



Students Report that Short In-Class Mindfulness Exercises May Enhance Deep Learning

What is this Research About?

Anecdotal evidence suggests that in-class mindfulness exercises may enhance student learning. In this study, a researcher and faculty member from Queen's University led his students through short mind-calming exercises at the beginning of each lecture. The researcher surveyed students to gather their feedback on the exercises.

What did the Researchers Do?

The researcher incorporated 3 to 4 minute mind-calming exercises into the beginning of each lecture of a 3rd year ecology course. The exercises included focusing on one's breathing, bringing awareness to the body's physical connection to the ground, and visualizing a field site visited earlier in the course and remembering the sensations of being there. At the mid-point and end of the semester, students completed an online survey measuring their perceptions of the exercises, including whether they found them enjoyable and whether the exercises promoted learning.

What did the Researchers Find?

Over 90% of students reported that they found the mind-calming exercises "enjoyable and relaxing." Approximately 70% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the exercises enhanced the depth and quality of their learning. Responses to open-ended survey questions were also generally positive, although a small group of students questioned the amount of time used for the mindfulness exercises. Preliminary evidence also suggests that introducing the mind-calming exercises may have improved the researcher's teaching evaluations for this course.

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A synopsis of a scholarship of teaching and learning journal article

➔ How to Implement this Research in Your Classroom

Consider incorporating short mindfulness exercises at the beginning of your classes. Mindfulness exercises can include instructing students to focus on their breathing or leading students through a "body scan." Survey data collected from 3rd year biology students suggests that students find these exercises enjoyable, and 70% reported that the exercises enhanced the depth and quality of their learning.

➔ Citation

Grogan, P. (2019). The possible learning and teaching benefits of short mind-calming exercises in undergraduate courses. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 10(2).
<https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2019.2.8190>

➔ Keywords

post-secondary education | university
life-skill | pedagogy
mindfulness meditation



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