

Effects of a mindfulness-based intervention for teachers: A study on teacher and classroom outcomes

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Given their heavy work demands, teachers feel increasingly stressed, and their stress and burnout can affect their health and well-being and negatively impact students' learning and engagement. A promising approach for enhancing teachers' social and emotional competencies (SEC) and well-being is through mindfulness-based contemplative practices. Moreover, research in this domain is very recent and there are few methodologically robust studies on the efficacy of interventions, namely on mindfulness-based interventions for teachers. The main goal of this study is to evaluate the proximal and distal effects of a mindfulness-based SEC promotion program – Programa Atentamente - (stress reduction, SEC promotion, compassion/caring practices), developed for teachers, across a variety of teachers and classroom variables – mindfulness, self-compassion, self-efficacy, well-being, self regulation, neurophysiological measure of attention allocation (P300) and classroom quality interaction. This study followed a randomized trial design and, in this poster, preliminary data for the pretest and posttest for teachers and classroom outcome variables will be presented. The experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG) included 82 and 33 elementary school teachers, respectively. This study used a mixed data collection strategy that encompassed self-report data, neurophysiological measure and observational ratings of classroom behaviors. Results indicated a significant improvement on EG teachers' levels of mindfulness, self-compassion, and psychological distress, compared to those of the CG teachers. Results also showed that mindfulness mediated the relationship between the intervention and teachers well-being, whereas self-compassion mediated the relationship between the intervention and teachers burnout. Considering neurophysiological measures teachers that underwent the mindfulness intervention (vs. the control group) are expected to present increased attention-related responses reflected in increased P3b amplitude, reduced alpha power and increased theta phase consistency for task-relevant stimuli, as well as decreased P3a amplitude and increased alpha power for task-irrelevant/distracting stimuli. Concerning classroom dimensions, the EG teachers demonstrated significantly higher levels of respect for students and lower levels of negativity responses to conflict situations, than CG teachers. These results reinforce that mindfulness training promotes mindfulness and self-compassion which then leads to reductions in stress and burnout and to an increase in teachers well-being and resources that can be invested in improving classroom interactions that support student learning.