

# Silke Rupprecht<sup>1</sup>, Peter Paulus<sup>1</sup>, Harald Walach<sup>2</sup> MIND THE TEACHERS

Mindfulness training helps teachers to flourish and enhance their teaching quality.

## The problem

- Teachers' well-being depends largely on their social and emotional competence (SEC), to cope with the professions' demands.
- Teacher SEC is also closely tied to their classroom performance (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Klusmann, 2013).
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Training (MBSR) is effective for the enhancement of SEC in both clinical and non-clinical samples (Fjorback, Arendt, Ørnbøl, Fink & Walach, 2011).
- Empirical trials addressing MBSR's efficacy for the enhancement of teachers' personal resources and their instructional quality are lacking.

*I am more aware if things are going wrong in the classroom. Sometimes I even talk about this with the students and we try to figure out ways to improve it together.*

## Purposes of study

- Investigate the relationship between teacher wellbeing and teaching quality.
- Assess the impact of a mindfulness training on teachers' well-being and SEC.
- Examine the meditating role of mindfulness

## Method

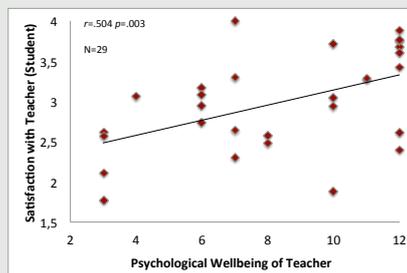
- The content of the classic MBSR curriculum was not changed but the duration shortened to 6 weeks (4 evening meetings and 2 whole-day trainings).
- A mixed-method design was applied:
  - Self-report scales of teacher health measures
  - Student report of teachers classroom performance
  - Semi-structured interviews with teachers

*Being more mindful with myself relates to interacting more mindfully with others. I realized it is important to take my own hopes and fears serious as a prerequisite to take the others seriously.*

## Sample

- Teachers were assigned to an experimental (N=18 main study, N=19 pre-study) and a waitlist-control group (N=15).
- A subgroup of Teachers (N=31) in both conditions agreed to assess their teaching quality through student feedback.
- Teachers were mainly female (92 %) with the majority working at a high school (Gymnasium).

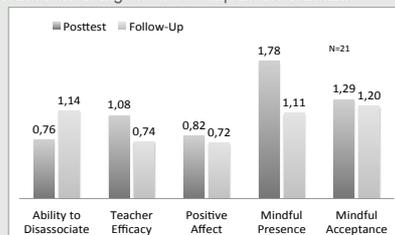
## Students are happier with healthy teachers.



Student scores aggregated at class-level after controlling for Intraclass-Correlations ICC<sub>1</sub> and ICC<sub>2</sub>.  
Self-report measures:  
 • Psychological Well-Being (General Health Questionnaire, GHQ-12) 12-item scale, inverted (High score = high well-being) (Schmitz et al. 1999, German Version)  
 • Teacher Satisfaction (3-item scale) (Biju Study- Baumert et al., 1997)

## MBSR - Training impacts teacher well-being and SEC.

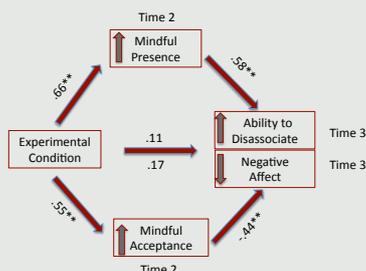
Cohen's *d* (effect size) for between group differences based on change scores compared to baseline



$d > 0,20$  = small effect;  $d > 0,50$  = medium effect,  $d > 0,80$  = large effect

Self-report measures:  
 • Ability to disassociate: 4-item subscale of self-regulation scale „Arbeitsbezogenes Verhaltens- und Erlebensmuster (AVEM)“ (Schaarschmidt & Kieschke 2006)  
 • Teacher efficacy: Scale 1 to 4 (Schwarzer 1999)  
 • Positive Affect: 4-item subscale of Emo-Check (Berking & Znojil, 2008)  
 • Mindfulness: 14-item scale Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI), Subscales adapted according to Kohls et al. 2009

## Changes in mindful acceptance and presence differentially mediate the training effects.



\*\*=p<0.01; Standardized regression coefficients between changes mediators and outcomes controlling for mediators; experimental condition: dummy-coded with intervention group=1.

## Discussion

- Compared to waitlist-control teachers in the experimental condition reported a high impact of the training on their well-being and social emotional competence.
- In qualitative interviews teachers revealed not only using mindfulness for self-regulation but also for relating differently to students.
- Differential effects of the mindfulness construct were found with mindful presence mediating cognitive self-regulation and mindful acceptance accounting for emotional changes.

## Conclusion

We demonstrated that a mindfulness training effectively improves teachers' well-being and competences and that the teaching quality may benefit of these changes.



*Generally, I am more relaxed now but I've also learned to allow myself to be exhausted. Faced with conflicts, I gained calmth through breathing exercises and respond with more clarity.*

## Limitations

- Weaknesses of this study are its small sample size and its quasi-experimental design.
- Future work aimed at detecting teacher changes in student teaching quality ratings may benefit from choosing a more homogenous student sample and employing a higher sample size. It could be worthwhile using a data triangulation by including observer-based data.

## Acknowledgements

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