Mindfulness as Practice: Shifts in Teacher Awareness and Identity

Abstract
ABSTRACT This narrative inquiry explores stories of a principal and two teachers in a rural setting who have had diverse experiences with the contemplative practice of mindfulness. The three participants – Russell, a beginning teacher, Willa, a wellness coordinator, and Patti, a principal – gathered with the researcher to convey their individual and collective experiences. My research wonder primarily focused on the following questions: How does the experience of mindfulness practice shift teacher identity and awareness, and time educators spend with children and youth? As educators, how can the practice of mindfulness expand our experience of listening, loving kindness, and compassion within educational spaces? Narrative accounts of the research participants were collected during individual and group semi-structured interviews ranging from thirty minutes to one hour. The narrative accounts were inquired into through the dimensions of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The participants' stories offer insight into the possibility that mindfulness practice impacts teacher identity and awareness, and how these guided their presence in their educational community.
Awareness and Mindfulness. This week I will clarify these two words and introduce the functions they point to. These states are quite often confused. Mindfulness is sometimes defined as “an ability to recollect”, “remembrance” or “knowing what is happening while it's happening”. Therefore its function is to keep something in mind. We could also describe it as an ability to pay attention to something. Examples would be the classic “Mindfulness of Breathing”, where we keep the breath in mind. We counteract forgetfulness of the breath and know the breath as it's happening directly. That's what Mindfulness is. Consciousness. Formal mindfulness practice, also known as mindfulness meditation, involves carving out one or more minutes to pay attention to the present moment on purpose, to strengthen awareness and our ability to recognize we have choices available in each moment. Informal mindful practice are in-the-moment strategies that can be used throughout the day. Keep in mind that mindfulness practice is called a practice for a reason: It bears the most fruit when practiced deliberately and regularly. Now, where to start? That's an individual decision, but perhaps get your feet wet by selecting one meditation exercise. The term “mindfulness” has been used to refer to a psychological state of awareness, the practices that promote this awareness, a mode of processing information and a character trait. To be consistent with most of the research reviewed in this article, we define mindfulness as a moment-to-moment awareness of one's experience without judgment. In this sense, mindfulness is a state and not a trait. While it might be promoted by certain practices or activities, such as meditation, it is not equivalent to or synonymous with them. Several disciplines and practices can cultivate mindfulness. These results indicate Mindfulness Awareness Practice training benefits children with executive function difficulties. 15. A study conducted by Amy Saltzman, M.D., in collaboration with the Department of. Compared to teachers in the control group, teachers in the SMART program also reported increased mindfulness, decreased occupational stress, and increased work satisfaction from pre- to post-intervention. At the end of the program, 95% of participants said they would recommend the program to their teacher colleagues and their principal. 19. Teacher Directory. Mindful Magazine. Magazine Subscription. Pausing to practice mindfulness for just a few minutes at different times during the day can help your days be better, more in line with how you’d like them to be. Explore these five daily practices for bringing more mindfulness into your life: Marta Locklear/Stocksy. Beyond safety, these include motivations like reward, connection, purpose, self-identity and core values. Setting an intention—keeping those primal motivations in mind—helps strengthen this connection between the lower and higher centers. For instance, you might come up with, “If office door, then deep breath,” as a way to shift into mindfulness as you are about to start your workday. Or, “If phone rings, take a breath before answering.”