wiser and more compassionate forms of decision-making and action-taking in concrete situations (Molly, 2016; Ricard, 2015; Simpson, 2017). This is a relevant facet of mindfulness, which invites us to make a distinction between the default 'doing' mode, commonly understood as the opposite of the mindful 'being' mode (Kabat-Zinn, 2005), and a more mindful way to respond to each situation through a kind of action able to alleviate suffering and foster genuine wellbeing in ourselves and others with whom we are in interaction. Thus we can say that when our presence is aware and connected with the present, recognizing ourself and what is happening around us and appreciating the whole richness of that moment, then a proper action in resonance with each situation can emerge, an action which, in turn, contributes to cultivating a culture of attention and care.

And then, the last one is empowering change, because mindfulness is absolutely not passive, even though we talk about acceptance, we talk about a bit of being aware and being with uh feelings, difficult, difficulties and difficult emotions and difficult thoughts […] Never mentions, so there is something about empowering change, enabling you to take better decisions.

Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher at primary and secondary schools in Wales

And then you're able to be more authentic in yourself and your relationships with other people and also take a bit of responsibility for your own actions, but without a blame to it, without that sort of reprimanding yourself when maybe you don't take the right action.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher

4.3.2. Aim B: Participants' evaluation about the most typical and current implementations of mindfulness programmes in schools

Three main themes emerged from Aim B. The first refers to the perceived positive effects of implementing mindfulness programmes within schools. Within this theme, we can distinguish two sub-themes: 1. positive impacts on pupils, and 2. positive impacts on teachers. The second theme refers to the purposes of this mainstream implementation. Regarding this theme, we can discern four main purposes observed by participants: 1. developing strategies to cope with daily school difficulties; 2. improving behaviour by calming pupils; 3. enhancing pupils' learning; and 4. increasing physical and mental health and general wellbeing. The third theme refers to the limitations of this most common implementation. There are five main points related to the perceived limitations of these programmes: 1. superficiality; 2. over-standardisation; 3. short duration; 4. over-focused on pupils; 5. budget constraints (see Table 7). In what follows, we will present the participants' perspectives on and understandings of each theme and sub-theme, reflecting on these to make clearer the meanings that can be expressed in a shorter and/or more implicit way.

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Positive effects	1.1. Impacts on pupils a. Concentration b. Mental and behavioural calm c. Mental health d. Wellbeing e. Friendly relational climate f. Academic performance 1.2. Impacts on teachers a. Stress reduction b. Task management c. Pupil behaviour management d. Resilience e. Sense of control and empowerment
2. Purposes	2.1. To cope with difficulties 2.2. Improving behaviour 2.3. Enhancing pupils' learning 2.4. Increasing mental and physical health

3. Limitations	3.1. Superficiality 3.2. Over-standardisation 3.3. Short duration 3.4. Over-focused on pupils 3.5. Budget constraints

Table 7. Themes and sub-themes from participants' perspectives on the most common mindfulness programmes implemented in England and Wales.

4.3.2.1. Positive effects

Most participants evaluate the introduction of mindfulness into schools across the UK as positive, recognizing that when mindfulness practices are offered at school, even as standardized and short-term interventions, these have some positive effects on teachers and, mainly, on pupils.

4.3.2.1.1. Positive effects on pupils

Amongst the most common positive effects on pupils, participants recognise improvement of concentration, mental and behavioural calm, mental health, wellbeing, friendly relational climate and increase in academic performance, which are valued as personally and academically positive and relevant benefits. These positive effects have been reported by research (Hutchinson, Huws and Dorjee, 2018; Mak, Whittingham, Cunnington and Boyd, 2018) which states that the systematic practice of mindfulness in children and adolescents improves emotional regulation and generates greater wellbeing through the more basic mechanism of cultivating focused attention regularly. These effects have been reported within the general population, even in programmes which only use informal practices (Shankland, Tessier, Strub, Gauchet and Baeyens, 2020), which is a point being increasingly considered in the current improvements of mindfulness programmes in the UK context; for instance, through the "Living in the Present" programme co-created by Sarah Silverton in Wales.

> *From my people survey, the children are really enjoying that point of calm as part of their Jigsaw sessions [in which mindfulness practices are included] and all of the children mentioned it as something that is helping them with their feelings and with their mental health and wellbeing.*

Katy, teacher at a state primary school

I suppose that kind of most obvious one is ability to focus, concentrate. I've noticed a big change in children's ability to not act on urges, say, particularly children who may be prone to needing to move around a lot.

Liz, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary

From my observation of that school that has implemented self-awareness and wellbeing into their daily start to the day, has meant children are much happier, their behaviour improved, and academically they're doing better… Friendships are better, there's no bullying. All of these things, if you have a mindfulness practice, every single day in the school which does not take long, 5 minutes – mindfulness practice does not take long - you would see a massive change in a school.

Louise, external mindfulness teacher

4.3.2.1.2. Positive effects on teachers

Similarly, when there are times at school for teachers' mindfulness pauses, participants report some benefits: mainly obtaining calm and grounding, which can help to teachers to prevent stress and to better manage their tasks and pupils' behaviour. Also, to have these mindfulness spaces seems to foster a sense of hope, control and empowerment in teachers, giving them an inner sense of freedom and creativity regarding what they can do and how they can do it in the classroom. This can be seen as a great benefit if we consider that the educational system is usually felt by teachers to be over-demanding and over-structured, which is one of the main factors at the basis of teachers' burnout and demotivation. These experiences are in tune with the research in this area. Grant (2017), for instance, suggests that teachers with mindfulness training show higher levels of social and emotional competence, as well as more resilience (Jennings, 2015). Other studies state that mindfulness enhances teachers' wellbeing and performance (Hwang, Bartlett, Greben, and Hand, 2017) and more fundamentally, a kind of open and focused presence in teachers (Irwin and Miller, 2016).

I see that there is more of a can-do attitude with regards to things. There develops a resilience in both staff and children, that they don't feel

helpless in what's happening around them, they feel as if they have control over what is happening and that they can change outcomes by changing something that they might be doing in a positive way. There is a development of perseverance, that you don't quit, that you don't give up, you know, that it this is, there are ways for us to be able to continue to improve and we can have an impact not only on our own lives, but on the lives of the people around us by being able to be calmer, in disposition, in mind and with a more positive outlook on life.

Victoria, headteacher at a primary state school

I suppose in a way my practices allowed me to be the person I am and be happy to be that person and know that we're all flawed and that's ok, that's ok. And to try and encourage the young people that, you know, life isn't perfect, but who they are is perfectly imperfect. They are who they need to be and to be true to themselves, but also to be aware of themselves and to understand themselves and their patterns and their behaviours, says that they have choice.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher

4.3.2.2. Purposes

Regarding this theme, there are four main sub-themes, most of them linked to how mindfulness can help teachers and pupils to cope with school challenges in terms of behaviour and academic performance. However, the personal wellbeing of teachers and pupils also emerges as something relevant and valuable itself. These purposes are in line with what can be understood as an instrumental approach to mindfulness in education (Ergas, 2019b; Ergas and Hadar, 2019), whose aims are summarised by Crawford et al. (2020) as stress management to cope with exams, improving concentration for academic achievement, and pacifying pupils for behaviour management. These purposes are:

4.3.2.2.1. To cope with difficulties

One of the most reported benefits of mindfulness practices is that they help cope better with everyday difficulties, particularly related to emotional and relational situations, by fostering a better capacity to do an inner pause, allowing one to respond more appropriately instead of reacting impulsively. This conscious space between the stimulus and the response permits cultivating discernment and

equanimity in life (Kabat-Zinn, 2005/1990), core attitudes for managing life challenges.

> *the purpose is to give some life skills to the pupils and the staff to help them when they need it. Uhm, give them access to some of those skills that they might not have, to show them a different way of dealing with problems uhm or a different way of helping boost their life.*
>
> Stewart, teacher at a state secondary school

4.3.2.2.2. Improving behaviour

One of the most traditional schools' expectations of pupils is that they behave well. This generally means pupils remain quiet to let teachers do their work. Mindfulness has been demonstrated to contribute to this regard by calming the minds and bodies of young people and preventing, to some extent, aggressive conduct (Weare and Bethune, 2021) and, broadly, disruptive behaviour at school.

> *I feel the main purpose would be to sort of ground them, ground the young person, notice how they're feeling and then they feel, I guess, equipped with potentially some strategies from the mindfulness practice to help with difficulties potentially during that day.*
>
> Cleo, external mindfulness teacher

4.3.2.2.3. Enhancing pupils' learning

It is well known that improving learning is the golden goal of most schools. In this sense, mindfulness has been implemented to contribute to this aspect. A meta-analysis of 22 studies by Maynard, Solis, Miller, and Brendel (2017) showed that mindfulness impacted cognition positively, mainly regarding executive functions, attention regulation, metacognition, and cognitive flexibility, which are crucial for learning.

> *I think it's about arming children with ways of a bank of things that they can call on, that will help to support them with their learning.*
>
> Mary, teacher and leaders at a state primary school

4.3.2.2.4. Increasing mental and physical health

The deterioration of mental health in children and adolescents in the UK and widely across most countries is one of the main reasons why schools are seeking support in mindfulness practices. To date, there is moderate evidence about mindfulness's benefits for primary students (Weare and Bethune, 2021) and no evidence on adolescents regarding mental health prevention (Kuyken et al., 2022). Among the benefits, research has reported enhancement of "positive mood, self-efficacy, empathy and connectedness" (Weare and Bethune, 2021, p. 33).

> *I think the purpose is… is to, you know, equip young people with what they need in life, which is the ability to look after their mental health as much as their academic and their physical wellbeing as well.*
>
> Liz, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary

4.3.2.3. Limitations

Related to some common characteristics of the typical implementation, some limitations emerged as relevant themes. It is possible to discern four main sub-themes: 3.1. superficiality; 3.2. over-standardisation; 3.3. short duration; 3.4. over-focused on pupils; and 3.5. budget constraints.

4.3.2.3.1. Superficiality

Common implementations are usually made superficially and partially, which implies a narrow and instrumental understanding of what mindfulness can do for the educational process in terms of training concentration and improving mental health in the service of academic achievements, as we saw in the literature review (Brito et al., 2022). In practice, this implies that many schools deliver mindfulness as a separate lesson without any significant connection with the rest of the curriculum or school life. In this regard, Simpson (2017) argues that the current mindfulness programmes in the UK are partial in at least two ways: they are over-focused on individuals to the detriment of a pro-social dimension, and

they are considered a tool or technique to remedy specific mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and behavioural disorders.

> *And the other piece that´s the big one for me is that we were hearing from several children that they were saying to their teachers "I really like your mindfulness voice, but I don´t like your maths voice" so there was something about you know this is being delivered as a thing you know… "it´s a lovely lesson… take you shoes off" you know… and a lovely mindfulness voice you know, but then the lesson finished and that wasn´t carrying on into the rest of the day…*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

> *Some schools are saying "well, I don't have time to do this because we've got to get this curriculum done", and if you spend some time with mindfulness, the curriculum gets done easier, 'cause our students are calmer they remember more, they're more inquisitive, they reflect on things differently, so that would be… that would be the best case.*
>
> Steve, leader at a private secondary school

4.3.2.3.2. Over-standardisation

Typical implementations are seen as over-standardised, which means that mindfulness sessions are delivered in a rigid and mechanical form at the expense of more meaningful, attuned and creative ways, again in line with what emerged from the literature review (Brito et al., 2021a, 2022). One of the more frequent examples is using scripts and apps in the sessions, which teachers can provide with low understanding and commitment to these practices or their conceptual foundations. Thus, when mindfulness is reduced to showing and following a PowerPoint, pupils' and teachers' needs are overlooked, and these kinds of programmes are reduced to a repetitive and decontextualised routine intervention, with the consequence of wasting the full potential of mindfulness for education. This idea is highlighted by authors such as Ergas (2019) and Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020), who understand this form of implementation as mindfulness "in" education, i.e. as an instrumentalised tool in the service of economic logics of cost-efficiency and easier regimes of measurability.

And sadly, I have seen people deliver ".b" who don't necessarily, who have said that they have a mindfulness practice or training, but they're literally it's just a resource they can use in their lessons, and they're not really clear of the underlying themes and so, therefore it's just the delivery then and there is a script, I have seen people read off the script, I personally don't feel any lesson should be scripted.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher

4.3.2.3.3. Short duration

This kind of implementation usually has a third problem: they are too short, and they do not have any significant or lasting impact on the school community in terms of sustainability (Crawford, Joseph and Sellman, 2019). According to most participants, time is one of the biggest challenges to implementing mindfulness in schools. This problem is a structural limitation of the educational system as it is currently organised, insofar as it demands many different tasks from teachers and pupils and puts high and permanent pressure on them through a culture and practice of over-demand for which quantity is more important than quality. This saturation of tasks locates time as a massive obstacle to a proper implementation of mindfulness, which in turn makes a case for defending the cultivation of a counterculture of more meaningful time, where awareness and its fruits can grow. Indeed, a study of more than 8,000 pupils by the MYRIAD project (Kuyken et al., 2022) states that the impact of the current standard and short mindfulness programmes does not seem to be better than the impact of the normal provision of social-emotional education in terms of mental health in adolescents when measured one year after the intervention.

The worst example of when it doesn't work, is when they just book you for a few weeks, or even a day. Actually, I've had some schools that have just said "come in and do a couple of hours of mindfulness with the children, uhm and they're for our Mental Health Week", which is… it's great that they are uhm exploring mindfulness. But it's not really, you know, going to have a lasting impact or really make much difference.

Liz, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary

4.3.2.3.4. Over-focused on pupils

A fourth limitation is related to the main target of this kind of implementation, which is a focus on pupils to the detriment of continued teacher training. It may be possible to provide reasons for this situation. On the one hand, participants notice a lack of awareness from the top of the school regarding the importance of starting with adults in order to deliver a sustainable implementation over time, under the narrow and common view that the effort in education must be placed mainly on pupils (Emerson, Leyland, Hudson, Rowse, Hanley and Hugh-Jones, 2017). On the other, we can see a historical trend in the implementation of mindfulness within schools in the UK, particularly in England, according to which, from the beginning of the MiSP process, the main focus was on children's and adolescents' needs, overlooking teachers' needs. All this will be developed later, showing that other studies suggest the priority of starting with adults (Shapiro et al., 2016). This trend seems to be currently considered by an enhanced awareness of teachers' emotional needs and by a generation of improved mindfulness programmes for teachers (Jennings, 2015).

> *I'm a bit cynical, it's more… because they… they want you to… to do it with the children. It's not… they're not thinking about your own mental health.*
>
> Rosa, primary and secondary teacher at a private school

4.3.2.3.5. Budget constraints

A fifth common limitation in schools is the budget, as usually these kinds of implementations, with all the rigour required, are expensive and are not a school priority. Thus we have to face the contradiction between two opposing attitudes from most of the schools: on the one hand, schools seem to want to improve wellbeing in the whole school community, yet on the other, they are not willing to spend the money needed nor to focus on the whole community.

> *I guess the kind of, you know what challenges schools is always money, um, you know if the training is expensive, they can´t afford it or they´ll only send one person, and then that person is so isolated in school that*

> *it´s almost impossible for a single person to, you know, continue with implementations wherever they go with that, you know, they can´t teach all the children in the school, so then it´s only with their class, perhaps you know for a year or two until they give up on it because there´s no support… um, there´s no team in the school that keep it alive for them.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

4.3.3. Aim C: Participants' reflections on a more integral implementation of mindfulness within schools

Regarding this aim, all participants think that a more integral/holistic/systemic approach is the best path to generating broader and more profound impacts on the educational process as a whole. On the other hand, most participants know that this approach implies a challenging endeavour, although it is certainly worth the effort. When participants reflected on this question, there were mixed feelings. It is clear that this idea awakens enthusiasm, motivation, hope and, in many cases, concrete and realistic thoughts and experiences about how to do it in real school life. At the same time, there are feelings of frustration, disappointment and scepticism derived from the contrast recognised by participants between education and mindfulness logic. This split is reflected in the research Ergas and Hadar (2017) addressed to this field, from which emerged the distinction between mindfulness "in" and "as" education, as discussed in the literature review (see also Brito et al., 2021). However, almost every participant had something to contribute to this path; only a few found the task too difficult as they could not offer alternatives to the common current way.

Within this third aim, we can find three main themes, each with several sub-themes, all relevant to exploring an alternative way to implement mindfulness within schools. The first theme refers to the purposes of a more integral/holistic implementation of mindfulness. Although mental health and wellbeing are still considered relevant in this new approach, participants suggested the following purposes: 1. generating personal and interpersonal flourishing; 2. cultivating attitudes of self-compassion and compassion for others; 3. empowering wiser

decisions and more attuned actions; and 4. fostering social transformation. On the other hand, some features emerged regarding an integral/holistic implementation of mindfulness within schools as a second theme, within which we can find these sub-themes: 1. systemic and transversal approach; 2. evolving process from a long-term view; 3. top-down orientation; 4. prioritisation of adults, especially of teachers. Finally, related to this aim, a third theme emerged about the challenges this approach could encounter in the real educational world, whose respective sub-themes are: 1. lack of understanding; 2. system requirements; 3. discipline with formal practices; 4. over-focus on academic outcomes; 5. budget priorities (see Table 8). In what follows, I will present the participants' perspectives on and understandings of each theme and sub-theme, reflecting on this to clarify the meanings that may be expressed more briefly or implicitly.

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Purposes	1.1. Personal and interpersonal flourishing 1.2. (Self)-Compassion 1.3. Wiser decisions and actions 1.4. Social transformation
2. Main features	2.1. Systemic and transversal approach 2.2. Evolving and long-term process 2.3. Top-down orientation 2.4. Teacher priority
3.Challenges	3.1. Lack of understanding 3.2. Institutional requirements 3.3. Discipline with formal practices 3.4. Over-focus on academic outcomes 3.5. Budget priorities

Table 8. Themes and sub-themes from participants' perspectives on a potentially more integral/holistic implementation of mindfulness in England and Wales

4.3.3.1. Purposes

4.3.3.1.1. Personal and interpersonal flourishing

Regarding the primary purpose of an integral/holistic implementation of mindfulness, besides considering wellbeing and mental health as important goals, the following ideas arose. First, an integral implementation should foster an attitude of self-awareness linked with balance, curiosity, creativity and joy as ways of being rather than as specific skills for academic performance (Han and Weare, 2019). From this point of view, mindfulness has a significant role to play in terms of educating children and adolescents for their integration as whole human beings. This implies more than the prevention of potential mental health issues, advocating instead a personal and interpersonal flourishing that makes them able to make a genuine and deep connection with themselves and others throughout life. In this sense, from an integral point of view, mindfulness would be something other than an eventual intervention: a form of education that realises the highest humanistic ideals, which everyone feels as the fundamental goal of a good education, in line with the discussion in the literature review (Brito et al., 2022; Ergas, 2019).

> *I see mindfulness as a doorway into enabling children to be creative, to be curious, to be in touch with themselves, their feelings, their thoughts, which will naturally support their wellbeing and their mental health. And if you're encouraging them to think in this way when they're younger, those skills will be embedded. So, as they develop, as they go through their lives, hopefully they'll be bringing that same sense into everything that they do…*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher

> *I think for me that the difference is that it´s about, um, living mindfully rather than being mindful or doing mindfulness […] living more mindfully, um… so to be practising attitudes and awareness and more often, so that body awareness and present moment and information or value more as a place to learn from and choose from.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

> *To create people and individuals who are balanced in their life. Not necessarily happy, we can't always be happy, and that's what*

mindfulness is about as well. It's hard to drive that, what the… one of the biggest misconceptions in schools is that mindfulness is about being happy. But a mindful culture, I guess, for me the purpose is to give that balance.

Stewart, teacher at a state secondary school

4.3.3.1.2. (Self)-Compassion

Another purpose proposed by participants is related to fostering an attitude of self-compassion and compassion and care for others, from which a culture of collaboration can emerge. From this point of view, mindfulness can contribute to cultivating a kind of presence that is more friendly and careful toward ourselves and others. In contrast to the current culture of self-criticism, perfectionism and competition, this can foster a different approach to learning in terms of understanding and solving problems in a collaborative and fraternal way. This is closely linked with the development of self-regulation in teachers and pupils, from which they can better manage their emotional world and cultivate a kind of openness to the world more appreciatively and gratefully (Gilbert, 2010; Neff, 2013; Noddings, 2012; Sellman and Amrhein, 2022). Thus education can become a meaningful process by which pupils and teachers can cultivate an approach to life and learning based on love and friendship.

creating a world of people who are not singularly focused on outcome, on achievement, on money and the economy, but creating a kind world, where people actually look out for other people, where people look out for themselves, where people look out for the environment, because they're actually thinking these things are important. They're being mindful of how they're living.

Stewart, teacher at a state secondary school

And I think, you know, the implications are vast if we are encouraging people to think of different ways of solving problems and to be creative in finding solutions and to be collaborative in the way they work with other people, rather than being in competition with other people, which is what at the moment, with our standardised testing, encourages young people to be constantly in competition.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher

Well, I think the kind of programmes that we are running is groundbreaking, where all the students, by the time they are 16, will

know self-control, they'll know self-compassion, they will know kindness and the impact that it has on themselves and their brain. And they'll know and they've experienced all of this sort of stuff, not just in a one hit, but over… it's over a space of three years.

Steve, leader at a private secondary school

[teaching mindfulness instrumentally] they're not giving children enough ability to develop that self-regulation, that ability to pause, that… that ability to just see all in wonder, you know, to appreciate what's going on, to exude gratitude, all of the other things that we know are beneficial there. So, I want children to be taught mindfulness, but I want them to be taught it properly.

Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher at primary and secondary schools in Wales

4.3.3.1.3. Wiser decisions and actions

A third purpose is related to empowering wiser decisions and more attuned actions. This is a more active part of the purpose of mindfulness in schools insofar as it is not only a technique for improving subjective wellbeing in our minds and bodies, but also the cultivation of a whole balance that allows us to evaluate each situation with equanimity and then make the best possible decision regarding ourselves and others (Berila, 2016; Forbes, 2019; Sellman and Amrhein, 2022). This seems to be an essential goal of mindfulness, although it is usually overlooked by more instrumentalised interventions insofar as it is not enough that evidence shows benefits in terms of subjective wellbeing; we also need to inform our concrete actions in the world if we desire to transform people's ways of being significantly and, following this, the culture and society in which we live also.

[…] mindfulness can make such a difference to support people through these crises that we're facing and also empower us to make wise decisions to ensure a successful future.

Eli, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in England

But there it isn't that you sit, stay with the situation just because you recognised it, it is because knowing this is the impact it's having on me

enables you to take a decision, a better decision than you might make if you take it right in the midst of that maelstrom. Never mentions, so there is something about empowering change, enabling you to take better decisions

Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

4.3.3.1.4. Social transformation

A fourth purpose includes a broader potential impact of mindfulness in schools related to creating a better society. This point emphasises the potential connection between what we are doing with pupils within schools and its impact on societal change, which is another aspect usually overlooked by instrumental interventions and most of the current research (Brito et al., 2022; Crane et al., 2023; Forbes, 2019; Simpson, 2017). For some participants, this goal must be one of the most important motivations for implementing mindfulness in schools if we think that education plays a role in the generation of a more democratic, fraternal, sustainable and collaborative society. This implies understanding the school as a micro-society in which the whole school community is continuously building forms of relationship that can be transferred to the macro scale of social functioning (Han and Weare, 2019).

Um, well, though I realise I sound a bit over hippie saying this, may be to create a better world, uhm to create a different society… Um, that is possibly too much […] creating a world of people who are not singularly focused on outcome, on achievement, on money and the economy, but creating a kind world, where people actually look out for other people, where people look out for themselves, where people look out for the environment, because they're actually thinking these things are important. They're being mindful of how they're living.

Stewart, teacher at a state secondary school

4.3.3.2. Main features

Regarding the second theme, the key features of an integral/holistic implementation, all of these are interconnected, which means that each one is only possible in interdependence with everything else.

4.3.3.2.1. Systemic and transversal approach

Another interconnected idea states that this implementation should be systemic and transversal, i.e. it should consider every aspect of the educational process and school life. Here there emerges a relevant distinction between making mere mindfulness activities versus implementing a mindful curriculum within the school, as we will discuss in the next chapter (Ergas, 2019b; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). This implies considering every activity the school already do as an opportunity for doing it from a mindfulness perspective, emphasising the *how* over the *what*. In this sense, every subject can incorporate not just time for a short practice, but also a kind of relationship between teachers and pupils based on care and kindness, and to take the opportunity to deliver content highlighting mindfulness principles or values, e.g. interdependence, impermanence and collaboration. The same can be said regarding other daily school activities such as assemblies, which can be taken as a great opportunity for adults to model mindful attitudes of respectful attention and compassion as well as open spaces for talking about feelings and sensitive issues related to the pupils' and teachers' everyday school life. In this vein it is interesting to hear the reflection of one participant that it is not important to teach mindfulness, but to teach and connect mindfully. However, for this to be a real option, we need everyone (or at least a majority) on board with this approach in some way, which implies that the right direction of this implementation is from adults to pupils. In this vein, Kenwright, McLaughlin and Hansen (2021) state that 80% of staff on board is the minimum for the success of any educational programme at a school.

> *I absolutely believe that it needs to be a whole-school approach and it needs to be weaved through their every day.*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

> *Forget teaching mindfulness, teaching physics, teaching biology, English. What could we do to make it more mindful? How can the teacher teach being more mindful? How can the physical space be more mindful? Uhm, because actually and I don't think that's the only important thing, I think we do need to teach the kids in mindfulness ideally, but I do think that's the most important first step.*
>
> Stewart, teacher at a state secondary school

If we could help the teachers and children bring mindful awareness to what they're doing anyway… then potentially, the whole day could be mindfulness, and, you know, so that´s where the new curriculum started to develop.

Silvia, external mindfulness teachers for primary and secondary schools in Wales

And the idea that came from the very beginning for us is that mindfulness would become part and parcel of what we do every day. It would become part of what the school was, and not just something that's added on; it becomes the ethos of the school, it is who we are, not another subject to be taught and learned, because the key for us was that we want it to become a habit, we want it to become ingrained in who they are, and so that they can take it through life rather than it just be something we do on a Friday afternoon at two o'clock.

Victoria, headteacher at a primary state school

I don't think you need to teach kids mindfulness, personally; if all the staff were practising mindfulness, the school would be mindful, and actually the way we interact with the children would change and, to a certain extent, you wouldn't need to teach the kids mindfulness.

Stewart, teacher at a state secondary school

4.3.3.2.2. Evolving and long-term process

Similarly to the previous idea, this implementation has to be understood and performed as an evolving process from a long-term perspective. In the first instance, this means that none of the current short interventions, usually eight weeks of sessions, is suitable for this task. Although maybe at the beginning the process can start with a relatively short training session, the rest of the process requires that each school develops a community of teachers practising and reflecting on different aspects of mindfulness and its potential for the educational process, and at the same time, a community that keeps meeting, sharing and growing together, generating its own path at its own pace, as will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter (see Brito et al. 2022). This approach demands high understanding, motivation and commitment from headteachers, leaders and teachers, and the patience to take an undefined period of time to allow a mindful culture to flourish. It is interesting here that one participant's idea of a "cascading model" recognises that realistically it is not necessary for everyone to be on

board from the beginning, but this can happen through the process as meaning and benefits become recognisable for more and more colleagues and pupils. This process must also be evolving (Forbes, 2019), which means that teachers and pupils must continue developing principles, ideas and practices meaningful for their specific contexts and needs and based on regular meetings, instead of implementing repetitive and standardised short-term programs with general aims.

> *recognising it is going to take time you know, we´ve always said that it might take 5 years for even an enthusiastic school to kind of take it on board thoroughly and you know the new teachers, the new mindfulness teachers in school you know are not gonna do their best job straight off so how they offer it and the way they grow as mindfulness practitioners in school is just giving it… allowing it time and allowing then to have the flexibility to let it grow as it needs to… then you know and then be able to share that… with kind of developing a model of training where a kind of cascading model, so rather than requiring everybody to come into training individually for a cost, um, we're doing a cheaper rate if you like for schools where there's somebody that´s an experienced mindfulness teacher who´s been delivering it at school for a while and who can then teach other teachers in school for less money.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

> *Uh, because they can't, we can't all be exactly the same in that way, we all have to find the right way that fits our school communities.*
>
> Victoria, headteacher at a primary state school

4.3.3.2.3. Top-down orientation

This idea refers to the direction of a holistic implementation, in which most of the participants recognise that the best model here must be top-down. This is considered a vital aspect of sustainable implementations (Hudson, Lawton and Hugh-Jones, 2020; Wilde, Sonley, Crane, Ford, Raja, Robson, Taylor and Kuyken, 2019) and implies at least a couple of requirements. Firstly, it requires that headteachers and leadership teams within schools understand mindfulness and its potential benefits for the whole school community from a long-term perspective. Secondly, this understanding should translate into motivation and willingness to make decisions regarding concrete things like money, time and

strategies. Some participants manifest their desire that a bottom-up model be the most straightforward and optimal way. However, they recognise that in the real world, the process has to work in the opposite direction, at least at the beginning. Some examples show the negative consequences derived from the loss of support from the top, due to a leader who was very supportive of this initiative leaving the school. What usually happen is that the whole implementation tends to decay and eventually disappear.

> *I think people talk about what's the best way to do this. Is it bottom up or top down? I think bottom up is lovely. But even bottom up only works, I think, if the top really supports it, because ultimately the top decides on funding, they decide on timing, they decide on strategy…*
>
> Stewart, teacher at a state secondary school

> *It has to have the belief from the headteachers that it's a worthwhile thing, that's probably the most important thing, and when you have the backing of the people, the stakeholders that are at the top then… and they believe in it, and they know that it's making a difference and that and this is why we're trying to see that it's making a difference.*
>
> Steve, leader at a private secondary school

> *So, if there's something that needs to be driven through school, it comes through the headteacher or through leadership, through senior leadership first; headteacher, senior leadership, which then gets discussed as another group of leaders, which helps with all of the planning in the implementation. So it's almost like it… it gets disseminated from the top down into the classroom.*
>
> Mary, teacher and leader at a state primary school

4.3.3.2.4. Teacher priority

Similarly to the previous one, this sub-theme refers to the prioritisation of teachers and adults more widely for starting in order to keep going with this kind of implementation. Although generally it is thought that mindfulness in schools is mainly for pupils, it is crucial to recognise that the priority is the experience and training of teachers insofar as they will be in charge of delivering these practices and ideas to pupils, which will be examined in the next chapter (see Brito et al., 2022). As one participant says, teachers make the "weather" in the classroom, which means that from a mindful presence, they are creating a sort

of “field force” from which they implicitly invite children and adolescents to enter a careful and peaceful relationship by which they can access themselves and be able to self-regulate their emotional experiences (Brito and Corthorn, 2018; Naranjo, 1999; Weare and Bethune, 2021; Weare and Hanh, 2019). It is wonderful to consider that pure teacher presence can be the most transformative way to educate pupils. Furthermore, if we extend this strategy to every adult around pupils, i.e. the rest of the school staff and parents/carers, these weather conditions can generate a powerful emotional environment for authentic self-knowledge, self-regulation and caring relationships within and outside of the classroom.

> *but it is something about the that whole how you are, your presence, increases the whole, you literally as a teacher you do make the weather in the classroom, the moment you actually are there with children. So, there's that priority, so that's the first priority, it is so important that teachers are together, because they're going to face challenges, children are challenging, you know, you can have all sorts of issues in the classroom, behavioural issues, and all sorts of things like that for whatever reasons their teaching is, I think, harder than when I did it all those years ago, children are challenging. And if you're dysregulated, you're only making dysregulated child worse.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher, primary and secondary schools in Wales

> *[…] education, it's about the children, of course, but if you don't have a healthy, happy staff, you're not going to have a particularly good uhm, relationship, you're not going to be modelling very good behaviour to the children. And ultimately, if we think from a mindfulness point of view, from just a human point of view, you know, we pick up so much from body language from how people speak to us, how they interact with us, if you have a healthy and happy staff…*
>
> Stewart, teacher at a state secondary school in England

> *So, in terms of mindfulness, really, we should be working on the teachers first… bringing that to them so they can feel in that… and really connect with themselves and how they are, without judgment, to be able to help them know how to manage themselves first, to be mindful of how they are towards children […] because if you give them a program to teach without the experience of feeling the benefits of mindfulness and having a practice, how can they effectively support those children through a*

practice, if we're going to have a daily embedded mindfulness practice in the curriculum?

Louise, external mindfulness teacher at primary schools in England

4.3.3.3. Challenges

4.3.3.3.1. Lack of understanding

Although fundamental, this integral approach is perceived as very challenging by some participants, which can be considered a third theme. One of the sub-themes related to this is that such an approach implies a high level of understanding at the top and among teachers in the school regarding mindfulness and its educational and human potentialities. From the beginning, this understanding requires high-quality training for adults, and then ongoing opportunities for regular external supervision (Wigelsworth and Quinn, 2020). When these conditions are met, pupils of all levels can benefit from an emergent mindful culture and its multiple expressions in practice.

It could have been implemented in a more holistic way. It's quite difficult to think to do, though, you know… I mean, unless you understand the benefits, and not everyone you know thinks that…

Rosa, primary and secondary teacher at a private school in England

4.3.3.3.2. Institutional requirements

Amongst the most relevant limitations recognised by participants is the high pressure that the current national curriculum places on schoolteachers (Ball, 2003; Berila, 2016). This translates into an over-busy timetable without any free time for the development of other human qualities such as those mindfulness promotes (non-productive time, spontaneous play, collaborative interaction, self-observation, caring conversations, etc); these aspects will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 7 (see Brito et al., 2021b). Time for self- and relational flourishing is the big absence in the current mainstream educational system. It represents one of the biggest challenges for an integral implementation of mindfulness and for transforming the entire educational process into one truly

meaningful and pertinent for our context (Biesta, 2022). Also, it is worth considering the view of some participants related to the increasing expectation that schools, and society in general, place on teachers' roles, which transcends the field of educational competencies and turns teaching into a potentially overwhelming job.

> *I think time, I think the requirements of the national curriculum, all the testing, you know, the kind of whole philosophy of education, and also in England I think rather than in Wales now, but you know it is all about achieving, you know, getting to a certain place, so that just keeps separating what we´re trying to do with mindfulness, you know "we need to get them there, they´re not ok here, they need to be there".*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

> *I think we need to reduce the pressure. And I think that, I think Government policy is needed to change uhm around what is the purpose of a primary school, really. Um and recognising that, you know, we can have a, you know, a bunch of kids with the highest grades in the world, but if they're not happy and they're stressed and they're anxious and they have no self-confidence, then they're not going to achieve their full potential in life.*
>
> Liz, external mindfulness teacher in state and private schools in England.

> *a shift in what is expected from teachers, we have become not just educators, in the sense of teaching reading, writing and maths, we have to do everything else, we feel as if we're having to be doctors, parents, social workers, you know, the welfare, everything! and with that, that can be a bit of hopelessness.*
>
> Victoria, headteacher at a state primary school

4.3.3.3.3. Discipline with formal practices

This sub-theme refers to the problem that some participants recognise relating to teachers' difficulty with having regular formal practices within and outside the school. In most mainstream mindfulness programmes, formal practices are considered essential for the success of the training (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). However, this is increasingly recognised as a narrow view of how mindfulness works, especially in educational contexts. In this regard, some participants state

that it is important to make a shift on this point and to relocate informal practices at the centre of mindfulness learning, which means giving more emphasis to taking daily routine activities at school rather than at home, in order to make them deliberately, with full attention, and with an appreciative and kind attitude (Davidson, 2021). Thus the whole day can eventually become an opportunity to cultivate a mindful school community life.

> *But she [one of the co-creators of The Present programme] recognised the difficulty of getting people to do their practice even while they're on an 8-week course. Yeah it… it is, it is hard and I got to admit I didn't do it on my 8-week course. I did it because I had to develop a practice to be able to get onto the children's courses. And of course, once you do it, you realise how important it is. But breaking that barrier is really hard. So, she has developed a course called "Living in the present", which is much more about mindfulness in everyday life. So less about structured guided practices like body and breath, although you do things like that, but much more about just taking pauses in your life, appreciating here now, connecting, making choices, you know, the awareness of mind and body.*
>
> Mrs Mf, external mindfulness teacher, primary and secondary schools in Wales

4.3.3.3.4. Over-focus on academic outcomes

Most participants think that the current over-focus of schools on academic results limits the potential for integral implementations of mindfulness. This is an issue recognised by many researchers and authors in this field (Maratos et al., 2019) as an unbalance in the educational process, expressed in an over-value of subjects such as maths, English and science to the detriment of other relevant topics and activities, such as arts and physical education; and overall, to the detriment of self and relational development (Wilson, Sellman and Joseph, 2023), in this case based on mindfulness. After decades of this educational system, we see a similar orientation to brain/cognitive learning over heart/emotional/relational development and organismic/body training. All this is accompanied by a testing regime based on which all learning is considered and examined as valuable (Ball, 2003; Biesta, 2015).

> *I think at the moment is the bare minimum in schools. And so, staff don't have time for wellbeing... Academic is, again headteachers at the top*

are… we have to remember they might be headteachers, but they are judged by people above them, governors, the governors in the school who are non-paid, but control the school. And they are judged on academic results…

Stewart, teacher at a state secondary school in England

4.3.3.3.5. Budget priorities

The last challenge refers to what some participants understand as the permanent problem of budget priorities within schools. That money is always something limited is not in itself a problem; it is how the budget is distributed that can be debatable. In the case of introducing mindfulness programmes in schools, this is recognised as a sensitive aspect for at least two main reasons: 1. owing to a lack of sufficient knowledge regarding facilitators and barriers to these kinds of implementations, and 2. because scalability of mindfulness implementations is commonly associated with high demand in terms of time and cost (Crane et al., 2020). In recent years specific research has been carried out in this regard, evaluating specific programmes in educational settings, mainly in the US (Doyle et al., 2019) and the UK (Crane et al., 2020).

I guess the kind of, you know what challenges schools is always money, um, you know if the training is expensive, they can´t afford it or they´ll only send one person, and then that person is so isolated in school that it´s almost impossible for a single person to, you know, continue with implementations wherever they go with that, you know, they can´t teach all the children in the school, so then it´s only with their class perhaps you know for a year or two until they give up on it because there´s no support… um, there´s no team in the school that keep it alive for them.

Silvia, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

4.3.4. Aim D: Participants' perspectives about the most typical and current mindfulness programmes for training teachers

Within this aim, different evaluations emphasise positive and negative aspects. To date, there is a considerable amount of research on the merits of mindfulness programmes for teachers (Jennings, 2015; Weare and Bethune, 2021) focused on the objective and more easily measurable factors such as feasibility,

acceptability and efficacy (Kuyken et al., 2013; Zenner et al., 2014). However, only in recent years has more critical research started to appear, inquiring from qualitative perspectives (teachers' and pupils' voices) into the limitations of mainstream mindfulness programmes, mainly regarding their instrumental design and their consequent lack of depth or lasting impact on the educational process in terms of fostering a flourishing life for pupils and teachers (Crawford et al., 2020; Kuyken et al., 2022; Wigelsworth and Quinn, 2020). Although most of the participants in this research agreed on the accessibility of the current most common mindfulness programmes, they also perceive that these programmes have severe deficiencies in terms of superficiality, duration and lack of long-term impact on the school community, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 7 (see Brito et al., 2022). As this is a crucial topic in this field and one of the main goals of the present research, it will be the main focus of the Third Cycle of this study to offer some guidelines which emerged from focus groups with some of the participants for a more integral implementation, oriented toward school system transformation in an evolving approach (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Thus, within this aim, two main themes emerged. The first refers to the merits of the mainstream programmes, in which we can discern two sub-themes: 1. accessibility, and 2. the benefits of curriculum-based programmes. The second theme relates to some important limitations of these programmes, namely the following sub-themes: 1. too introductory; 2. lack of continuity; 3. too-high formal practice requirement; 4. inflexibility; 5. budget constraints; 6. cultural biases (see Table 9).

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Merits	1.1. Accessibility 1.2. Curriculum-based
2. Limitations	2.1. Too introductory 2.2. Lack of continuity 2.3. Excessive formal practice requirement 2.4. Inflexibility 2.5. Budget constraints 2.6. Cultural biases

Table 9. Themes and sub-themes from participants' perspectives on the current mainstream mindfulness programmes for training teachers

4.3.4.1. Merits

Within this fourth aim, the first theme is the merits of these programmes, regarding which some participants recognise, as two sub-themes, the following sub-themes:

4.3.4.1.1. Accessibility

Typical mindfulness programmes offer a good introduction for teachers in terms of accessibility of concepts and practices, allowing them to understand complex concepts in simple and experiential ways. An appropriate example of this would be the idea of our 'wandering mind' and how that implies a brain 'default mode' of functioning called the 'doing mode', with implications for the generation of anxiety, stress and burnout. This contrasts with a more mindful experience of focusing our attention on the present moment, called the 'being mode', with its implications for the achievement of a more calm and open state of mind and body (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). All these ideas are explained by useful metaphors, like the domestication of a chaotic puppy, and supported by neuroscientific research translated into straightforward figures (Simpson, 2017).

4.3.4.1.2. Curriculum-based

Furthermore, these programmes offer something other than a simple set of activities, offering instead a curriculum segmented by age and with some

progression, backed by a robust body of research, and able to engage pupils with the practice (see the website https://mindfulnessinschools.org/ as an example). Although participants support the idea of having a mindfulness curriculum, the factual curriculums appear too rigid and superficial, not allowing a proper personal and educational embodiment of mindfulness.

> *I think the Mindfulness in Schools Project, I think they're doing a very good job of making it accessible to many people. And I think they're very open about the fact that, you know, it's just like dipping your toe in the water, that it is very introductory.*
>
> Eli, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in England

> *Then look at the complex concepts that you are getting over. And that is why doing these programs which are so beautifully researched and thought out is important, rather than that incidental mindfulness that just plucks a practice or a video off the shelf. And the… there, you see there is a world of difference giving children a curriculum that is full of things like this, you'll explain how things work and why you would do it, and we leave children better committed to an anchoring practice than most adults after an 8-week course to be honest.*
>
> Mrs Mf, external mindfulness teacher, primary and secondary schools in Wales

4.3.4.2. Limitations

4.3.4.2.1. Too introductory

However, on the other hand, most participants recognise (more strongly in the individual interviews than in the focus group) that these programmes need to be improved in important ways. Participants perceive that these programmes tend to be too basic and introductory insofar as they have a short duration (commonly, five full days or six to eight weeks), which means it is difficult for teachers to gain a deep understanding of the nature and potentialities of mindfulness within schools as well as to achieve any discipline in the practice in the long term, as we explored in the literature review (Brito et al., 2022; Ergas, 2019; Simpson, 2017). This point is connected with the idea that these programmes have an

unbalanced focus on mental health from a therapeutic background, which seems to be inadequate for systemic educational purposes.

> *I don't think it goes deeply enough, um, in terms of amount of practice and amount of experience before teachers can deliver mindfulness*
>
> Eli, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in England

> *I just meant about teachers being trained and there isn't really a chance, uh, once you do that six-week course, that's it. There's no chance to then kind of improve your practice or… or review your practice, it's just like "here's the six-week course, now go off and… and do it" kind of thing.*
>
> Rosa, secondary teacher in a private school in England

4.3.4.2.2. Lack of continuity

This point is a common limitation for teachers, as it is for pupils' programmes. It means that mindfulness teaching in schools includes a pre-defined set of contents and practices in a structured sequence replicated similarly over time, as we will see in Chapter 7 (see Brito et al., 2022). Although these programmes can offer an interesting taste for teachers and pupils, the risk with this lack of progression is that they can become a repetitive and demotivating routine instead of being a process through which teachers and pupils evolve in terms of self-knowledge and development of different human and educational dimensions such as ethics, contemplative attention, gratitude, compassionate relationships, and creative orientation to daily and world problems (Hyland, 2016), in an age-based approach. In this regard the emergence of the Welsh programme "Living in the present", co-created by Sarah Silverton, Tabitha Sawyer and Dusana Dorjee, is interesting, and has two distinctive hallmarks: 1. an emphasis on informal practices and the different creative ways in which teachers can take every routine opportunity to cultivate awareness, and 2. the proposal of seven main topics to work on from an evolving approach called the spiral curriculum: these are *here and now*, *focusing*, *human body*, *human mind*, *connecting*, *noticing choice* and *noticing change* (see the website

https://www.thepresentcourses.org/living-in-the-present-8-week-mindfulness-course-online/).

> *But we… had doubts, because it was offered as a half an hour session over a period of time… and I kept hearing that teachers were so busy it´s hard to fit the half an hour into what they had to do already, to create the space, um, and what I kept hearing was that people once they finished the programme stopped, they didn´t know what to do after that… you know, maybe more than half, just for "we´ve done that now, what do we do next?" And because it was the same material for years 3 up to 6, then if they repeated it once, it was kind of "well, we´ve done this", you know… so it didn´t feel fresh enough to… to keep motivated.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

> *I think that´s not what´s been happening really… you know it´s the same with adult courses, there´s been lots of offering learning courses, but not so much supporting people beyond the 8 weeks to continue to practice, and I think that´s probably true in schools that you know, sell them training and then we won´t stay in touch with them.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

4.3.4.2.3. Excessive formal practice requirement

This idea is a potentially controversial topic regarding the limitations of common programmes for training teachers. Some participants think low-frequency teacher practice is a problem in terms of their qualification to offer mindfulness to pupils. However, other participants here raise a problem, in the sense of putting unrealistic expectations on teachers through overly high formal requirements, mainly regarding the need for frequent formal practices in daily life, such as sitting meditation or any other kind of formal practice which can take 20-40 minutes per day, based on the MBSR model. If we consider how busy teachers usually are at school, it seems unfair to ask them to keep such a regular and committed formal practice, because it could be felt as another excessive demand with the concomitant risk of frustration and demotivation. An interesting idea emerging here is to distinguish between formal and informal practices, giving the second the priority for teacher training within and outside of the school. From this point of view, although some formal practice would be

advisable, the emphasis must be on taking every daily activity within the school as an opportunity for both teachers' and pupils' practice, as discussed regarding the previous limitation. Notably, school life offers many occasions for doing things in a mindful way; for instance, being aware of tone of voice, attention to each pupil, and the use of certain topics or experiences to cultivate curiosity, critical thinking and compassion, amongst other things.

> *you know the ways some adults are introduced to mindfulness, you know we´ve tried all sorts of different ways over the years to see what´s accessible and you know, manageable, but still lots of people are doing it very formal… quite, you know… quite high requirements for practice… um… you know, and I think making that relevant in the school environment, is very difficult to do then you know trying to match that […]*
>
> *I think that they won´t engage, they can´t because of their busyness, and they´re very quick I think teachers to feel like they´re not doing it properly, um, so there´s lots of shame and guilt and lying about how much home practice they´re doing you know because… because they can´t do it so, so we´ve developed an adult version of "The Present" to just invite teachers then to explore on mindfulness.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

4.3.4.2.4. Inflexibility

A fourth sub-theme refers to the link between these programmes and the research at the base under the evidence-based scientific regime. One of the main strengths of the usual programmes is the vast amount of scientific evidence they are based on, which implies that they have to be built to make measurement possible according to currently validated scales. For this reason, these programmes used to be very structured and standardised, with the risk of becoming too rigid and with low potential for adaptation to each school's particular needs. Here there is a problematic correlation between the genuine quality of a programme and its evaluability according to criteria usually based on quantitative research, which tends (as with every sort of testing) to influence the structure and content of these programmes in the direction of a simplification that threatens their depth and impact, in the service of what Purser (2019) calls the "Mindfulness-Academic-Science Complex". This refers to mindfulness research having become a very

convenient and profitable endeavour under the criteria of measurability and publishing productivity, as has been suggested in Chapter 5 (see Brito et al., 2021a).

> *I think it's a shame that the ".b" is being used for research with the MYRIAD project, because I think that has meant it had to be fixed in the way that it's delivered to have consistent results. And there's a lot of feedback to hear your ideas of what makes a good research and, you know, which methodologies work better and all of that. And it it's almost like it became a bit too scientific…*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

4.3.4.2.5. Budget constraints

Again, budget constraints are also recognised as a limitation insofar as the high cost of these programmes reduces access to many teachers, making it difficult to achieve a critical mass of well-trained teachers within schools. The main problem here is that if we do not have enough trained staff, it is much more difficult for mindfulness within schools to have a systemic and long-term impact on teachers and pupils. According to Kenwright et al. (2021), the critical mass for the success of any new educational initiative to be institutionalised is around 80%, which means that this percentage of teachers should at least sympathise with a given mindfulness programme. On the other hand, the few trained teachers are at risk of being too isolated within the school, which can generate a dissonance between the motivation of these teachers and the purpose and actions promoted by the school, implying the potential demotivation of these teachers. In this sense, it is more suitable to make mindfulness programmes for teachers more accessible from a monetary perspective.

> *I guess the kind of, you know what challenges schools is always money, um, you know if the training is expensive, they can´t afford it or they´ll only send one person, and then that person is so isolated in school that it´s almost impossible for a single person to, you know, continue with implementations wherever they go with that, you know, they can´t teach all the children in the school, so then it´s only with their class perhaps you know for a year or two until they give up on it because there´s no support… um, there´s no team in the school that keep it alive for them.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher for primary and secondary schools in Wales

4.3.4.2.6. Cultural biases

A final relevant sub-theme to be considered is the cultural biases of the most popular mindfulness programmes in England and Wales. Specifically, one of the participants suggests that the Dot b programme, in particular, is too white British and middle-class centred, as expressed in some features such as the use of metaphors like the pet (not every culture recognises animals as pets), the use of masculine sports personalities as models, or the use of skinny women in videos. In my view, although this point can be seen as a limitation when these kinds of programmes are exported out of the UK context, it can be considered an invitation to pay special attention to the local characteristics and needs of the particular contexts into which we want to introduce a mindfulness programme. This is in line with Kirmayer's (2015) statement that

> [u]nderstanding how mindfulness changes experience may require not simply exploring the phenomenology from first-person perspective or identifying the brain correlates of particular states or outcomes, but also mapping the social worlds in which experiences of calm, attentiveness, nonattachment, equanimity, and compassion are enacted. (p. 459)

This requirement could conflict with the other aforementioned limitation regarding the over-standardisation of these programmes, opening a space to discuss what can be considered universal aspects and what can be considered cultural aspects of a particular mindfulness programme for educators.

> *Whereas the ".b" I find that it is not diverse at all, so I don't think it relates to different cultures, it's very sort of British centric and public school centric and quite genderised too […]*
>
> *However, there are certain things like, in the "paws b" for… no, in the ".b" where they talk about puppy training, and certain cultures would not have a pet dog, it's just, you know, they don't like dogs […]*
>
> *And some of the slides, in the "paws b", there's one particular slide in the session on choices, where the girl is very, very thin and she almost looks anorexic.*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

4.4. Conclusions

The findings reported in this chapter cover a wide range of aspects related to the current implementation of mindfulness in schools in England and Wales. This range includes, on the one hand, teachers' perceptions of and reflections on the importance of the personal experience and understanding of mindfulness, and the merits and limitations of the current mainstream mindfulness programmes for pupils; and on the other hand, the possibility of implementing mindfulness more integrally within schools. The parcel of findings regarding the benefits and merits of the current implementation is in line with many other studies that stress cognitive, emotional and relational outcomes for pupils and teachers (see Weare and Bethune, 2021), a fact recognised by Hyland (2011) at the early stage of the implementation and research in this field: "[…] the benefits of mindfulness for teachers and students are more than enough to encourage further research in the field" (p. 175).

Similarly, most of the limitations found in this research are akin to other research findings related to the limitations of mindfulness programmes for both pupils and teachers, which can be understood as an excess of instrumentalisation, meaning that these programmes are usually too individualistic, standardised, short-term and merely remedial in terms of mental health and academic skills; which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter as well as in Chapter 7 (Brito et al., 2021a, b; Ergas and Hadar, 2019; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020; Simpson, 2017). Interestingly, some of these limitations find support in and anticipate the reports derived from the MYRIAD project (Kuyken et al., 2022; Montero-Marin et al., 2022), already outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, which conclude that the typical mindfulness interventions do not seem to demonstrate improvements in mental health and wellbeing in secondary pupils compared to traditional social and emotional learning provision in the UK schools.

This research phase reveals several further relevant participant insights, which can support the need to rethink the current mainstream implementation of mindfulness in English and Welsh schools. The first insight refers to the recognised relevance of ensuring that mindfulness in schools starts with

teachers, highlighting the need for teachers to maintain a daily mindful experience and an accurate understanding of the nature and potentialities of mindfulness for educational purposes (Han and Weare, 2017; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). From participants' experience, mindfulness in education relates to a way of being (rather than making some mindfulness activities), authenticity (rather than replicating acquired knowledge), flourishing (rather than promoting mental health only) and empowering actions (beyond any passive awareness). On the one hand, this view is consistent with one of the main features of an integral approach perceived by participants and, on the other, with the distinction realised in Chapter 2 between a thin and a thick approach to mindfulness in education (see Brito et al., 2022). Interestingly, these ideas are oriented to core dimensions of human development, instead of merely fostering mental health or academic competencies to promote a more effective adaptation to market demands.

Another insight from participants' perspectives refers to the purposes of the current mainstream mindfulness programmes within schools and their inherent limitations. In line with most of the research on this topic (Carsley, Khoury and Heath, 2018; Crane, 2017; Ergas and Hadar, 2019), its main purpose emerged as very instrumental in terms of being focused on individual benefits and behavioural outcomes. Among these, we can highlight coping with difficulties, enhancing pupils' learning and improving behaviour, all of these related to what is considered proper adaptation to the current educational system. Indeed, alongside these purposes, participants recognise that the common mindfulness programmes in schools (such as Paws b and Dot b) have important intrinsic limitations, amongst which we can emphasise superficiality, over-standardisation and short duration, with the consequence that they do not offer a significant contribution in terms of genuine educational goals for the school community as a whole, as discussed in Chapter 2 (see Brito et al., 2022).

Finally, a concluding participant's insight worthy of mention refers to some important limitations of the current most common mindfulness training for teachers in the UK. These findings are even more relevant if we consider that there are few studies on the impact of mindfulness programmes for teachers

compared to pupils (Seney and Mishou, 2018). Thus we can highlight four main aspects to consider for improving the current mindfulness training for teachers (at least in England and Wales): these programmes are 1) too introductory, i.e. although they cover important content and skills with an accessible pedagogy, they are incomplete and superficial; 2) too short and without continuity, i.e. although short programmes can be more accessible and affordable, this has the crucial consequence of a non-lasting impact on the school community insofar as it is about cultivating modes of being rather than just offering information; 3) too oriented towards formal practices, i.e. mindfulness programmes for teachers, derived from the MBSR original version, place high pressure on teachers in terms of frequency and duration of formal practices, which in turn negatively impact motivation and sense of self-efficacy. Instead, it is recommended to give more importance to informal practices and to daily school opportunities for practice awareness; 4) they are too inflexible, i.e. the curriculum of these programmes is too script-based, and they are repeated year after year in the same way, not allowing for creative embodiment by teachers, which makes them less pertinent and motivating for both pupils and teachers. Again, owing to the relevance of this topic and the lack of sufficient research on it, I will offer more detail in the guidelines generated in the following empirical investigation cycle (see Chapters 6 and 7).

4.5. Summary

This chapter has offered a detailed account of findings from the second research cycle, i.e. interviews, combined with reflections based on pertinent literature. These findings were organised into the four aims (numbered with letters) of the first research question, namely the teachers' perceptions of A. the relevance of personal mindfulness practice; B. the current dominant mindfulness programmes in schools; C. a potentially more integral implementation of mindfulness in schools; and C. the current mindfulness training for teachers; all in the English and Welsh contexts.

Within each aim arose themes and sub-themes as follows. Within aim A, the themes were "Teachers' personal practice" and "Understanding the nature of

mindfulness". Within aim B, the themes were "Positive effects", "Purposes of the implementation", and "Limitations". Within aim C, the themes were "Purposes of an integral implementation", "Main features", and "Challenges". Finally, within aim D, the themes were "Merits" and "Limitations". In turn, within each theme, I found several relevant sub-themes which allowed for positive and critical reflection on key elements of the current implementation.

Core insights from this stage appeared to be relevant contributions, some reinforcing what we already know from the literature, e.g. benefits such as improvement in behaviour, concentration and wellbeing. However, more interestingly, other insights highlight the need to shift from a therapeutic to an educational approach, linking mindfulness with a way of being in terms of personal and interpersonal flourishing rather than mere mental health prevention. Also, a critique regarding the over-standardisation and simplification of the current mindfulness programmes for pupils and teachers, mainly in the English context, arose as a fundamental contribution to the field which is rarely reported by research so far.

Chapter 5: Mindfulness 'in' Education as a Form of Iatrogenesis. A Reflection on the First Findings

This chapter formed the basis for publishing an article in 2021 in collaboration with my supervisors (see Brito, Joseph and Sellman 2021a). To a lesser degree, this chapter is influenced by another article published in collaboration with my supervisors (see Brito, Joseph and Sellman 2021b).

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss a fundamental controversial aspect of mindfulness in schools, representing an effort to reflect on and interpret the limitations and critical reflections offered by participants in the last chapter, and critically considering the main findings of the second cycle of this study. This chapter should be understood as a phenomenological-hermeneutical intellectual endeavour towards an in-depth understanding of the foundations of the core limitations of current mainstream mindfulness programmes in England and Wales. This reflection refers to how the evidence for the benefits of mindfulness, applied instrumentally, is developed within a particular worldview consistent with neoliberalism, compromising genuine potential for individual and social transformation. As such, I argue that it is helpful to synthesise the critique of MBIs, well known as 'McMindfulness' (Purser, 2019), through the concept of 'iatrogenesis' (Illich, 1976), in order to more deeply understand how they are being used as interventions with hidden, unnoticed and probably unconscious political and economic motivations to the detriment of a more transformative implementation. The main intention is to offer a critical argument for how a promising approach to individual and systemic transformation is subverted by neoliberal axioms which actually thwart deeper intra- and interpersonal change.

To this effect, in this chapter I employed the methodology of a critical literature review, whereby I have classified meta-reviews of mindfulness effects alongside mindfulness and education research published within the last ten years (e.g. Ergas, 2019a; Felver, Celis-de Hoyos, Tezanos and Singh 2016; Weare 2012; Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz and Walach 2014), and used meta-critiques (e.g. Forbes, 2019; Hyland, 2016; Kristensen, 2018; Ng, 2016; Purser, 2019; Reveley,

2016; Walsh, 2016; van Dam et al., 2018) to analyse and group these effects. After introducing different modalities of mindfulness within education that aid my classification (Ergas 2019b; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020), I initially focus the critique on the most common instrumental applications. As posited in Brito et al. (2021a) the main effect of mindfulness is enhanced awareness, which can result in the classifications of positive and negative 'side-effects' when understood from a simplicity paradigm of linear and temporal causality, though positive side-effects are more frequently reported. In order to understand the deeper and less apparent iatrogenic effects of mindfulness 'in' education as a third classification, I then outline how it is necessary to draw upon critical and systems theories. This endeavour enables MBIs to be understood within a complexity paradigm (Capra, 1996; Maldonado, 2020) rather than the tendency existing in much educational and psychological research to focus on crude empirical outcomes. As the chapter proceeds, I will show how iatrogenesis, as an insidious type of side-effect, derives from an over-simplified implementation of mindfulness within schools and a corresponding reductionist type of research which impedes, even threatens, the potential of these practices for deeper self-understanding and social transformation. Although those who teach mindfulness practices presumably have the best of intentions, I contend that mindfulness related to the educational process as a whole, and human flourishing more broadly, has been subverted into a technique for individuals to learn how to endure the exploitative conditions of a system largely based on a productive technical and neoliberal logic rather than transform it, even when these initiatives are superficially guised as self-care. Tables 3 and 4 present some of the iatrogenic effects that can be inferred from the literature.

Throughout this chapter, I join the call for more authentic and integral approaches to mindfulness. This review underlines that it is only through mindfulness 'as' education rather than 'in' education that such an approach possesses a more transformative potential for human flourishing (Ergas, 2019a; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). Given the critical aim of the reflection in this chapter, I do not have the scope to explain what I mean by this transformative potential nor describe such approaches in detail; this will be presented in Chapter 7.

5.1. Modalities of Mindfulness within education

Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020) articulate two modalities of mindfulness within educational settings. The first, mindfulness 'in' education, is intervention-based, largely derived from psychology, and employs the practices as self-help techniques to assist individuals in adjusting and adapting to the pressures of schooling and/or other life circumstances. This is contrasted with mindfulness 'as' education, which emphasises a more integral approach where mindfulness, understood as deepened awareness, permeates all aspects of the system, including relationships, curriculum and pedagogy. A similar categorisation has been employed by Ergas (2019b), who adds mindfulness 'of' to 'in' and 'as' education. This third category engages a more critical form of mindfulness to include understanding the nature of education and the education system, including its more covert functions such as conditioning and reproduction of social inequalities. As Ergas and Linor (2019) and Ergas (2019b) affirm, although it is clear that mindfulness 'as' education is rare, and mindfulness 'of' education is rarer still, we can find some exceptions in university courses with social justice outlooks (e.g. Rendon, 2009; Berila, 2016). Mindfulness 'in' education is the most typical modality and the modality towards which I focus this critique.

Many have welcomed mindfulness 'in' education as an inoffensive universalising of East Asian wisdom, particularly Buddhism, and as a means of superficially reducing the suffering associated with Western education and lifestyles, including inattention arising from hyper-stimulation, poor mental health arising from ruminative thinking and stress arising from performative agendas in education and the workplace. Nevertheless, many others have criticised such an instrumental approach for overlooking the connection between mindfulness practices, a more profound examination of self and society, and their relationship to a more comprehensive, wholesome and ethically-oriented approach to being (e.g. Hyland, 2016, 2017; Simpson, 2017). That mindfulness is effective is not the issue; it may be that it is too effective, making it susceptible to appropriation by agendas with ulterior motives. Many welcome the introduction of mindfulness and recognise its potential to at least offer temporary

respite from performative agendas (e.g. Ergas, 2019b; O'Donnell, 2016). Kabat-Zinn (2017) has defended this application as a universalisation of Buddhist sensibilities ('spreading the Dharma'), claiming the fact that suffering *is* reduced is more important than *how*. However, those who critique mindfulness 'in' education more deeply highlight that it is framed as a self-soothing technique, oriented more broadly to improved performativity, framed by the broader logic of late capitalism, known more specifically as neoliberalism (Ergas, 2019b; Forbes, 2019; Hyland, 2017; Reveley, 2019; Scherer and Waistell, 2018). Subjected to this critique, mindfulness 'in' education is problematic because individuals are taught to cope with systems that may be, at least partially, responsible for their suffering, while deeper understanding of self and reality is undermined (Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020).

In arenas outside of education, this instrumentalisation of mindfulness has been satirically called 'McMindfulness' (Forbes, 2019; Ergas, 2019a; Purser and Loy, 2013; Purser, 2019). Among the main characteristics of McMindfulness, pertinent to education are the following. (1) A secularisation of the original Buddhist traditional teachings, which also recontextualise and dissociate the practice from its ethical and spiritual foundations, often with a degree of ignorance to this fact (Hyland, 2016). (2) An alignment of these interventions with a neoliberal socioeconomic framework, which means that mindfulness interventions within schools have as a substantive goal the improvement of academic performance and productivity, even if disguised as an individual wellbeing intervention (Reveley, 2016). (3) The transformation of these interventions into a very lucrative commercial product that promises to be a panacea for almost any problem, from eating disorders to school effectiveness, claiming to be supported by 'hard' neuroscientific research (Purser, 2019). (4) The appearance of being an intervention for self-development and profound self-transformation, when in fact a high percentage of the 'product' is dedicated only to improving a narrow subset of skills and competencies (Forbes, 2019). I will return to these features at the end of this chapter, where I will reflect on them in light of the 'iatrogenic effect' of mindfulness in education, an idea I will introduce below.

Applied to education, this focuses on adapting pupils and teachers to an over-demanding system rather than fostering significant individual and social transformation (Brito et al., 2021a; Forbes, 2019; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). Paradoxically, all of these features actually constitute mindfulness as a subtle but genuine threat to integral and transformative education as well as human flourishing more broadly, at odds with its roots, which emphasise reducing suffering. For writers like Hyland (2016), this is because mindfulness, as a more advanced and individualised skill, has been abstracted from its ethical roots, mainly the three Buddhist 'Cardinal Virtues' (non-attachment, benevolence and understanding) and the Noble Eightfold Path (right view, resolve, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, concentration and mindfulness), which are more wholesome and socially oriented and less concerned with the transcendence and enlightenment of the individual alone (Keown, 2013; Loy, 2003). Hence, mindfulness 'in' education, as a version of McMindfulness, is dangerous not just because it thwarts genuine potential liberation, but also because it is used upon a captive audience whose agency is compromised. In this guise, mindfulness 'in' education could be understood as a more insidious form of conditioning, as it focuses discourses of poor mental health on issues of individual culpability rather than institutional fallibility.

To understand this 'sleight of hand', Brito et al. (2021a) suggest it may be helpful to understand mindfulness 'in' education as a form of iatrogenesis. The word 'iatrogenesis' comes from the Greek ιατροζ (*iatros*, healer) and γενεσιζ (*genesis*, origin), meaning *brought forth by a healer*, regardless of whether the effect is perceived to be positive or negative. In a classic book about this concept, Illich (1976) distinguishes three different levels at which we can understand iatrogenesis as a phenomenon: (1) clinically, when a specific treatment causes some adverse or unwanted effect; (2) socially, when everyday life is medicalised by large-scale health organisations (e.g. pharmaceuticals) to generate both a delusional demand and a dependence on systems serving corporate or state capitalism; and (3) culturally, when modern medicines weaken and replace traditional forms of coping with illness, suffering and death. Alternatively, the American Psychological Association (APA, 2015) defines iatrogenesis as

> a pathological condition that is inadvertently induced or aggravated in a patient by a health care provider. It may be due to the behaviour of the provider (e.g. the manner in which he or she examined the patient) or be a result of the treatment he or she prescribed. (p. 517)

In this sense, although the mainstream meaning of iatrogenesis derives from a medical and psychotherapeutic framework with an exclusive focus on individuals, Illich's (1976) expansion of the concept to include social and cultural structures offers useful critical tools for reflecting on education systemically and as a simultaneous creator of 'cancer and cure', without probing the actual cause of cancer.

I argue hereon that it is useful to offer a critical literature review of mindfulness 'in' education, or McMindfulness, analysed against the concept of iatrogenesis to more fully understand how it is being utilised as an intervention with, possibly unconscious, underhand political motivations. In order to do this we need to understand the relationship between mindfulness and its effects, be they simple, i.e. positive or adverse, or more complex, i.e. iatrogenic, recognising that the quantity of research on the nature of these effects reduces respectively. Hence, in order to fully understand iatrogenic effects, it is also necessary to build up a more complex theoretical model of the relationship between mindfulness and systemic effects. I later turn to critical and systems theories to help with this endeavour. This is a response to the empirically-driven research so often conducted about mindfulness 'in' education which betrays its origins in East Asian wisdom and its conception of reality as a unity of subject and object by focusing instead on interventions and crude outcomes. I have already stated that Illich's (1976) concept of iatrogenesis will support examination of the critical literature on mindfulness within and in relation to systems. Other scholars that have written from a unity perspective and who critique modernity and its features are useful in our analysis, most notably Heidegger (1977, 2006), who was particularly incisive in critiquing the logic of a 'technical era' from a point of view that synthesises Eastern and Western philosophy. Bringing systems theory (Capra, 1996; Varela, Thomson and Rosch, 2016) to the endeavour supports this analysis further by positioning mindfulness 'in' education within a complexity

rather than a simplicity paradigm, whereby phenomena are more intricately connected than positivist approaches would appreciate.

5.2. Side effects: positive, adverse and iatrogenic

As Brito et al. (2021a) outline there are no such things as side effects; there are just effects. Whether these effects are positive, adverse or even iatrogenic is a matter of perception, which in turn is culturally and historically framed. As shown in Figure 12, the main effect of cultivating a mindful practice, such as meditation, is simply enhanced awareness, which, if engaged deeply, can result in numerous insights about the nature of self, reality and our relationship with the world. When mindfulness is practised, even superficially, or for short but regular periods of time, effects perceived to be positive are common, and these are generally understood in a simplicity paradigm of direct and linear causation. There is only a small, but significant, literature on effects perceived to be negative, and with the exception of inferences from the critical discussion concerning the framing of mindfulness by neoliberal contexts and agendas, there needs to be more literature discussing iatrogenic effects. This chapter aims to initiate discussion of the potential iatrogenic effects of mindfulness 'in' education, how these can be more fully understood by building a systems model of mindfulness 'in' education and how this iatrogenic effect is framed (see Figure 13), and then tabulating its diverse expressions in the literature (see Table 13). As a foreground for exploring these iatrogenic possibilities, let me first cover the literature on positive and adverse effects.

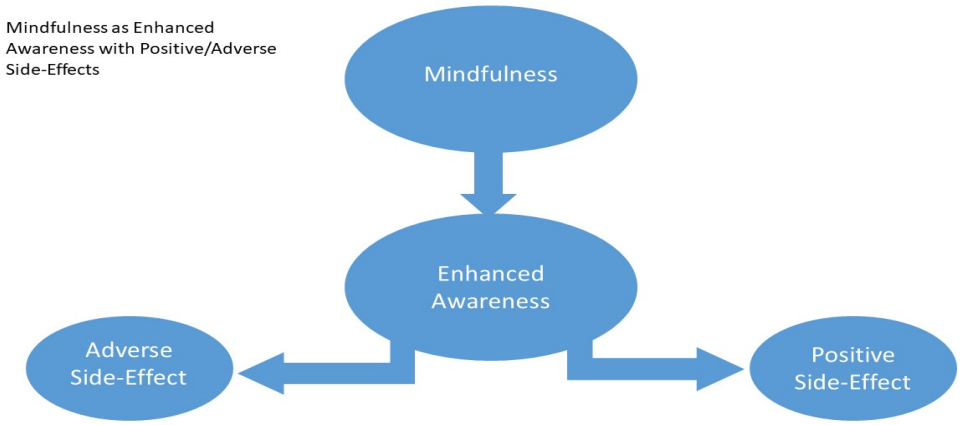


Figure 12: Effects of mindfulness in a simplicity paradigm (Brito, Joseph and Sellman 2021a)

There is a substantial body of research into meditation and mindfulness which emphasises positive 'side-effects'. For example, internationally respected researchers like Siegel (2011, 2018), and Goleman and Davidson (2017) link the cultivation of mindfulness with an extensive range of physiological and psychological benefits. However, much of this evidence base comes from the fields of clinical psychology and neuroscience (Purser et al., 2016), which has served as an impetus for its research and application to other domains, such as education. The problem with this evidence base is that it is founded on simplistic positivist research and, in many cases, with experienced meditators, who often draw upon spiritual traditions providing an ontological and ethical worldview more holistic and integral than mere self-enhancement. And yet, as explained by Bodhi (2016), "they [the mainstream proponents of mindfulness] will present it as a radical, pragmatic, existential therapy that does not require any belief commitments, as a 'Buddhism without beliefs' that does not ask for any more faith than a readiness to apply the method and see what one can get from it" (p. 9). Such critique contrasts with assertions in the popular press and media that the positive benefits of mindfulness can apparently be felt with as little as ten minutes of practice daily (Chaskalson and Reitz, 2018).

The introduction of MBIs in educational institutions has undoubtedly been fuelled by a growing multidisciplinary evidence base emphasising their positive

side effects, and studies about mindfulness in education have been keen to report these findings, also generally employing intervention-based methodologies (Herrnleben-Kurz and Walach, 2014; Jennings, 2015; Weare, 2012; Zenner, 2014 all provide research summaries). In educational settings, the most frequently reported positive side-effects can be organised into three broad categories: (1) cognitive (e.g. enhancing attention and concentration; improving academic achievement; reducing rumination and self-judgment); (2) emotional (e.g. improving emotional regulation; enhancing resilience, empathy and compassion for self and others; reducing reactivity and difficult emotions such as anxiety, depression and irritability); and (3) social (e.g. fostering a pro-social mentality; enhancing empathy, kindness, conflict resolution and altruism) (Ergas, 2015; Felver et al., 2016; Jennings, 2015; Weare and Nind, 2011; Zenner et al., 2014) (see Table 10). Thus it appears that a regular and well-intentioned practice can produce permanent modifications in physiology, personality and the manner in which people relate to themselves and their world, which Goleman and Davidson (2017) call 'altered traits'. Given that such practice can easily be commodified into schemes of work and object(goal)-oriented lessons, which school would not want to implement such a welcome 'elixir' for all life's ills? In contradistinction, writers like Ergas (2015) and Hyland (2016) argue that the genuine fruits of mindfulness practices can only flourish when rooted in a spiritual and ethical worldview, such as the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Path introduced earlier, representing a more wholesome and embodied approach to life.

Author/Year	Benefits for Teachers	Benefits for Students
Weare, 2012, 2021.		**Improvement of**: wellbeing, self-regulation, awareness, calm, sleep, cognitive performance, concentration **Reduction of:** worries, anxiety,

		stress, reactivity, 'bad' behaviour
Shapiro et al., 2016	**Improvement of**: self-care, self-awareness, attention, empathy, (self)compassion, emotion regulation, affect tolerance, presence **Reduction of:** stress, burnout, emotional reactivity	
Jennings, 2015		**Improvement of**: Resilience, creative thinking, perspective-taking, innovative problem-solving, caring, compassion, self-awareness and emotional self-regulation
Flook et al., 2013	**Improvement of**: attention, effective teaching behaviour and self-compassion **Reduction of**: psychological symptoms, burnout and attentional biases	

Table 10. Benefits of mindfulness 'in' education

Focusing on the UK as an example, following encouraging initial evidence about the positive side effects of MBIs, Parliament has recommended further research and application in educational and health settings as well as the workplace and the criminal justice system (Mindfulness Initiative, 2015). Subsequently, the Oxford Mindfulness Research Centre's MYRIAD project has secured funding for a large randomised controlled trial (RCT) which looks at the impact of the

‘Dot b’ curriculum for students aged 11-14 offered by the UK Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP) and its counterpart for younger children aged 7-11, ‘Paws b’. Both programmes are adaptations of the pioneering Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course created by Kabat-Zinn in 1979 (Simpson, 2017). Interestingly, as mentioned previously, the last report from the MYRIAD project (Kuyken et al., 2022) concludes that these mindfulness programmes do not have a better impact on adolescents' mental health than the regular school mental health provision. As this finding is relevant and subject to diverse interpretations, I will return to it later in this work (especially in Chapters 7 and 8). As I will argue, these kinds of programmes often promote individual wellbeing, but also carry the possibility of adverse effects and the broader impact of self-pacification upon systemic functioning, including the possibility of iatrogenesis.

According to Farias and Wikholm (2016), there is a potential ‘dark side’ to mindfulness which has been under-reported and under-researched. Most advocates and some critics tend to focus on positive and adverse effects from within a positivist paradigm (van Dam et al., 2018), meaning the effects of meditation on individuals are only investigated from a linear and materialistic perspective. Akin to a medical model, any unanticipated or unwanted outcomes are constructed as intervention side effects. I have already explained that all effects of mindfulness, other than enhanced awareness, are indeed side effects; these particular side effects are most commonly reported in the literature as ‘adverse effects’ (van Dam et al., 2018) or ‘unwanted effects’ (Cebolla, Demarzo, Martins, Soler, and García-Campayo, 2017) and are based almost exclusively within clinical and psychotherapeutic contexts with adults and gleaned through self-report methods. To date there has been very little information concerning educational settings. However, a small number of research studies suggest that 25% of meditators have experienced some adverse effects, even if they tend to be transitory (Cebolla et al., 2017). According to Lindahl, Britton, Cooper, and Kirmayer (2019), these effects include heightened anxiety and fear, delusional thoughts/beliefs and changes in sense of self (see Table 11). Such effects can be regarded negatively from a psychopathological approach (Lindahl et al., 2019) but can also be understood as temporary crises,

a challenging but important component of more holistic development within a humanistic, transpersonal or spiritual paradigm (Grof and Grof, 1993).

Author/Year Publication	Adverse Effects
Van Dam et al., 2018	Dissociation, depersonalization, visual hallucinations, insomnia, changes in sense of self, altered perception of space and time, traumatic memory re-experiencing, panic, anxiety, suicidality
Farías and Wikholm, 2016	Somatic, psychological, neurological, stress, depression
Cebolla et al., 2017	Anxiety (fear and panic), pain (stomach, headache, muscular, nausea), depersonalization, derealisation, hypomania, depressive symptoms, emotional lability, visual focalization problems, dizziness
Lindahl et al., 2019	Perceptual (hypersensitivity to light and sound, body sensations, derealization) Affective (euphoric/mania, increased reactivity, anxiety, depression, fear) Somatic (sleep, appetitive, thermal changes, pain, somatic energy, involuntary movements) Sense of self (changes in narrative, agency over thoughts, emotions, sensations and actions, sense of boundaries of self/world) Cognitive (impairments in executive functioning, delusional thought and beliefs)

Table 11. Adverse effects of meditation and mindfulness

5.3. The relevance of the cultural and socioeconomic context: Applying critical and systems theories to understand iatrogenesis

It is important to distinguish iatrogenic from adverse effects. This, I suggest, requires a deeper and more complex consideration of the cultural, societal and economic context within which mindfulness is implemented, for which engagement with critical and systems theories is necessary and pertinent. While adverse effects have been reported in the scientific literature, although infrequently, there is no systematic investigation concerning iatrogenic effects of mindfulness 'in' education nor any other field. As previously discussed, both iatrogenic and adverse effects can be understood as side effects. However, these two phenomena arise from different paradigms. Adverse effects are generally explained within a simplicity paradigm, which considers phenomena in a reductionist manner, subjected to linear causality (see Figure 12).

To understand the nature of iatrogenic effects it is necessary to observe phenomena in a complexity paradigm, which considers all phenomena to be interconnected, emergent and contextual (Capra, 1996; Maldonado, 2020). Drawing upon critical and systems theories, I have constructed Figure 13 to model these relationships. When mindfulness is 'operationalised' as a technology for self-adjustment rather than self-realisation, it reveals its nested connection within a neoliberal framing sociopolitically and within materialistic views of reality epistemologically and ontologically (Sellman, 2020). Analysis of this nesting of mindfulness within a broader neoliberal material reality is undertaken by many critical theorists, though I suggest the philosophical contribution of Heidegger (1952/1977, 1997/2006) on the essence of modernity is particularly useful here, namely his understanding that the human being is subjugated in every aspect of their existence by the framing of their reality within a 'technical' era. Although individuals are a social species living in communities, their 'interiority' stimulates a form of individuation and contemplation which, if unfettered, can lead to experiential insight. However, most people are distracted from such conscious self-connection, distracted by subsistence and triviality, exacerbated by this 'technicity'. Heidegger (1954/1977) used this concept to demonstrate how each individual and their environment is 'enframed' by a

tremendous machinery, in which beings are understood and manipulated as mere resources available exclusively for productive purposes (see Brito, 2018; Brito et al., 2021b for a fuller discussion).

Hence the Heideggerian idea of modernity as 'technique' can serve as an illuminating way to understand the central vices of our educational system as it currently exists. 'Technique' does not mean something related primarily to technology, but rather something that describes the implicit assumptions and deeply engrained socio-cultural-historical norms affecting how an individual is in the world as a 'dwelling', Heidegger's term for the site of individual human consciousness whilst recognising its interdependence with the world (Heidegger, 1977/1954; Inwood, 1999). In this sense, technique is understood as a worldview and disposition to and within the world, which reveals everything as a standing reserve to the service of human interest within our species' outlook. This specific form of a modern manifestation of the relationship between human beings and the world, on the one hand, and of the human being with themselves, on the other, is called 'enframing' (Heidegger 1977/1954). In this sense, both nature and the human species appear to be mere resources available for 'calculative thinking', according to which all phenomena become an object for human representation, measurement and control, and subservient to improving efficiency in a world tailored to human needs within an anthropocentric view of reality (Peters, 2002; Rae, 2013).

According to Heidegger (1969/1959), this calculative thinking is characterised by an increasing tendency to reduce every complexity into a set of commodifiable, available, controllable and measurable pieces of data, which can be observed in both contemporary educational settings framed by neoliberalism more generally, and trends such as 'McMindfulness' specifically, as the "[…] obsession with improvement, assessment, efficiency and measurement" (Kouppanou, 2017, p. 9). This means that only certain perspectives and actions are valued, translating everything into the mechanisms of an instrumentalised and strategic mentality that ensures productivity according to pre-defined standards and rules that repeat in endless cycles of efficiency. Interestingly, Heidegger (1977/1951) considers that this form of dwelling in the world is

'correct' from a metaphysical-technical perspective, although it is not 'true' from an ontological perspective. This means we have progressively more knowledge about materialistic-based science and its spectacular achievements, but less wisdom about our own existence and its place within the interwoven nature of the world. Presciently, for Heidegger (1969/1959), the greatest danger of such a penurious form of thinking/dwelling is that it "[…] may someday come to be accepted and practised as *the only* way of thinking" (p. 56, author's original emphasis).

In line with Heidegger's work, we can find the source of several radical critiques regarding the purpose of education and wellbeing interventions within schools which now appear extremely timely. One pertinent critique comes from Biesta (2013, 2022), who affirms that education has three main purposes: qualification (preparing new generations for socioeconomic demands), socialisation (inserting new generations into a co-existence rooted in a pre-established social order), and subjectification (allowing new generations to explore and discover their specific ways to exist in, with and in response to the world). Biesta states that the last purpose, crucial in its function, is absent from the current education system. The point here is that this lack is fundamental as the main purpose of education, which Biesta calls 'existential', should not be only the preparation of new generations for the economic needs of the current society, but also a space and time for children and adolescents to explore and develop themselves in their relations with the world. In Biesta's words: "This is the school as place and space but perhaps first and foremost the school as time – as the time we give to the new generation to try, to fail, to try again … and to fail better…" (Biesta, 2022, p. 23). Expressed in more Heideggerian terminology, authentic education is

> […] aimed at the thinking of Being rather than an education aimed at thinking. It therefore has little to do with adding 'critical thinking' or 'reflexibility' to the curriculum, but is rather after a different way of 'being in the world', not 'caught' or determined by the world of beings or […] by positive knowledge about the world of beings. (Biesta, 2016, pp. 839–840)

In order to understand the extent to which the current societal order represents a risk for the most genuine purpose of education and the potentialities of

mindfulness within it, it is helpful to examine some of the key features of the concept of neoliberalism as an exponent of late capitalism and a concretisation of the manifestation of calculative thinking and its underpinning of a modern worldview centred on material growth and individualism. For this I will follow the ideas of another philosopher akin to those of Heidegger, Byung-Chul Han (2015), who has developed a critical reflection on neoliberalism as a socioeconomic system founded on materiality and technology, in which it is possible to observe several essential traits.

First, the late capitalist logic is dominated by an 'excess of positivity'. This is expressed as a tendency to take on more and more things to accomplish, both personally and professionally, generating a greater likelihood of burnout within society by requiring individuals to increase their productivity in every sphere of their life (Han, 2015).

Second, such burnout within society instils increasingly insidious processes of self-exploitation, including individualization of responsibility for the system's failures. This means that human problems created by the system are appropriated by individuals as personal issues that need to be solved by themselves and without any serious questioning of the broader logic characteristic of 'enframing' (Han, 2017). In this regard, Han says: "Now, under the neoliberal regime of auto-exploitation, people are turning their aggression against themselves. This auto-aggressivity means that the exploited are not inclined to revolution so much as depression" (Han, 2017, pp. 6-7, italics in the original). Amongst the problems generated by this system are the presence of stress, anxiety and depression as pervasive, an expansion of competitiveness in all areas of life, and the potentially irreversible degeneration of the natural environment.

Third, in such a society, productivity has become the maxim to such an extent that even non-productive time, such as leisure, is understood only as a 'functional deceleration', or necessary respite, in the service of increasing performativity and even profitability (Rosa, 2010). Under the grip of this logic, any threat within the neoliberal system is reframed as needing remedial instrumental procedures, technical rather than systemic in nature (Kristensen,

2018). Thus, while there has been a surge of scholarly and practitioner interest in promoting wellbeing over the last two decades, there have not been corresponding improvements in wellbeing - quite the opposite. I suggest that this is likely to be the case because wellbeing objectives have been usurped to satisfy a neoliberal agenda.

Thus, extrapolated to mindfulness within schools, a genuine mindful practice has much to commend it here, as it enables observation of and inquiry into direct experience. However, if that opportunity is truncated by the abstraction and orientation of mindfulness 'skills' to narrower objectives, such an opportunity is lost (Ergas, 2017; Hyland, 2016; Sellman, 2020). The educational process can and must foster a sort of existential transformation of the human dwelling, allowing humans to go beyond feeling utterly lost and distracted by their occupation with the meleé of everyday things to contemplate fundamental questions about the 'nature' of (their) Being and their own specific place in connection with its calls.

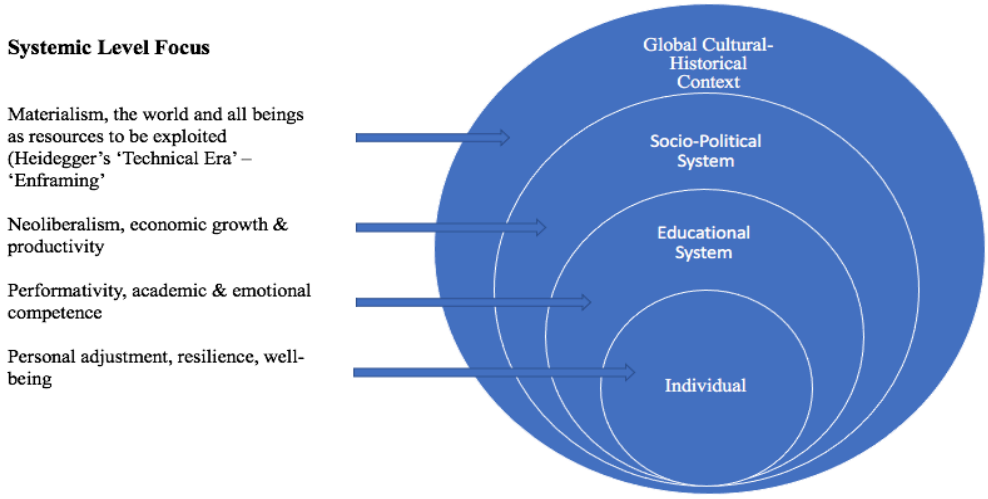


Figure 13. Systemic effects of mindfulness on individuals and education in a complexity paradigm

To understand how the iatrogenic effects of mindfulness 'in' education may work, it is helpful to explore some key insights from systems theory to underscore the utility of this conceptualisation. Late in the first half of the twentieth century, emanating principally from biology and mathematics, the

concept of first- and second-order cybernetics emerged to offer more complex explanations for interconnected phenomena such as living processes and, more interestingly, the role of the observer (consciousness) within epistemology (Capra, 1996). First-order cybernetics introduced the crucial idea that understanding any phenomenon necessitates considering the relationships between sub-systems and wholes, much like integral theory (Wilber, 2016). This conception radically undermines the positivist paradigm whereby phenomena must be isolated to be understood. As an alternative to such a reductionist, mechanistic and linear approach to understanding causality, a systemic, or an integral, paradigm has developed to offer a view of reality as an organic unity (Lanza, 2009; Von Bertalanffy, 1975; Wilber, 2016; Wiener, 1948). In this sense, what happens at one systemic level dynamically influences every other level, sub and super. Although structure and predictability may be present, the degree of complexity requires, epistemologically, hitherto significant challenges to theoretical understanding to be included and embraced.

Developing understanding further, second-order cybernetics introduced the fundamental variable of the observer into the interweaving of the nature of reality. According to Varela et al. (2016), reality is an interdependent co-construction process involving first-person experience and the environment, termed ‘embodied’ action. This interplay generates experience, but it is always contextual. In this sense, every understanding of phenomena can aspire to a kind of objectivity called ‘in parenthesis’ by Maturana (1997), i.e. knowledge is valid only in specific domains of existence, shared by different observers through language. These conceptualisations, derived from biology and cognitive sciences, are similar to the findings of quantum physics whereby reality emerges from potentiality only in the presence of a conscious agent (Görnitz, 2018; Lanza, 2009; Levy, 2018). Perception of reality is hence always co-constructed through biologically and psychologically conditioned filters and culturally conditioned values, beliefs, languages and thought forms (Sellman, 2020). The challenge here is understanding mindfulness through these multiple lenses in all its implementation forms.

Also coming from a complexity paradigm, Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (2011) introduced a distinction between two different modalities of intervention-outcome to the field of clinical psychology. ‘Type one’ change consists of an intervention effect which produces an alteration that remains at the same systemic level but does not affect the wider interconnected systems. In the context of this reflection, mindfulness ‘in’ education is a perfect example of this type of change insofar as it can improve concentration or reduce anxiety in teachers and pupils without challenging the logic of the educational system as a whole and its subservience to a neoliberal socioeconomic framework (Forbes, 2019; Reveley, 2016; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020, see also Figure 13). On the other hand, a deeper transformation would correspond with a ‘type two’ change, where the target is not only at the individual level but also the wider system. Educationally, this would include the purpose of education, what counts as knowledge, approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, the role of the teacher’s presence, relational styles, and intra- and inter-personal relationships (Brito and Corthorn, 2018; Ergas, 2015; Esbjörn-Hargens, Reams, and Gunnlaugson, 2010; Forbes, 2016; Miller, 1993; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020).

Being attentive to how mindfulness ‘in’ education may be framed by simplicity and complexity paradigms, first and second-order cybernetics, and type-one and type-two changes, there is a crucial difference between the scope and understanding of adverse and iatrogenic effects. Adverse effects focus the gaze on individuals and intervention outcomes, generally standardised and transitory (short-term). Conversely, iatrogenesis focuses on systemic impact, which may be indirect, subtle, unpredictable, and potentially more permanent (long term). Mindfulness implemented with this broader impact as an aspiration has been called 'integral' mindfulness (Forbes, 2016; Wilber, 2016), mindfulness ‘as’ education (Ergas, 2019; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020), or simply 'mindful' education (Brito and Corthorn, 2018), which offers greater scope for understanding the nature of self and reality as a prelude to more wholesome and ethical conduct, individually and collectively.

5.4. Iatrogenic effects of mindfulness ‘in’ education

As Brito et al. (2021a) argue, the problem with mindfulness is not that it is not effective but rather that it is too effective in terms of the positive side effects so far introduced, and therefore it is vulnerable to neoliberal appropriation. Hence, mindfulness's ‘dark side’ is not really a problem of mindfulness itself but an issue concerning how it is instrumentalised when implemented in contexts with hidden or undefined ethical goals, particularly within education. I continue to argue henceforth that it is helpful to synthesise the critique of mindfulness ‘in’ education with the concept of iatrogenesis, informed by systems theory, to develop a deeper understanding of how neoliberal ideological motivations (explicitly or implicitly) distort the nature and meaning of the practice.

Walsh’s (2016) meta-critique of MBIs is helpful with this endeavour. He argues that ‘McMindfulness’, contrasted with critical mindfulness, is underpinned by ideological characteristics, not fully qualified by scientific evidence, which mobilise a worldview contradicting its spiritual and philosophical origins. In Walsh’s (2016) words, “secular and scientific communities have largely represented mindfulness as a value-free practice with universal benefit, which disguises how particular ideologies and values shape mindfulness to serve particular interests” (p. 154). It is important to be aware of the inevitable perspectivism inherent in any approach to phenomena, particularly concerning the complex relationship between mindfulness and education. I will now summarise Walsh’s (2016) critique, adapting, interrogating and adding to some of the terminology and associated debate to construct two tables (Tables 12 and 13) highlighting the potential iatrogenic effects of mindfulness ‘in’ education.

Critical Category	Type of Iatrogenic Effect within Education	Potential Counterbalance of an Integral Approach
Universalism	Reinforcement of an individualistic approach	Cultivating an ethical orientation within the educational process (as with the Buddhist eightfold noble path)
Neoliberalism	Reinforcement of performance and productivity	Cultivating and expanding an orientation to expanded consciousness, critical mindfulness and social transformation
Mindfulness©	Reinforcement of mindfulness as a mere intervention in the service of market needs	Cultivating a transversal, long-term and flexible implementation in the service of local and global needs
Cosmeticism*	Reinforcement of superficiality and narcissism, limited skills/competencies subservient to institutional needs	Cultivating a deep and systematic inquiry about the nature of the self, its highest possibilities, and its relationship with the world

Table 12. Iatrogenic effects within education and suggested counterbalances
* This fourth category has been added by the author to three other categories from Walsh (2016)

(1) Walsh (2016) argues that MBIs attempt a form of 'universalism'. MBSR, created by Kabat-Zinn (2005), and subsequent developments, imply a transmission of the Buddhist spiritual and ethical teachings without spiritual references, which can be seen as the ‘Trojan horse hypothesis’ (Purser and Ng, 2015). As previously discussed, Kabat-Zinn (2017) defends this process as both a beneficial and necessary consequence of universalising Buddhist sensibilities

to help those suffering from poor health who would not normally consider attending a meditation course. As Buddhism can be positioned as a philosophy, as well as a pragmatic approach to life, it can be argued that it matters more that suffering is reduced than that a participant develops a 'spiritual' identity. However, universalism also reinforces a focus on the individual rather than the social and ecological (see Figure 13) by abstracting mindfulness from its broader context and ethical orientation, failing to cultivate more holistic traits such as compassion, kindness, virtue and wholesome conduct (Ergas, 2015; Hyland, 2017; Purser, 2019; Simpson, 2017; see also Tables 12 and 13).

(2) As previously discussed, many interpretations and implementations of mindfulness within education and health seem to be aligned with neoliberalism as a socioeconomic framework, our dominant social order, which attempts to promote productivity on the one hand whilst minimising any 'drain' on state resources through pseudo-individuation (Reveley, 2016). In this respect, MBIs promote a privatised view of wellbeing which shifts narratives of responsibility, particularly concerning mental health, exclusively onto individuals without due consideration of the institutional and structural conditions propagating suffering in the form of stress, burnout and depression (Ergas, 2019a; Purser, 2018; Saari, 2018; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020; see also Tables 12 and 13). Kristensen (2018) highlights that this is utilising the same technology that made you ill to make you better. This 'anti-critical' narrative can even reinforce a sensibility whereby mindfulness cannot transform exploitative institutional conditions because they are preserved, localising the effects of mindfulness exclusively to matters of individual enhancement (Ng, 2016). Ultimately mindfulness 'in' education is only valued and maintained if there is an academic or economic payoff (Marx, 2015).

(3) MBIs present meditation practices as a form of commodification in the service of any necessity, which Walsh (2016) refers to as 'Mindfulness©', a profitable product within a larger, lucrative wellbeing industry which has augmented considerably over the last 20 years to market a variety of interventions to improve almost any challenging aspect of daily human life, including eating, educational attainment, career development, parenting and

mental health. However, in doing so, it colludes with the emphasis on the fallibility of the individual and encourages only very superficial intrapersonal and spiritual development (Forbes, 2016; Hyland, 2016, 2017; see also Tables 12 and 13). Consequently, rather than the individual being liberated, they remain or become more dependent on external help and societal structures, as the deeper work required for de-conditioning, healing from childhood trauma and transcendence are overlooked (Sellman, 2020).

(4) Walsh (2016) discusses critical mindfulness as a potential way forward. This exposes a fourth limitation of mindfulness 'in' education, which I call 'cosmeticism' (see Tables 12 and 13). Although mindfulness promotes the possibility of deep self-transformation, in actuality, typical training focuses on specific competencies at the service of a productive system without questioning the nature and orientation of this service in broader terms. Mindfulness 'in' education currently remains a conditioning technology of the self, according to which the self is understood as something separate, whereas the origins of the practice in East Asian wisdom emphasise the unity of reality. This is a perversion of the practice, subjecting the individual to acquiring mere cognitive and emotional competencies (Brito and Corthorn, 2018; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020), in which no authentic self-inquiry, self-knowledge, nor even self-deconstruction are possible. Hence, mindfulness 'in' education offers limited interior or ontological exploration (Ergas, 2019b; Forbes, 2018). Nor is there any encouragement to apply such approaches as observing thoughts to a broader critique of social justice (Berila, 2016) or the qualities of 'attending out' (e.g. compassion, kindness, ethics, responsibility) (O'Donnell, 2016).

Author/Date	**Implicit Iatrogenic Effect reported in the Literature**	**Critical Category (Walsh, 2016)**
Ergas, 2019a	'The external perspective shows mindfulness *in* education as conforming with 'the system', supporting its functioning and improving performance and wellbeing *within* it' (p. 6).	Neoliberalism
Ergas, 2019b	'The rational-economic orientation [McMindfulness] reflects an acknowledgement	Cosmeticism

Table 12. (continued)

	of economic needs and respects education's functional role, while the contemplative orientation [e. g. Integral Mindfulness] acknowledges the individual's interiority [self], and his/her need for meaning and purpose beyond mere survival' (p. 257).	
Ergas, 2015	'Thus, it could be suggested that contemplative practices introduced as curricular 'interventions' geared toward instrumental aims—such as improving attention (Napoli *et al.,* 2005), enhancing executive functions (Flook *et al.*, 2010), and tending to teacher burnout and wellbeing (Roeser *et al.,* 2012)—might be eroding a much fuller ethical educational potential inherent in the origins of contemplative practices within wisdom-traditions' (p. 204).	Universalism
Forbes, 2016	'[…] these forms of mindfulness interventions are easily accommodated to an individualistic, therapized, and commodified society that is itself a major generator of social suffering and distress' (p. 1257).	Mindfulness©
	'Mindfulness unintentionally becomes part of the neoliberal tendency to psychologize difficult social and structural problems' (p. 1264).	Neoliberalism
	'[Mindfulness] is reduced to an over-simplified, superficial, or "not-worked-through Metaphysics", and instead prefers "affect management" and scientific reductionism to deep inquiry into the basic nature of the self and to a commitment to moral and social enactment' (p. 1262).	Cosmeticism
Hyland, 2016	'The key weaknesses are that they [scales of mindfulness] decontextualize mindfulness from its ethical and attitudinal foundations' (p. 109).	Mindfulness©

Table 12. (continued)

Hyland, 2017	'McMindfulness applications fail miserably when they separate something called "present moment awareness" (surrounded by a dangerous "myth" exposed by Purser, 2014b) from moral principles such as compassion and loving-kindness' (p. 345).	Universalism
Kristensen, 2018	'[…] mindfulness practices serve as a treatment for a problem, which is successively reinforced through that very same treatment. Thereby, mindfulness practices come to represent a productive break with a contradictory effect of retaining or aggravating the ill it was intended to cure' (p. 185).	Neoliberalism
Marx, 2015	'Whether or not this is the primary reason for using mindfulness, its use is unlikely to be sustained unless it can be justified as a cost-efficient way of enhancing performance and productivity. Another risk posed by focusing too much on the individual is that an understanding of suffering becomes individualised. Causes of organisational problems can come to be located in employees rather than in organisational or political structures' (p. 1156).	Neoliberalism
Ng, 2016	'[…] using mindfulness for the "emotional regulation" of students leaves the discriminatory, inequitable, anti-critical, and depoliticizing structural arrangements in the education system unaddressed' (p. 148).	Neoliberalism
O'Donnell, 2016	'[…] developing the habit of attention might help mindfulness programmes in schools to sustain a sense of openness in practice that remembers to also turn outward to beings other than oneself, helping to de-centre the self, and intensifying	Cosmeticism

Table 12. (continued)

	contact with reality through the practice of attending *to* rather than getting mired in the projections and fantasies of the self' (p. 43).	
Purser, 2018	'Corporate mindfulness has become the new brand of capitalist spirituality, a disciplined but myopic self-help doctrine, that transfers the risk and responsibility for wellbeing onto the individual' (p. 106).	Neoliberalism
Purser, 2019	'The products [mindfulness practices] are marketed as providing more fulfilling and sensual experiences, not the development of virtue, ethical behaviour, moral courage, and compassion' (p. 76).	Mindfulness©
Saari, 2018	'Mindfulness practice can intensify the effects of individual responsibility and can obfuscate the role of wider social structures in work and personal life because mindfulness meditation ensures that the focus is always trained on one's own body and private emotional responses in the present moment' (p. 147).	Neoliberalism
Sellman & Buttarazzi, 2020	'The instrumental application of mindfulness makes young people the subject of mental-health interventions, which is dangerous because it creates meta-narratives locating individuals rather than social structures as the site of blame' (p. 5). 'Hence, mindfulness within such structures cannot be about enlightenment but adjustment to these structures of oppression' (p. 6).	Neoliberalism
Simpson, 2017	'[…] if the focus remains on technique, neglecting ethics and insight, students mainly get more mindful of themselves. In some ways, this is ironically disempowering.	Universalism

Table 12. (continued)

It reflects the requirements of a competitive market system, which places the emphasis on personal resilience, not on making society less destructive' (p. 63).	
'Unless mindfulness is differently framed, it indoctrinates students in neoliberal thinking' (p. 64).	Neoliberalism
'Similarly, dot-b's maxim that "thoughts are not facts" could be expanded. Students learn that we worry because "our minds are addicted to telling stories about what's happening to us" and "many of these stories are fictions". However, nothing is said about what this implies about identity [self]' (p. 62).	Cosmeticism

Table 13. Iatrogenic effects and their critical categories

5.5. Summary and Conclusion

Mindfulness is commonly understood to be about transformational learning. It can be, but it is not necessarily so. The argument substantiated here, as an interpretation of some of the main findings from the previous chapter, is that the prevalent implementation of mindfulness 'in' education, a form of McMindfulness, is too simplistic and can be understood as a menacing form of iatrogenesis. Here, learning at the individual level is an adjustment to the logic and demands of neoliberalism rather than the deeper individual and collective transformation necessary for ethical and sustainable living. Given the origin of mindfulness in East Asian wisdom, characterised by a broader set of attributes oriented to wholesome living, including the reduction of suffering, it is paradoxically counterproductive that they have become overly focused on the individual enhancement and light on critique of the social and political conditions lying at the heart of much suffering. As such, while Buddhism is not primarily about social transformation, I have argued that through mindfulness

practices and their ethical basis, people can become more aware of themselves, including of what causes them to suffer. Liberating themselves from societal conditioning, individuals may become more psychologically mature and authentic, which can consequently have a significant and transformational impact on society by enabling them to assume responsibility for the connection between their values, choices and lifestyles. In this sense, mindfulness has the potential to be transformative as a form of education, for individuals and collectively, but this potential is not being fully realised as yet.

This argument does not intend to belittle the value of inner work and observation of an individual's relationship with experience; on the contrary, I feel it is dangerous to overlook many of the contributing factors to suffering if, as we think they are, they are within reach of social justice movements if individuals are adequately motivated and mobilised. More critical and oft-ignored perspectives invite current educational mindfulness programmes, such as MindUp and MiSP, to clarify their ethical implications and broaden their ambitions (Simpson, 2017; Jennings, 2015). Such a rallying call is echoed by Walsh (2016), who states that "in response to critiques of McMindfulness, the mindfulness movement should replace universal, asocial, and ahistorical views of mindfulness with critical, socially aware and engaged forms of mindfulness" (p. 163). As such, I add the participants' voices and my own to those authors calling for more integral and critical approaches to mindfulness, with Berila (2016), Ergas (2015), Esbjörn-Hargens et al. (2010), Forbes (2016), Simpson (2017) and Wilber (2016) amongst those offering potential ways forward.

Finally, it is important to recognise that mindfulness has the potential to be a vehicle for both reducing human suffering and promoting human flourishing by being a contributing factor to more egalitarian and ecologically sustainable human systems. This is increasingly apparent when we witness the consequences of a worldview, latterly enshrined by neoliberalism, that emphasises separation, materialism and commodification with all their predictable consequences: individual existential malaise, social injustice and ecological degradation (Loy, 2003). But, as Jennings (2015) elucidates, this is a matter of transformation rather than reformation:

> This cultural tipping point has the potential to transform (as opposed to reform) education. To ‘reform’ means to change or improve the condition of an existing structure or form. In contrast, to ‘transform’ means to change the very nature of the structure or form itself - a metamorphosis. (pp. 181–182)

Hence it is crucial that mindfulness in/as education is not mobilised as yet another way of continuing a destructive paradigm whereby individual transformation is simply about learning to cope with and adjust to oppressive systems, but instead is a vehicle for greater self-understanding, social harmony and environmental sustainability.

Chapter 6: Findings from the Third Research Cycle: Focus Group Sessions

Introduction

This chapter presents findings derived from the third cycle of this research. It focuses on the co-construction of guidelines for an integral implementation of mindfulness within schools based on the experience and reflection of participants willing to attend additional focus groups. If the second cycle had the purpose of understanding the teachers' perceptions of the current implementation of mindfulness in schools and of their training, considering the merits and limitations of these, this cycle had the more proactive purpose of reflecting on the main concerns to take into consideration if we want to implement mindfulness from an integral perspective. Therefore, this part of the research stays close to the principles of action research, in producing some preliminary guidelines.

Thus, in concrete, this chapter develops core ideas derived from a process of four online sessions of a focus group conducted with six teachers with different degrees of expertise related to implementing mindfulness within school contexts. These sessions aimed to collaboratively build, through conversations based on key general questions, guidelines for a more integral implementation of mindfulness within schools. This main topic was divided into three dimensions, which can be understood as levels of implementation for an integral approach, from the broadest to the most specific. Thus the following three main dimensions emerged: (1) contextual conditions, (2) key principles, and (3) key strategies for an integral implementation within the school (see Figure 14 for an overview of the dimensions and Table 14 for an overview of themes by dimension). Within these dimensions were relevant themes and sub-themes which can be understood as key ideas for a general guideline for an integral implementation of mindfulness within schools.

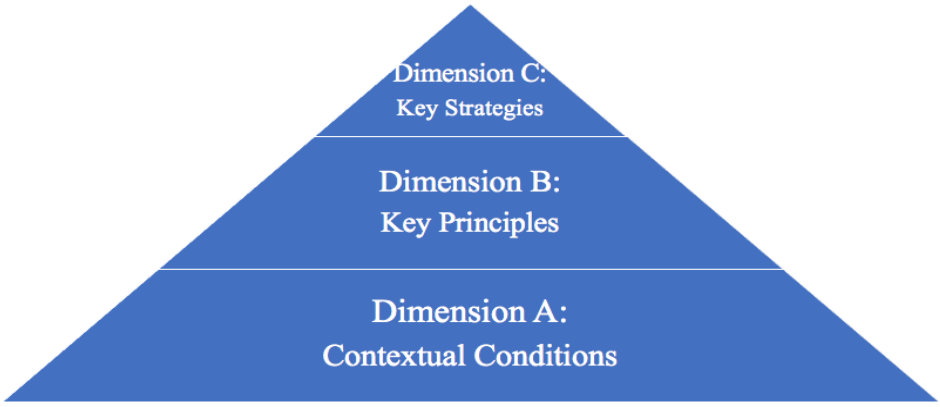


Figure 14. Dimensions of the guideline for an integral implementation of mindfulness within schools

Dimensions	Themes
Contextual conditions	Education policy framework School requirements
Key principles	Purpose(s) Modes of implementations Sensitive aspects
Key strategies	What to do? How to do it?

Table 14. Themes by dimensions of the guideline for an integral implementation of mindfulness within schools

6.1. Methods and Research Design

The data analysis of focus groups followed the same method as in the previous cycle, i.e., reflective thematic analysis, from which many codes emerged, were grouped into relevant themes and sub-themes, and organised into three pre-established dimensions (see Section 3.5, 4.2 and 4.3.). These dimensions were deduced from the interview phase in order to organise the guidelines, which were the primary goal of this research cycle (see Figure 14).

As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, the cyclical action research model informed the research. In the case of focus groups, it was expressed in the fact that this entire cycle emerged after the analysis of the previous one. This data collection stage was based on a blend of pre-planned key dimensions which I considered

relevant regarding the second research question, in order to generate general guidelines for an integral implementation of mindfulness in schools and the participants' perspectives on each dimension, a process realised collaboratively.

The sample consisted of six mindfulness teachers, five women and one man. Two teachers work at state schools, and four are external mindfulness teachers. Two participants are from Wales, and four are from England. Each session lasted around one and a half hours, except for session three, which lasted two and a half hours because we focused on discussing the three dimensions. The sessions were conducted between June 15th and July 6th 2021. In general, most participants are experienced practitioners and teachers of mindfulness in schools, representing a select and purposive sample whose value is its specific knowledge of mindfulness practices within schools.

6.2. Dimension A: Contextual Conditions for an Integral Implementation

As the group was constituted of teachers from England and Wales, from the beginning differences regarding governmental approaches to education emerged as a relevant topic of discussion. The first point was that although both countries deliver the same programmes supported by the same organisation (the MiSP, mentioned previously), the educational policies framing those programmes are very different. In sum, while England's policies seem to promote a more academically oriented education system in which wellbeing is understood from a mental health viewpoint, Wales's policies seem to foster an educational system more oriented to the development of wellbeing, understood as individual and societal flourishing. This difference seems to open a differentiated range of possibilities for implementing mindfulness in both contexts, with some advantages on behalf of Wales (see the Conclusion section in this chapter for further discussion of this distinction).

Within this dimension, we can identify two main themes: (1) Educational Framework and (2) School Requirements. In order to keep the exposition clear and without language redundancies, I will use letters (e.g. A, B, C) for dimensions and numeration for themes and sub-themes (e.g., 1, 1.1.; 2, 2.1.),

similarly to Chapter 4 (see Table 15 for an overview of themes and sub-themes within this dimension.

Dimensions	Themes	Sub-themes
A. Contextual conditions	1. Educational policy framework	1.1. Purpose of education system 1.2. Systemic change 1.3. Assessment as obstacle 1.4. Problematic therapeutic approach
	2. School requirements	2.1. Good understanding 2.2. Engaged leadership 2.3. Well-trained teachers 2.4. Academic-wellbeing balance 2.5. Prioritising teachers 2.6. Symbolic messages

Table 15. Sub-themes by themes regarding contextual conditions of the guideline for an integral implementation of mindfulness within schools

6.2.1. Educational Policy Framework

Four key sub-themes regarding this aspect emerged: (1) Purpose of the education system; (2) Need for systemic change; (3) Assessment of the educational process as an obstacle; and (4) The problematic predominance of a therapeutic model within education.

6.2.1.1. Purpose of the education system

The first point raised here by participants was comparison of England's and Wales's educational goals and associated policies. While the main educational purpose for England seems to be the development of academic skills driven by a strong testing apparatus, for Wales it seems to be the development of ethical citizens (Moore et al., 2020). These variances offer different possibilities for mindfulness within schools, with a clear advantage for Wales in terms of opening a door to a more integral form of implementation in the service of individual and societal flourishing. This is visible, on the one hand, in the difference in language used by education policies in both countries regarding the place and nature of

wellbeing within schools, and on the other, in the role that compassion is starting to play in the Welsh education system; for example, through the initiative of University of Derby (see https://www.derby.ac.uk/research/centres-groups/psychology-research/compassion-in-education). An interesting idea related to this is that good academic performance requires a good level of wellbeing in pupils and teachers, insofar as wellbeing sets the best conditions for emotional calm and confidence and better concentration and motivation, which in turn improve the whole process of learning.

> *minister say that this… you know, I mean for our mindfulness Wales we said we want to make Wales a more compassionate, kind of fairer society, but they buy into that, that´s exactly what they want as well, we are absolutely aiming for societal change.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

> *one of the full purposes in Wales is to develop ethical citizens of the world, isn't it, like still has its language, so that, that kind of is very a general across the whole of society isn't it, and it isn't just education that we focus on it's also health care and prison settings isn't it there's lots of other settings that we focus…*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

> *I remember reading that the British Government, sorry, they call, it is the Department of Education programme that's it´s English focus group then, looked at trying to boost PISA and then they went straight to Singapore, for maths and so on, and I´d worked in the Singapore state system and that´s kids working from 7 o'clock in the morning till midnight and having about 3 weeks off a year, it´s insane.*
>
> Stewart, secondary teacher in England

> *we also know that children can´t achieve it if they´re not feeling okay, so it's like, well, you know, kids learn to speak, not because they´re taught in schools, they learn to speak because they just assimilate information when they're happy, so surely, well not just when they're happy, but they assimilate it, surely so much of learning is about how we feel, and if we feel okay, we´ll be maybe motivated to learn for ourselves*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.2.1.2. Systemic change

The teachers in England mostly think that English education is oriented to transmitting knowledge to pupils with a high emphasis on being an international model of education (a sort of a transnational business company) and on very traditional forms of evaluation based on academic performance, in keeping with Biesta's (2015) notion of 'learnification'. This seems to imply keeping aside other, clearly more important aims, such as creativity and kind relationships among peers. This trend seems to be changing in Wales, where education is more oriented toward personal and societal development; it seems to be changing in England too, although in a slower and less radical way.

> *I feel that is very much leading the agenda on education, you know we want to have a world class education, we want people to come from all parts of the world to be educated in England with an English education and. I don't know, I feel that that maybe where our drive is coming from in England in terms of policy, whereas in Wales, you know, there's more emphasis as you say on the wellbeing of people.*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

> *personally I would really love to see systemic change in education, I think it´s long overdue and we need it, I don't feel the system suits what I believe education should be about for young people and going into the future with not knowing what jobs are gonna be out there at all I think we should really be encouraging creativity, you know self-reliance, connection with others and working well with other people… and those sort of skills I feel are more important than um, sort of knowledge which I feel you can find now you know with the right skills online you don´t need to learn knowledge and have knowledge, you can access knowledge as long as you are told how to do that well, so I would love to believe that mindfulness would bring about systemic change within the education system, that´s my sort of little hoping dream.*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.2.1.3. Assessment of the educational process as obstacle

The main point here is that the current inspection system (i.e. the Ofsted Report) prioritises the school performance in specific subjects - e.g. scores in maths, English and science - over other relevant aspects of a comprehensive human-centred education, such as the cultivation of personal and interpersonal abilities

like emotional self-regulation and compassion toward us and others. In this sense, the current exam system in England particularly is perceived by teachers as a force of attraction directed almost exclusively toward academic performance and as an impediment to a more extended cultivation of wellbeing. This affects how mindfulness can be implemented in schools in terms of maintaining it as a coping strategy against the anxiety and stress produced by the educational system itself. This high-stakes testing is considered by von der Embse (2017) to be one of the most severe systemic stressors for teachers, along with old-fashioned pedagogy, low incomes and personnel shortages.

> *I feel that in the UK [England] schools are still achieving in terms of exam results… and therefore doing well on the scale of all the other schools locally… it´s not, it wouldn't sort of really be a failing thing unless there were safeguards there*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

> *I think teaching in England, that is not just necessarily the focus on the mindfulness as well is the focus on everything else, and the fact that everything else is so…, exam driven, means that you're moving away even more from the concept of mindfulness or even just wellbeing*
>
> Stewart, secondary teacher in England

6.2.1.4. Problematic therapeutic approach

In the English educational context, the fact that the current implementation of mindfulness in schools tends to be understood and delivered from a therapeutic model oriented to dealing with mental health issues is perceived by participants as inadequate for educational purposes. The main point here is that it is based on a popular educational view of mindfulness as a mental health intervention for children with specific problems (Simpson, 2017), rather than as an educational approach. Thus the potential educational impact of mindfulness 'as' education (Ergas, 2019b; Ergas and Hadar, 2019) in terms of cultivating fundamental attitudes regarding self-knowledge and more flourishing relationships with others and society, is overlooked. Thus there is a challenging problem related to a paradigmatic shift from a therapeutic model to an educational and societally-oriented model of mindfulness within schools (Forbes, 2019). A more detailed

explanation of this distinction will be developed later in the conclusion of this chapter.

> *I think that for a lot of the schools that I've gone into, mindfulness is often something that´s seen as to be available for maybe children that are having extra issues or struggling with their mental health or wellbeing, so there´s a little tendency for some, but for it to be a bit of a fix, you know, for individuals rather than a whole school.*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

> *We need to stop talking about and using MBSR and MBCT. They´re a medical model that were devised for a particular population and we are moving mindfulness right out of that whether or not we're talking about schools. I'm coming straight in on that, in that we're talking about my place with the general public, we're not talking about it as a remediation for particular pain or stress even though… lots of people are in pain and stress or whatever, but if this is general public it's not an intervention it's not therapy, um so, and I´m coming right from, from that point of view there.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.2.2. School Requirements

Regarding this theme, we can find the following six main sub-themes: (1) Good understanding of the nature and potentialities of mindfulness within education; (2) Need for engaged leadership; (3) Need for experienced and motivated teachers; (4) Keeping an adequate balance between academic performance and wellbeing in the entire educational process; (5) Prioritising teachers' practice and understanding of mindfulness as a condition for better implementation in the classroom; and (6) Having symbolic messages in schools visualising and supporting the value of mindfulness within the school.

6.2.2.1. Proper understanding by school staff

This idea refers to the importance that school staff, mainly the headteacher and wellbeing leadership, have a deep understanding of the nature and potentialities of mindfulness for the educational process as a whole. This understanding means experiential and conceptual knowledge, which requires a proper introductory

implementation of mindfulness for the heads and teachers before they decide whether and how to deliver it to pupils. Based partially on the conversations with participants, an integral approach to mindfulness needs to offer a well-articulated programme in which psychological and neuroscientific evidence (e.g. Gilbert, 2010; Siegel, 2018) is blended with key philosophical and spiritual ideas (e.g. wisdom, compassion, altruism, virtues, flourishing, etc.) with clear meaning for a humanistic educational purpose as well as an embedded personal practice.

> *you need to have eye in from someone who actually really knows what mindfulness is and are not just saying let's do mindfulness 'cause they've heard of it and they've heard it's good, but actually either themselves or know someone who's influential on them, who really have experienced how mindfulness can be effective in managing everyday life, those attitudes and all of those things that underpin it, otherwise it can be any word, it could mean anything.*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

> *I think with mindfulness as well it´s a double seller because the children will get it and the staff will get it, you know if you´re bringing it on to your daily practice, you´ll be experiencing it yourself which I think is really good… um, yeah so definitely that understanding, emm… you know staff, I think for us as a school if staff understand it they take it on board and you know run with it, it´s just about learning about that.*
>
> Mary, leadership in a primary school

6.2.2.2. Engaged leadership

It is important to have engaged leaders insofar as, in practice, they are in charge of making this implementation effective and sustainable over time. This engagement means having a good understanding of what mindfulness is and being emotionally connected with a proper intention and motivation, from which the right enthusiasm will give the process the energy and the direction it needs. In this sense, the contribution of Paul Gilbert (2010) that compassion is not an emotion but a high motivation able to organise our whole self in its relationship with ourselves and the world, is crucial in this respect, which explains why the Welsh initiative is looking at this approach and starting to work with Gilbert's team at the University of Derby (Maratos et al., 2019).

it is so important, that there's somebody in the school who actually, has actually got some mindfulness practice, and ideally someone in the senior leadership team.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

If you haven't got somebody who absolutely understands it and is needing the… mindfulness from a point of really understanding it and modelling mindfulness, then you can have all of the policies you like but it isn't going to work… so right back at the beginning when you asked the question there and I thought about, the government stuff there and none of that was an issue if you've got somebody leading it… and interestingly that that's one of the factors in the healthy and happy Estyn Report from 2019, that they talk about the leadership in the school being absolutely crucial.

Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

being that kind of leadership… um, you know understanding what the intention is, but also, the kind of grassroots enthusiast, and how both of those come together make the ideal package don't they, because often the leaders, the leadership are too busy aren't they, are too of doing other things, so kind of giving it function and let other people, um, you know use their enthusiasm to make it come alive, that seems to be the good mix.

Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

I think if it´s sort of considered quite highly from the top and it´s fed down and your staff take it on board, there are… I do see ways in how it can be done, but it´s, it has to have everybody on board doesn´t it, to have it to be effective, emm, and to be implemented, so it, it starts at senior leader discussion and then it filters down.

Mary, leadership in a primary school

6.2.2.3. Well-trained teachers

Every participant highlighted the need for experienced and motivated teachers to deliver mindfulness in the classroom with pupils. This is a sensitive point insofar as it can be seen from a twofold perspective. On the one hand, this requirement is an extra demand for teachers in the sense of a perfectionist expectation about how mindful they must be, which is clearly an unrealistic expectation. On the other hand, however, this could be understood more

accurately as giving teachers the opportunity (not the obligation) to develop a more mindful way of connecting with peers and pupils and life more widely (Jennings, 2015). The key idea here is that teachers who embody mindfulness as a way of being (not as a technique/strategy only) may be more motivated and find more effective ways to spread the central mindful attitudes to the rest of the school community (Roeser et al., 2012).

> *How do you then go forwards? and it is getting the staff to be passionate about it or even just to take it on board, but to have the background knowledge of the benefits and why, and I think if you can get that into it somewhere, that's a great starting point really.*
>
> Mary, leadership in a primary school

> *When I do teach classes it´s really interesting the teachers who are interested and have a personal practice, and they join in and it does have a huge impact on the whole class, when the teacher… cause they're role modelling as well the kids are looking to them and… they do get more at it when the teacher´s interested and doing it as well.*
>
> Katherine, external mindfulness teacher in England

> *what we need are people living a mindful life, that people are able to… to do this themselves… and so I think that that's a lovely way forward… when I get that, when I get all the stuff together.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.2.2.4. Academic performance–wellbeing balance

Participants recognise the relevance of maintaining a good balance between academics and wellbeing in the entire educational process, with the appreciation that teachers' and pupils' wellbeing can be considered one of the most relevant conditions for high-quality academic achievements (Wilson et al., 2023). From here, we can develop at least two relevant ideas. Firstly, according to a substantial amount of research (Weare, 2012; Weare and Bethune, 2021), mindfulness practices foster wellbeing in several domains (inner calm, emotional regulation, improvement of concentration), enhancing academic performance and more adaptative behaviour. Secondly, and more interestingly, the rebalancing of the educational process in the direction of enhancing wellbeing can be considered an educational endeavour which can potentially

locate education on the right track, i.e. toward the cultivation of human capacities and potentialities related to self-knowledge, self-care, compassionate relationships and a culture of care and flourishing (Simpson, 2017; Forbes, 2019).

> *PSHE in general you know we think about personal, social, health education, surely is quite an important part of life, if one lesson a week, well maths is 6, English is 7 or whatever it might be and geography is 4… so kids aren´t stupid when it comes to prioritizing what´s important, realizing what´s important… PSHE is not important to them in the same level… maths must be important, cause they´re seeing what we´re prioritising as society is maths, English, science are the most important things, achievement in those are the most important things, and the other thing is very small […]*
>
> *I've worked in different schools the last years or so, in private where there is more balance, and I still don´t see enough balance really, um, and so I think that mindfulness… for me in schools, in the sense of mindful culture, teachers, a balance for teachers as well, um, and balance for the kids is a, it´s just actually something that isn´t just talking about them performing… and, they don´t perform, in their minds they might be failing… and giving an alternative.*
>
> Stewart, secondary teacher

> *if you're ever calm at mind and you have strategies to keep yourself calm, then you will learn and your learning will be more effective. And so, the same for adults and how we operate.*
>
> Mary, leader in a primary school in England

6.2.2.5. Prioritising teachers

This point is at the heart of an integral implementation of mindfulness within schools: starting with teachers. This means that teachers undergoing a short mindfulness training of 6-8 weeks and then replicating a structured and standardised programme with pupils is not the right path and needs to be deeper (Hanh and Weare, 2017). Instead, an integral and transformative implementation requires teachers to take a longer journey with mindfulness before they can embody and teach mindfulness to pupils meaningfully and creatively (Jennings,

2015; Jennings et al., 2019). Indeed, this is the opposite of the current trend of short/superficial training and script-based teaching. This point also raises questions about the nature of the teaching and learning process, which in the case of mindfulness is less related to the transmission of knowledge and closer to an experiential transformation in the context of a network of relationships (with one's own practice, with peers, with the atmosphere of the classroom and with the school as a whole).

> *I think there has been a big shift, so if the teachers experience it themselves for their own wellbeing… um… then they have more understanding, they are kind of embodying it much more in the classroom, even if they don't have a curriculum, then they're sharing their practice in school rather than, you know sort of practicing together, rather than you know, teaching mindfulness… as a subject you know, that has been massively important in letting it be much more of a culture of the school and… better understanding you know experientially rather than conceptually.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

> *if you work with a teacher who is doing the mindfulness at the same time, doing it with the children, it´s such a difference yeah, than if you´re doing it with a teacher who is just there doing something else at the same time.*
>
> Katherine, external mindfulness teacher in England

> *say we´re building capacity at the moment, we´re getting as many staff as possible to have done the 8-week course because then they can go on, and this is a marathon not a sprint, then they can go on to do whatever they choose in terms of the further training to enable them to properly integrate it into their curriculum.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.2.2.6. Symbolic messages within schools

This is an aspect usually overlooked by research: the relevance of symbolic messages to visualise and support the value of mindfulness within the school. Similarly, as we express the high value that subjects such as maths, English, or science hold in the educational process through the high amount of time dedicated to them and how they are tested, we need to make very visible the

value that mindfulness practices also hold for schools in order to naturalise their practice and implementation. This can be undertaken through several measures, e.g. through using a range of language which includes key ideas and metaphors used in mindfulness teaching, through the frequency of formal and/or informal practices in everyday school life, through having a special room for meditation, through incorporating mini retreats several times a year, through having mindful sentences written on walls, etc.

> *the language we use… I did a whole section on that you know the typically British… the "how are you doing", "I´m not bad" um, so your baseline´s bad… ok great, um, and just that, really interesting work from, you know from the US on that, just changing that one word to good sorting itself to do it, it had a genuinely positive impact even if you don´t genuinely feel it… um, really interesting.*
>
> Stewart, secondary teacher in England

> *the space needed to be used in that way to be more valuable… and you know to have a space dedicated to this is a massive you know kind of acknowledgement and permission isn't it you know it´s, "we really value space and we´re giving you some"… it´s you know rooms are kind of, you know, massive currency aren't they.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.3. Dimension B: Key Principles for an Integral Implementation within Schools

This was where more ideas and discussions emerged in the four sessions. Based on the participants' experiences and understanding, it is clear how important it is to undergo rigorous reflection and establish key orienting ideas as the foundation of an integral approach to mindfulness within education. These key orienting ideas can be understood as key principles for an integral implementation of mindfulness within schools (see Table 16), and can offer a frame of meaning for any concrete way to deliver it in specific contexts. These principles are valuable insofar as they have been generated from the perspective of experienced mindfulness teachers, most of them with vast experience of implementing mindfulness within school contexts. However, I realise that the

number of participants is too small to enable definitive conclusions. Instead, I intend these principles to be a starting point for thinking about and exploring a more integral and transformative approach to implementing mindfulness within schools beyond the currently dominant, more instrumental forms of intervention.

Within this dimension, we can identify three main themes: (1) Purpose(s) of implementing mindfulness in schools; (2) Modes of delivering mindfulness in schools; and (3) Sensitive aspects to consider for an integral implementation.

Dimension	Themes	Sub-themes
B. Key principles	1. Purpose(s)	1.1. Transforming school culture 1.2. Cultivation of attitudes 1.3. Enriching pupils' personal lives 1.4. Educational approach
	2. Modes of implementation	2.1. Proper direction 2.2. Meaningful and flexible curriculum 2.3. Evolving curriculum 2.4. Transversality 2.5. Engaged staff 2.6. High-quality teacher training 2.7. Explicit visibility 2.8. Family involvement
	3. Sensitive aspects	3.1. Cost/efficiency balance 3.2. Fragility of the implementation 3.3. Voluntary participation 3.4. Realistic expectations

Table 16. Sub-themes by themes regarding key principles of the guideline for an integral implementation of mindfulness within schools

6.3.1. Purpose(s) of implementing mindfulness in schools

We can identify four main sub-themes regarding this theme, which in this case will be understood as principles: (1) Need to transform the school culture; (2) Cultivation of attitudes rather than training skills; (3) Supporting and enriching pupils' personal lives; and (4) Need for an approach which is educational rather than therapeutic in nature.

6.3.1.1. Need to transform the school culture

An integral implementation of mindfulness has to aspire to transform the educational culture rather than to cope with individual pupils' mental health problems. This means that mindfulness can generate a shift in some fundamental aspects of the way the school community interacts and in the very purpose of the educational process. Regarding the first point, mindfulness can foster relationships based on compassion, generosity, kindness, acceptance, collaboration and altruism in order to create an environment of safety, confidence, peace and fraternity. Related to the second idea, mindfulness can contribute to balancing the current academicist goal of education through a focus on human flourishing in its multiple dimensions: personal, interpersonal, communitarian and eco-systemic (Hanh and Weare, 2017; Jennings, 2019; Mason, Rivers and Jackson, 2020).

> *the idea of a mindful culture, and, going to the idea and maybe Wales will go down, will get there with the change in the focus… that we even need to teach mindfulness… we need that explicit to the kids, or if the culture, the staff, everything, is more mindful… about, you know… mirroring and so on and so forth, the whole idea of maybe then the subjects aren´t just focusing on seeing results, results, results and really… get what we want anyway… and maybe if we´re talking about somewhere like sort of up in London I´m not saying both by any measure but, the idea of just removing grades and payment and competition in regards of academic as an achievement, until they´re older… and can maybe rationalise that more… that creates a condition where… everyone is mindful… without even needing to teach mindfulness… um, just because the culture is different, and… you know there´s no striving, there´s just ok "we´re learning for the sake of learning, we´re learning cause we want to learn, love learning" and you decide what you study and you know, you enjoy what you do.*
>
> Stewart, secondary teacher in England

> *personally I would really love to see systemic change in education, I think it´s long overdue and we need it, I don't feel the system suits what I believe education should be about for young people and going into the future with not knowing what jobs are gonna be out there at all. I think we should really be encouraging creativity, you know, self-reliance… you know, connection with others and working well with other people… and those sort of skills I feel are more important than um, sort of knowledge which I feel you can find now you know with the right skills online you don´t need to learn knowledge and have knowledge, you can*

access knowledge as long as you're told how to do that well, so I would love to believe that mindfulness would bring about systemic change within the education system, that´s my sort of little hoping dream.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.3.1.2. Cultivation of mindful attitudes

According to participants, an integral implementation must be more about the cultivation of attitudes than about training skills. This implies understanding mindfulness as a way of being rather than a set of techniques to improve separate aspects of human functioning. In this sense, integral mindfulness must foster the cultivation of teachers' and pupils' character to develop ways of being (attitudes) to enable types of relationships from which personal and communitarian flourishing are possible. This means that education can empower the formation of a worldview, i.e. a way to pay attention based on curiosity, openness, acceptance and kindness, as suggested by several authors (Shapiro et al., 2016; Rechtschaffen, 2014).

I do think something like an attitude… because there´s a huge part isn´t there with mindfulness, it´s not just about focus control of you know bringing your attention back, sort of calming down, there´s the whole side of compassion, agency, support in the community, connecting, and it´s that sort of side that we´re hoping to develop a bit further, but it does feel a little bit like climbing a mountain, and baby steps.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.3.1.3. Supporting and enriching pupils' personal lives

This principle refers to the idea of promoting personal flourishing in pupils' whole lives. This means something more than improving concentration or decreasing stress on behalf of academic achievement, toward a more integral development which includes intellectual, emotional, relational and spiritual dimensions to contribute to a more authentic and balanced life in adulthood and in relational contexts. On this point, we can consider what Joseph (2016) describes as the main features of a flourishing life: authenticity, seeking goals

from intrinsic motivation, a sense of meaning and purpose, engagement in everything we do in life and achievement of excellence.

> *it does directly contribute to the curriculum in the health and wellbeing area of learning experience, but also that it´s an enabler for all sorts of other things at schools, and you know that might be anything from growth mindset.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

> *I´d like to use the word enrichment… bringing a sort of a richer detail and sense to everything that´s going on… enriching lives rather than just going through emotions and getting stuff done.*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

> *which language we are using is usually about [being] supportive, and you know, so I guess that´s… there´s something about it being there´s something that holds us, um, and supports us to all sorts of different things but it kind of offers something to give us a boost… and supportive kind of feels like a friend it feels like a um, a companion doesn't it the, thinking about us in a good way and wanting the best for us you know.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.3.1.4. Educational approach

A last principle regarding purpose refers to the need for this implementation to be educational rather than therapeutic in nature. Insofar as the mainstream MBIs come from a clinical-medical context (Kabat-Zinn, 2005/1990), it is relevant to distinguish these kinds of interventions from implementations with an educational purpose (Ergas, 2019b; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). While in the first case mindfulness has been used to alleviate and prevent specific symptoms such as anxiety and depression, in educational settings mindfulness should focus on pupils' integral development in order to enable them to live a meaningful childhood and adolescence, contributing to society as responsible citizens. This difference implies thinking differently about the focus and the format in which mindfulness should be delivered in schools, attending to school communities' special and local needs.

> *we´re talking about mindfulness in schools for the general public, you know it´s general, it´s about, yes it´s about intervention but it´s also about living a better life, yes it´s about self-regulation, but it´s also about flourishing and about creativity and taking better decisions, it's across the whole of our lives, this is not therapy, and MBSR and MBCT are too medicalized for what we are talking about, they´re too hot and heavy and too boring to be absolutely honest, in that dominion.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.3.2. Modes of implementation

We can find eight main principles in this area, based on participants' reflections: (1) The optimal direction of an integral implementation; (2) Having a meaningful and flexible mindfulness curriculum; (3) The need for an evolving curriculum; (4) Taking every activity at the school as an opportunity for implementing mindfulness; (5) Increasing involvement of staff in the implementation; (6) Having a high-quality mindfulness teacher training from the beginning; (7) Need to make the central importance of mindfulness for the educational process symbolically visible; and (8) The convenience of involving families in the mindfulness implementation process.

6.3.2.1. Optimal direction of the implementation

Participants agreed that the best direction for the implementation of mindfulness is from the top down. This means that the most effective and sustainable way to introduce mindfulness in schools is from the headteacher and leaders to teachers, then to pupils (Grissom, Egalite and Lindsay, 2021). This top-down support from a position of understanding and experiencing mindfulness is crucial for several reasons: (a) it is the best source of motivation for teachers; (b) it is easier to get financial support to keep the implementation ongoing; and (c) it is the safest way to make the implementation durable and sustainable over time. In other words, every key decision about the implementation should come from the school's top level and even from higher levels, such as politics. We need to ensure that the entire top educational level has the opportunity for a proper introduction to mindfulness and its educational potential from experiential and conceptual perspectives.

I think, you know what we said about, senior leadership and being on board is one of the key things isn't it, and enthusiastic people in schools to actually action that mission and we named that already.

Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

we´re coming back again to senior leaders making decisions, and around funding, I know at that school they needed an extra class 'cause they needed extra money coming in so they needed, you know, the footfall from having more students so all of these little things feed in and it can still happen regardless, but it makes it so much harder, and then it feels more like a battle rather than just something that can happen with ease.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

I´ve seen first-hand it´s a very fragile thing as well, and without the backing of certain key people, it can collapse quite quickly actually, as it, again, as I saw in the school, Deputy Head, who brought it in, left, and the new Deputy hadn´t mastered it… scrapped everything.

Stewart, secondary teacher in England

6.3.2.2. Meaningful and flexible curriculum

The current most popular mindfulness curricula within the British educational context (e.g. Paws b and Dot b) used to be highly standardised and script-based, besides being short-term (6–10 sessions). An integral version seems to require much more flexibility in adapting to the local context. It needs to develop curricula with variable topics in variable formats and a continuing process. This means an integral mindfulness curriculum looks more like a seed that grows inside the school system, interwoven with its development over time, than an external fixed device (Brito et al., 2022). This is one of the main contributions of Rechtschaffen's book *The Way of Mindful Education*, where he proposes an approach to teaching mindfulness in schools based on its main aspects (embodiment, attention, heartfulness and interconnectedness), and at the same time in a flexible manner depending on contextual factors and, mainly, on the teacher's style: "There are as many ways to teach mindfulness as there are teachers" (Rechtschaffen, 2014, p. 138).

I think about using rigid curriculums, is that you can actually respond to the group in front of you, and I think if you´re trained and skilled and you have your own practice, you´re then more open to responding to the group, so when you are, you know bringing mindfulness to young people, and the curriculum that you´ve got is very rigid, it´s so hard, you know cause you can see it´s sort of dying a death, […] whereas if you are working with a group and you can see that they could benefit from doing some movement or bringing in something that has happened in their day that's relevant, it's not rigid then it becomes more fluid […].

I think there needs to be, you know some choice […] in what they do to make it relevant to them and their experience and what they need […].

Unfortunately, because of the packed curriculum in schools, especially in primary, teachers have got very much into that "come on, children, do this, do that, and then we'll do this and then we'll do that", and it's very instructional and quite sort of narrow.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.3.2.3. Evolving curriculum

Another agreement amongst participants is related to the idea that an integral curriculum should evolve according to different factors, such as age range, group characteristics, local idiosyncrasies, teacher's styles and mastery. This evolutionary view is understood by some participants in terms of a spiral curriculum, which means that the same themes (e.g. attention, emotional regulation, compassionate relationships, etc.) can remain the same over time but with more profound levels of consideration in terms of practices and reflections (Forbes, 2019).

I think with little ones… you know, compared to the lower and bottom of primary up to year 6 there´s a huge developmental range there… so in terms of just use of language and stuff it needs to, sort of change, but, I´m thinking with secondary, they´ve reached a certain level hopefully of literacy so, it´s more about how much more mindfulness they´ve done… as to what evolves… so they might start with more basic practices, shorter practices, activities, sort of discussions, more sort of information but then the more they do it, the more they practice, they can then evolve it and you know it can become a lot more complex to suit.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

I start off training with youth mindfulness, so it´s just adapting things and trying to have an evolving program… it´s quite challenging but it´s been really great to be able to work with children for such a long period of time.

Katherine, external mindfulness teacher in England

for example if I just think Paws b, like when talking about what to do when you actually talk to children about the amygdala and the fight, flight and freeze, and what they do there you give them an entirely different language, when you talk to them about understanding the hot cross bun you know, in the sense of how their thoughts and emotions and body sensations influence their actions, you have an entirely different language to talk to children about any aspects… and so you incorporate that, that becomes part of the curriculum, part of the everyday life of the school… this is why I´m so adamant that mindfulness is not an intervention, it´s a way of life and it´s part of the life in the school and part of the curriculum of the school.... and so, the spiral curriculum is just that, you come back to things on a regular basis but a slightly more advanced level, slightly more… so continuity and progression, being the old-fashioned words that we always used to use.

Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.3.2.4. Transversality

Another principle that emerged during the group conversations refers to the idea of taking every activity at the school as an opportunity for implementing mindfulness, i.e. for cultivating attitudes and habits in the direction of fostering curious and appreciative attention, compassionate motivation in relationships, constructive critical thinking, emotional self-regulation, etc. This means that instead of waiting for special spaces and activities, teachers can maintain a mindful attitude throughout the day to creatively observe the many opportunities the school day offers to cultivate mindfulness in themselves and their pupils, talking about key mindfulness topics, doing mindfulness practices, modelling mindfulness attitudes, etc. (Jennings et al., 2019; Mason et al., 2020).

it isn´t about places or things… it´s about attitudes and, you know bringing it into every moment, you know so teachers don´t have to be removed… from, you know, the normal environment in school to have a bit of space, you know it´s crazy the space in the environment isn´t it… but it´s um… you know that feels like it´s more sustainable.

Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

we don´t need all these extra things, cause you won't have it at home so it´s just made it much more… very simple, I suppose it's back to basics but it´s much more transferable then, you can do it wherever you are, you don't have to have all these special things, the whole… the different equipment, it doesn't matter where you are that´s what I think has been a small positive thing about the change in schools during this time.

Katherine, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.3.2.5. Engaged staff

If we want to assure a successful integral implementation of mindfulness in schools, it is fundamental that staff (mainly, but not only, teachers) should be fully involved. This means that more than one motivated person at the school is needed to make a systemically transformative implementation in the long term. In other words, although we have the head of school on board and a few other motivated people, what is really needed is to build a mindful community inside the school, which means growing and maturing together alongside the process of understanding, practising and implementing this approach with themselves and with pupils. This implementation will be more powerful insofar as the whole community behaves and relates to each other as a healthy extended family (Han and Weare, 2017).

but then over time you know if you´ve got more teachers involved and you can grow it that way, the teachers can then teach the teachers over time and it starts being cheaper and more… you know, spreads deeper doesn't it, the kind of recognising where are you, what stage are you, what do you need right now… and then where do you go next.

Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

which is why I´m so keen to build capacity, which is why I stepped back from doing more children work directly with children to say you know, you need a whole team, you need lots of your staff, if not all of them, you need lots of them trained, you need more than one person who´s trained to teach whatever of the programmes you´ve chosen to introduce, and you need it built into the curriculum, so it´s much harder… to say someone´s not here therefore we´re not gonna do it.

Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.3.2.6. High-quality teacher training

Thus this principle implies two different and complementary ideas. Firstly, the relevance of having a good curriculum in order to train and teach headteachers, wellbeing leaders, teachers and pupils adapted to their different characteristics and contexts; and secondly, that the main purpose of this curriculum is to allow for 'tasting' and to understand the educational meaning that an integral implementation of mindfulness has for an integral education (Bowden, Norton, and Griffith, 2021; Emerson, Leyland, Hudson, Rowse, Hanley, and Hugh-Jones, 2017). This idea also implies that good training requires continuous learning and sharing as a school community with the same purpose and motivation. At the same time, this should be a process in which the impact/benefits for the school community serve as a reinforcement to keep going through what we can understand as a virtuous circle. For this task, most of the current standard and short-term mindfulness programmes are insufficient; thus a proper systemic and evolving curriculum should be developed, and these guidelines can be helpful in that regard.

> *Leadership, then it´s staff training, so the staff delivering the programme are properly trained, then the next one is additional training, and this assumption that really applies to us in life because you´ve done it, doesn't mean that you can teach it to anybody else, and the last one was involvement of families.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

> *they can see how it supports them… to do what they want to do in their lives you know whether that´s doing well in exams or not… um, you know, engaging in dancing or singing or you know something else… then you know if we can help them to own it, you know, so that they´re going "oh maybe I do want to practice more formally because that will support me" rather than you know "my teachers telling me I´ve got to practice, got to meditate, got to meditate now" and actually my mind´s completely, you know, thinking about something else completely and failed at that practice, you know… it´s which way round we go isn´t it, we can have, you know, we can choose it and know why we´re choosing it… and have conversations about that so that people you know build an understanding and more choice about practice.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

it´s everyone having the understanding of why it´s important and why you´re doing something, and that´s how you manage to get things done effectively as well isn´t it, but again you´ve got to factor in the time and you know how it happens and… erm… all that when you´re trying to bring it into the whole day is like, what does that look like… and start understanding that.

Mary, leader in a primary school in England

I think it´s a really good point is the huge behind it, is the evidence base that you can refer people to, which does really help doesn´t it, when you´re saying why you´re doing it…

Katherine, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.3.2.7. Visibility of the relevance of mindfulness within schools

One of the most subtle principles raised by participants is the symbolic relevance of making visible the central importance that mindfulness has for the school. According to this idea, the physical school environment can be considered a continuous reminder of the relevance of cultivating a mindful personal and communitarian way of being and interacting. Examples of this might be: having a special silent and minimalist room with images of core mindful attitudes (peace, care, compassion, joy, fraternity, altruism, etc); playing bell sounds regularly throughout the day (e.g. every one or one and a half hours) as a reminder to stop, breathe and appreciate the good things in life; to have classrooms decorated in a more minimalist way with images and sentences which can remind teachers and pupils of the core attitudes already mentioned and the good things in life, although considering special needs. In this way, the whole school day can be an experience to connect with the essentials: joy, peace, gratitude, and common humanity, and doing this as a mindful community. It could be useful to have these kinds of symbols on the school website as well, which can serve as a broader recognition, beyond the school, that this school is committed to cultivating these values and attitudes.

I think that says a lot because it´s telling… it´s coming in what we value, this is what we think is important, consequently I think then you have tracked different staff as well… maybe not completely but I think you do by saying that… and consequently the flipside of that if you don´t focus on that then you don´t push that, you attract different staff as well… and

it´s just flagging up, it´s highlighting what is important for us, yes of course grades are still important maybe but we also value this… very visual thing for someone that can then change the culture of the place as well.

Stewart, secondary teacher

the space needed to be used in that way to be more valuable… and you know to have a space dedicated to this is a massive, you know, kind of acknowledgement and permission isn't it you know it´s, "we really value space and we´re giving you some". It´s you know people's rooms are kind of, you know, massive currency, aren't they?

Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.3.2.8. Family involvement

The last principle that emerged within this area refers to the importance of involving families in the mindfulness implementation process (Mason et al., 2020). Indeed, this principle can be understood as part of the principle that mindfulness implementation should start with adults and then travel down to the pupils. Although it is always challenging to involve families in the educational process, it is possible to find attractive ways to encourage it. Beyond how to do it, the key point is that the school should have clear and effective communication with parents and carers about the purpose, aims and activities regarding mindfulness in the school in order to benefit pupils' wellbeing and happiness. From here, it is easier for parents and carers to be motivated and able to be part of this educational process on behalf of their children as a first step. Progressively, it is likely that they will develop an attitude of curiosity and want to incorporate some practices and understanding themselves. When families incorporate mindfulness at home to any degree, it serves as momentum for children and adolescents to consider it more meaningful in their lives.

we´ve offered family dates as well so inviting parents and siblings to come in the morning and do a session with us… so that, sort of make it into the whole family event and that´s worked really well… the children have had their opportunity to show their families to practice all together, I think as well cause I´ve been going to school I´ve put, the senior manager has put the time in so it´s the teachers all getting very involved so they're getting so used to it by being there and sort of so regularly, they´re very on board the teachers are and… joining in.

Katherine, external mindfulness teacher in England

Leadership, then it´s staff training, so the staff delivering the programme are properly trained, then the next one is additional training, and this assumption that really applies to us in life because you´ve done it, doesn't mean that you can teach it to anybody else, and the last one was involvement of families.

Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.3.3. Some sensitive aspects of an integral implementation

We can discern four main ideas regarding this dimension: (1) Cost/efficiency balance; (2) Fragility of keeping the implementation going; (3) Keeping mindfulness invitational; and (4) Having realistic expectations regarding the educational potentialities of mindfulness.

6.3.3.1. Cost/efficiency balance

This is a challenging issue because schools usually have tight financial resources and a vast range of activities to be implemented. The main point here is that the cost of an integral implementation should go from more to less, as the most expensive part is the starting phase, in which external mindfulness teachers usually offer a programme for leaders and teachers at the school in order to then prepare a group of these staff who can continue developing the implementation from within the school (see https://mindfulnessinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/MINDFUL-WALES-TOOLKIT-Nov-2020.pdf, p. 13). After that, it is recommended to maintain long-term work with these external teachers in order to have regular supervision and keep the programme evolving over time. Regarding this challenge, we have to think about where the financing can come from - perhaps from a government initiative and/or from the school budget, or a mix of both. As research on the benefits of mindfulness in education in the last decade has demonstrated, it is reasonable to decide to take this cost in anticipated prevention of other, much more expensive societal issues that the implementation will help to prevent, such as mental health issues in children and adolescents (e.g. depression and anxiety disorders).

you know the costs of provision, you know and how do you get enough people trained, where does the money come from, to do that or what's the cost of it, how is it offered in a way that´s accessible for more people, um… and I think the other thing is kind of time expectation, you know we can know that to get a school kind of deeply involved is going to take five years at least, you know, and know it´s not a quick fix.

Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

I would say budget is a big issue if you´re using external services to deliver mindfulness, and even if you´re bringing it into the schools to train a whole lot of teachers can be really expensive.

Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

a budget is massive within a school and you know whether it´s affordable, how expensive something is… and just whether it´s deemed as a priority really.

Mary, leader in a primary school in England

6.3.3.2. Fragility of the implementation

Another sensitive aspect to consider is how fragile it is to keep these implementations working in the long term. According to participant reflections, after a mindfulness implementation has started in a school, the challenge then follows of keeping it going in the long term. Some reasons for this fragility are: (a) when the impetus to keep working on mindfulness in the school settles on only one person, then all depends on the permanence and motivation of that person, which is very risky; (b) schools always have many other activities and initiatives to be implemented, most of which will seem more important or urgent than something like mindfulness, so if the school does not have enough understanding about the purpose and benefits of mindfulness for pupils and teachers, it will be easy for other activities to take its place; (c) for many schools mindfulness is still seen as a luxury in comparison to other emergent and "urgent" needs. Thus we face the challenge of maintaining this implementation as a delicate treasure that a committed school community needs.

I´ve seen first-hand it´s a very fragile thing as well, and, without the backing of certain key people, it can collapse quite quickly actually, as

it, again, as I saw in the school, deputy head, who brought it in, left, and the new Deputy hadn´t mastered it… scrapped everything.

Stewart, secondary teacher in England

Then the staff that had learnt it were so busy they weren´t sort of, they really liked it themselves but they didn't want to go on and train, and then it all fizzled out again, so it was going really well and then because of that one thing with the classroom and not being enough space, it all just stopped, unless there´s someone literally in the school, who's pushing it from the inside as well as someone from the outside, I mean whoever made the decision to not have that room anymore for example, it can go as quickly as it takes… it took 3 years to get to a certain point and then, now I´m 3 years later I haven´t been in touch with the school […]

I've worked with schools that the teachers have been you know, made to do it, and that´s been very difficult to teach and in other schools it´s a choice and not many do it, and then they move school or they leave, so it´s how do you keep it going, how do you keep the momentum going, um, it´s that whole intention attitude thing, isn´t it?

Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.3.3.3. Voluntary participation

This principle relates to keeping mindfulness invitational within the school. This is a complex point insofar as we have to reconcile, on the one hand, the need to have as many staff on board as possible, at least to have a critical mass of people practising and sharing a mindfulness approach in order to permeate the educational culture; and on the other hand, the freedom for anyone to join the implementation voluntarily, as a result of genuine motivation and understanding. It is also interesting to have a more mandatory phase of the tasting experience and then open voluntary options for deepening the personal process with mindfulness. This is a crucial point as the success of the whole implementation depends, at least partially, on staff's free, informed and committed choice regarding this approach. On the other hand, based on the participants' view, it seems to have a discrepancy in this point, as some think that anyway pupils are offered many other subjects compulsorily. In this case, it seems sensible to pay careful attention to how to offer pupils mindfulness experiences, giving them options around how to do it in terms of comfort and confidence.

I would start with the children saying you know, "you don´t have to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable", and I think by just saying that, can make someone feel a little bit more comfortable about getting on board, so there´s no pressure you know, "if you want to just sit and rest, that´s fine or any worries talk to me during or after or your teacher", it's just taking that pressure off them, because they´re thinking "oh goodness this isn´t for me".

Katherine, external mindfulness teacher in England

I've sort of been quite insistent that maybe a taste or something like that could be compulsory, but beyond that they´re really wanting to invest in it and really sort of try the skills and have a go themselves, there needs to be some opt out, and also because for a lot of them it might be overwhelming because so many of that age group are in a difficult place, that when we look at trauma sensitivities as well, it´s almost as if they need to have a get out without having to say why […]

I sort of feel a little bit strongly about it shouldn´t be imposed on people… and sometimes *when you go in and do DPD days it can feel like people are stuck there and they don´t really want to be there and then it can have a negative effect, so there needs to be that curiosity a conversation something*

Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.3.3.4. Realistic expectations

A final sensitive aspect refers to having realistic expectations regarding mindfulness's real potential within educational contexts. On this point, we can find a range of potentialities with two extremes. One is the view that mindfulness can be a specific intervention to promote and prevent mental health issues in children and adolescents with no expectation to contribute to the educational process at all; the other is that we can think of mindfulness as an educational approach that can lead and transform the purpose of the educational process within a school. Neither the instrumental nor the magical views are correct if we seriously want to implement mindfulness in an integral and transformative way. Instead we need to develop a complex and systemic approach from which we can understand mindfulness as a part (albeit the key part) of different factors influencing the construction of an integral education for the generation of a healthier society in all its dimensions. Thus a universal mindfulness approach in

schools is unlikely to be a transformative path, which means considering the contextual conditions of the specific school community to ensure more promising implementations (Montero et al., 2022).

> *I still think we can change the world but we have to accept it´s going to be a long… a long… you know, mindfulness itself isn´t gonna do it… it´s people who are gonna do it, who are being mindful, and all we can do is to just, make sure you know what we can do whatever we can to enable as many people as possible to have the opportunity to pick that up if they want to, then expanding our joint circle of concern if you like, cause there are actually a lot of us, you know, may not be a critical mass yet, but there are a lot of people like us, and I think it´s just, that growing that circle of concern till we get to that critical mass… and then we´ll make a difference there but I think we need to just be realistic but you know I´m passionate about mindfulness… but it can do what it can do… and I do worry about us expecting it to be a magic wand… for things that are not actually even part of it… it´s philosophy if it´s any… any value… so we need to be a bit realistic about what we want mindfulness to do.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

> *now whether you call that systemic isn´t gonna matter… you know it´s what you call systemic, because even with all that autonomy, within the choices and the professional choices that they´re gonna have there… there is still a whole curriculum to cover, there are still rules and regulations as safeguarding and all sorts of other things that are not gonna go away. And that´s what I would understand as being systemic, and mindfulness… it needs a lot more to mindfulness to actually make a difference to that, because that´s… that´s actually coming from somewhere else… and not within the individual school so I think there´s something, an issue about what we talk about systemic.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.4. Dimension C: Key Strategies for an Integral Implementation for the School

This dimension was a topic in which participants were very interested, although it was more challenging to recognise and offer concrete ideas regarding how to convert the more general principles into specific implementation strategies within schools. I think most of the ideas that emerged here are based on the current programmes that participants are familiar with, mainly from England and

Wales, such as Dot b, Paws b and The Present. This indicates how difficult it can be to think outside the box of our current understanding, which in turn is rooted in the participants' individual biographies and trajectories regarding mindfulness in education. Nevertheless, some important suggestions related to this dimension can be taken as a starting point. It is also an invitation to explore the different initiatives arising worldwide, some of which are promising in terms of an integral implementation of mindfulness in schools. In my view, our creative and collaborative potential is needed to put this implementation into practice considering local needs and contexts.

Within this dimension there are two main themes: (1) What to do; and (2) How to do it (see Table 17).

Dimension	Themes	Sub-themes
C. Key strategies	1. What to do?	1.1. High-quality curriculum 1.2. Support with scientific evidence 1.3. Starting with adults 1.4. Building a mindful community
	2. How to do it?	2.1. Modelling by teachers 2.2. Discovery-oriented approach 2.3. Teaching from modesty 2.4. Keep it invitational

Table 17. Sub-themes by themes regarding key strategies of the guideline for an integral implementation of mindfulness in schools

6.4.1. What to do?

We can discern four main sub-themes within this theme: (1) Having a high-quality curriculum from the beginning; (2) Supporting the implementation with strong scientific evidence; (3) Starting the implementation with adults, and (4) Building a mindful community.

6.4.1.1. Having a high-quality curriculum

After adults are embedded in the mindfulness approach, it is vital to have a high-quality curriculum to teach children and adolescents. The first key idea derived from this initial strategy refers to the distinction between activities and curriculum on mindfulness. It is relatively easy to find many resources with specific activities for delivering mindfulness in the classroom (e.g. books and websites with videos and audio); what is really challenging is to have an integral curriculum which considers a systemic and developmental approach to educational contexts (some good examples are the SEE programme by Emory University, The Compassionate Schools Project by University of Virginia and the Living in The Present course co-developed by Sarah Silverton, Dusana Dorjee and Tabitha Sawyer). According to some participants, such a curriculum should combine essential topics with appropriate and meaningful practices, being flexible and evolving according to age groups and local features and needs. When a good integral mindfulness curriculum is implemented, instead of scattered activities, we are, as one of the participants says beautifully, teaching people to fish instead of giving them just a fish. In this vein, Ergas (2019) argues that there is increasing development of contemplative curricula, including pedagogies fostering "meaningful and intimate learning along with ethical, socio-emotional and socially-engaged attitudes" (p. 260). Thus a high-quality mindfulness curriculum can be understood as rooted in a first-person perspective in the service of cultivating mindful attitudes through an evolving and flexible process.

> *I think there also needs to be something, like a framework or something to hang it on 'cause otherwise then it's a bit like the emperor's clothes, what is mindfulness then you´re saying it´s an attitude, an enabler, it´s an undercover everything… and then what actually is it… so there sort of needs to be something, and I don't need to be going on about "The Present" but you have obviously the themes which we hang it on, it gives a framework, and then other curriculums have you know what you do each week, there needs to be some… something initially whether you´re teaching the staff or teaching children for the first time, that you´re hanging it on so that they can get their practice and understand what mindfulness is and then from there you can sort of launch into other areas and bring it in to other things too but it´s like… people really get it for themselves first.*

Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

> *I´m not saying those are not useful things to do though… but, we use the analogy in the talk though, you can do things that will buy you a quiet hour you can calm the children after the work, playtime and things like that, but you´re giving them a fish not teaching them to fish… and actually there´s a real challenge for us I think in getting people to understand you´re not just doing mindfulness because you, we do an app or you stop now and again, there´s much more to it than that and that has been staff capacity, so that´s an absolute priority that we need more staff to understand what it´s all about which basically means engaging them in a course of some sort there, and then they can make it… but if that´s all you are doing then recognise you´re doing activities you´re not going to get the results, you´re not going to get the impact that we could if we do something… why we choose is much more the curriculum I suppose but much more depth.*

Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.4.1.2. Supporting with scientific evidence

There is a remarkable consensus among participants about the importance of backing this implementation with scientific evidence. As in the sense of having a "Trojan horse" to introduce this implementation in the first place, as in the sense of deepening the training, the current research on the field of mindfulness in general, and mindfulness in education in particular, can play a crucial role in terms of acceptability and for a better understanding about how mindfulness works and what its benefits are. Among the several perspectives in current research, the neuroscientific approach is probably the most influential and persuasive. Currently, we have access to insightful information about how mindfulness practices impact the brain in terms of improvements in attention, concentration, thought and emotional regulation, empathy, (self-)compassion, prosocial behaviour, neuronal regeneration, etc. (see Gilbert, 2010; Gilbert and Choden, 2013; Goleman and Davidson, 2017; Siegel, 2018).

> *but you know something as well about research you know, about the importance of research… to kind of tell us more about this and help persuade some sceptical others, you know, of the possibilities. […] information available, places where people can go and have*

conversations about it, find out what other people have been doing, how it suits them… [are] a good start.

Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

I think a really good point is the huge evidence behind it, is the evidence base that you can refer people to, which does really help doesn´t it, when you´re saying why you´re doing it.

Katherine, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.4.1.3. Starting with adults

There is agreement on the recommendation to start every implementation in schools with adults. The main reason for this is that when the school staff have enough experience practising and understanding mindfulness and its educational potential, it is more likely that they will want to deliver these benefits to the rest of the school community and beyond. On the other hand, at this stage, it is clear that teachers' mindful modelling can be considered one of the best ways to spread mindfulness attitudes to pupils more implicitly and continuously, from a mindful presence more than from conceptual teaching (Hanh and Weare, 2017; Jennings, 2015; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Shapiro et al., 2016). Thus there are good reasons to think that if we have a critical mass of mindful teachers in a school, this can generate a synergetic movement to transform the whole school culture into one in which children, adolescents and adults can flourish and show up the best human potentialities.

I think it is powerful if, you know, adults experience it for themselves they can see what it´s like and sometimes we do things where we just target a couple of year groups and we just trial it out, you know a series of whatever we´re trying to deliver and then see what the impact is to then, have more evidence to then give you more power behind the reason why you´re doing things to be able to sell it to staff and then you start to bring other year groups in or you might try it as a key stage and then try it across the key stages, I think it is about that like we said starting small rolling it out… but yeah experience for yourself because if you don't know yourself what it's like, you know, that's hard to teach somebody else or even to be in that mindset.

Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.4.1.4. Building a mindful community

On this point, we can apply the saying "one swallow does not make a summer", meaning that in order to deliver a transformative implementation, we have to be very aware of, and motivated to find, the most suitable ways to deliver the process of constructing a mindful community (Mason et al., 2020). This community is essential insofar as people need to feel part of a bigger project and to have regular spaces for sharing experiences, ideas and reflections on what is happening in the long-term process. A good example of how to contribute to the generation of this community is to have ambassadors among teachers and pupils, who can offer personal testimonies and guide practices and conversations on key aspects regarding mindfulness and education. This idea is being developed in the more recent updates of the MiSP programmes through the production of short videos of teachers' and pupils' experiences, intended to inspire educational communities.

> *there is one person that practices mindfulness that, you know and we know that one person on their own at school, is not gonna last, it just doesn´t… you know it´s too much effort for people to keep it alive on their own… so then you know we kind of need to get people in contact with each other and support it and knowing they are not alone.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

> *One of our primary schools has got a system of ambassadors eh… and these are children who actually lead the practices… they are trained up and they've got certificates, and they get guidance, and they've got lanyards, and they've got a box in each classroom with their kit in it, which is a timer, uh, and their bell.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.4.2. How to do it?

We can discern four main ideas in this area: (1) Teacher modelling; (2) An implementation based on a discovery-oriented approach to learning; (3) Teaching from an attitude of humility; and (4) Keeping the implementation as invitational as possible.

6.4.2.1. Teacher modelling

This strategy can be seen as an enactment of the saying "be the change you want to see in the world", which here means that the very way of being teachers (and adults more generally) should be in a process of transformation in order to embody a kind of presence characterised by peace, attention, kindness, joy, equanimity and compassion, able to generate a constant and subtle invitation to pupils and colleagues to enter into this atmosphere of consciousness, freedom and confidence (Han and Weare, 2017; Jennings, 2015, 2016; Shapiro et al. 2016). In this sense, there is a significant distinction between teaching mindfulness and teaching *mindfully*, with a clear emphasis on the second one: "When you are on a path of personal growth, you are modelling to your students the true meaning of mindfulness" (Rechtschaffen, 2014, p. 43). From this stage, every emerging implementation will spread the seeds we wish to cultivate within the school more effectively.

> *I think the modelling is really important, but it´s the point of view of the kids seeing that there´s value to it … everyone thinks this is important not just another thing that they´re being told they should do, cause kids aren´t stupid.*
>
> Stewart, Secondary School teacher in England

> *so it´s such a cultural change… and if you´re teaching in a school as a teacher and then you´re teaching mindfulness in the school as well, it´s almost like sometimes you feel like you´re different cause, on the one hand, you're teaching according to how teachers are meant to teach… and the next minute you´re doing it a different way because it´s mindfulness, and ideally that way would be in every lesson.*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

> *It's really important. It's about the modelling. It's about why it's important for teachers to model, you know, people hear your music, not your words. And that happens at home as well. And I've got a couple of people who have trained with me who are looking to go on to train to teach parents.*
>
> Mrs Mindfulness, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.4.2.2. Discovery-oriented approach

This means that when we think about implementing mindfulness with pupils, the usual notion of transmission of knowledge needs to be revised for self-development, which requires a guide through an experiential path of integration (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010; Rogers and Freiberg, 1994/1969). This is a key principle for all integral and transformative education and must be seriously considered if we want to cultivate virtues, not just to fill pupils' minds with more content. Of course, this experiential approach requires teachers well trained in guiding self-exploration and facilitating group experiential work, with high sensitivity to delicate experiences (e.g. traumatic memories) and topics (e.g. self-identity) which can emerge in the classroom context (Jennings et al., 2019).

> *people learn it in a different way, don´t they? and how much they embrace mindfulness when they´re first introduced to it and how quickly they… you know if you´ve just learned about mindfulness you know straight into delivering something to children… you know that´s massively challenging, isn't it? but, to kind of know that it´s gonna grow over time and keep supporting it to grow over time you know, have a framework where it can keep developing, you know, from a teacher point of view and how it is in the classroom, you know I think that kind of lets people not be under pressure, to perform it well, but you know, but if it´s a conversation and it´s kind of "oh well what is mindfulness? Can we discover this together?" you know, but there´s no pressure to be… you know the perfect mindfulness teacher who´s floating through their day.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.4.2.3. Teaching from humility

This way of teaching is crucial for this implementation because one of the main messages we want to offer pupils is self-acceptance and acceptance of others. The fundamental meaning of mindfulness is how to be happy in our imperfect humanity, which is also an educational challenge in a cultural context in which high performance and achievement are fostered in pupils under the risky umbrella of a misunderstood conception of 'success'. Therefore, teachers' cultivation of a humble attitude and the opportunity to show our own imperfections and mistakes are core to teaching mindfulness, as we can model

and give implicit permission to pupils to be themselves with their lights and shadows, i.e. for offering opportunities to be authentic and self-confident.

> *One of my favourite adult mindfulness teachers um has ADHD and then she says the wrong thing often, but does a rewind button, you know does a sound of a rewind… so when she says something she doesn't mean, she does a kind of [rewind sound] you know, "start again" you know… and that's so lovely you know that kind of attitude, you know "we haven't got to be perfect" it's not even mindfulness if we're aiming to be perfect all the time.*
>
> Silvia, external mindfulness teacher in Wales

6.4.2.4. Keeping the implementation invitational

This means that although we have a curriculum and a plan for guiding practices and teaching content, we must always be aware of each child or adolescent's particular limitations and obstacles and their specific group or class. The main point here is that everyone feels safe and comfortable with what is going on in the lesson and that practices and teachings are as beneficial and meaningful for their life as possible, which implies keeping the space explicitly invitational (Jennings et al., 2019). In this regard, details such as tone of voice, gestures, word choices, postures, and interactional styles, i.e. non-verbal language, are very important aspects to be considered and discussed openly and kindly within the mindful community.

> *I sort of feel a little bit strongly about it shouldn't be imposed on people… and someone when you go in and do DPD days it can feel like people are stuck there and they don't really want to be there and then it can have a negative effect, so there needs to be that curiosity a conversation something.*
>
> Jo, external mindfulness teacher in England

6.5. Conclusion

As reported in this chapter, most research in the field of mindfulness and education has been focused on the benefits of these implementations, mostly on pupils, with a mental health focus and a quantitative approach. There is also some research on the merits of specific mindfulness programmes oriented to

children, such as the MiSP organisation in the UK, Learning to BREATHE in the US and Canada, MindUp in Canada; and programmes oriented to teachers, such as the CARE and SMART programmes in the US (Jennings, 2015). The findings presented in this chapter contribute to shedding light on a previous and wider dimension, i.e. the fundamentals of any integral implementation of mindfulness in school contexts, offering key ideas about the three main layers of context, principles and strategies, which can serve as a general guideline for further implementations. In this concluding section, I will discuss some of the aspects derived from the themes and sub-themes explained previously from two angles: their contribution to a critical consideration of mindfulness implementation and their positive implications for reflection in this field.

The first critical point I would like to discuss is the education policy differences between England and Wales, as highlighted by participants, regarding what these countries understand by wellbeing in school contexts. For example, the 2021 English document "Promoting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing" (available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing) states this understanding of wellbeing: "The proposals place schools and colleges at the centre of plans to embed a culture of openness around mental health and forge stronger links between education and health to ensure children and young people can access appropriate support" (p. 3). From here, we can interpret that wellbeing in schools is being understood in terms of two features: it is synonymous with mental health and it focuses mainly on individual pupils. This view is consistent with the reflections in the literature review (see Chapter 2) regarding the recent history of the neoliberalisation of the educational process and the instrumental use of mindfulness in schools as a technique to prevent and alleviate mental health problems in the English context (see Chapter 5).

On the other hand, if we observe the 2021 Wales document "Framework on Embedding a Whole Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing" (available at https://gov.wales/framework-embedding-whole-school-approach-emotional-and-mental-wellbeing), the perspective on wellbeing is thus: "The whole-school

approach seeks to support good emotional and mental wellbeing by promoting a positive cultural environment in schools, where children and young people form positive relationships with staff and other learners, and relationships are strengthened" (p. 5). In this case, we can interpret some nuanced yet important differences. Instead of linking wellbeing to mental health, this document links it with the emotional and mental dimensions of being cultivated within a nurturing culture, focusing on relationships rather than individuals. Additionally, the relevance of adults is explicitly expressed as a crucial aspect of what we can understand as systemic wellbeing. This framework is more aligned with the integral implementation of mindfulness outlined above and in coherence with the systemic approach explained in the next chapter.

Establishing a comparison between England and Wales regarding the quality of the relationship between pupils and staff as an essential aspect of wellbeing in the school, Moore et al. (2020) state the following conclusion:

> Notably, the findings in Wales that overall, pupils attending poorer schools tended to report higher levels of connectedness to school staff than those in more affluent schools was not replicated in the more highly marketised English school system, with the inverse association observed. (p. 1114)

This article, focused on wellbeing in primary schools in Wales, highlights two relevant contextual points of difference between the two countries which are illustrative of the importance of education policies in which wellbeing in schools is considered in a communitarian instead of in an individual form. The first point refers to the critique, stated by several authors, regarding the increasing marketisation of the education system in the UK, particularly in England, in the last four decades (Ball, Bowe, and Gewirtz, 1996). This process has entailed a dramatic change in the entire logic of the educational process toward a regime of performativity (Ball, 2003), in which every educational goal is oriented to productivity to the detriment of fundamental human dimensions such as wellbeing (see Chapters 2 and 5).

The second point can be understood as a necessary consequence of the previous one and refers to the kind of relationships fostered in schools in socioeconomic contexts characterised by marketisation and performativity, which can be interpreted as organisational, i.e. as consumer relationships, in order to obtain a product in the form of qualification for the work market (Wilson et al., 2023). In this regime, the teacher-pupil relationship is understood in praxis from a tutorial approach, i.e. as one in which the teacher is a sort of coach in the service of supporting 'personal' needs for the superior good of academic performance instead of from a communitarian approach in which everyone is in the same process of personal and interpersonal growth in order to develop an ethical and civic way to interact in the world.

Also derived from this guideline is the implicit fact that when we reflect on the potentialities of mindfulness in schools, reflecting on the purpose and practice of education itself is unavoidable. Indeed, participants frequently commented and reflected on the educational system as a whole, as evident in the distinction mentioned above between education policies in England and Wales. In line with the literature review (see Chapter 2), the main issue raised here echoes Ball's (2003) diagnosis of the current educational logic of "performativity" (one of the three interconnected policy technologies, along with marketisation and managerialism), which defines teachers as "enterprising subjects" striving for a permanent improvement in productivity in order to achieve a set of standards articulated by people who are not thinking from an educational perspective or for an educational purpose. This crucial idea is expressed in participants' views on the high pressure schools put on teachers and pupils, on the lack of time for implementing wellbeing strategies in a school timetable full of academic activities, on the difficulty of finding headteachers and leadership who are able to reflect and make decisions outside of this box of performativity, and on the sensation of the fragility of this endeavour (see Table 17, Dimension B, Theme 3). In this context, an integral implementation of mindfulness in mainstream education system appears more like a dream than a realistic and feasible project.

However, it is worth highlighting that for participants, this kind of implementation is seen as possible and, indeed, as an urgent need, emphasising

that such an approach should point beyond individual prevention of mental ill-health and promotion of mental health, and toward the cultivation of attitudes and virtues (Biesta, 2013) capable of enriching teachers and pupils' personal and interpersonal lives, generating a school culture of care and progressive flourishing (see also Noddings, 2012, 2013). This perspective is commensurate with the approach Ergas (2019), Sellman and Buttarazzi (2020) call mindfulness 'as' education, which consists of the systemic and systematic cultivation of attention and core mindful attitudes in pupils and teachers, rather than training specific skills; of fostering all human interactions and permeating the school life, an aspect that will be developed in more detail in the next discussion chapter.

Among the principles mentioned by participants, I would like to highlight three for their particular importance and meaning for, and relative absence from mainstream mindfulness programmes for schools. First, in the focus group, there was an agreement that mindfulness should be integrated into a curriculum and not be separate activities. The critical point is that this curriculum should not just be another version of the MBSR model, a programme of around eight weeks, but a systemic and evolving implementation. In this context, 'systemic' means an implementation including different actors (pupils, families, teachers, leadership, headteachers) and dimensions of the school, and which can be understood in terms of Wilber's (2016) figure of quadrants (see Figures 14 and 15, in the next chapter), i.e. integrating the cultivation of personal attitudes (attention, curiosity, appreciation, acceptance, self-compassion, etc.) and interpersonal qualities (kindness, empathy, compassion, etc.), and contributing to building a mindful culture of care and wellbeing in which individuals and community can flourish.

The third principle deserves an explication owing to its relevance across the whole thesis: that the implementation of mindfulness in schools requires an educational rather than a therapeutic approach. It helps to clarify what I understand by "therapeutic" and "educational" and why there is a need to distinguish between these terms/purposes. Following Ergas (2019b), the therapeutic approach is currently dominant and posits a scientific-secular narrative underpinned by a narrow view of mental health as the absence/presence of behavioural and emotional symptoms such as anxiety, stress and depression,

i.e. as the lack of some specific social and emotional skills in the school. This understanding of mental health is based on the behaviourist and cognitivist Anglo Saxon psychological tradition derived from a positivist epistemology and a medical model, which emphasises that all real phenomenon is known by direct observation and it should hence be susceptible to mathematical formulation (Comte, 2009/1865). There are, of course, other forms of understanding the therapeutic, for example, as the recognition of the person as a being possessing the potential for self-actualisation (Rogers, 1995/1961; Maslow, 1999/1962) and flourishing (Seligman, 2011). In the context of this research, when I distinguish the therapeutic from the educational I am considering the former concept in the narrow sense previously explained.

On the other hand, the concept of an "educational approach" is based upon Biesta's (2022) distinction of three main purposes for education (see sections 2.1 and 7.4), particularly regarding his proposal that an educational purpose should be understood as the existential task to support pupils in their subjectification processes. In the context of this study, this means that mindfulness should aim to foster the cultivation of a self, able to regulate and orient its desires and impulses toward a dynamic balance (equanimity) in an intra-personal and inter-personal domains. This proposal challenges education to go beyond learning as its main purpose toward a self-flourishing position involving the mastering of the relationship with the world's demands.

A last point to consider is the relative absence of reflection on the potentialities of mindfulness for social transformation. From my interaction with the group, I believe it is difficult for mindfulness teachers to visualise how mindfulness implemented in the school can contribute to something as huge as social transformation. Although some participants mentioned this idea, it remains a general desire or dream, not concretely related to something mindfulness can do. My interpretation of the reason for this is twofold. On the one hand, I think that as every participant has been trained in some form of instrumental mindfulness (MiSP or NHS in the UK context, for instance), they are conditioned to understand and apply mindfulness with a clear focus on individuals and (less strongly) relational wellbeing, overlooking systemic aspects such as the societal.

However, on the other hand, I believe all of us, including the participants in this research, are also conditioned into a kind of education system closer to a business model based on a market worldview rather than an education system understood as a catalyst for social development and the formation of a citizenry with mindful virtues, such as collaboration and sensitivity, all serving the common good. In this sense, mindfulness's social dimension still seems to be a ‘blind spot’ when we want to plan, design and implement it in schools.

6.6. Summary

This chapter has presented a detailed account of findings from the third research cycle, i.e. focus groups, offering general guidelines for a more integral approach to implementing mindfulness in school contexts. I organised these findings into three dimensions: A. Contextual conditions, B. Key principles and C. Key strategies. Seven relevant themes emerged from these dimensions, as follows: in Dimension A, 'Education policy framework' and 'School requirements'; in Dimension B, 'Purposes', 'Modes of implementations' and 'Sensitive aspects'; and in Dimension C, 'What do do' and 'How to do it'. This outcome can be considered as a contribution to respond to the general question of 'how to implement mindfulness holistically within schools?'

The chapter provided a rich presentation of meaningful topics within each dimension. Among the most relevant and with potential implications for practice are: (1) a shift in the approach from a therapeutic to an educational focus; (2) the idea of prioritising adults' training as a pre-condition to teaching mindfulness to pupils; (3) the need to co-design a mindfulness curriculum which is meaningful, contextualised, flexible and evolving, capable of being integrated into the broader school curriculum; and (4) the challenge of building a mindful school community able to feed and sustain this implementation across time organically and sustainably. Another insight worth mentioning refers to the fragility of this endeavour and the need to align mindfulness and human flourishing as allied educational priorities and goals, a positioned often seen as incompatible with the "proper" purpose of schooling’s narrow focus on academic achievements. In this

regard, time and sufficient understanding emerged as core ingredients for the successful implementation of mindfulness.

Chapter 7: From Instrumental to Integral Mindfulness: Toward a More Holistic and Transformative Approach in Schools

This chapter forms the basis for an article published in 2022 in collaboration with my supervisors (see Brito, Joseph and Sellman 2022). To a lesser degree, this chapter is influenced by another article published in collaboration with my supervisors (see Brito, Joseph and Sellman 2021b).

Introduction

The relationship between mindfulness and education has become a topic associated with both promises and pitfalls since the turn of the millennium (Ergas, 2019a). Throughout this period, education in the UK and other Westernised countries has witnessed a concerted effort to compensate the performativity agenda with a range of wellbeing initiatives. This could be seen as an attempt to 'both have your cake and eat it', as schooling still privileges the development of cognitive skills above all else in the service of neoliberalist economic functioning, but is now also somewhat tempered by a broadening focus on the emotional wellbeing of students and teachers, sometimes referred to as 'therapeutic' or even 'contemplative' turns. This counter-movement, intentionally or not, has emphasised personal abilities such as self-knowledge and emotional regulation as further individual competences to be acquired during schooling (Hyland, 2009). In this context, the encounter between education and mindfulness traditions appears initially promising in terms of efficacy, though critical voices (Berila, 2016; Brito et al., 2021a, 2022; Ergas 2019b; Forbes 2019; Hyland 2016; Reveley 2016) express concern about the superficiality of MBIs and how they privatise wellbeing and thwart deeper forms of self-knowledge and social transformation.

As I showed in the Literature Review (see Chapter 2), considering the question of what the relationship between education and mindfulness is, Ergas (2019b) asserts three main modalities for mindfulness implemented within educational contexts: mindfulness 'in', 'as' and 'of' education. Mindfulness 'as' and 'of' education are distinguished from mindfulness 'in' education as being more

holistic, by which I mean broader and more inclusive in content as well as more critical. Whilst they promote cultivation of a way of being through the whole school system, they are also rarer, and consequently more marginal. Mindfulness 'in' education, however, has become more mainstream, largely because it operates from a more instrumental perspective. Such mindfulness training is 'attractive' as it comes packaged with a range of self-soothing and concentration techniques. From this perspective, mindfulness can be seen as a tool that offers objectifiable as well as laudable attitudes and skills. This means that MBIs in schools are typically 'outsourced' interventions with a focus on improving the skill-set and general wellbeing of students and teachers, aligned with a logic of individuality and productivity and thus reinforcing the socioeconomic system, namely neoliberalism, which currently frames most Western education (Ergas, 2019b; Forbes, 2019; Hyland, 2017; Scherer and Waistell, 2018). When subjected to critique, mindfulness 'in' education is problematic because individuals are taught to cope with systems that may be, at least partially, responsible for their 'suffering', while a deeper understanding of self and reality is undermined, as has been explained in Chapter 5 (see also Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020).

The purpose of this chapter is to develop in more depth two meaningful ideas derived from the findings of the last chapter. The two insights to be explored are the differences between two diverse approaches to the format and focus of mindfulness implementation in schools. This reflection on format and focus follows, on the one hand, a critique of the conventional implementation of MBIs in educational settings based on an interpretation of the participants' reflections in order to stimulate debate regarding their merits and limitations. Thus I will argue that although these instrumental MBIs within education result in several benefits in individualistic terms during the short term, and thus it may be better to have these interventions than not to have them, they also undermine broader goals for holistic education, at both individual and societal levels, and thus need to be implemented more integrally in order to achieve more deeply transformative and longer-term benefits.

In addition, the reflection on these topics will explore what an integral mindfulness approach means in the context of this study. The type of integral mindfulness implementation and integral education I propose draws on Ken Wilber (see Wilber, 2016; Wilber and DiPerna, 2017); Esbjörn-Hargens, Reams and Gunnlaugson, 2010, and Forbes (2019), though their heritage can be traced back to yogic and contemplative roots. An integral approach accommodates interior as well as exterior experience and has collective as well as individual dimensions, which will be explained more fully later in this chapter.

The chapter begins, however, by resuming discussion of the socioeconomic background of mindfulness and education, namely neoliberalism (developed in Chapter 5), examining core ideas by authors belonging to a critical and societally oriented approach to mindfulness, who consider it necessary to reflect on the detrimental implications of this worldview for education broadly and mindfulness within it more precisely. I then analyse the potential and shortcomings of implementing mindfulness instrumentally first and individualistically second, before concluding my argument for a more holistic and integral approach. I use these terms interchangeably as they are etymologically connected to 'wholeness' but have distinct, if overlapping, literature, both sets of which I draw upon. Toward the end of the chapter I draw upon Heidegger (1996/1927, 1993, 2006), Wilber (2016), Wilber and DiPerna (2017), 1969/1959), and Esbjörn-Hargens et al. (2010), alongside authors who reflect on contemplative approaches to education, in order to share some suggestions for and examples of what a holistic/integral approach may look like.

7.1. Sociocultural Context of Mindfulness 'in' Education

Mindfulness practices derive from broader ancient Buddhist philosophy (Feldman and Kuyken, 2019; Sun, 2014) and were introduced in the form of a standardised intervention called Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) in Western societies in 1979 through Jon Kabat-Zinn's pioneering work, first in health settings and subsequently in areas as heterogeneous as education, therapy and various workplaces (Purser and Loy, 2013; Sun, 2014). Early research about mindfulness in education seemed to demonstrate that these practices have

several potential benefits (Weare, 2012, 2021), so much so that in 2015 the UK Parliament, as one prominent example, advocated greater research and implementation in the health, justice, organisational and educational domains. In the case of education, this may have been in response to the alarming rise in teenage mental health problems witnessed over the past 30 years (Mindful Nation UK, 2015). However, in the last decade, this type of implementation has been critiqued by many authors as a problematic over-simplification and instrumentalisation, subservient to a neoliberal agenda (Hyland, 2017; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020), and has become a topic of debate. On one side of this debate are psychologists arguing from what they see as a pragmatic discourse, who affirm that this kind of implementation has positive and measurable effects in educational settings. On the other side are contemplatives arguing from a spiritual, critical and/or integral standpoint that superficial implementation can have an 'iatrogenic effect' in the educational system if its socioeconomic foundation is not taken into account (for a deeper explanation of this idea, see Brito et al., 2021a; also Ergas 2019a). As explained in Chapter 5, the term 'iatrogenesis' is borrowed here from Ivan Illich (Illich, 1976) to describe processes where individuals are made the subject of health discourses at the expense of institutional critique.

Although both positions offer good arguments, in this research I will adopt a more critical perspective regarding how the mainstream implementation of mindfulness in schools is being developed. I tend to agree with critiques that the trend of mindfulness programmes in schools serves, mostly inadvertently, the dominant neoliberal agenda (as was explained in Chapters 2 and 5). Focusing on education, and following the reflections of Berila (2016) and Forbes (2019), we can observe the following problems/misunderstandings regarding the implementation of mindfulness within schools. (1) Cultural appropriation and decontextualisation of these practices from their origins in specific spiritual Eastern traditions (Berila, 2016). The main issue here is the risk of using mindfulness practices just as mental and physical fitness exercises, forgetting their deeper spiritual and ethical purposes (e.g. developing wisdom, compassion, mental and body balance, peaceful and collaborative communities), avoiding questions of whether and how these purposes should be considered educational

purposes also. (2) Common beliefs and prejudices regarding the supposition that the primary goal of contemplative practices is to soothe people and avoid conflicts (Berila, 2016). In fact, most people working in educational settings perceive mindfulness as a technique to relax the body and focus the mind in order to improve wellbeing and productivity. (3) Utilisation of these practices from a supposed apolitical perspective, keeping them at an individual level and avoiding observing and questioning power structures such as economic logic and educational policies (Forbes, 2019).

This debate is relevant to the current educational system insofar as most authors, even policymakers, appreciate the transformative potential that mindfulness practices offer both in terms of individual wellbeing and more socially oriented virtues of human cultures, such as wisdom, compassion and purposefulness (Jennings, 2015). However, critiques are well aware of how mindfulness can be made subservient to neoliberal agendas that do not necessarily have authentic individual and social needs at heart (Forbes, 2019; Reveley, 2016; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). With MBIs in both education and corporate settings, we witness a displacement of systemic issues onto students and staff, rather than matters of policy, in much the same way employees, rather than employers and investors, take on society's burdening issues. I contest that mindfulness and education will foster greater individual and societal transformation with greater emphasis on systems first, then teachers, then students. Accordingly, in this chapter, I will examine two core issues of the instrumentalisation process of mindfulness in educational contexts. First, I will explore the merits and limitations of implementing mindfulness from an instrumental or integral perspective (the implementation format). Second, I will examine the merits and limitations of focusing this implementation on individuals or/and systems (the implementation focus). Finally, I will portray the fundamental ideas underpinning an integral approach to mindfulness within schools. The principal aim here is to motivate educators to consider how MBIs in education can be implemented more meaningfully for students, teachers and society.

7.2. Implementing Mindfulness Within Education: Instrumental or Integral Format?

This section explores the merits and limitations of implementing mindfulness in education in formats often derided as over-simplified and reductive. Critiques of MBIs in education are often concerned with omission, i.e. what is lost when mindfulness is subjected to a technical rationale and standardized for implementation, as opposed to something more integral or holistic and rooted in its ethical Buddhist foundations (Ergas, 2019b; Simpson, 2017). Of course, any possibility that education could be colluding with indoctrination will become a sensitive issue. This is precisely why Kabat-Zinn (2011) sought to 'de-spiritualize' mindfulness when he introduced it to hospital patients, realizing that many participants would not follow such a course if it was constructed as 'religious' in nature.

Nonetheless, I contend that the Buddhist foundations of mindfulness can be understood philosophically rather than religiously and subsume a number of psychological insights and ethical orientations, which are overlooked within most MBIs. Keeping some reference to Buddhist ethics does not necessarily equate to the introduction of Buddhism within education, particularly as the insights are shared with many other contemplative traditions. However, the preservation of some of this material allies with an approach that cultivates the growth of the whole person and their interdependence with nature and the world. For example, from a Buddhist standpoint, an individual becomes ethical and wholesome when their thoughts, actions and speech are informed by wisdom and compassion, and from a deeper understanding of self and nature as transitory and interconnected processes (Hanh, 2010).

Conversely, according to a rigorous meta-analysis by Ergas and Hadar (2019) of more than 400 peer-reviewed papers published in the last 15 years, the mainstreaming of mindfulness in schools has typically adopted the format of being taught in a tightly structured manner, framed scientifically and secularly. Rather than going back to original and classical teachings, MBIs tend to look to the aforementioned MBSR program as a model for inspiration. MBSR,

organized into eight classes of approximately 2.5 hours, often including a day-long retreat, is seen as the 'gold standard' for making these practices more accessible and beneficial to the general public, and, when reduced in length and intensity, for school-based teachers and students (Sun, 2014).

Such an instrumental application of mindfulness in educational settings does have some support from research. According to O'Donnell (2015), MBIs can be understood as the introduction of a 'Trojan Horse', such that this apparent decontextualisation from the Buddhist tradition can actually be a tactic for recontextualisation (spreading the 'Dharma'). This conjecture suggests that core principles from Buddhism are universalized and disseminated to reduce suffering in areas such as physical and emotional health, as well as promoting more harmonious relationships and, tentatively, improving academic performance as a by-product (Kabat-Zinn, 2011). Additionally, such adoption can be defensible in terms of making MBIs more efficient, measurable and standardized, with the additional benefit of being more rigorous, accessible and comparable for the scientific research community eager to promote evidence-based impact (Hyland, 2017). Although this instrumental approach currently dominates how mindfulness is applied in schools, it is necessary to evaluate the extent to which it can be regarded as successful for meta-educational processes, such as criticality, reflexivity and orientation to social justice, that characterize mindfulness 'of' education and its transformative potential (Ergas, 2019b).

For authors offering robust critique of instrumentalisation, MBIs can generate several limitations and genuine threats to more holistic approaches. On the one hand, the standardized implementation of mindfulness in education tends to emphasize improvement of academic achievement, cognitive performance, attention and concentration specifically, but on the other hand it often overlooks crucial interpersonal abilities such as compassion and altruism, thus transforming mindfulness into a technique in the service of productivity (Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020; Simpson, 2017). Most MBIs dilute Buddhist ideas and practices to blend them with psychological and neuroscientific research to produce an intervention that is seen as politically neutral and easily marketable (Purser, 2019). MBIs tend to be light on critical awareness and do

not take into account how educational processes are influenced by socioeconomic framing, particularly neoliberalism (Reveley, 2016).

When mindfulness is implemented as training to enhance performance and productivity it contributes to sustaining the same problematic logic, i.e. incessant acquisition of various forms of capital (e.g. educational, economic), class reproduction and unsustainable growth. It does this instead of questioning and transforming society into a more conscious and collaborative community, a tendency which has been satirically called 'McMindfulness' (Purser, 2019), and is applied to educational settings in a manner that can be seen as 'iatrogenic' (Brito et al., 2021a). This means that MBIs tend to emphasize competence and efficiency, subjugated to institutional and political goals, rather than the needs of an individual and/or particular group in a specific context. For those who advocate a greater social justice orientation to mindfulness training, MBIs are seen as inculcation within existing cultural and institutional norms rather than cultivating the necessary critical thinking and contemplative attention required for social transformation and environmental sustainability (Berila, 2016; Brito et al., 2021b; Rendon, 2009).

In this vein, as Hyland (2015) and Ergas (2015) suggest, a diluted version of mindfulness is expressed through the proliferation of different types of measures and scales that only evaluate specific and isolated skills and undermine the more transformative dimensions of this practice. Thus the steady development of greater awareness of self and reality involved with more authentic forms of mindfulness cultivation are subverted to a reduced set of specific pragmatic achievements. This corresponds with one of the fundamental problems of the whole education system, understood by Biesta (2015) as the 'learnification of education': the concern that the theory, policy and practice of education assume learning is something known in advance. Meanwhile, core educational questions are neglected, such as: (1) what can be considered relevant knowledge; (2) what the purpose of learning is; and (3) who is delivering/facilitating that learning. The latter point also raises questions of power: who controls knowledge and benefits from its acquisition? As we will argue later, more integral approaches

to mindfulness can embrace these fundamental educational concerns by bringing them into the spotlight.

In this vein, the idea of a standardized implementation of mindfulness in education being a 'Trojan Horse' is perhaps nothing other than wishful thinking. Indeed, according to Purser (2019), the common belief that MBIs in any institution, including education, represent the beginning of a progressive revolution, or mass awakening, is a misnomer with no empirical evidence, as the type of mindfulness maneuvered 'under the radar' is technically rather than spiritually oriented. The principal reason for this shortcoming is that the format of current MBIs in education has a clear orientation towards self-regulation only, and the ability to cope with stress, as a self-technology device in particular. The use of MBIs in this way is convenient for the individualistic ideology of capitalistic logic and the preservation of power and inequality (Reveley, 2016). Furthermore, it is helpful to analyze the concept of 'intervention' and its implications. When mindfulness in education is understood as an intervention, the worldview from which it is derived has clear medical and economic connotations in terms of efficacy and cost-effectiveness (Ergas, 2019b). In other words, mindfulness as an intervention becomes merely a set of techniques that are implemented from an external approach and from a position of supposed ethical and political neutrality. However, neutrality is never really possible in this sense as the framing in which MBIs are offered is never neutral: as Purser states, "the depoliticized nature of mindfulness means its therapeutic ethos of individual action supports neoliberalism" (Purser 2019, p. 37).

Thus it is important to rethink the mainstream implementation of mindfulness in education in order to convert this promising practice into a genuinely transformative approach, assuming the purpose of education is, above all, to promote self-knowledge and wellbeing rather than the preparation of an obedient and sufficiently skilled workforce. The research literature makes a distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of wellbeing (Joseph, 2016). Hedonic wellbeing refers to states of positive and negative feelings. Eudaimonic wellbeing refers to more existential and contemplative dimensions such as meaning and purpose in life, authenticity and agency, and the person's relation

to the social world. Whereas the more instrumentalised MBIs tend to be concerned with hedonic wellbeing, a genuinely transformative approach would be dedicated to fostering eudaimonic wellbeing. We suggest this could be achieved by a more integral approach to teaching mindfulness, introduced in the next section and informing our concluding discussion.

7.3. Implementing Mindfulness Within Education: Individualistic and/or Systems Focus?

According to Forbes (2016), who draws upon integral theory, particularly Wilber's organisation of theories into a single framework for understanding a broad range of phenomena (Wilber, 2017), the focus of mindfulness can be classified into four quadrants (I/It/We/Its), achieved by intersecting two axes: individual/collective and interior/exterior (see Figure 14). In this categorisation, the main focus of the most conventional MBIs in education remains in the upper 'Objective' and 'Subjective' quadrants because they focus on the individual, emphasising psychological modifications such as improved concentration and mental wellbeing and corresponding observable behaviours and neuronal correlates. In this section, we will argue that although such a focus can be understood as beneficial from a superficial point of view, conversely, its overly individualistic focus actually represents a threat to educational processes and human development more broadly.

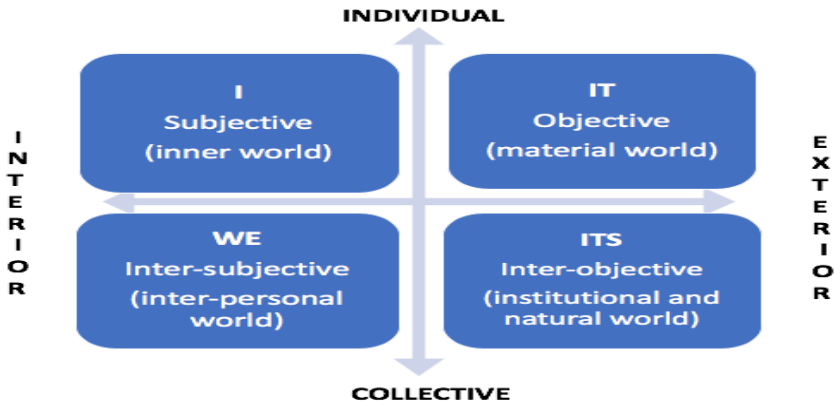


Figure 15. An Integral Framework, adapted from Wilber (2017) by Forbes (2016)

As previously outlined, many immediate benefits to an individualistic focus of MBIs are reported in the literature. These include improved stress management, emotional regulation, interpersonal skills and academic performance compared to those without mindfulness training (Crane, 2017; Jennings, 2015; Weare, 2012; Zenner et al., 2014). These benefits, and the research on which they are based, are generally founded on Kabat-Zinn's operational definition, according to which mindfulness consists of "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). As such, the onus is placed on the individual to observe and accept situations as they are. This is a laudable trait in most circumstances. However, in educational settings framed by performativity, and neoliberalism more broadly, it places culpability for stress firmly at the feet of the individual rather than the institution or culture, which may be the origin of the stress or suffering in the first place. In doing so, there is a 'sleight of hand' that displaces institutional or systemic culpability as individual failure to be resilient, rather than deeper questioning of the circumstances in which adversity arises (Hyland, 2017; Purser, 2019; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). More integral approaches to teaching mindfulness do not belittle the role of individual transformation, but neither do they neglect the criticality characteristic of more socially and/or ecologically oriented mindfulness (Purser, 2019). Without this broader outlook, MBIs in education can be posited as a low-cost and superficial intervention, currently portrayed as a possible panacea for individuals to cope with problematic cultures and systems rather than questioning and reframing these contexts.

Although this focus on personal wellbeing is popular and enjoys much empirical evidence supporting its short-term benefit, I argue that it is partial and largely uninformed about the complex network in which educational processes take place, possibly because of its underlying psychological rather than social-scientific research basis (Crane et al., 2023; Hyland, 2016; O'Donnell, 2015; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). The fundamental argument against the mainstreaming and instrumentalisation of mindfulness in education suggests that its neoliberal framing has implanted these practices solely as 'self-technology', where adequate mental health for productivity is maintained (Trnka and Trundle,

2014). The very terms ‘wellbeing’ and ‘resilience’ can be interpreted as symptoms of this dominant discourse, in which self-improvement is framed as a capital requirement for optimal functioning within a broader socioeconomic framing which is questionable in terms of its ethical motives (Reveley, 2016). As explained in Chapter 5, the training of these abilities usually posits time for relaxation and leisure as purely ‘functional deceleration’, which means its purpose is to generate greater tolerance among students and teachers to withstand institutional conditions characterised by excessive pressure and performativity.

Additionally, the very notion of ‘wellbeing’ has been over-simplified, emphasising adaptive personal skills even when pro-social behaviour is considered, and neglecting wider dimensions such as those shown in the lower, collective-oriented quadrants in Figure 1 (Forbes, 2016). Perhaps the best example of this approach to wellbeing comes from the main fount from which this idea emerged as fundamental; namely, the positive psychology proposed by Martin Seligman (2011). Seligman proposes five core measurable constituent elements of wellbeing under the acronym PERMA (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement), which fit well in the aforementioned individualistic approach (Norwich, 2022).

As Joseph (2016) suggests, we can find two orientations to wellbeing: a hedonic (driven to gain pleasure and comfort) and an eudaimonic (driven to personal development and meaningful purpose in life) orientation, the latter having the longer and deeper impact for a flourishing life. Nonetheless, this subjective side of wellbeing should be complemented by its objective side. In this vein, Kristjánsson (2017), grounded in Aristotle’s philosophy, states that the concept of flourishing is more appropriate than wellbeing insofar as it includes among the preconditions of flourishing not just subjective experiences but also ‘external necessities’, understood broadly as inner and outer conditions, such as “psychological, physical, societal/political and economic aspects” (Kristjánsson, 2017, p. 91).

Furthermore, these conditions can be divided into those over which we can exert more control with our will through our decisions and lifestyles (e.g. bodily

exercise, meditating, healthy eating, attending psychotherapy, etc.) and those beyond our control (e.g. healthy constitution, childhood family dynamics, societal logics, climate emergency, etc.). Unlike the focus of most MBIs, suffering needs to be understood as not just individual in origin but also as arising from social and institutional conditions if the educational process genuinely aspires to be an agent of social transformation. This is not an attempt to negate individual action but rather to orient individual action to something close to mindfulness's Buddhist origins, especially socially engaged Buddhism, which emphasises 'wholesome' action in the world for the sake of all living beings. A relevant voice from this movement is David Loy, who applies Buddhist wisdom to understand and solve societal problems. Loy (2003) states that modern societies are infected by three widespread poisons: greed, ill-will and delusion. Greed is the main problem in the current capitalist economy, which fosters individualism and competition; ill-will is the main problem concerning current global politics, characterised by exclusionism and ideological polarities; and delusion is widespread across social media, which generates distortions in public opinion. Correspondingly, the author proposes three core antidotes worthy of consideration, especially in education: generosity, compassion and wisdom.

Many critiques fully acknowledge the short-term benefits of a personal-therapeutic dimension, but argue that this perspective can produce what I call an iatrogenic effect in the long term (Hyland, 2009; Simpson, 2017). On the one hand, 'iatrogenesis' is a medical term used when treatment alleviates some individual's symptoms but the person's general condition deteriorates. On the other hand, applying a more sociological and philosophical meaning, Illich (1976) used the term to describe processes whereby institutional malaise is offset and privatised against the individual. Hence, in the context of MBIs in education, the individual focus can improve some desirable skills - stress management in advance of a written examination, for example - but at the same time can maintain, normalise, and even accentuate toxic features of the performative and neoliberal apparatus to which the individual is subjected. As Kristensen (2018) helpfully summarises: "… mindfulness practices come to represent a productive

break with a contradictory effect of retaining or aggravating the ill it was intended to cure" (p. 185).

At this point, a few key elements related to the over-simplified focus of MBIs in education are deserving of fuller examination. Let me begin with what Purser (2015) calls 'the myth of the present moment'. According to this idea, mindfulness trains an individual's capacity to focus on their present moment experience, reducing mental rumination, which can be useful to diminish stress and regulate difficult emotions such as mild depression. However, at the same time, when the present moment is understood merely as a pleasant and self-soothing sensory experience, it overlooks deeper inquiry into the nature of that awareness (i.e. who is having the experience? what is the nature of the self?) and the net of conditions that make that experience possible (i.e. what is the nature of reality?). Accordingly, some mindfulness students learn to cope in ways that do not impede performance but do not probe deeper into their existential and institutional conditions, thereby failing to challenge structural impediments to their flourishing.

In the words of Purser, 'the products [mindfulness practices] are marketed as providing more fulfilling and sensual experiences, not the development of virtue, ethical behaviour, moral courage, and compassion' (Purser, 2019, p. 76). It is hence possible to make a clear distinction between training skills and cultivating virtues. While a skill is an instrumental ability, convenient for workforce preparation and strategic evaluation, a virtue involves the development of a 'way of being', which is both more authentic and holistic (Brito and Corthorn, 2018; Joseph, 2016) and which impregnates every action with radical personal responsibility and ethical orientation. Here we can discern further heritage from the Buddhist tradition and Eastern spirituality more broadly; also from Aristotle's (1981) philosophy, insofar as the core idea regarding ethics in education is not the notion of value as a set of ideals and rules to be followed, but the idea of virtue as experiential understanding and a flexible practice to be cultivated and applied. In the words of Keown (2013): "rules must not just be followed, but followed for right reasons and with the correct motivation" (p. 115). Additionally, this process must be understood as an experiential path rather

than cognitive learning, inner work and mastery rather than knowledge acquisition (Brito, 2011; Varela, 1996). It is a striking indictment of most Western education systems that they foster subservience rather than free-thinking, creative and critical individuals, presumably because the latter ultimately challenge hegemony and the former do not.

Furthermore, an individualistic focus could produce more problematic effects than benefits insofar as it underestimates the conformist nature of educational processes and how they continue to privilege and protect those with power and vested interests in the status quo. The broader features of mindfulness, which are more consistent with its spiritual and philosophical origins, such as compassion, altruism and constructive social critical thinking, are currently overlooked by most commercial MBIs within education (Hyland, 2016). There are some exceptions, such as those mentioned by Jennings (2015): CARE (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education) and SMART (Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques) programmes, both running in the US, which include, for example, self-compassion and relational components. Nonetheless, the main point remains the same: whether these programs are implemented with teachers and/or pupils, the fundamental goal is generally to improve intrapersonal and interpersonal skills at the behest of academic performance. MBIs can be further critiqued for being atomistic. They commodify, standardise and utilise the basic characteristics of mindfulness as psychological properties, and, therefore, individual traits. In doing so, phenomena are understood as separate and isolated, contrary to the core idea of Buddhist and East Asian spiritual traditions emphasising unity and connectedness to reality. In this vein, Hanh and Weare (2017) express the necessity of building a mindful community of teachers in order to support a more coherent, sustainable and transformative context in which human flourishing can occur. Hence I argue that mindfulness within education must be reconsidered carefully to rectify this narrow focus and move towards a more integral approach, which regards individuals as interconnected ‘holons’ within larger and interpenetrating layers of context (Crane et al., 2023; Ergas, 2015; Forbes, 2016; Hanh, 1999; Wilber, 2016).

7.4. Toward a More Integral Approach

This section will present a reflection on what 'the integral' and 'the contemplative' mean through three levels of analysis. The first refers to an ontology of human existence to show its integrative and contemplative potential, appealing to Heidegger's existential ontology. The second level links to a psychology of the components of an integrated life, drawing upon Wilber's integral psychology interconnected with an integral and contemplative perspective on education and mindfulness (third level), reflecting on Esbjörn-Hargens, Biesta and Ergas's epistemological contributions. This section represents a hermeneutical contribution to the question of what integral education and mindfulness mean, developing in-depth insights from the participants, i.e. going beyond the mere phenomenology of what was said, according to the spirit of the chosen methodology, i.e. undertaking a transdisciplinary reflection.

At the first level, I am going to expose some of Heidegger's core concepts regarding the 'nature' of being a human. Following Heideggerian (1996/1927) philosophy, the unity and totality of existence is defined ontologically by two key concepts: care and dwell. Existence is care in the sense that it is relational by nature and in all possible directions: self-care, care for other persons and care for the things that occupy everyday life. This concept must be understood ontologically, without assuming any positive meaning, as the ground for a range of possible displays of care, from more instrumentalised and dominating to more solicitous and liberating forms of relationship with ourselves and others. As Heidegger (1996/1927) states, "this [solicitous care] concern which essentially pertains to authentic care; that is, the existence of the other, and not to a what which it takes care of, helps the other to become transparent to himself [sic] in his care and *free* for it" (p. 115, author's original emphasis). This conception of human beings as care has a twofold implication in the context of Heidegger's thought, relevant to the relationship between mindfulness and education. On the one hand, it means that humans are intrinsically interconnected with the world, particularly in relation to the social context. On the other hand, it implies a temporal dimension, which means that humans are historical beings influenced by tradition. Thus our being is a process of co-construction through social

interactions and implicit or explicit assumptions of an idiosyncratic cultural tradition.

Regarding the second idea, where existence dwells in the world, it means that our primary relationship with the world is through an experience in which there is an interplay between familiarity and unfamiliarity on the one hand, and between closeness and remoteness on the other. In Heidegger's (1993/1947) words: "[…] man [human being] is the being whose Being as ek-sistence consists in his dwelling in the nearness of Being. Man is the neighbour of Being" (p. 245); or, phrased more poetically "Man is the shepherd of Being" (p. 234). In this sense, dwelling refers to the most profound meaning of the prefix 'Da' (a word that means the same as the 'ex'/'ek' in the key word 'ex-sistence') in the word Da-sein, i.e. being in close proximity and open (Da) to Being (sein). This openness necessitates taking care of our own being and the being of others (persons, nature and things) in the ordinary everyday, letting them/us be, building a homely familiarity and yet, at the same time, remembering our mortal condition as a font of undeniable mystery and hence unfamiliarity, calling us to retain and renew our surveillance of the world and ourselves with the innocence and curiosity of a 'beginner's mind'. This conceptualisation owes a considerable debt to East Asian wisdom, particularly Buddhism, and its appreciation of impermanence, interdependence, present-moment awareness and compassion (Lewin, 2015).

Existence, however, as a project to be realised over the path, has a double ethical, and therefore educational, possibility related to its mode of being in the world. This crossroad is expressed by Heidegger with different words depending on whether we consider his early or late stages of thinking. According to this distinction, we can find two main dyads that explain the extreme possibilities of existence regarding being-in-the-world: authenticity/inauthenticity (Heidegger I) and meditative/calculative thinking (Heidegger II). Heidegger (1996/1927) explains the difference regarding the first dyad as an existential-ontological difference formed by our experience and understanding of ourselves and the world. When existence is inauthentic (a sort of default mode), it understands itself as a subject that lives chronologically in objective time, preoccupied with

its concerns about things (ontic entities) as the primary form of living, thus configuring a distracted, confused and ego-centred mode of being in the world. Thus we believe that we are our ideas, emotions, plans, memories, roles, relationships, and so on, whilst hiding our more genuine (ontological) possibilities.

Mindfulness practices encourage us to recover from the previously mentioned mode of being and learn to observe thoughts and feelings as non-determining phenomena that come and go within our experience. In doing so, existence can dwell more authentically, which means that we awake to an understanding of ourselves as a being open to the mystery of Being, confronted by the finitude of our mortal existence and by the calls of our deep conscience, which invite us to genuinely be ourselves as we respond in tune with each situation we experience (Heidegger, 1996/1927). I have developed this ethical dimension of Heidegger's philosophy (see Brito, 2018), concluding that this ethics can be understood as vocative (grounded on a call) and inclusive (onto-centric rather than anthropo-centric). Thus confusion disappears, and our selfhood becomes resolute, free and sensible whilst attentive and committed to what any situation requires of us:

> The call is precisely something that *we ourselves* have neither planned nor prepared for nor wilfully brought about. 'It' calls, against our expectations and even against our will. On the other hand, the call without doubt does not come from someone else who is with me in the world. The calls come *from* me, and yet *over* me. (Heidegger, 1996/1927, p. 254, author's original emphasis)

Interestingly, the fact that these calls come from a deep place of authenticity opens important questions about the role of the will and planned action regarding the process of becoming ourselves within and beyond the formal educational process, an idea that will be discussed further through Biesta's reflections on the purpose of education later in this section.

Regarding the second dyad, Heidegger (1969/1959) distinguishes between two modes of thinking, which perhaps should be interpreted as different ways of being. As one - calculative thinking - has already been explained in Chapter 5, here I will concentrate on the more flourishing mode, which Heidegger calls 'meditative', offering rich and promising meanings to understand not only an

alternative way to dwell within a technical world, but also suggestive of ideas that probe the purpose of education and the contribution of mindfulness. Meditative thinking is an expression that condenses Heidegger's synthesis of the perennial philosophies of both the West and East (see Heidegger, 2006, 1968). As with deep mindfulness practice, meditative thinking requires the effort and discipline to overcome enframing logic, rather like paying attention in a specific way to the world as something with its own order and dynamism. This type of dwelling is described as a "*releasement toward things*" (Heidegger, 1969/1959, p. 54), which means an attitude of careful openness, contemplation, acceptance and gratitude, alongside a very subtle and particular kind of non-manipulative action towards things. Thus, instead of pre-defining and controlling the world, releasement means a radical relationship of respect toward ourselves, other humans and nature, in such a way that everything can manifest according to its own pace and inherent mystery. In this sense, releasement can be understood as a supreme form of attention (Lewin, 2015) or presence (Christopher, 2018), by which humans can foster a genuine wellbeing in the three core dimensions of our existence: individual, societal and ecological. Here we witness the interconnection between a deep understanding of mindfulness practices, ethical orientation and its potentialities within education. As such, the type of ontology underpinning releasement represents not only an educational odyssey, but also "an antidote to the narrowness of the neoliberal educational agenda" (Thomson, 2001, p. 24) insofar as it challenges educators to teach not mere thoughts but to think in a meditative way, thus emphasising presence before any particular curriculum (for a detailed development of the Heideggerian philosophy applied to mindfulness in education see Brito et al., 2021b).

Regarding the second level, it is now helpful to explicate some of the core features underpinning a more integral approach to mindfulness within education. For this, epistemological and psychological scaffolding from Wilber (2016) and Wilber and DiPerna (2017) is useful, within which I synthesise key suggestions from various contemplative educators. Wilber's (2016) integral approach to mindfulness describes three elements, in which 'growing up' (personal stage development) is balanced with 'waking up' (consciousness states development) and 'showing up' (issues of voice, agency, ethics, purpose and contribution), all

of which connect the level of the individual with the collective. Wilber and DiPerna (2017) add 'cleaning up' (healing our individual and collective wounds and how they impact our relationships) to these processes. Brito et al. (2022) use these categories to briefly outline what an integral approach to mindfulness and education could look like, as also shown here. The approach within this section is illustrative only as, in reality, all the elements operate with varying degrees of synergy. As I discuss each theme I will be attentive to the interior/exterior and individual/collective dimensions applicable from this integral perspective to mindfulness in education, representing the third level of reflection, which permeates the whole discussion in this section.

Growing up

Resuming Biesta's (2015, 2022) critique concerning the 'learnification of education', I argue that an integral approach of mindfulness to education can and must foster something deeper than improved cognitive learning. Whilst knowledge of the world is important, it needs to be complemented by the cultivation of inner or self-knowledge (Ergas, 2019c) for genuine maturation, which also lays the foundations for the types of contemplative inquiry that aid self-healing (cleaning up) and agency (showing up). Informed by Heidegger (1969, 2006; see also Brito et al., 2021b), here we can helpfully distinguish a more basic form of critical thinking as an analytical capability that evaluates facts and accompanying evidence from contemplative attention. This involves the cultivation of an attitude of openness and curiosity, from which inner and outer phenomena are observed, recognising both the nature of mind (e.g. rumination, judgement, resistance) and the inherent interdependence of all life. Contemplative attention also implies a return to the body, or direct experience, as a potential and valid knowledge site (Ergas 2015, 2019c).

In other words, an integral approach to mindfulness must include three main pillars of knowledge as its 'curriculum' for maturation: self-knowledge (with an emphasis on attention to patterns of thinking, feeling and acting), interpersonal knowledge (with an emphasis on empathy, kindness, generosity and compassion), and knowledge of the world (with an emphasis on understanding

and working alongside the dynamics of nature as well as a critical understanding of how sociohistorical institutions, such as economic, political and educational activity, affect human lives both constructively and destructively). At this point it is essential to acknowledge that a holistic/integral conceptualisation of 'curriculum' is much broader than subjects and learning objectives. In making this point, I explicate that the very concept of knowledge itself must be redefined from its usual cognitive and content-based conception to a more experience-based conception, in much the same way Fromm (2021) distinguishes between 'having knowledge' and 'knowing'. The first conceptualisation refers to information acquisition; the second to a process by which one is in touch with reality in a more open, creative, dynamic and intuitive relationship. This is clearly an argument for a much broader curriculum which includes learning through the body, relationships and nature alongside the inclusion of more critical subjects, e.g. law, economics, politics and philosophy, all notable absentees from most state-controlled education. Such deep learning, characterised as knowing both thy self and thy world (Ergas, 2019a, 2019c), is inevitably interwoven with the broader purpose of education itself, which from a contemplative view, and my own, must be aligned with human flourishing in all its aspects (individual, relational, societal and ecological). Furthermore, education for human flourishing must find a balance between following an a priori curriculum and self-directed learning, which is more flexible and person-centred (Gray, 2013).

Waking up

Spira (2017) states that "although the practice of meditation has been reduced by popular culture to a means of relieving stress and anxiety, in its original form it is the means by which awareness has access to its knowledge of itself" (p. 45). Although Spira (2017) draws more upon Hinduism and yogic approaches in his writing, the point made is pertinent to my argument and overlaps with Buddhist teachings showing how the cultivation of deeper awareness reveals impermanence, no-self and unity (Loy, 2019). In this respect, Wilber (2016) asserts that learning mindfulness corresponds with deeper self-inquiry, which involves developing a witnessing consciousness that observes the comings and

goings of the mind, how our experience conditions the mind, and then a deeper understanding of the self and its interconnectedness. For Wilber (2016), the pinnacle of such understanding is an awareness of the unity of all things, much like Spira (2016). Although the idea of self has multifarious meanings (see Ergas and Ritter, 2020), I suggest our true self is the ever-present witness, unconditioned by and subsuming all experience. Learning about the self goes well beyond any one subject area; it requires opportunities for the kinds of direct experience acquired through contemplative practices and is also informed by insights from disciplines such as psychology, science, religion and philosophy. In Wilber's (2016) approach, learning involves the integration of pre-existing theory into increasingly sophisticated syntheses. For Wilber, understanding reality as non-dual represents the current pinnacle of spiritual development, which can only be understood through experiential practice. Thus self-knowledge, as a core educational aspiration, implies a combination of both self-realisation as an experiential path and a proper understanding of ideas through reflection and assimilation, as something different from mere knowledge acquisition.

Cleaning up

Forbes (2019) insists that a holistic and integral curriculum must include features that encourage critical inquiry into the institutional roots of individual suffering (e.g. anxiety and stress) and contextual reflection on self-development (including the roles of family and schooling), alongside the consideration of broader cultural, social and economic factors. Only through such 'work' can individuals attain a level of self-awareness that corresponds with being in the world in such a way that a person's deep wounds do not impact their relationships with others and subsequently underpin the cultivation of an ethical way of being, in which deep self-knowledge and compassion can be oriented toward social and ecological injustice (e.g. inequality, racism, the climate emergency). In addition, education needs to proceed in ways that allow children and young people to develop authentically, without fear that their attachment to caregivers and education providers is threatened. Where this has already been

compromised, education needs to embrace rather than push away therapeutic opportunities that may be available.

Counter to much educational policy, I advocate that these processes start with teachers first (Dix, 2017). It is essential that the role teachers and schools play in perpetuating suffering is recognised. Teachers need to be developed in their own inner work so harmful dynamics are not reinforced in the classroom (e.g. coercion to control children and young people). In fact, discipline in schools, in particular, needs a radical reappraisal. Its current emphasis on reactivity and symbolic punishment represents the very hegemony an integral and holistic curriculum should contest and transcend. Although current school education has largely abandoned physical punishment, it is still common to see symbolic forms of punishment, mainly through different regimes of evaluation, judgment, and comparison of pupils' capabilities and conformist tendencies, which they can feel as a devaluation of their being, and as an expression of a kind of education built upon ontological violence rather than ontological love and acceptance. Thus classroom management needs transformation towards something more education focused and humanistic, which I will elaborate later in this section. Implementing such a vision requires a long-term commitment and a willingness for adults to change before students. As seminal thinker Jung (1998) elaborates: "if there is anything that we wish to change in our children, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could better be changed in ourselves" (p. 194). Hence self-awareness needs to feature more prominently in teacher education courses and then be seen to be as core an educational entitlement as any other curricular aspect, valuing inner fitness as much as we do physical health.

Showing up

As a contemplative approach to education, knowledge arising from mindfulness practice is only relevant if it is rooted within the direct experience of pupils and teachers, culminating in a fuller comprehension of the self and our relationships with others and the world. Such learning cannot be achieved by didactic teaching alone; it needs to be experiential and embodied (Crane, 2017; Langer et al.,

2020). It is best served by cultivating presence, assured self-knowledge, empathy and compassion, initially by teachers, then by students (Palmer, 1998; Rogers, 1994/1969; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020). We have to be cautious of further burdening teachers, as it is no more satisfactory to lay the blame for systemic failure at their feet than at those of students. I am aware most of my recommendations speak to reform at the level of policy, teacher training/education, curriculum and educational climate. However, we need to acknowledge that most close relationships, particularly those within families and those between students and teachers, are not so conscious and, as a result, often reproduce power dynamics from prior experience, further reinforced by schooling's emphasis on external authority. Hence, as previously discussed, it is an educational imperative that teachers learn mindful forms of 'discipline', etymologically linked to the ideas of teaching and study rather than control and order (Siegel and Bryson, 2015), so they do not unconsciously repeat cycles of conditioning, and so that the suffering associated with attachment needs does not trump authenticity. Educational policy needs to take the lead here, but it is also possible that such change can also be mobilised from the 'ground up', recognising that student-teacher relationships are the fundamental 'medium' through which education takes place.

It is relevant at this point to remember that the previous ideas were part of Rogers' pioneering view of education in his classic and insightful, although unfortunately not globally influential (Joseph, Murphy and Holford, 2020), book *Freedom to Learn* (Rogers, 1969). In this book, Rogers distinguishes two kinds of learning. The first, dominant in western mainstream education, is the 'learning of nonsense syllables', the goal of which is to memorise abstract ideas. This is learning that involves only the mind and does not consider feelings or personal meanings, and so is not relevant to the whole person (Rogers, 1994/1969, p. 35). The other is 'significant, meaningful [or] experiential learning', regarding which the author lists five defining components: this learning is (1) oriented to personal involvement (including intellectual and emotional dimensions); (2) self-initiated (a motivation and sense of discovery that come from within); (3) pervasive (not changing only behaviour but transforming personality); (4) evaluated by the learner (according to what is meaningful for the learner); and (5) meaningful

(regarding whole experience) (Rogers, 1994/1969, p. 36). In sum, this approach to learning can be considered integral insofar as it seeks the transformation of learners (pupils and teachers) according to their own world of references and meaning. However, similarly to his claim about the therapeutic conditions for positive change, Rogers established that the requirement for achieving this sort of learning is the generation of a particular environment for the school community, characterised by "[…] the experience of feeling unconditionally accepted, emphatically understood and in genuine contact with others" (Joseph et al., 2020, p. 553). Thus the relational and emotional conditions in the school are the 'secret ingredient' for cultivating any meaningful and transformative education.

Focusing on what teachers can do to bring greater awareness into the classroom, Palmer (1998) argues the need for teachers to embody authenticity by emphasising the central role that presence and positive regard for students play in educational contexts. Should issues of 'discipline' arise, they are responded to mindfully, not as matters for control and coercion but as opportunities for teaching, learning and growth (Siegel and Bryson, 2015), as well as exploration of group dynamics. More mindful 'discipline' thus possesses some of the following characteristics, identified by Rogers (1994/1969): students share leadership and responsibility with teachers, serving as an integral part of the 'management' of the classroom/school, and authority takes the form of guidance or sharing wisdom, emphasising intrinsic ethics and motivation. Rogers (1983) summarised the teacher's role thus: "the primary task of the teacher is to permit the student to learn, to feed his or her own curiosity" (p. 18). These requirements also place significant demands upon teacher training and education, which have largely neglected teachers' opportunities for inner work until now. There needs to be a seismic shift in preparing teachers for their vocation and supporting their continuing growth and development by incorporating opportunities for greater self-knowledge in their formation (Dix, 2017). Following Naranjo (2016), consciousness and integration can only be awakened in others by persons already in possession of sufficient self-awareness.

Interestingly, when Rogers asks about the teacher's role, i.e. about what ‘to teach’ means, he takes inspiration from Heidegger's thought, reflecting on the following quote:

> Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. Indeed, the proper teacher lets nothing else be learned than learning [...] The teacher is ahead of his [sic] apprentices in this alone, that he has still far more to learn than they, he has to learn to let them learn. The teacher must be capable of being more teachable than the apprentices. The teacher is far less sure of his material than those who learn are of theirs. If the relation between the teacher and the learners is genuine, therefore, there is never a place in it for the authority of the know-it-all or the authoritative sway of the official. (Heidegger, 1993/1952, p. 380).

Rogers takes this thought as a 'central idea' which expresses one of the most relevant endeavours of every teacher, namely to let pupils to learn (Rogers, 1994/1969, p. 34). Thus the teacher's authenticity and creativity in facilitating the students' learning is an old and ever-present goal of a genuine integral and transformative education. What is true for education in general is even more true for implementing mindfulness in schools, as this principle is at the core of mindfulness as a contemplative practice, a way of living and a form of education.

One of the most crucial considerations of a holistic/integral approach to mindfulness and education concerns who is facilitating knowledge, for what purpose and for whose benefit. At this point Biesta’s (2009, 2022) critique of the trend of ‘learnification’ in the current educational system becomes relevant, insofar as the word ‘learning’ has become a self-evident phenomenon that serves as a wildcard to be used everywhere to (not) respond to crucial educational questions. Thus learning has become an empty word that has not answered the three main questions we need to consider regarding this complex phenomenon: (1) What is learning about (contents)? (2) What is learning for (purpose)? and (3) Who should be responsible for learning (teacher’s role)? For this author, the main purpose of a good education is to give children and adolescents the opportunity to discover and explore their selves, which is far beyond learning: “The educational [purpose] is to be a self, not a learner. This is the key reason why I found it important to argue for the need to ‘free’ teaching from learning,

so that other ‘existential possibilities’ […] can come into view and can be brought into play” (Biesta, 2022, p. 61). Hence I suggest opportunities for such scrutiny accompany all genuine learning. As previously discussed, this involves the development of contemplative attention as well as critical thinking, which could include understanding how one learns and processes information alongside the role of education in society, as described by Ergas’ (2019) mindfulness ‘of’ education. In most countries, the state controls both what is taught and how, while concurrently exercising judiciary responsibility for its appraisal (Biesta, 2015). I would recommend that these functions are separated and teachers are given greater freedom, particularly from constraining neoliberal performative apparatus, so that education can be an independent check against governmental agendas and offer greater potential for human flourishing.

The value of learning, I argue, is augmented when it is both embodied and applied. Hence education needs to provide greater opportunity for heartfelt experiences that foster feelings of connection with other human beings and our environment as well as the capability to apply these positive attitudes within our communities, possibly in the service of common humanitarian goals, and with a broader social justice orientation (see Berila, 2016; Rendon, 2009; Sellman and Amrhein, 2022). Oriented this way, mindfulness contains a diversity of helpful practices and conceptualisations to serve human potential, particularly the cultivation of compassion and altruism. Compassion is the motivation to recognise the suffering in ourselves and others alongside the desire to alleviate it; altruism is the tendency to act concretely in that direction (Ricard, Mandell and Gordon, 2015). As a practical example, one mindfulness practice to this end is the ‘metta’ meditation, where attention is focused on the present moment, and then the higher intentions of love, peace and benediction for humanity and other beings with whom we share the world. Without an outlet for transferring these sensibilities, Thomas (2013) reminds us: “[...] you get good at what you practise, not at what you don’t” (p. 90). Therefore, accompanying inquiry and application can assist the integration of these ideals into daily life within and beyond schools.

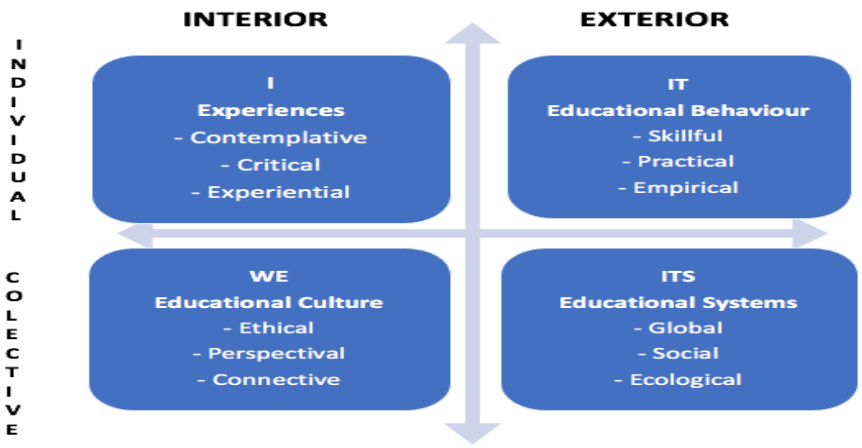


Figure 16. Dimensions of an Integral Education, adapted from Wilber by Esbjörn-Hargens (2010)

Alongside what has been explained regarding the Wilberian interpretation of an integral approach to mindfulness within education, it is relevant to take into consideration the contribution of Esbjörn-Hargens et al. (2010). Their attempt to systematise core principles, features and examples [of what] can be considered a genuine 'integral' approach to education in general, which also draws on Wilber's theory, and which is at the same time illustrative for the kind of mindfulness implementation we are investigating in this research. Esbjörn-Hargens et al. (2010), indeed, prefer not to offer a formal definition of 'integral education' to avoid as much as possible any reductionism and exclusion of the inherent diversity of perspectives within this field. However, they offer some core features which can be understood as principles of any authentic integral education, among which I would like to take the following three from the point of view of an integral implementation of mindfulness in education:

(1) Exploring multiple perspectives. In order to respect the complexity of implementing mindfulness in educational contexts with an educational rather than a mental health purpose, we need to develop an approach considering different disciplines (e.g. education, psychology, philosophy, sociology, contemplative traditions, etc.) as well as a diversity of experiences of individuals and groups regarding mindfulness and education. In this sense, in order to gain complexity and inclusiveness, we have to construct a perfectly clear and coherent system.

(2) Including first-, second-, and third-person methodologies of learning and teaching. An integral implementation of mindfulness in schools implies considering the subjective, intersubjective, objective and interobjective dimensions of this process. This means we need to elaborate a process of cultivation of, to mention a few: mental wellbeing and balance (subjective); relationships and relational cultures of compassion and care (intersubjective); and a lucid discernment about institutional, societal and environmental living and working conditions (objective and interobjective), alongside a commitment to wise actions.

(3) Combining critical thinking with personal practices of transformation. This is an important recognition that every idea and concept is grounded in an embodied experience, i.e. sensations and feelings. Thus learning to think should be based on what I have called 'contemplative attention', which requires specific practices in order to familiarise ourselves with our 'interior' world and its interconnection with the 'outer world'.

Additionally, Biesta (2022) goes one step further, articulating the need for a 'world-centred education' instead of an education based on pupils as individuals, on the one hand, or the curriculum, on the other. In a similar vein to the core Heideggerian ethical idea that authentic existence is rooted in the calls from Being and its responses to these calls, Biesta states that the more crucial purpose of education should be 'pointing' to different aspects of the world for a concrete someone (the pupil), a gesture that entails a twofold movement: (1) this pointing implies a calling to someone in concrete, i.e. there is at stake a provocation for pupils to observe what they want and need from the world ('gesture of learning'); and (2) this pointing is at the same time an indication to give our attention to some specific aspect of the world, i.e. to listen to what the world is asking from us ('gesture of being taught by'). This process, in which the teacher points to pupils to orient them in relation to the world, and pupils are located in a position to respond (or not) to the call, represents the very act of subjectification insofar as the pupil is questioned in his/her own existence and confronted with his/her own freedom. Thus education should be, above all, a permanent and warm opportunity to develop what Roth (2011) calls our capacity for 'passability', or

"our capacity to be affected" (p. 18). This is in tune with the core contemplative idea about the radical interconnection of self and world, meaning that self-knowledge and self-development are nothing else than to be open to and attuned with the world in which we dwell in our daily life.

It is also relevant to say a few words about what I understand by 'contemplative' when I reflect on a contemplative perspective of education (mindfulness being one of its most prominent representatives) and its relation to the notion of 'integral'. Based on Palmer et al. (2010) and Grace (2011), we can understand a contemplative pedagogy as a form of education that locates its focus on the learner's first-person experience, i.e. on cultivating his/her capacity for observing without judgement the inner and outer world, taking the time to let phenomena manifest themselves in their wonderful interconnection and complexity alongside letting oneself be transformed by that experience of observation-manifestation. As Palmer et al. (2010) state: "This requires time, repetition, patience, and practice. Stage by stage, students are led ever more deeply into the experiential learnings awaiting their faithful attention" (pp. 113-114). As we can infer, this process addresses us beyond mere knowledge about things toward a lifelong dynamic of self-knowledge and ethical cultivation (Grace, 2011), i.e. beyond mere learning toward (inter-)personal transformation in and with the world (social and natural). Therefore, a contemplative approach to education should be an essential part of any attempt to promote an integral educational process, insofar (as was shown above) as first-person approaches and personal transformative practices are core principles of every integral perspective.

If we want a metaphor to express the core of what is at stake in an integral and contemplative education, and in any integral implementation of mindfulness within schools, we can say that this process is closer to the growth of a living organism than to the functioning of a factory (Miller, 1996). In Miller's words, "[…] the school can be seen as a complex living organism that is evolving – changing through a sense of purpose, collaboration, and deep sense of inner direction […] The primary focus in this whole process is teacher personal growth" (Miller, 1996, p. 182). I offer a couple of reflections regarding these

ideas. (1) The main difference between an instrumental and an integral implementation of mindfulness in education is this way of understanding the process as something unique, meaningful and co-constructed, taking into consideration the idiosyncratic needs and characteristics of each school community in order that it can be incorporated into the everyday life of that specific school. (2) In doing so, the first crucial and unavoidable step is to give teachers, and school adults in general, a thoughtful and careful opportunity for their own cultivation of a mindful way of being, for which it is necessary to offer them a high-quality formation, from a highly qualified mindfulness teacher, and with enough time to undertake an authentic process of self-development in key personal, interpersonal, communitarian and institutional dimensions.

Hence, I urge a significant paradigm shift from instrumental applications of mindfulness within education to a more holistic/integral approach. For this, I agree with Ergas' (2019c) proposal of four main epistemological characteristics of an integral approach to mindfulness and education, which I have subsumed implicitly within this chapter. These are: (1) a whole-person approach, whereby educational processes incorporate an embodied perspective to learning, penetrating beyond linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence; (2) a focus on the 'self' or interiority, including what constitutes self-knowledge in mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions beyond external subjects and reality; (3) a 'presence' as well as a 'spontaneous' ability to teach this 'inner curriculum', superseding rational and performative obligations; and (4) a recognition of the 'ephemeral' nature of such processes, to which we have added Forbes' (2019) concern for criticality, or what Ergas (2019c) has himself called mindfulness 'of' education.

7.5. Summary and Conclusion

In summary, I have argued that although the benefits of mindfulness in the educational system have been largely supported by a body of research on the benefits for individual wellbeing and stress management, research has not been as attentive to the more existential and contemplative aspects of individual and social wellbeing. In this respect, the implementation of these types of practices

may have longer-term detrimental effects on education as a whole when subjected to critique of the broader systems with which they interrelate, chiefly neoliberalism. The implementation of mindfulness in a standardised and instrumental way may provide accessibility and short-term impact on 'symptom' management amongst students and teachers, but with limited effect on the educational system as a whole and corresponding mitigation of human suffering in the long term. The focus of MBIs on individual wellbeing has shown that although they have several benefits, predominantly related to cognitive and emotional abilities, they generate an effect, iatrogenic in nature, whereby student and teacher wellbeing is privatised, positioning the inability to cope with systemic pressure as a lack of individual resilience rather than an indication of systemic failure. The nature and purpose of a neoliberal system are left beyond reproach under the shield of apparent neutrality, protecting it from critique. I have argued that formal education should be more than just workforce preparation and should help to cultivate deep knowledge about self and reality, subsuming both critical thinking and contemplative attention. I have also argued that such education must have an ethical disposition, whereby students have meaningful opportunities to apply their knowledge in the service of the 'greater good', an element often lacking in most existing MBIs.

Using the integral framework adopted from Wilber (2016) and Wilber and DiPerna (2017), the following recommendations can be put forward.

• Growing Up: Students are given ample opportunity to learn, experientially as well as cognitively, about the interior as well as the exterior nature of experience, such that they learn about themselves, their emotions, and their relations to others, according to their stage of development.
• Waking Up: Students are given ample opportunity to develop their contemplative practices toward the deepest level they are ready for, and all students develop an appreciation of the connectedness of all things through explicit cultivation of their consciousness.
• Cleaning Up: Students and teachers are given ample opportunity to heal from neurotic conditioning and traumatic experiences and are given the possibility of developing their awareness to such an extent that harming others and causing

suffering is minimalised. There is an extra burden on teachers here to avoid reproducing the types of conditioning that may perpetuate trauma and further suffering.

• Showing Up: Students and teachers are given ample opportunity to apply attitudes cultivated by mindfulness (e.g. presence, kindness, altruism) in service to others and with an orientation to social justice and ecological sustainability.

It may be difficult, even now, to predict what will be the real contribution of mindfulness to education over the next two decades and beyond: in the words of Kabat-Zinn (2017), it is simply 'too early to tell'. Nevertheless, this contribution would in all likelihood be more significant if those who are currently implementing mindfulness in schools were genuinely informed about the practice, comprehended its ethical foundations, and were wholeheartedly committed to a holistic/integral agenda. Such an approach to mindfulness in schools necessitates the incorporation of critical mindfulness and a social justice outlook, or at least offers a pathway to deeper understanding and application at multiple levels: an individual's inner life and their relationships with communities both locally and globally (Berila, 2016; Rendon, 2009). Necessary first steps include bringing contemplative practice into initial and continuing teacher education and (re)introducing compassion-based practices, as exemplified by the CARE program for teachers in the US (Jennings, 2015) in most commercial MBIs. The recommendations offered above, based on my interpretation of the participants' views, offer a pragmatic and ethical challenge to education providers, with ramifications which, although indeterminable, are likely to be far-reaching, ultimately looking to educators and policymakers to contest the performativity agenda of education and have the vision and will for transformation.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

Introduction

This final chapter aims to offer some insightful reflections, based on the main findings, to inspire more integral and transformative ways of implementing mindfulness in schools. Looking back at the topics raised by this study, there are two significant and, to some extent, novel ideas I would like to highlight. Firstly, every integral and transformative implementation of mindfulness in schools should have educational rather than therapeutic purposes and background, i.e. it must respond to the different goals of a genuine educational process. Secondly, we are always engaged in the fragile task of offering an implementation from a whole-school approach, which implies a systemic and evolving process permeating slowly and effectively all sub-systems and levels of the school, starting with adults. Most mindfulness implementations in schools so far have been interventions with low and non-lasting impacts (see, as a paradigmatic example of this, the result of the MYRIAD report previously presented, Kuyken et al., 2022). Now we are in a better position to think, design, and implement mindfulness in schools considering the guidelines and reflections proposed in this study, at least as a starting point.

This chapter is divided into five sections. (1) Overview of the principal study findings. (2) Limitations of this study. (3) Implications and suggested future directions. (4) Learnings from this journey. And (5) Vision Statement and its implications for practice.

8.1. Overview of the principal study findings

Essentially, this study sought to understand and appraise the current typical mindfulness implementations in the English and Welsh school contexts from teachers' perspectives. The research findings were reported in Chapters 4 and 6, in Research Cycles Two and Three, respectively. Among the wide range of themes and sub-themes that emerged, I would like to highlight in the Second Cycle the purposes and limitations of the most used mindfulness programmes

for pupils and teachers, as perceived by participants. On the other hand, in the Second Cycle, I will focus on the purposes of an integral approach, and in the Third Cycle on Dimension B, regarding the purposes and key principles of an integral implementation. Although there are other relevant ideas, this choice relates, on the one hand, to the contribution of these findings by offering helpful suggestions to improve the impact of mindfulness in schools from a more comprehensive approach, and on the other, to the intrinsic coherence between the limitations of instrumental implementations and proposals for an integral approach. A more comprehensive picture of the contributions of this study will be presented and discussed in the Vision Statement proposed in Section 8.5.

Among the perceived purposes of the current mindfulness programmes for pupils are: (1) to cope with difficulties, i.e. equip children and adolescents with strategies and skills to self-regulate challenging emotions and solve problems, most of which are generated from the same school system; (2) to improve behaviour, i.e. give pupils tools to adapt to the expected school requirements (e.g. calm, silence, attention); (3) to enhance pupils' learning, i.e. create optimal classroom conditions and foster attentional strengths to achieve academic success; and (4) to improve mental and physical health, i.e. provide strategies to prevent mental and physical problems (e.g. anxiety and obesity). These purposes have been reported in the traditional literature on the benefits of mindfulness for pupils (Parker and Kupersmidt, 2016; Weare and Betune, 2019). Although these purposes are worthy of pursuit in education, they have two fundamental problems. Firstly, the research on which they are based is not conclusive about the reality of these benefits, owing to methodological weakness in the designs of most of the studies (Roeser et al., 2022). Secondly, the focus of these purposes is reduced to individual improvements with an explicit or implicit ulterior interest in academic success (Forbes, 2019; Simpson, 2017). Thus instrumental goals gain primacy over more integral possible impacts in terms of personal, interpersonal and institutional flourishing.

Regarding the limitations of the most typical mindfulness programmes for pupils, the participants perceived these to be (1) superficial, i.e. topics are delivered in a narrow range without sufficient depth and reflection; (2) over-

standardised, i.e. structured in a rigid script-based format, leaving little time for teacher creativity and pupil interaction; (3) too short, i.e. designed in formats of one day or a few weeks, which do not allow any lasting habit change. These limitations align with critiques which state that the instrumental approach tends to generate mindfulness programmes and curricula with the minimum aim of helping students cope with a sterile and demotivating education, rather than fostering a more comprehensive personal and interpersonal flourishing (Forbes, 2019; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020; Simpson, 2017). Furthermore, these limitations can be understood as a twofold balancing problem: on the one hand, cost/efficiency, i.e. the problem of generating the highest impact with the lowest cost, and on the other, efficiency/researchability, i.e. the challenging issue of creating a more comprehensive and complex implementation which, at the same time, is able to be measured by research methods, particularly from quantitative perspectives.

Concerning the limitations of the most common mindfulness programmes for teachers, participants perceived that they are: (1) too introductory, i.e. they need to offer more understanding of the nature and educational potentialities of mindfulness; (2) lacking in continuity, i.e. they offer a short course of around eight weeks without considering how to continue the implementation for incorporating mindfulness as a habit and a school-ethos transformation; (3) highly demanding regarding formal practices, i.e. programmes posit unrealistic expectations for daily formal practices, which can generate frustration and demotivation with mindfulness; (4) inflexible, i.e. they are structured and delivered in a standard and rigid form, leaving little space for exploring experiences and knowledge in more profound and creative ways. Although teachers' mindfulness training is highlighted as essential by participants, there is scarce or null research focused on the teachers' experience of these programmes (Bowden et al., 2021) and how a good programme should be (Jennings et al., 2019). Following Shapiro et al. (2016), we face the challenge of forming mindful teachers in such a manner that they can embody attitudes such as acceptance, nonjudgment, patience, trust, kindness, etc., considering the power of informal practices, i.e. "intentionally bringing an open, accepting, and discerning attention to whatever we are engaged in" (Shapiro et al., 2016, p. 85). This may

entail a warmer voice tone, choosing more appreciative words or listening with fully interest to pupils.

Regarding the findings about the purposes of an integral approach, if we combine findings derived from the Second and Third Cycles of this study, we can find ideas such as (1) flourishing, i.e. the cultivation of mindful attitudes, such as acceptance, nonjudgment, discernment, (self-)compassion; (2) enriching pupils' lives, e.g. by fostering wiser decisions; (3) generating a mindful culture, i.e. cultivating an ethos of care across the whole school community; (4) building an educational approach instead of a therapeutic one; and (5) contributing to social transformation, in line with what has been suggested by authors who emphasise a more contemplative and socially engaged approach to mindfulness in education (Berila, 2016; Ergas, 2019; Forbes, 2019; Hyland; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2019).

The main difference between these two approaches, according to participants' perspectives, is that while the more instrumental focuses on individuals in terms of academic and behavioural achievements, the more integral focuses on different levels of the educational process, such as individual, relational, communitarian, cultural and systemic, in order to foster personal and societal flourishing. These differentiated purposes are in tune with the core principles of integral and contemplative education, as explained in Chapter 7 and summarised in Table 18. In this sense, I agree with the words of Zenner et al. (2014), who state that

> Mindfulness can be understood as the foundation and basic pre-condition for education […] Mindfulness practice enhances the very qualities and goals of education in the 21st century. These qualities include not only attentional and emotional self-regulation, but also prosocial dispositions such as empathy and compassion, self-representations, ethical sensitivity, creativity, and problem-solving skills. (p. 2)

Instrumental Purposes	Integral Purposes
- Coping with difficulties - Improving behaviour - Enhancing pupils' learning - Increasing mental and physical health	- Cultivating mindful attitudes - Transforming school culture - Enriching pupils' lives - Educational approach to flourishing

Table 18. Comparison between the purposes of instrumental and integral implementations of mindfulness within schools

Finally, concerning the key principles derived from Dimension B in the Third Cycle, participants highlighted the following: (1) a systemic/transversal approach, i.e. incorporating the cultivation of mindfulness attitudes across every activity at the school; (2) an evolving/long-term process, i.e. implementing mindfulness considering stages, individual characteristics, groups features, institutional needs and possibilities, from a process perspective; (3) a meaningful and flexible curriculum, i.e. starting with a curriculum which is pertinent for each specific context and built in collaboration with each school; (4) top-down direction, i.e. starting generally with adults, particularly by those adults with more power in the school (e.g. headteachers, wellbeing and social and emotional learning leaders, etc.); and (5) prioritising teachers' mindfulness training and understanding, i.e. taking seriously the idea that teachers have to be the kind of person they want to see in their pupils, for which they need a deep mindfulness formation regarding its educational potentialities, theoretically and practically. These ideas align with most literature on critical mindfulness in education (Ergas, 2019; Forbes, 2019; Sellman and Buttarazzi, 2020; Simpson, 2017). Although it is challenging to find concrete examples of this approach worldwide, some existing promising experiences can inspire us, most being in the early stages of development and still under research. Amongst the most noteworthy are the Social, Emotional and Ethical Learning curriculum developed by Emory University in the US (https://seelearning.emory.edu), the Living in the Present programme co-developed by Sarah Silverton in Wales (UK) (https://www.thepresentcourses.org), the Centre for Compassionate Mindful Education co-developed by Rony Berger in Israel (https://www.educare.co.il/eng) and the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) programme co-developed by Patricia Jennings in the US (https://createforeducation.org/care/). All these initiatives have at their hearts the

commitment to long-term cultivation of personal, relational and societal flourishing through an approach which includes awareness, compassion, civic ethics, and social justice beyond the instrumental paradigm focused on individual performance for academic success.

8.2. Limitations of this study

As explained in Chapter 3, this study was grounded in a hermeneutical onto-epistemological perspective which implied embracing the unavoidable fallibility of such an endeavour (Orange, 2010). Also, as this research was inspired by the epistemological idea of following an itinerant rather than an iterative research process, it took the risk of privileging spontaneity over the accomplishment of fixed rules and steps. I think all attempts to do research in a 'minor key' (Ingold, 2017) have to take the risk of sacrificing objectivity and generalisability at the stake of obtaining richer and more meaningful findings. That said, this study has some limitations worth mentioning.

(1) The sample was small and highly motivated to participate in this study, thus it can be assumed that they represent people who are well disposed toward mindfulness in schools with the potential risk of biased perspectives, e.g. overlooking more negative aspects of the current implementations.

(2) As the sample was purposeful, some are committed contributors to the development of mindfulness in education, particularly those from Wales, who are involved in developing mindfulness projects linked with the political world. This could imply ideological biases regarding overestimating the advantages of one country (Wales) over the other (England).

(3) Owing to the typical time restrictions of a doctoral study and the restrictions derived from the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to make fieldwork observations in classrooms nor to have the opportunity to interview children and adolescents to contrast views, as planned at the beginning. This could have precluded a more comprehensive approach to the phenomenon under research.

(4) Considering that this study has participants from England and Wales and that they mentioned important differences between the educational policies in both countries, perhaps the reflection on the connection between policies and mindfulness implementations could have been more detailed and profound.

(5) In some parts of the thesis perhaps some statements regarding instrumental mindfulness programmes made overgeneralisations, giving the impression that most of mindfulness implementations are instrumental in nature. Although this was explained in Chapter 2 (see pages 38 and 39), there is the risk of unfairly critiquing programmes that do not fit within this categorisation.

(6) Linked to the last point, this study lacks the inclusion of a more comprehensive review regarding specific mindfulness programmes in order to distinguish which illustrate instrumental and integral approaches under clearer analytical criteria.

8.3. Implications and suggested future directions

This section will offer some notable implications and suggest future directions for implementation and for research in this field. While implications draw on some insightful ideas to illuminate and highlight emergent contributions for a more transformative implementation, future directions aim to orient new implementations and research toward more fertile and ecological approaches and forms of thinking in this field. In this regard I would like to emphasise the significance and novelty of the onto-epistemological view of research in a 'minor key'; this allowed me to explore this topic by combining first-, second- and third-person approaches, being simultaneously aware of the nuances implied in a complex phenomenon like this one.

8.3.1. Implications

The core implication of this study is the need to think outside the box in the field of mindfulness in education. This need applies to the implementation of mindfulness in schools as well as to questioning the purpose of education in the

context of our time. Regarding the first aspect, thinking outside the box implies considering mindfulness a form of education beyond any typical instrumental approach from which it is understood as an external and discrete manualised 'intervention' for enhancing individual performances in matters such as attention and emotional regulation (Ergas, 2019b). The main findings of this study align well with Roeser et al.'s (2023) suggestion of a paradigmatic shift towards a relational meta-theory, which implies

> thinking about whole persons - their agency, motivations and stage-specific developmental needs (as well as how well their social environments address such needs). Such a perspective also serves to orient theory and method towards contexts, relationships, social interaction, shared activity, and cultural practices in the development of mindful and compassionate children and adolescents. (p. 247)

This means that an integral implementation of mindfulness in schools requires thinking from a complexity rather than a simplistic paradigm, as proposed in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.4.), implying the involvement of the whole community, its particular stages of development and its multidimensional contexts (family, social, economic, cultural, etc.). According to Weare (2023), this integral approach has already been demonstrated to offer a more sustainable transformation of the whole school system compared to individualised 'discrete interventions'. Such a crucial transformation relates to what Forbes (2019) calls 'civic or social mindfulness' in education, namely the formation of individuals "as social beings and global citizens, part of an inclusive, democratic practice that creates a shared sense of common good" (p. 198). Furthermore, Jennings et al. (2019) affirm that in a similar way that mindfulness helps us to self-understand our inner functioning, it

> […] can also help us collectively see the internal and external workings of our school systems and its impacts on children, adults, and the larger society. Seeing these relationships more clearly, we can then identify what is needed most and respond to the challenges in an intentional and skilful way. (p. 6)

These are some of the main features of what this study has revealed as an 'integral mindfulness approach'.

A second implication relates to offering a concrete response to the necessary question about how to do it in real educational contexts. This study has provided suggestions in this regard, some of which are: (1) whole-school implementation, rather than separate activities or mindfulness curricula; (2) systemic implementation, i.e. which permeates all school sub-systems (heads, teachers, pupils, families, etc.); (3) evolving implementation, i.e. carried on as a process in stages from an organic perspective; (4) oriented from a top-down direction, i.e. starting with adults, especially with those who have more power of decision at the school; (5) ensuring teachers' engagement, which means they have a good understanding of mindfulness and its educational potential and the personal embodiment of a range of contemplative practices; and (6) facilitating teachers to find creative and pertinent forms of applying a mindful approach in the classroom, primarily through modelling and kind interactions with students plus specific practices and activities aimed to cultivate mindful attitudes.

Another essential implication, increasingly emphasised by research, is the crucial role that well-formed mindfulness teachers play in the impact of any implementation (Han and Weare, 2017; Jennings, 2015; Weare, 2023; Shapiro et al., 2016). This study has highlighted a deficiency in this regard, in line with the widely referenced MYRIAD project, which concludes that it is necessary to have well-formed teachers, reduce burnout and improve wellbeing in order to enhance the school's emotional climate (MYRIAD, 2022), which, in turn, facilitates learning conditions. According to Grant (2017), a solid teacher formation - instead of instrumental and superficial training - ideally includes direct and indirect approaches. The first implies that teachers take structured mindfulness training to cultivate mindful attitudes such as presence, non-reactivity, and compassion. The second alludes to personal mindfulness practice in teachers' everyday lives. These two paths enable teachers to cultivate the same mindful attitudes within their pupils in an implicit way, primarily throughout their modelling: "To realize the benefits of mindfulness in the classroom, it is not necessary for teachers to explicitly teach mindfulness to their students. By practicing mindfulness themselves, they model mindful, non-judgmental, compassionate behaviour" (Grant, 2017, p. 148). Thus offering a meaningful and

high-quality formation to teachers and then finding the most skilful ways of extending these benefits to students are at the heart of a fertile implementation.

8.3.2. Suggested future directions

Although mindfulness implementations in schools and research in the field are increasing, substantial conclusions about their impact on pupils of all levels, teachers, and the school culture are limited owing to the weakness of the ways in which mindfulness is typically implemented and researched (Roeser et al., 2023). According to this study, such weakness corresponds with their individualistic, over-standardised, brief and superficial approaches. At the same time, the weakness of much of the research generally stems from an over-simplified approach to the evaluation and measurement of a complex and contextualised phenomenon. Based on this assessment, articulated as a result of this study, I can delineate some suggested future directions. As some implementation suggestions have already been presented in the last subsection, I will focus on future directions for research in the field of mindfulness in education. Thus future research should:

(1) Seek an understanding of what works from a range of contextualised mindfulness programmes combining objective (e.g. rate of aggressive behaviour) and subjective (e.g. self-report on wellbeing and stress feelings) factors. An approach incorporating mixed methodologies could yield much insight with regard to what facilitates or hinders implementation with maximum impact.

(2) Identify the differences between instrumental and integral approaches for implementing mindfulness in schools in much more detail, especially regarding their impacts on different school sub-systems. Comparative research may be of benefit here, for example evaluating and contrasting the impact of two implementations, one typical, such as the Paws b or Dot b programmes, and another with a more integral and long-term design, could be insightful. To observe if there are differences between these two modalities, it could be relevant

to investigate subjective (e.g. perceptions of wellbeing) and objective (e.g. a reported aggressive behaviours in the classroom) dimensions.

(3) Develop a phenomenological, respectful approach to investigating integral and whole-school implementations, going beyond any methodological straitjacket. Doing this implies appropriately understanding the meaning and purposes of research in what Ingold (2017) calls a 'minor key'. It could be interesting to focus research with the aim of understanding how school communities are experiencing different types of mindfulness such as attention and emotion regulation, the quality of relationships with others or the motivation towards learning processes. Such an endeavour would require phenomenological emphasis on the participants' experience over methodological rigour in order to highlight particular experiences in more detail and depth, attending to the trees more than the forest.

(4) Carry out specific research on what the core attributes of a mindful teacher are and how they can be achieved. As teachers are at the centre of any transformative mindfulness implementation, this line of research could be essential to helping teachers generate an optimal emotional classroom climate and foster mindful attitudes and responses in pupils (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Compared to the research on pupils, studies on what a mindful teacher looks like and how to cultivate this quality are significantly less common. In this sense, it is necessary to develop more research with teachers to understand the best ways of training them, considering those aspects they felt were meaningful (bottom-up) instead of what research on consolidated programmes suggests as relevant (top-down). Again, a phenomenological approach is recommended as a potentially illuminating research direction.

(5) Explore how mindfulness 'as' and 'of' education (Ergas, 2019) can contribute to rectifying the very purpose of education and achieving it insofar as a considerable portion of the conversations with participants relate to questions about the purpose(s) and goals of education itself. This is a relevant, although neglected, line of research I suggest explicitly investigating. We need approaches that both explore and harness participants' (headteachers, teachers

and pupils) sensibilities to such educational dimensions as what they consider meaningful learning or what Biesta (2022) calls the subjectification purpose of education, and how this can be addressed by mindfulness practices and inquiry. Also, this research could explore how mindfulness implementations can cultivate these dimensions. Such an investigation implies a shift of the whole approach within the field, starting by defining educational rather than therapeutic goals worthy of development for the school community.

(6) Investigate how contextual, social, economic, political and environmental conditions can affect the impact of particular mindfulness implementations and in what ways, as was suggested by comparing the English and Welsh differences in educational policies. Contextual conditions in the field of mindfulness implementations within schools have been largely overlooked and this has been criticised by authors of socially oriented mindfulness in education (Berila, 2016; Forbes, 2019; Reveley, 2016). This study shows preliminarily that similar programmes implemented in different contexts (by culture, educational policies, socioeconomic systems, school ethos, etc.) have different purposes and impacts. Based on this study, I suggest considering the idiosyncratic contextual characteristics of participating schools where mindfulness is being implemented and/or research the impact of a particular implementation. This can be a good antidote against the current trend towards the over-standardisation of the typical mindfulness programmes and a more beneficial contribution to the design of more integral, meaningful and pertinent implementations that are respectful of the needs and motivations of each educational community.

(7) Consider how the way of researching in this field can generate confusion regarding whether the instrumentalisation is a factual characteristic of a particular programme or a consequence of a narrow way of researching from a positivist and simplistic methodological approach to the phenomenon.

8.4. What have I learned through this investigative journey?

Throughout this journey, I have learned so many things that I cannot express all of them in this space. However, there are two areas in which I have noticed not just increased learning but also experiential perspective transformation. On the one hand, I have experienced personal growth by dialoguing with participants, taking mindfulness and compassion courses, studying the literature in the field and having regular supervision discussions. When I started this study, I had a practice and understanding of mindfulness as an individual path for self-transformation, which had had demonstrably beneficial effects on my own wellbeing; for instance, helping me to be more focused on the present moment, more aware of my moods and emotions and able to regulate them, more sensitive to and connecting deeply with other people, and, in general, to be less worried and more open to experience. Now, however, I feel a higher sensitivity to, and awareness of, the connection between my personal integrity and its potential to transform communities and institutional logic. I can say that I have broadened and deepened my compassion circle, feeling more motivated to contribute to healing and maturing the education system in the service of current and future generations of pupils and teachers. After this personal journey, I not only agree with the sentence 'be the change you want to see in the world', but I want to go one step further and make the commitment to doing everything in my power to see that change in the world realised.

Furthermore, I have undergone a fruitful academic learning process related to the connection between mindfulness and education. At the beginning of my PhD, I understood mindfulness in education basically as an application of psychotherapeutic approaches to mindfulness (e.g. MBSR, MBCT, CFT), and therefore as an external intervention in the service of specific educational issues such as concentration, emotional regulation and relational difficulties. In the process I have gained a perspective on mindfulness as a profound and necessary part of the educational process, orienting practically and theoretically towards the cultivation of holistic human flourishing, i.e. for individuals (mainly teachers and pupils), relationships among the whole school community, institutional functioning and the broader societal order. I feel I have enough experience,

competencies, knowledge and motivation to enact meaningful transformations in schools from an amply contemplative and critical perspective. Simultaneously, I have gained a realistic vision of this transformational process, which requires well-informed contextualisation in particular schools and well-calibrated expectations regarding what is possible and what is not, moving away from the naive view of mindfulness as a panacea for solving everything in education.

A final idea worthy of reflection finds its root in the philosophy of John Dewey (2014/1916). One of his core contributions to education is that any transformative school education is an indirect endeavour through the kind of environment it fosters: "We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment. Whether we permit chance environments to do the work, or whether we design environments for the purpose makes a great difference" (Dewey, 2014/1916, p. 30). These words resonate with Heideggerian thinking about the task of teaching as letting to learn and the Rogerian reflection about the fundamental role of an accepting, emphatic and authentic environment in facilitating meaningful learning, explained in the last chapter (see Section 7.5.). When applied to mindfulness in schools, this gives us a powerful clue regarding how to implement a mindfulness approach. Instead of spending lots of time designing preplanned curricula and activities to impact specific skills and behaviour, we need to create the relational and emotional conditions within which a mindful culture can emerge. This culture of care and flourishing can only materialise if the adults in charge, i.e. teachers, are committed to incorporating mindfulness practices and attitudes themselves before cultivating mindfulness in their students through a presence characterised by attention, acceptance, kindness, curiosity, closeness and compassion. We must remember that teachers make the classroom climate, which facilitates the inner and interpersonal climate of the school community for individual, collective and institutional flourishing.

8.5. Vision statement – a proposal

After all data analysis was done, in the Fourth Cycle of this study, I developed, along with my supervisors, a vision statement to condense and communicate the core messages of this research. These statements were shared with all participants via email and a number of scholars working in this field. Everyone agreed with these principles for an integral view of mindfulness in schools. The only statement that generated some suspicion was number eight in regard to the word 'neoliberalism', as for some this interpretation could evoke deliberate and ill-intentioned hidden motivations on the part of those carrying out what I have called 'instrumental' implementations. In this regard, I just want to remind us that the notion of 'neoliberalism' was explained in Sections 2.2 and 5.4, from a philosophical and socioeconomic perspective, as one of the central characteristics of our modern age in terms of the predominance of enframing, calculative thinking and achievement and performance society (see Heidegger, 1977/1954, 1969/1959; Han, 2015, 2017). This is the cultural background for the dominant educational logic of performativity and measurement (Ball, 2003), within which mindfulness has been implemented mainly as a counterbalance to keep teachers and pupils functioning in a more bearable form (Forbes, 2019). Thus these statements, derived from an interpretation of the participants' perspectives, are intended to serve as general orienting guidelines for any mindfulness implementation that aspires to be genuinely integral and are the last message I want to share before finishing this journey.

Those who endorse this vision statement are a community of teachers and researchers committed to the key principles of educating pupils with a deep ethical and prosocial sensitivity toward transforming a world confronted by ecological, societal, economic, political and technological crises. With this in mind, we believe integral mindfulness should be oriented to its full transformative potential and incorporate the following principles.

Integral mindfulness in education should:

1. be a catalyst for a *holistic education system,* one that balances academic dimensions with an explicit commitment to human flourishing at individual and collective levels.

2. be offered as part of a *whole school approach*, emphasising systemic change rather than individualistic and isolated improvements.

3. be offered with an *evolving view* in mind, understanding that implementation is a participatory and progressive process which considers relevant dimensions such as age range, local needs and levels of consciousness.

4. consider its *purpose in educational and ethical terms*, preferring a framework that seeks to cultivate attitudes and virtues for personal, interpersonal and communitarian development, rather than merely a mental health intervention or vehicle for other forms of school adjustment.

5. *start with adults*, insofar as integral mindfulness is best served by professionals modelling a mindful culture including attention to mindful relationships, care and compassion.

6. be based on *high-quality staff training* of sufficient depth and duration to allow staff to have an authentic experience and a profound understanding of the potentialities of mindfulness for education.

7. be based on *a strong commitment toward a mindful community*, allowing regular times and spaces for staff and students to gather, practise and share experiences.

8. contribute to *critical and ongoing constructive reflection on the purpose of education* in order to counterbalance or even transform the current dominant neoliberal policy framework of performativity in the UK education system and beyond.

9. foster a *socially engaged approach to human suffering*, from which human distress and suboptimal functioning is understood as occurring in, and as a product of, the person's social context (including the school); an approach in which poverty, violence and discrimination are explicitly addressed, and the concept of 'mental' health as arising exclusively from within the person is challenged.

Instead of discussing each statement separately, I want to reflect in general on what this vision statement implies for mindfulness in education, following some of Berila's (2016) ideas regarding the connection between contemplative education and anti-oppressive education. The first point is that contemplative pedagogy "encourages reflection on our internal experience as well as our interdependence with others" (Berila, 2016, p. 15), including the school and societal systems. Secondly, this approach to education empowers teachers and pupils not only to understand and connect to the world around them but also to foster the courage to change what is not working in society (Berila, 2016). The last idea refers to the requirement for teachers to be self-actualised to empower students about how to live consciously in the world (Berila, 2016). Thus mindfulness in education is more than a boost to learning; it is a path through which we can cultivate fundamental human attitudes (e.g. awareness, discernment and compassion) for self and social transformation, i.e. for the generation of ethical and civic individuals engaged with the common good over any individualistic interest. Although this assertion could be seen as romantic, from this research we might think that what is really naive is to expect these changes to come from politics, and what is more sensible is to put all our effort into generating the necessary world transformations via a more mindful education.

Finally, I would like to highlight the principal messages derived from this study regarding their significance for school education and their novelty related to what has been reported by most research in the field to date. Based on the participants' voices, it is possible to affirm that mindfulness in schools can be incorporated as an educational approach instead of a mere external and discrete psychoeducational intervention. In this sense, mindfulness should be

implemented organically *with* rather than *to* the school community, following the most effective path, i.e. starting by training key adults (heads, teachers and parents), generating a mindful school atmosphere of care, kindness, collaboration and compassion, and offering students regular opportunities for practising different mindful attitudes through formal and informal practices and activities across the school day. In other words, we already have enough experience, knowledge and skills to plant seeds of transformation, despite the oppressive institutional school conditions, to foster the integral flourishing of the whole school community through a comprehensive mindfulness approach. This means we can generate the conditions for flourishing intellectually (i.e. awakening our attention, curiosity and deep enquiry), emotionally (i.e. connecting with and manifesting calm, balance, kindness, gratitude and appreciation), relationally (i.e. connecting with others in acceptance, empathy and compassion), corporally (i.e. knowing and taking care of our body and its needs), and spiritually (i.e. finding meaning in everyday life and fulfilling our best human potential in, with and for the world). This is the real meaning of an integral education, and this is the best possible role of mindfulness within it.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Research Ethics Approval Paperwork



University of Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

School of Education
University of Nottingham
The Dearing Building
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Wollaton Road
Nottingham
NG8 1BB

educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

29/09/2020

Our Ref: 2020/18

Dear R Brito Pastrana

Thank you for your resubmitted research ethics application for your project:

Investigating more holistic approaches to mindfulness in the UK schools

Thank you for confirming you will make the small changes I requested in a letter on 23/09/2020. We have added your confirmation to your application file.

Following this, we are pleased to now confirm your research is:

Approved

This research is approved provided it is completed by end 2023
If your research overruns this date, please contact the Ethics Team to arrange an extension and update on any additions/changes to your work.

We wish you well with your research.

Prof Mary Oliver Ethics Committee

+44 (0)115 9514470
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Appendix 2

Initial Contact Letter for Teachers and Head Teachers

Date: …..

Dear …..,

I would like to invite to you to participate in a doctoral research project, the main purpose of which is to improve the quality and meaning of how mindfulness practices are currently implemented within UK schools. I am contacting you because you have some experience in this area and your insights would be valuable.

I am a PhD student of the School of Education at University of Nottingham and I am conducting research of the following exploratory research question:

How are qualified teachers experiencing and understanding the whole process of implementation of mindfulness in primary/secondary school in the UK educational setting?

The aim of the research is to explore and understand the benefits and possible improvements of existing mindfulness in schools programs. The broader purpose of this research is to understand the desire for more holistic approaches to such courses and the implementational issues that may arise.

Taking part in the research will involve being interviewed by me, face to face or more likely, online, for about one hour on your experiences and reflections on the implementation of these programs.

All contributions you make will be strictly confidential. You will not be identified in the research and I will invite you to choose a pseudonym to safeguard this.

I have enclosed an information sheet explaining the research in more detail and also how any data collected would be managed. Please read this sheet carefully when deciding whether to take part in this research project or not.

Thank you for considering participating in the research, I really appreciate your time.

If you would like to take part in this research project or would like further information, please contact me by email at alyrb1@nottingham.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 3

Participant Information Sheet for Teachers / Head Teachers

Postgraduate research study: Investigating more integral approaches to mindfulness in the English and Welsh schools.

Researcher: Rodrigo Brito

What question is the research addressing?

How are qualified teachers experiencing and understanding the whole process of implementation of mindfulness in primary/secondary schools in the UK?

What is the purpose of the research?

The research aims to analyse the experience and understanding of qualified teachers and headteachers regarding the current implementation of mindfulness programs in schools and implementations issues concerning more holistic alternatives.

Who is the researcher?

I am a PhD student of the School of Education at University of Nottingham. I am clinical psychologist with 15 years' experience and a teacher of the MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) program. I have worked for almost 10 years in the implementation of this program within a clinical population.

Why have you been asked to be involved?

Because you are leading a school in which this kind of mindfulness programs is being implemented by qualified teacher(s) in primary and/or secondary levels.

What would you have to do?

If you agree to take part in this research, I will interview you for about one hour at least once but probably one more time in the future. The interview will involve a few questions, however there will be plenty of time for you to outline your thoughts on the area of research. The interview will be audio recorded digitally and transcribed, and I will send you a copy of your interview transcript. You can then check this for accuracy and whether, in hindsight, you are comfortable with the information included. The interview can take place in a private room at your

school or in any other confidential place that is comfortable for you. An online platform is also possible and may be more suitable due to the current circumstances with COVID-19.

Do I have to take part?

You are under no obligation to take part in this research project. It is your choice. If you decide you would like to take part you will receive a copy of this information sheet for future reference and will be asked to sign a consent form. However, you are in control of your participation throughout the process and can stop or pause the interview and the other activities at any point. Also, you can only answer questions you are comfortable answering and ultimately withdraw your consent at any time.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The interview can be an opportunity to reflect on some aspects of the implementation of the mindfulness program in the context of your school, deepening your understanding of the scope and strategies of more holistic mindfulness “as” rather than “in” education.

How confidential will my input be?

Your contributions to the research will be strictly confidential.
All interview recordings will be deleted once transcripts have been made and these have been agreed by you. All transcripts will be held securely for the duration of the research, with all personal information removed to ensure anonymity. These transcripts are retained for at least seven years.
Your contact information will be held securely in a folder on a password protected account on the University of Nottingham’s computer system and destroyed once the thesis has been published. This is in accordance with the University of Nottingham Code of Practice for Research.

Any extracts of interviews used within the final research report will be anonymised through the use of your chosen pseudonym (an alternative name). The final research report will be submitted to the University of Nottingham and the results may be presented at conferences and/or published in journals.

What happens next?

If you agree to participate in this research, please let me know by email and we will agree a suitable time and place (or an online platform) for the interview to take place. Once your interview has taken place it will be transcribed from the audio tape. Copies of the relevant transcript, along with the themes that have emerged from it, will be sent to you so that you can check it for accuracy and to

see if you are happy with the contents. I will then analyse all the individual interviews I have conducted to identify themes that emerge in order to make decisions on next steps in the research process and also to draw research conclusions. These conclusions will be included in potential articles that could be published during the process and in my PhD thesis, which will be submitted to the University of Nottingham.

Any questions?

If you have any questions regarding your participation in this research project, please contact either:

Researcher
Rodrigo Brito Email: alyrb1@nottingham.ac.uk

Research supervisor
Dr Edward Sellman Email: edward.sellman@nottingham.ac.uk

Complaints or concerns

If you have any complaints or concerns regarding this research project, please contact Research Ethics Coordinator, educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 4

Participant Consent Form (Phase 1 / Interview)

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

How are qualified teachers experiencing and understanding the whole process of implementation of mindfulness in primary/secondary schools in the UK educational setting?

Researcher's name: Rodrigo Brito **Supervisor's name:** Dr Edward Sellman

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research project.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage of the project, without any negative consequences to me, up to publication. In this case, the data will be analysed in preparation for my thesis and publication after September 2021.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interview(s).
- I understand that electronic data will be stored securely by Rodrigo Brito in a password protected folder on University of Nottingham's computer system. Hard copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet. This data will be kept for at least seven years.
- I have read and understand the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) statement provided separately.

- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.
- I agree to participate in this research project, as interviewee, as outlined to me.

Signed ……(research participant)

Print name …… Date …….

Contact details

Researcher: Rodrigo Brito email: alyrb1@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Edward Sellman email: edward.sellman@nottingham.ac.uk

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:

educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

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Appendix 5

Participant Consent Form (Phase 2 / Focus Groups)

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

How are qualified teachers experiencing and understanding the whole process of implementation of mindfulness in primary/secondary schools in the UK educational setting?

Researcher's name: Rodrigo Brito **Supervisor's name:** Dr Edward Sellman

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project and the discussion group have been explained to me.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the discussion group.
- I understand the purpose of the discussion group and my involvement in it.
- I understand that my participation in the discussion group is crucial, which means that I require the commitment to attend ideally to every session and the good will to contribute as much as I can to the purpose of the group.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage of the project, without any negative consequences to me, up to publication. In the case that I decide to withdraw from the discussion group, all my information will be also withdrawn if this is your wish.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the discussion group and that this material will be transcribed by an external person under rigorous confidentiality's conditions.

- I understand that electronic data will be stored securely by Rodrigo Brito in a password protected folder on University of Nottingham's computer system. Hard copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet. This data will be kept for at least seven years.
- I have read and understand the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) statement provided separately.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.
- I agree to participate in this research project, as participant in the discussion group, as outlined to me.

Signed …… (research participant)

Print name …… Date ……

Contact details

Researcher: Rodrigo Brito email: alyrb1@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Edward Sellman email: edward.sellman@nottingham.ac.uk

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:

educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 6

Confidentiality Agreement – Focus Group Participants

Maintaining the confidentiality of the identity and contribution of each member of the focus group is vital to us. As we, as researchers, have undertaken not to reveal anything that could identify you in any report on the findings of this research, we would ask that you sign the following confidentiality agreement in which you undertake not to share the names of fellow focus group members, or share information from the focus group with any other person.

Please complete the form below **before** the commencement of the focus group interview.

I _____ (please print name) hereby agree that

- I will not share the names of the other participants in the focus groups with any other person
- I will not share any information given in the focus group by other participants with any other person.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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Appendix 7

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Postgraduate research study: Investigating more integral approaches to mindfulness in UK schools.

Researcher: Rodrigo Brito

How the University of Nottingham processes your personal data

The University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD (0115 951 5151), is committed to protecting your personal data and informing you of your rights in relation to that data.
The University of Nottingham is registered as a Data Controller under the Data Protection act 1998 (registration No. **Z5654762** – https://ico.org.uk/ESDWebPages/Entry/Z5654762).

One of our responsibilities as a data controller is to be transparent in our processing of your personal data and to tell you about the different ways in which we collect and use your personal data. The University will process your personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and this privacy notice is issued in accordance with the GDPR Articles 13 and 14.

We may update our Privacy Notices at any time. The current version of all of our Privacy Notices can be found at https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/utilities/privacy.aspx and we encourage you to check back regularly to review any changes.

The Data Protection Officer

The University has appointed a Data Protection Officer. Their postal address is:
Data Protection Officer,
Legal services
A5, Trent Building,
University of Nottingham,
University Park,
Nottingham
Ng7 2RD
They can be emailed at dpo@nottingham.ac.uk.

Your personal data and its processing

We define personal data as information relating to a living, identifiable individual. It can also include "special categories of data", which is information about your racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, and physical or mental health, the processing of which is subject to strict requirements. Similarly information about criminal convictions and offences is also subject to strict requirements. “Processing” means any operation which we carry out using your personal data e.g. obtaining, storing, transferring and deleting.
We only process data for specified purposes and if it is justified in accordance with data protection law. Detail of each processing purpose and its legal basis is given in each privacy notice listed below, please select the one most relevant to your relationship to the University.

Why we collect your personal data

We collect personal data under the terms of the University’s Royal Charter in our capacity as a teaching and research body to advance education and learning. Specific purposes for data collection on this occasion are to obtain contact details to enable you to participate in the research project looking at understand how to implement mindfulness within schools in the UK in a more holistic form. Additionally, we will collect data from the research interview(s) and the discussion group you will participate in as part of this research. Your interview(s) and the information will help to address the research question of how are qualified teachers experiencing and understanding the whole process of implementation of mindfulness in primary/secondary schools in the UK educational setting?

Legal basis for processing your personal data under GDPR

The legal basis for processing your personal data on this occasion is Article 6(1a) consent of the data subject OR Article 6(1e) processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest OR Article 6 (1b) processing is necessary for the performance of a contract OR Article 6 (1f) processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller. The legal basis for processing your personal data on this occasion is Article 6(1a), consent of the data subject. This means that you have agreed to us collecting your contact details and the information from the research interview conducted by Rodrigo Brito.

How long we keep your data

The University may store your data for up to 25 years and for a period of no less than 7 years after the research project finishes. The researchers who gathered or processed the data may also store the data indefinitely and reuse it in future research. Measures to safeguard your stored data include

- Retaining contact details in a folder in a password protected account on

the University of Nottingham's computer system.

- Your choice of a pseudonym for your interview transcript to prevent your identification and hard copies kept in a lock cupboard and any electric copies kept in a folder on a password protected account on the University of Nottingham's computer system.

Who we share your data with

Extracts of your data may be disclosed in published works that are posted online for use by the scientific community. Your data may also be stored indefinitely on external data repositories (e.g., the UK Data Archive) and be further processed for archiving purposes in the public interest, or for historical, scientific or statistical purposes. It may also move with the researcher who collected your data to another institution in the future.

Please email any related request to data-protection@nottingham.ac.uk.

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Appendix 8

Ethical Agreement for Transcriber

8th October 2020

I, _____ , in my role of transcriber of the information collected within the context of the PhD research entitled "Investigating more holistic approaches of mindfulness in the UK schools" delivered by Rodrigo Brito in the context of his PhD research in the School of Education at University of Nottingham, I assume the commitment to respect every ethic security measures that my work imply.

I understand that every transcribed/edited information is strictly confidential, and I assume the commitment to safeguard this confidentiality regarding every material which I will transcript/edit. In order to ensure it, I assume the duty of:

1. Do not reproducing the audio recordings nor its written contents in any other context.
2. Do not altering, manipulating nor using in my behalf any content from the audio records nor from its written content.
3. Deleting from my computer the audio and the transcribed/edited file immediately after these materials are given to the responsible researcher.
4. Communicating to the responsible researcher in case I know, or I believe to know, to any of the participants, abstaining to transcript/edit that material.

If I have any questions about this research and about my role in it, I will contact to the responsible researcher, Rodrigo Brito, by any of these ways, phone: 07743044604 and/or email: alyrb1@nottingham.ac.uk.

Then, I _____, having read and understood this agreement, I agree with every conditions.

_____	_____
Transcriber Signature Bernardita Riesco	Responsible Researcher Signature Rodrigo Brito