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Teaching Mindfulness Online

ISANA/ANZSSA Conference 2017

Presentation Overview

- Mindfulness for Wellbeing and Academic Success (MWAS) Program – The **Content**
- The **Research Outcomes**
- The **Learnings**
- The **Challenges**

Quick Summary

Mindfulness for Wellbeing and Academic Success (MWAS)

2016 SSAF funded project

A four week mindfulness training course for students. Two options:

- Self guided online (Interact2)
- Real time sessions (Adobe Connect)

Research looked at:

- Mental Wellbeing WEMWBS (Stewart-Brown & Janmohamed 2008)
- Mindful Attention Awareness MAAS (Brown & Ryan 2003)
- Academic Motivation AMS (Vallerand, Blais, Briere & Pelletier 1989)

Researchers: Geoff Simmons, Maria Bellio, Judy Redman

MWAS - Content of the Program

Week One Content

- Introduction to mindfulness
- Thoughts and awareness
- How we learn mindfulness
- Making a commitment to practice

Week Three Content

- Attention
- Training attention
- Dealing with distractions
- Multitasking
- Stress and performance
- Applied mindfulness
- Procrastination

Week Two Content

- Default mode brain function
- Negativity bias
- Responding to negative emotions mindfully

Week Four Content

- Being intentional
- Ethics, values and spirituality
- Maintaining motivation
- Finding teachers
- Wellbeing and positive psychology
- Using apps for guided meditation

MWAS – Week **One** Content and Practices

| Week One Content | Week One Practices |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to mindfulness <p>Thoughts and awareness</p> <p>How we learn mindfulness</p> <p>Making a commitment to practice.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three minute Breathing Space (everyday mindfulness)• Using the Breath as an Anchor (guided mindfulness practice) |

MWAS – Week **Two** Content and Practices

Week Two Content

- Default mode brain function
Negativity bias
- Responding to negative emotions mindfully

Week Two Practices

- Three minute Breathing Space (everyday mindfulness)
- Thoughts and Feelings As Waves (guided mindfulness practice)

MWAS – Week **Three** Content and Practices

Week Three Content

- Attention
- Training attention
- Dealing with distractions
- Multitasking, stress and performance
- Applied mindfulness
- Procrastination

Week Three Practices

- Mindfulness Bells (everyday mindfulness)
- Body Scan and Mindful Movement (guided mindfulness practices)

MWAS – Week **Four** Content and Practices

Week Four Content

- Being intentional
- Ethics, values and spirituality
- Maintaining motivation, finding teachers
- Wellbeing and positive psychology
- Using apps for guided meditation

Week Four Practices

- Befriending Meditation (guided mindfulness practice) and
- Practice of participants' choice.

Research Outcomes

Main findings:

- Mindfulness training may be successfully delivered online both in real time and self-guided
- Improvements in wellbeing and mindful attention
- Some participants reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation for study

The Learnings

- A brief mindfulness program can be effective (Participants reported increased wellbeing, mindful attention and academic motivation)
- Mindfulness can be taught effectively online
- Collaborate to make use of online learning technology for best outcomes

The Challenges

- Timing
- Limits to presenters' expertise (re online teaching & learning)
- Teaching Mindfulness
- The importance of practice
- Placing mindfulness in the learning context
- Limits on reflection, feedback and sharing in the online space

Mindfulness for Wellbeing and Academic Success

Forthcoming paper in JANZSSA April 2018

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