



## Mindfulness makes for happier teachers

According to a new study, teachers who practice "mindfulness" are better equipped to reduce their own stress levels and prevent burnout. The study, carried out by the University of Wisconsin, also highlighted that said factors amongst teachers are a chief concern for school districts nationwide; not only affecting the standard of education, but also incurring considerable additional costs in recruiting and sustaining teachers.

For the purposes of the research, 18 teachers were recruited to take part in a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course. The teachers undergoing training were randomly assigned and asked to practice a guided meditation at home for at least 15 minutes a day. They were also taught strategies for preventing and dealing with stress in the classroom, for instance "dropping in", a process of momentarily focusing attention on your breath and other physical sensations, thoughts, and emotions. The training also included practices to help them to adopt a kinder outlook on their challenging experiences.

Over the course of the school year, the researchers found that those who received the mindfulness training displayed significant reductions in psychological stress, improvements in classroom organisation, and increases in self-compassion. Whilst the group that did not receive any training showed signs of increased stress and burnout. "The most important outcome that we observed is the consistent pattern of results, across a range of self-report and objective measures used in this pilot study, that indicate benefits from practicing mindfulness," said the study researcher assistant scientist, Lisa Flook.

