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Mindfulness as a Means of Reducing Teacher Burnout

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Mindfulness as a Means of Reducing Teacher Burnout

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ED 590: Research and Complete the Capstone, Cohort 294

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Abstract

Educators are asked to do more tasks every school year. It can be difficult to maintain boundaries and continue feeling like an effective educator, with the demands of everyday teaching. This paper examined how the use of mindfulness, as an individual, assists educators in avoiding burnout. The resources used were a mix of qualitative, quantitative, quasi-experimental, meta-analyses, and mixed methods focusing on strategies and reasons educators should use stress-reducing techniques in their personal lives to help with occupational stress. The conclusion of the research gathered showed the use of mindfulness benefited educators and school systems by reducing absenteeism, reducing healthcare costs, and reducing teacher turnover (Harris & Bostain, 2021). As administrators add mindfulness into professional development, educators have space to create the balance.

Keywords: Mindfulness practice, Burnout, Occupational stress, Resilience

Chapter One: Introduction

As the world changes, so too, does the American education system. As stressors and changes took place with a pandemic, educators have too started leaving the field in droves. In educator preparation, there has not been a focus on balancing mental health with the demands of teaching in the K-12 system. The research examined how the use of mindfulness, as an individual, helped educators avoid burnout in their careers. The use of mindfulness has been shown to benefit educators and school systems by reducing absenteeism, reducing health care costs, and reducing teacher turnover (Harris & Bostain, 2021). As administrators add mindfulness into professional development, educators have space to create balance, in turn, the space to increase effectiveness, positively influence students, and find joy in their careers and outside lives. Research in the area of mindfulness as a means of avoiding career burnout for educator's brought forth key terms and themes discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

Definition of Terms

Mindfulness practice- To pay attention in a specific way and being in the moment without making judgements (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, as cited in Renshaw, 2020).

Burnout- According to Renaud and LaCroix (2023), burnout was first defined by Freudenberger in 1974. Now the term is defined as “exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration” (Merriam-Webster, 2023).

Occupational stress- Stress related to work and the response that may be experienced related to work demands and pressures because of lack of matched knowledge or abilities, which may challenge the ability to cope (World Health Organization, 2023).

Resilience- The outcome of adapting successfully to challenging experiences, especially mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility, and adjusting to internal and external demands. (American Psychological Association, 2023).

Importance of Topic

As the demands of teaching and learning continue and adapt to the changing child, educators need to have balance and adequate coping skills to deal with the stressors of the K-12 classroom. As the world is coming to a post-pandemic state, society has heard of educators changing professions more than before the pandemic. If there is no systematic change and focus on mental health, balance, mindfulness practice, and coping skills to effectively deal with stress, it is possible the American education system may change for the worse. A 2014 Gallup poll showed 46% of teachers were reporting high daily stress which ranked the profession as one of the highest for occupational stress (as cited in DiCarlo et al., 2020). As educators experience high levels of occupational stress, it is a logical conclusion, skilled teachers in all academic settings have left the profession to utilize their dynamic skills in other professions. Specifically, if special education teachers do not experience a sense of accomplishment or appreciation, they may start losing passion and begin not implementing individual education plans with their best effort; this may negatively impact students with disabilities more than their general education peers (Sun et al., 2019). Through the use of mindfulness, classrooms, students, and teachers experienced less conflict. Educators could be more authentic, present, and able to detach from interpersonal conflict. This leads to fewer feelings of negativity and stress at work, and less reactivity if there are difficult behaviors occurring in the classroom (Norton & Griffith, 2020; Harpin et al., 2016). As research articles were reviewed, the topic of mindfulness related to burnout, the themes of stress reduction, resilience, and positive learning environment emerged.

Scope of Research

The research examined included a mix of a variety of research methods including, qualitative, quantitative, quasi-experimental, meta-analyses, and mixed methods of peer-reviewed primary resources. The resources found, focused on strategies and reasons educators should use stress reducing techniques in their personal lives to help with occupational stress to avoid burnout. An additional focus was on what administration and school boards can do to help their educators avoid burnout and find a life balance between home and work, as education programs do not currently have a focus in this area for pre-service teachers. Research articles were selected based on the use of mindfulness to reduce stress, strategies educators can use to reduce stress, and behavioral impacts of stress and mindfulness. The research articles gathered were published between the years 2010 and 2023, with nineteen primary educational journal resources. Seventeen of the resources were conducted between 2016 and 2023. In addition, three resources and one video were used in defining key terms and definitions for this paper.

Conclusion

In summary, as changes took and continue to take place, in the field of education in response to the pandemic, educators have started leaving the field all together, for other careers. In educator preparation, there has not been a focus on maintaining educators' personal mental health with the demands of teaching in the K-12 system. The researcher asked the question, how did use of mindfulness practice, as an individual, help educators avoid burnout in their careers? The program question of: what are the best practices for providing inclusive instruction for all learners? The use of mindfulness has been shown to benefit educators and school systems by reducing absenteeism, reducing healthcare costs and reducing teacher turnover (Harris & Bostain, 2021). These outcomes positively influence students in the classroom, to ensure

inclusive instruction for all learners, when teachers are present and happy teachers are more effective in their classroom management and instruction. It has been important for state officials and administration to recognize workloads are ever-changing, and with change comes stress. It is essential interventions for educators are put into professional development to practice self-care and stress management throughout the school year. Each person has different strategies that work better for them, so when there are professional development sessions presented to the entire staff, educators could find what works for them and begin implementing it for their personal and their student's well-being. Through the addition of these practices, teachers and educators are better apt for the ever-changing demands in the classroom and meeting individual student needs.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The special education field has changed drastically over the last decade. As society began to come out on the other side of a pandemic, there were more educators changing professions than before the pandemic. As school systems continued to respond to changes in American culture, practices needed to be implemented to preserve and retain educators. As teachers enter the profession, research showed 40-50% of new teachers will leave their career because of occupational stress and burnout (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016 as cited in Pinthong, 2021). In a survey of over 30,000 educators, 73% shared their work is often stressful, and 26% reported they have poor levels in the area of mental health (AFT & BAT, 2015 as cited in Zarate et al., 2019). As demands on educators increased in the classroom, there was an increase in teachers finding new professions to utilize their dynamic skills. One important strategy to assist in the changes in education was to implement the practice of mindfulness as educators. The question and purpose of this literature review was: How does mindfulness practice, as an individual, assist in the avoidance of teacher burnout? As the literature was reviewed, key vocabulary was defined and the following themes emerged from the research: effects of stress, mindfulness practice for the educator, methods and reasons to reduce occupational stress, learning environment, resilience, and recommendations for future balance in education.

Definitions of Burnout and Mindfulness

Teachers are affected by burnout in a way that has affected classrooms, students, and families to the point of frustration which has become newsworthy. As media has reported on challenges within classrooms, there has been more attention on the profession. When starting a teaching career, many mentors reference the idea that teaching is a work of heart. This way of thinking is valid, as teachers really dig deep to help students succeed, and many hours are

worked without additional compensation. As a side-effect of the passion teachers put into helping students, they can experience feelings of burnout. According to Renaud and LaCroix (2023), burnout was first defined and described by Freudenberger in 1974, and is a prolonged reaction or response to chronic stressors on emotions and interpersonal interactions from an occupation. Now the term is defined in the dictionary as “exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration” (Merriam-Webster, 2023). An example to support these definitions has been illustrated by teachers utilizing sick time as mental health days to re-establish connection with what is important to them. Educator burnout is a concern; however, the use of mindfulness practice can assist in burnout prevention.

The use of mindfulness practice can help educators find a healthy balance and set boundaries between their personal lives and teaching careers. According to Kabat-Zinn (1994, as cited in Renshaw, 2020), mindfulness is paying attention in a specific way and being in the moment without making judgements. Happify (2015) shared mindfulness is knowing what is going on in one’s own head without getting carried away. As the two authors suggested, mindfulness practice has allowed a person to slow down in a focused attempt to understand how one felt in the previous moment, what their thoughts were, and pause to make the observation without reaction. Since mindfulness focuses on being aware in the present moment and keeping attention on how one feels, it is important to know educators can change physiological responses to their work in schools in a way to have non-judgement towards themselves and others as they navigate the challenges of their school days (Aslan-Gördesli, 2022). If educators fail to utilize mindfulness practice, tailored to their individual needs, they risk the trajectory of occupational stress affecting their mental and physical health over the long term, as well as the risk of burnout, resulting in career change.

Effects of Stress

Stress for educators can affect the school system in measurable ways of: absenteeism, increased cost of health care, and teacher turnover (Harris & Bostain, 2021). A Gallup poll, (2014, as cited in DiCarlo et al., 2020) showed 46% of teachers were reporting high daily stress that ranked the profession as one of the highest for occupational stress. The term ‘Teacher stress’ refers to educators experiencing negative feelings associated with their job and the emotions of anxiety, frustration, anger, and even depression (Kyriacou, 2001, as cited in Czerwinski et al., 2021). Since the pandemic, educators have been experiencing higher stress than before. Behaviors in the classroom have increased since the pandemic, and as caregivers, educators are being continually expected to handle challenging behaviors. These expectations can be emotionally draining, stressful, and lead to fatigue. Singh, (2020) found having mindfulness practice enhanced compassion, reduced psychological stress, burnout, as well as depression symptoms, thus, improving caregiver and educator quality of life with intentional mindfulness practice. A quasi-experimental study, done with special education teachers, by Sharp Donohoo, et al. (2021) showed the use of mindfulness, along with personal prayer, that compassion satisfaction (CS) and perceived stress scale (PSS) scores significantly improved more for the group of special education teachers who had a higher level of perceived stress, when looking at the mean differences between two groups of educators, with the highest and lowest levels of perceived stress at the beginning of their study to the end of the study that lasted around six weeks. When educators have a heightened level of emotional exhaustion, it can be expected that student’s measurable growth will be lower, as well as uneasy feelings, which causes heightened negative behaviors for teachers to handle too; an increase in awareness of emotions throughout the day with the use of mindfulness may help educators fight off the

feelings of burnout and improve theirs and their student's emotional health (Zarate et al., 2019). The feelings of stress impact the classroom in negative ways. As many educators experience stress, their classrooms have become more behavior ridden and the focus becomes behavior management over academic curriculum. This has the potential to cause stress for the educator and students.

Occupational stress and burnout can influence an educator's ability to be open to change and efficiency in the classroom (Norton & Griffith, 2020; Harris & Bostain, 2021). Even perceived stress can lead to negative classroom environments as well as poor academic outcomes and negative impacts on teacher well-being (DiCarlo et al., 2020). Burnout is a product of chronic interpersonal and emotional work stress and manifests through emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001, as cited in Sun et al., 2019). Teachers who have felt high levels of burnout have decreased motivation to teach, which results in poorer classroom practices, affecting both the teacher and the students in a negative way (Czerwinski et al., 2021). Mindfulness practice, for individual educators, can assist in addressing the poor classroom practices established from educators who feel overwhelmed, stressed, and burnt out.

Mindfulness Practice for the Educator

The practice of mindfulness aids people who practice to be intentional in their thoughts at the moment. This increases the chances of higher awareness and positive outcomes (Harris & Bostain, 2021). The positive outcomes increased morale and created positive momentum for educators and students. Norton and Griffith (2020) shared, participants in their study spent time discussing the majority of positive impacts practicing and delivering mindfulness instruction had on relationships, and they had fewer discipline problems in their classrooms. Harpin et al.,

(2016) also reported teachers and students had an increase in positive classroom behaviors, emotional regulation, and academic achievement. When an individual teacher took part in a study by Akpan and Saunders (2017), it was found that his self-efficacy and self-compassion improved in a little over a month of intentional practice. In review, those who practiced mindfulness saw more positive outcomes from the practice than negative outcomes. As the stressors of teaching have continued to impact educators the use of mindfulness is used as a tool to combat the stressors.

The profession has continued to evolve with the ever-changed political landscape of two polar ends, negative feelings about work as educators has affected how educators present themselves and advocate for themselves and their students. According to Harris and Bostain (2021), consistent use of mindfulness techniques helped to increase teachers' self-awareness, improvement in personal well-being, and work performance. Teaching ranks high in stress-related outcomes like psychological and physical health as well as overall employment satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2005, as cited in Czerwinski et al., 2021). The practice of mindfulness was found to decrease psychological distress for people with higher-than-average stress levels, and the most significant impacts were in the areas of depression, somatization, acting hostile, and anxiety (Franco et al., 2010). As the practice of mindfulness aides in mental health of educators, the research also supported these strategies also positivity influenced the nervous system.

Additional research showed the brain and nervous system impacted mindfulness practice too. Greeson et al. (2014, as cited in Pinthong, 2021), found that practicing mindfulness had a positive impact on the brain and autonomic nervous system because it reduced production of stress hormones, increased the immune system, and helped the person engage in healthier habits

in the areas of eating, sleeping, and relaxation methods. By intentionally using mindfulness, positive outcomes were witnessed in the areas of somatization, interpersonal sensitivity, and hostility; there were also reductions in obsession-compulsion, anxiety, depression, and paranoia (Franco et al., 2010). As these improvements are made in the lives of people who practice mindfulness their overall physical and psychological health is improved. The practice does not make stressors disappear; however, it does help individuals better suited to handle those stressors.

Some participants in a study done by Todd et al. (2019), expressed they felt mindfulness practice was a way of coping with stress but not getting to the root of the cause. Zarate et al., (2019) completed a meta-analysis that showed, teachers exposed to mindfulness training improved their use of the practice by almost a whole standard deviation more than those teachers not taking part in a mindfulness intervention. The idea of the use of instruction and intervention for adults learning a new skill, like the use of mindfulness practice, is supported by this meta-analysis. The instruction was essential because, nearly all teachers asked by, Herman et al., (2018) shared they felt high levels of stress, and only seven percent of those asked felt like they had a positive and productive way of managing the high stress they feel in connection to their profession. This indicates there should be a higher focus in two areas, systemic change of the education system, and how to manage stress and create balance while the systemic change is occurring. Particular focus needs to be placed on strategies for special education teachers and women in the profession to find the strategies that work for them.

Another source focused on special education teachers and women. Nuri, Demirok, & Direktör (2017, as cited in Sun et al., 2019) found special education teachers specifically experienced moderate to high levels of burnout due to low occupational success and large

workloads. Balancing the stress of: legal paperwork, program planning, specialized instruction, open communication with team members of students, special education evaluations, and teaching lessons has created a tough role in the system. An additional dynamic related to stress was explained by gender role theory, within the framework of social roles, women have taken on more caretaking roles, which has created more compassion fatigue (Eagly & Wood, 2013, as cited in Aslan- Gördesli, 2022). Compassion fatigue has been a leading factor to higher stress levels and burnout. Higher stress and burnout lead to poor mental health. Zarate et al., (2019) shared, teacher's rate among the highest for poor mental health and stress when compared with other professions. When literature was reviewed by Aslan- Gördesli (2022), the literature showed, women experienced more emotional burnout, where men experienced more personal accomplishment, and as a result, women scored higher compared to men in all aspects of burnout. With a predominantly female field of education this is concerning. The sub-groups of educators, special education teachers, and women are considered the individuals who benefit from mindfulness practice the most, as men scored lower in the area of burnout compared to special educators and women (Aslan-Gördesli, 2022). Regardless of gender or role as an educator, all who practice mindfulness in an attempt to balance their role as educators benefited from its practice.

As pre-service teachers take classes to become teachers, the programs they enroll in do not have preparation for the self-preservation mindfulness practice helps the teacher to maintain. As a result, self-preservation and mindfulness becomes an after-thought once they are in the profession (Franco et al., 2010). Perhaps districts taking part in a mindfulness class, in an online format, mindfulness virtual online course, (MVOC) have helped teachers implement the practice.

As participants in Pinthong's research (2021) shared, even a virtual format of mindfulness instruction helped them increase their coping skills with stress related to the profession.

Methods and Reasons to Reduce Occupational Stress

Historically as teachers started their careers, it was essential to find a balance of work and life quickly to avoid the impacts of stress as their career progressed. As they found the balance, they found more happiness in their career and have had a more positive student impact. The practice of mindfulness in combination with a coloring activity have helped the teacher's well-being (Czerwinski et al., 2021). Mindfulness paired with self-compassion assists teachers in finding a balance (Akpan & Saunders, 2017). As educators have found balance, there has been an increase in positive feelings around their profession, but the balance has taken consistent practice. Gold et al. (2010) found stress, depression, and anxiety, and emotional distress are all feelings teachers in primary school settings experience. It should be considered a top priority to have teachers participate in experiences offering to offset the negative effects that their chosen profession has had on their daily lives; Franco et al. (2010) found techniques like attending private events (birthday parties, graduation parties, family gatherings) while not being in charge of them helped reduce teachers' individual stress. These events help them connect with loved ones and find joy in their personal time too. According to Gold et al. (2010), maintaining mental health and reducing stress have been approached outside of the education world with computerized and traditional cognitive behavioral therapy, physical relaxation interventions, and exercise regimens. These methods could be attempted by teachers too. Teachers who participated in a mindfulness class via virtual format during the pandemic shared they experienced reduced levels of stress and heightened awareness of feelings, which gives the field hope for combatting stress and burnout (Pinthong, 2021).

Through the use of mindfulness interventions in the classroom, Norton and Griffith (2020) found there were decreases of negativity and increases in positivity for young people in the classroom, as well as reduced depression, anxiety, and burnout among school staff. The positive impacts of mindfulness interventions continue, as Sun et al. (2019) found mindfulness practice helped implementers of the practice find self-acceptance and reduce stress and perceived stress, in turn reducing the feelings of burnout. Self-acceptance as an educator strengthens confidence, bonds with other educators, and assures their decisions are sound. As teachers progress through their workday, they are making multiple decisions every minute, and over the long term, their executive functioning and decision-making impact their energy and motivation that can contribute to burnout (Renaud & Lacroix, 2023). Specifically for special education teachers, if they do not experience a sense of accomplishment, they may start losing passion and begin not implementing individual education plans with their best effort, and this may negatively impact students with disabilities even more compared to typically functioning peers (Sun et al., 2019). If their teacher's start losing their passion and individual plans are not met, laws and regulations are also not followed, which impacts the teacher as well as the school district.

Feelings of burnout result in reduced motivation, confidence, and concentration (Gold et al., 2010). If one has feelings of burnout, the feelings of shame come into play too. According to Brown (2012, as cited in Akpan & Saunders, 2017), shame is an inhibitor to a person's ability to believe they can be successful. As an educator feels shame about how their students may not have done well on a grade-level assessment, when they share results with their grade-level team, they may not be open to suggestions because it was too hard to take the steps of acceptance and to be reflective to changing behavior when they are overwhelmed. However, Sharp Donohoo et al. (2021) found prayer, as another form of coping with stress, paired with mindfulness may

reduce levels of stress and compassion fatigue. As teams work together and become reflective about instructional strategies and methods based on assessment data, despite how hard it might be, they help build a stronger learning environment for the entire grade level. As a part of team planning and building instructional plans, the use of mindfulness, and personal prayer as a coping strategy to open the mind to new ideas, team members help each other become stronger educators. The support that team members have provided each other in the trenches of the school year help ensure healthy learning environments for educators and students.

Learning Environment

The learning environment in every classroom is a foundation for success for all students and staff in the school (Harris and Bostain, 2021). Through the implementation of mindfulness, the environment becomes calmer, more accepting, and joyful. Norton and Griffith (2020) found there was a more accepting space for vulnerability and personhood for students and teachers in the classrooms practicing mindfulness. Teachers noticed as many children became familiar with mindfulness, they became more accepting of the practice and used the strategies they had been taught, for example, deep breathing, and finger breathing; they even requested more time in the classroom to practice mindfulness (Todd et al., 2019). Teachers with higher levels of interpersonal mindfulness have better classroom management, and with more effective classroom management burnout decreases; additionally self-efficacy and student-teacher relationships are also enhanced, contributing to a balance (Aslan-Gördesli, 2022). There is more joy in the classroom when there is a balance.

Overall, classrooms who practiced mindfulness experienced less conflict, and staff was more authentic, present, and able to detach from interpersonal conflict. This led to fewer feelings of negativity and stress at work, and less reactivity if there are difficult behaviors occurring

(Norton & Griffith, 2020; Harpin et al., 2016). Some challenging behaviors in the classroom are due to low attention spans of students in the classroom. Recent national surveys have shown an increase in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) over the last decade, and Tarrasch's (2018) study showed the use of mindfulness workshops in elementary school children was helpful for improving attention spans, selective attention, and decreased impulsivity, children also had improvements in their functioning and well-being. In response to ADHD not anticipated to decrease, educators need to implement strategies to help our educators combat the stress of classroom attention challenges.

The use of mindfulness has been found to be more significantly impactful to classroom climate than stress (DiCarlo et al., 2020). When mindfulness is implemented the impact of positivity is greater than the impact of the negative stress. This showed the importance of implementing mindfulness practice in our schools. Mindfulness training helps develop a brain state that influences attentional networks, meaning utilizing the strategy can help develop longer attention spans (Tarrasch, 2018). Teachers who are effective in using mindfulness in their classrooms are expected to develop high self-efficacy in their classroom management (Aslan-Gördesli, 2022). On the other hand, students who have teachers who feel burnt-out typically cause more disruptions due to behavior, are less motivated, and do not reach their academic goals as quickly as students who do not have a teacher who is burnt-out (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009 as cited in Zarate et al., 2019).

In addition, the use of alternative therapies and personal meditative practice (such as prayer as an individual, or meditation) in an educator's personal life, and mindfulness have a mutual teacher and student benefit (Stanley, 2011, as cited in Sharp Donohoo et al., 2021). It was recognized by the majority who took part in mindfulness practice, they felt comfortable

sustaining the practice and discussing challenges as well as successes (Todd et al., 2019). As teachers implemented mindfulness, positive climate increased and stress decreased (DiCarlo et al., 2020). When teachers have additional awareness of emotions through the day, through the use of mindfulness practice, teachers can push off the feelings of burnout and experience more positive emotions for themselves and their students; they have a better understanding of the challenges in the profession and have a better handle on their emotions, which improves the climate in the classroom and academic achievement for their students (Zarate et al., 2019). This supports a positive classroom climate which helps develop a more effective learning environment for teachers and students (Pianta et al., 2008, as cited in DiCarlo et al., 2020).

Research showed a teacher's feeling of stress and burnout also affect the emotional well-being and academic success of the students (Becker et al., 2014, as cited in Zarate et al., 2019). When educators are stressed, students are at risk of feeling the stress. DiCarlo et al. (2020) found that when teachers had stress scores in the high range, as their baseline, there was more of a negative feeling climate in their classroom than the teachers who had a moderate stress range as their baseline. Students in the classrooms with stressed teachers tend to have increased negative behaviors, less motivation, and have less academic success (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009 as cited in Zarate et al., 2019). When student learning goals are not met stress can pile on educational teams and families; therefore, producing an additional unwanted outcome. Finally, research has found emotions are contagious, so when a teacher is angry the students are more likely to feel anger too; when a teacher feels calmer, students are likely to feel calmer (Zarate et al., 2019). Those mutual emotions also mean that when the teacher works through tough situations the whole class works through those situations, showing resilience for all in the learning environment.

Resilience

Practicing mindfulness helps a teacher and students to develop and grow in their resilience (Pierotti & Ramer, 2017, as cited in Harris & Bostain, 2021). Practicing mindfulness reduces nervousness, worry, and distress while increasing relaxation in muscles, being emotionally calm, and overall well-being (Franco et al., 2010). When the practice is used as a personal practice in the educator's life, it helps them cope with what life brings, which helps the relationships in the educator's life and aids in reduction of healthcare needs (Harris & Bostian, 2021; Norton & Griffith, 2020). Mindfulness has been helpful to changing the relationship of stressful thoughts and events by decreasing reactivity and enhancing conscious thoughts about emotions (Teasdale et al., 1995, as cited in Gold et al., 2010). The use of mindfulness helps teachers become more flexible, which gives them resilience in tough situations. As a result, burnout is avoided. Czerwinski et al. (2021) shared how mindfulness-based coloring offers an intervention to help support teachers, but other practices may align with each educator's lifestyle and personality to better fit their needs in relation to recovering from occupational stress and rejuvenating.

Burnout was found to vary by gender and showed women reported more burnout compared to men, which can be explained by gender theory, in that, men do not get as involved in the social characteristics in schools, compared to women (Aslan-Gördesli, 2022). This showed there is a potential to take an emotional toll on the women in teaching roles, which can cause more frustration and burnout for them. It has been found to be essential that self-efficacy become a piece of education, for educators, to give the feeling of personal control and physiological wellbeing (Akpan & Saunders, 2017). As self-efficacy grows, so too does resiliency, as when educators advocate for themselves, they look for improvements and help from others, and with

help improvements happen, boosting morale, and sense of accomplishment. Without intervention in building self-efficacy and stress management methods educators will continue to experience social and emotional challenges that will impact effective instruction for their students (Zarate et al., 2019). As mindfulness is utilized teachers demonstrate increased adaptive skills, coping skills, stress management, and they are more positive about the students they serve (Taylor et al., 2016, as cited in Sharp Donohoo et al., 2021). Positive self-belief added trust in their own abilities as educators, and it provided greater instruction and higher student achievement (Akpan & Saunders, 2017).

Interpersonal mindfulness for teachers who practiced mindfulness was connected to socioemotional self-efficacy, and classroom behavior management, but the same was not found in their outside lives (Frank et al., 2016, as cited in Aslan-Gördesli, 2022). This means the practice of mindfulness may have helped them with stress management in the complexities of the classroom, but a different level of mindfulness practice may be important to apply to their outside life. When practiced for the purpose of attention skills- like self-regulation, perseverance, and attention to detail- the practice of mindfulness improved these areas; they found it could be related to reduced anxiety because of the practice of mindfulness itself (Tarrasch, 2018). Much of the research gathered has suggested it could be a challenge to implement the use of mindfulness in classrooms because of lack of understanding its benefits, but research does support its use. The benefits of mindfulness practice are documented and published in the world of science, but it is important to consider how the practice is brought to teacher's attention, in order to get a "buy-in" as it is adapted into classrooms and schools (Todd et al., 2019). As we move forward, in order to sustain educators, the use of mindfulness as a form of self-care has shown to be essential.

Recommendations for Future Balance in Education

As the world of education continues to evolve and change, school systems need to keep in mind the practice of mindfulness has the potential to help educators have a positive impact on their classroom environments and students. Harris and Bostain (2021) showed how burnout decreased absenteeism, turnover, and the cost of teacher health care also increased. However, according to Larson et. al. (2018, as cited in Czerwinski et al., 2021), there are not many implemented interventions to help to avoid burnout. School systems should consider mindfulness sessions for students and training for teachers in connection with social-emotional learning and positive behavior interventions and supports (Harpin et al., 2016). Students who practiced mindfulness with their teachers shared they had a more positive experience than they previously had with stress during exams, getting to sleep, and dealing with difficulties like losing while playing a sport or family conflict, and overall had more feelings of positive fulfillment (Norton & Griffith, 2020). As teachers have maintained awareness of their inner thoughts while facing the challenges of everyday teaching and balancing the political climate affecting funding for schools and increases in expectations, exhaustion has happened and burnout has occurred (Harris & Bostain, 2021; Czerwinski et al., 2021). Finally, formal interventions focused on self-acceptance and mindfulness stress reduction should be taken to prevent burnout in education, especially in the field of special education (Sun et al., 2019). As interventions focus on self-acceptance teachers are able to focus on emotional well-being.

Educators' social and emotional well-being not only affects themselves, but also affects the students in schools, because students notice how their teachers are doing, and react based on the environment. Todd et al. (2019) found that in foundation courses with mindfulness experienced instructors, participants were able to see a more positive impact in themselves as

educators, and brought to light the idea, it would be possible that without the teaching experience in the area of mindfulness practice, there may not be such a noticeable impact. This means, if started early, the practice of mindfulness may help educators feel less occupational stress over the long term.

As professional development is planned for each school year, it is important for mindfulness practice training to be incorporated, but first the learning needs to be focused on the “why” behind it (DiCarlo et al., 2020). This has created the willingness to try something foreign, and be okay with the possible discomfort as the practice starts. Educators are creatures of habit and master adapters, so as they start the practice, it may be uncomfortable; but they will adapt a practice that works for them and their students. As they have started the practice too, they have seen the benefits of stress being decreased, lower anxiety levels, fewer feelings of depression, and as a result, less burnout; in addition, those working with students with disabilities, trauma, or even higher level, level three of four setting, students benefited from mindfulness practice in their daily school routine (Zarate et al., 2019). As educators and students showed benefits from mindfulness practice boundaries and balance happened.

The use of mindfulness practice reducing burnout symptoms and teacher retention are directly correlated. This means if society wants teachers to stay in the field, current practices need to adapt to include mindfulness practice. Self-efficacy for struggles in the classroom and reaching out to teammates or administration for ideas in classroom management also helped with the culture of mindfulness practice (Aslan-Gördesli, 2022). Social support and close relationships with co-workers are helpful for reduced stress, so team building exercises for schools have been essential to stress reduction, and feelings of accomplishment and reduced feelings of burnout (Sharp Donohoo et al., 2021). This means, administrators have an obligation

to build teams of educators who can collaborate and fit well together, as they support each other through the year. School districts who address teacher stress through a wellness program saw a cost-savings of more than three dollars for each dollar they invested in the wellness program, and their teachers also expressed an increase in job satisfaction (Pintong, 2021). As educators have experienced job satisfaction they stay in their roles as educators and have continued to make an impact.

Conclusion

In summary, one important strategy to assist in the changes in education was to implement the practice of mindfulness as educators. The question and purpose of this literature review was: How does mindfulness practice, as an individual, assist in the avoidance of teacher burnout? As teachers begin their teaching career and enter the profession, research shows 40-50% of new teachers will leave their career because of occupational stress and burnout (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016, as cited in Pinthong, 2021). Those statistics illustrate the need for interventions to happen for educators, in order to preserve the American education system for the long term.

The use of mindfulness practice can help educators find a healthy balance and set boundaries between their personal lives and teaching careers. According to Kabat-Zinn (1994, as cited in Renshaw, 2020), mindfulness is paying attention in a specific way and being in the moment without making judgements. Happify (2015) said mindfulness is knowing what is going in one's own head without getting carried away. The research showed using mindfulness practice as an individual outside of teaching helps teachers find a healthier balance than if they do not utilize this practice. With the use of mindfulness, teachers can avoid absenteeism, rise in health care costs, and turnover because of burnout (Harris & Bostain, 2021). Perhaps the best outcome

from practicing mindfulness as an educator is the stress-reduction and stronger relationships built in and outside of the classroom (Norton & Griffith, 2020).

Educators who practice mindfulness have experienced benefits in overall health, mental and physical. According to Harris and Bostain (2021), consistent use of mindfulness techniques helped to increase teachers' self-awareness, improvement in personal well-being, and work performance. Additionally, compassion fatigue is a factor leading to higher stress levels and burnout. Zarate et al., (2019) shared, teacher's rate among the highest for poor mental health and stress when compared with other professions. Teachers who participated in a mindfulness class via virtual format during the pandemic shared they experienced reduced levels of stress and heightened awareness of feelings, which gives the field hope for combating stress and burnout (Pinthong, 2021). This virtual intervention showed that simply giving the space and time for mindfulness practice as self-care made an impact in avoiding burnout.

When considering optimal learning environments, research has found, emotions are contagious, so when a teacher is angry the students are more likely to feel anger too; when a teacher feels calmer, students are likely to feel calmer (Zarate et al., 2019). Those mutual emotions also mean that when the teacher works through tough situations the whole class works through those situations, showing resilience. The use of mindfulness helps teachers become more flexible, which gives them resilience in tough situations. As a result, burnout is avoided. Czerwinski et al. (2021) shared how mindfulness-based coloring offers an intervention to help support teachers, but other practices may align with each educator's lifestyle and personality to better fit their needs in relation to recovering from occupational stress and rejuvenating.

When considering future practice, it is essential interventions are put into school system professional development to practice self-care and mindfulness. Each person has strategies that

work better for them, so being offered different sessions is essential. It will also be important for administration to recognize workloads are ever changing, and if educators are trying new things, there will need to be others omitted from the workload, as well as compensation for work completed.

If mindfulness is not added to professional developments for in-service teachers, or teacher preparation programs for pre-service teachers the country runs the risk of losing teachers every year, without being able to replace them. With fewer teachers, class sizes go up and teacher effectiveness decreases, making a domino effect take place. Getting to systemic change will take political change, and taking first steps as educators to voice how we manage classrooms and balance our responsibilities is hard but an essential first step. Mindfulness practice for ourselves helps us manage our emotions, and maintain our health.

Chapter Three: Discussion, Applications, and Future Studies

As school systems continue to respond to changes in American culture due to the global pandemic, practices need to be implemented to preserve and retain educators. The research examined how the use of mindfulness, as an individual, helps educators avoid burnout in their careers. As demands on educators increase in the classroom, there is an increase in teachers finding new professions to utilize their dynamic skills. As media has reported on challenges within classrooms and in the world of education, there has been more attention on the profession. With more attention brought to the profession, it is an optimal time to make positive changes happen for educators, students, and families.

When starting a teaching career, many mentors reference the idea that teaching is a work of heart. If there is not systematic change and focus on mental health, balance, mindfulness practice, and coping skills to effectively deal with stress, it is possible the American education system may change for the worse, reducing effectiveness for students and families. Specifically, if special education teachers do not experience a sense of accomplishment or appreciation from their teaching peers, they may start losing passion and begin not implementing individual education plans with their best effort, and this may negatively impact students with disabilities more than their general education peers (Sun et al., 2019). Through the use of mindfulness, classrooms, students, and teachers are able to experience less conflict. As there is less conflict within classrooms, more academic and social skills learning is able to take place, building foundations for all students to be successful. As research was gathered on the topic of the use of mindfulness practice helping to reduce burnout, the themes of stress reduction, resilience, and positive learning environment emerged, and insights were gained for future practice in the field of mindfulness practice for educators and its use in the classroom.

Limitations of the Research

Through the review of literature there were limitations found in the research. One limitation was the sample demographics of different researchers, they focused mostly on general education teachers, Harpin et al. (2016) also noted a small sample size, limiting the ability to generalize findings. Similarly, Akpan and Saunders (2017) had a sample size of one teacher, who started a corrective action plan due to outwardly showing frustration in front of students between the time of agreement to partake in the study and the study beginning, due to this action plan, making generalizations could be challenging; but those researchers could indicate using mindfulness with self-compassion can assist educators in reducing negative feelings.

As literature was reviewed it is important to note each article did not discuss all the methods to reduce stress to avoid burnout, Sharp Donohoo et al. (2021), and a self-reporting survey was used to gather findings, that allowed participants to be non-specific by using phrases like, all the time or sometimes, which limits understanding of possible antecedents before the use of mindfulness practice. An additional limitation noted by Sun et al., (2019) is the noted lack of social support in the practice, that may affect how mindfulness is perceived by the person practicing. In the DiCarlo et al. (2019) study, the teachers implementing the practice worked at the same school, but each person had different support and was able to design the learning environment differently, so the variables could result in different outcomes. Akpan and Saunders (2017) concluded that every case might yield different results.

Insights Gained from the Research

It is essential interventions for educators are put into professional development to practice self-care and stress management throughout the school year. Through the research, insights focused on the benefits mindfulness practice provides educators to find balance in their

lives, as they show deep compassion and care for the students they serve in their classrooms. The use of mindfulness practice by educators is an effective way to manage occupational stress, reduce absenteeism, reduce healthcare costs, reduce turnover, and avoid burnout (Harris & Bostain, 2021). Educator burnout is a concern, however the use of mindfulness practice, as an individual can assist in burnout prevention.

The use of mindfulness practice can help educators find a healthy balance and set boundaries between their personal lives and teaching careers. According to Kabat-Zinn (1994, as cited in Renshaw, 2020), mindfulness is paying attention in a specific way and being in the moment without making judgements. Happify (2015) shared mindfulness is knowing what is going on in one's own head without getting carried away. Since mindfulness focuses on being aware in the present moment and keeping attention on how one feels, it is important to know educators can change physiological responses to their work in schools in a way to have non-judgement towards themselves and others as they navigate the challenges of their school days (Aslan-Gördesli, 2022). This ability to change the physiological response is important when thinking about our educator's health and ability to adapt to changes, responsibilities, and continued stress in both life and career.

As educators continue to be problem solvers and caretakers, our focus on stress management is essential. Johnson et al. (2005, as cited in Czerwinski et al., 2021) shared teaching ranks high in stress-related outcomes like psychological and physical health as well as overall employment satisfaction. The practice of mindfulness was found to decrease psychological distress for people with higher-than-average stress levels, and the most significant impacts were in the areas of depression, somatization, acting hostile, and anxiety (Franco et al., 2010). Occupational stress and burnout can influence an educator's ability to be open to change

and efficient in the classroom (Norton & Griffith, 2020; Harris & Bostain, 2021). Even perceived stress can lead to negative classroom environments as well as poor academic outcomes and negative impacts on teacher well-being (DiCarlo et al., 2020). Nearly all teachers shared they felt high levels of stress, and only seven percent of those asked felt like they have a positive and productive way of managing the high stress they feel in connection with their profession (Herman et al., 2108, as cited in Zarate et al., 2019). The high levels of stress felt by educators takes a toll on their health physically and mentally, and it was also found that gender could be an additional factor.

As caregivers by nature, women have a harder time separating their feelings from their work. When literature was reviewed by Aslan- Gördesli (2022), the literature showed, women experienced more emotional burnout, where men experienced more personal accomplishment, and as a result, women scored higher than men in all aspects of burnout. The sub-groups of educators, special education teachers, and women are considered the individuals who benefit from mindfulness practice the most, as men scored lower in the area of burnout than special educators and women. As mindfulness interventions are put in place for in-service teachers, we need to keep in mind the majority of educators are women.

As we strive to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students and educators in the classroom, our focus can be on making those environments more positive. Through the use of mindfulness interventions in the classroom, Norton and Griffith (2020) found there were decreases in negativity and increases in positivity for young people in the classroom, as well as reduced depression, anxiety, and burnout among school staff. Sun et al. (2019) found mindfulness practice helped implementers of the practice find self-acceptance and reduce stress and perceived stress, in turn reducing the feelings of burnout. Specifically for special education

teachers, if they do not experience a sense of accomplishment, they may start losing passion and begin not implementing individual education plans with their best effort, and this may negatively impact students with disabilities even more (Sun et al., 2019). As reflection happens as a result of the research it is important to propose practical applications.

Applications

As a reflective researcher and practitioner, it is essential to make connections to practical applications from the research in the area of mindfulness practice assisting educators in avoiding burnout to preserve the field of education. There should be a higher focus on two areas, systemic change to the education system and how to implement stress management for educators to create balance while the systemic change is occurring. An emphasis should be on the root cause of stress educators experience, rather than the little things, because if the focus is the large things, there is a bigger impact made. In today's society the high-level stress is related to policy changes and the political climate in connection with the world of education; these changes may be mountains to climb, Todd et al. (2019) found that even focusing on the little stressors for intervention had the potential to assist individuals who took part in the practice. Particular focus needs to be placed on strategies for special education teachers and women in the profession to find the strategies that work for them. The following are three specific suggestions, and additional importance for applications, on how to implement mindfulness into the lives of our educators now, while bigger systematic change can be proposed.

Suggestion One

Professional development needs to be implemented and focused on mindfulness strategies. As administration starts introducing mindfulness practice into educators' daily lives, it is important to remember it would be best practice to start with a conversation about the practice

with the participants to get to know their background knowledge and comfort level with each other. It is important to have educators with similar backgrounds together, to ensure comfort level (Todd et al., 2019), but first the learning needs to be focused on the “why” behind it (DiCarlo et al., 2020), because with the “why” there is buy-in. Additionally, educators providing special education support to students would be important to have together, as they work together in a different way to support each other’s mental well-being through the unique circumstances of their daily school life (Beighton & Wills, 2019, as cited in Singh, et al., 2020). Professional development and mindfulness workshops improve dialogue and chances to share ideas with people, and help people realize educators are all in this together (Todd et al., 2019). As the connection to the community grows, support for one another does too.

As a part of professional development options districts could offer mindfulness classes in an online format, mindfulness virtual online courses, (MVOC) to provide the training from the convenience of their home, Pinthong (2021), found this option helped those who participated to increase their coping skills with stress through the pandemic. This option could also help teachers focus on self-acceptance and stress reduction, especially in the field of special education (Sun et al., 2019). As interventions focus on self-acceptance teachers are able to focus on emotional well-being. The more options educators are given to focus on self-care, the more boundaries are encouraged and happiness flourishes.

Implementing mindfulness practice as an individual starts with the knowledge and professional development to develop the skill, but there needs to be a way to sustain the practice as a part of daily life. One method educators can implement to ensure the practice is sustained is to dedicate fifteen minutes during contact time, before students come, or after dismissal, to ensure this time is protected. This could be practiced as a group to begin, and gradually the

groups get smaller as the practice gets more routine, and it is noticed that the practice is helpful for decompressing. A second method educators can implement to ensure the practice is sustained is by having a mindfulness meeting as a team during team preparation times. This may start out as a five day a week session with grade-level teams and reduce to less days with the expectation of each teacher finding the strategy for them as an individual and dedicating the time during their preparation time for individual mindfulness practice. A third method to ensuring the practice is sustained is to have educators implement the practice during a sacred ten to fifteen minutes in their school day, and have them log the time, with what practice they used (mediation, walking, deep berthing, listening to calming music, journaling). Then, coming together as small groups during a portion of staff meetings to discuss the strategies they used, and how they feel like the practice is affecting them. Reflection is an essential piece of maintaining a practice over time.

Suggestion Two

As mindfulness workshops are being introduced it is important administration allow their staff time during the school day to de-compress as a team. This may come during an early morning prep time, or a lunch time, for around twenty minutes, while on contract time. The collaboration and friendships built during this time to destress helps the bond of each team grow, and build the team dynamic. When teachers have awareness of emotions through the day, through the use of mindfulness, they experience more positive emotions, which improves the classroom learning climate (Zarate et al., 2019). If mindfulness practices (deep breathing, coloring, meditation, stretching, or walking) are implemented during these twenty-minute sessions it can help educators reset for the duration of their school day, and they can build that bond with their team members. Social support and close relationships with co-workers are helpful for reducing stress, Sharp Donohoo et al. (2021), emphasizing the importance of

administrators having an obligation to build teams who can collaborate and fit well together, as they support each other throughout the year. This would be especially true for special education teachers, who may not have lunches or prep times scheduled together in order to accommodate IEP meetings, specialized instruction schedules or student behaviors that may arise through the school day.

Suggestion Three

As professional development focuses on mindfulness practice, mental health, and stress reduction for educators, it is essential the social-emotional learning curriculum implemented also focuses on mindfulness practice and positive behavior supports (Harpin et al., 2016). This daily practice in the classroom makes a positive impact on the learning environment. Greeson et al. (2014, as cited in Pinthong, 2021) found that practicing mindfulness has a positive impact on the brain and autonomic nervous system because it reduces production of stress hormones, increases the immune system, and helps the person engage in healthier habits in the areas of eating, sleeping, and relaxation methods. By intentionally using mindfulness, positive outcomes happen in the areas of somatization, interpersonal sensitivity, and hostility; there were also reductions in obsession-compulsion, anxiety, depression, and paranoia (Franco et al., 2010). As mindfulness practice benefits adults, students benefit from the practice, and as it is implemented, our impact as educators is greater because we are assisting students in developing coping skills for the times they will encounter stressors in their lives as children and adults. Utilizing this practice encourages growth by all who use it.

Additional Importance of Research Application

When creating a safe and welcoming environment in the classroom, the use of mindfulness can help create a space for openness and a safe space to make mistakes. Norton and

Griffith (2020) found there was a more accepting space for vulnerability and personhood for students and teachers in the classrooms practicing mindfulness. Teachers noticed as many children became familiar with mindfulness, they became more accepting of the practice and used the strategies they had been taught, like deep breathing, and finger breathing; they even requested more time in the classroom to practice mindfulness (Todd et al., 2019). The use of mindfulness helps reduce stressful feelings and feelings of burnout.

If mindfulness practice is not implemented our teachers will continue to feel stress that results in overwhelmed feelings and burnout. This runs the risk of students who have teachers who feel burnt-out, and the students react with more disruptions, less motivation, and do not reach their academic goals as quickly as students who do not have a teacher who is burnt-out (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009, as cited in Zarate et al., 2019). When teachers have additional awareness of emotions through the day, through the use of mindfulness practice, teachers can push off the feelings of burnout and experience more positive emotions for themselves and their students; they have a better understanding of the challenges in the profession and have a better handle on their emotions, which improves the climate in the classroom and academic achievement for their students (Zarate et al., 2019). This supports a positive classroom climate which helps develop a more effective learning environment for teachers and students (Pianta et al., 2008, as cited in DiCarlo et al., 2020). As reflection happens as a result of the research it is important to propose continuing research based on the results of the use of mindfulness as a means of reducing teacher burnout.

Future Research Recommendations

Through the process of researching how mindfulness practice, as an individual, assists educators in avoiding burnout five additional questions emerged for the author. These questions

also support the essential question of the special education department, what are the best practices for providing inclusive instruction for all learners? It is essential for research to continue in these areas because without research we will not continue to grow and develop as educators. The following recommendations for research are explained next.

Question One

The first question that emerged was: How is morale boosted in special education and teaching in general? This is an important question because of the result of burnout. It will also take some time to implement, nationwide, the practice of mindfulness and self-care in order to make the biggest impact on our education system. When we boost morale in our schools, we strengthen our teams and the positive impact on student achievement. With the divide that exists between general education and special education teachers, strategies to build morale may be the catalyst for closing the divide.

Question Two

The second question to emerge was: How does the practice of mindfulness in the classroom help students develop as young adults? This question touches on the social emotional development of our students, and could be related to predictions of success as adults. When we focus on emotional development of our student's we are building emotional intelligence. With this we could be building future generations who are not afraid to ask for help when they need it, and come together to solve problems.

Question Three

The third question to emerge was: What are the impacts of mindfulness curriculum from pre-school to grade 12? This question is a continuation of the previous research recommendation. This is an area of interest because, again, the use of mindfulness is a strategy to help with

reducing stress in one's life. If these strategies are taught through K-12 curriculum students will be learning skills they can use for their whole lives. If we are able to research this question and implement this practice, we can prepare our students with healthier coping skills for stress later in life.

Question Four

The fourth question to emerge was: What are the effects of mindfulness on families who have experienced trauma? This question is important because trauma affects the way the brain develops, and it would be important for trauma informed practices in the classroom, to know how those students and families would react to the use of mindfulness practice. It could be a place of great healing, but may also affect students in the classroom differently.

Question Five

The fifth, and final, question to emerge was: How are the effects of mindfulness practice different for different genders in the classroom? The research gathered in the literature review written had a bit of information on differences between males and females, but there is more to be learned. It may be important to think about how to structure the practice in the classroom, or how to group students if using small groups.

There are still other questions to be asked in regards to mindfulness. It is a practice that helps improve mental health and balance in our lives. As we implement mindfulness practice for our teachers, we are making a generational impact to end a stigma related to mental health, and that is a great aspiration.

Conclusion

In summary, the research showed using mindfulness practice as an individual outside of teaching helps teachers find a healthier balance than if they do not utilize this practice. With the

use of mindfulness, teachers can avoid absenteeism, rise in health care costs, and turnover because of burnout (Harris & Bostain, 2021). Perhaps the best outcome from practicing mindfulness as an educator is the stress-reduction and stronger relationships built in and outside the classroom (Norton & Griffith, 2020). As we practice mindfulness, we become more aware of our inner thoughts and feelings.

When considering future practice, it is essential interventions are put into schools professional development, or monthly meetings, to practice self-care and mindfulness. Each person has strategies that work better for them, so if there are professional development sessions presented to the entire staff individually could find what works for them. It will also be important for administration to recognize workloads are ever changing, and if educators are trying new things, there will need to be others omitted from the workload, as well as compensation for work completed, in an attempt to support the work and personal life balance.

Future areas of research include: ways to boost morale in education, in the areas of special education and general education, how mindfulness practice in the K-12 classroom helps develop young adults and mental health, how does mindfulness practice help students and families that have experienced trauma, and how does mindfulness practice help the different genders? There are still other questions to be asked in regards to mindfulness, and overall, it is a practice that helps improve mental health and balance in educator lives. As mindfulness practice is implemented for teachers, a generational impact is made to end a stigma related to mental health, and that is a great aspiration. According to Harris and Bostain (2021), "Mindfulness helps individuals be intentional about being in the present moment. Constant awareness and attentiveness open the door for creating resilience. Mindfulness provides the opportunity for

individuals to look at stressful events as challenges versus threats” (p. 89). Mindfulness practice opens the doors to a healthier life.

If mindfulness is not added to professional developments for in-service teachers, or teacher preparation programs for pre-service teachers the country runs the risk of losing teachers every year, without being able to replace them. With less teachers, class sizes go up and teacher effectiveness decreases, making a domino effect take place. Getting to systemic change will take political change, and taking first steps as educators to voice how we manage classrooms and balance our responsibilities is hard but an essential first step. Mindfulness practice for ourselves helps us manage our emotions, and maintain our health.

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