Student: Eleanor Weisbaum
Supervisor: Ray Rogers
Date of submission: July 30th, 2014

"Why Mindfulness: Examining an Emerging Educational Pedagogy"

A Portfolio submitted to the faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies, York University Ontario, Canada.

York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

_____	_(See attached email)_____
Eleanor Weisbaum	Ray Rogers
(Student)	(Supervisor)

Index

Abstract…….…….....3

Foreword…… 5

Section 1: Introduction…… 7

Section 2: Personal Context…….....8

Section 3: Field research overview……..9

Section 4: A Conversation with the experts……..... 11

Section 5: Literature review of the historical, cultural and medical contexts…… 30

Historical and cultural context…… 30

Questioning the System: Popular Education……...35

Mindfulness and Education…….39

Section 6: Field research – Experiencing the practice……..... 44

Case Study 1 - Conference at the American School in London…… 48

Case Study 2 - Workshops in elementary & high schools, New Delhi, India… 52

Section 7: Conclusion……..58

Epilogue: Discussing tensions & potential capitalist cooptation……. 60

References……... 63

Appendix: Descriptions of foundational practices……. 66

Abstract

Through interviews with international experts, along with a literature review, this paper explores some of the current issues that exist within the education system regarding teacher and student well-being, as well as some of the historical and cultural antecedents that have caused these issues to manifest. It also examines recent scientific research, which reflects concerns around the impact of stress on students. One recent study shows that repeated stress negatively impacts the brain's ability to learn. Through field research and case studies, the use of mindfulness and meditation as a resource to provide tools and activities to counteract these issues will be explored.

Two years of field research, working directly with Buddhist monastics in the tradition of international scholar, activist and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, provides unique insight into the practical implementation of mindfulness in a classroom setting. The field research is summarized into two case studies. The first examines the responses of educators to a four day mindfulness conference, and the second analyzes feedback from high-school students in New-Delhi, India who participated in a three day in-school mindfulness workshop. The results of both case studies reveal an over-all positive response from both groups of participants, with feedback showing an increase in well-being and a decrease in stress and anxiety.

Because of its status as an emerging field, it is clear that further research is needed to define more fully the effects of mindfulness as an intervention tool within the classroom. Further in-depth research in this field is imperative, so that academic and public institutions can utilize it effectively. It is also important to recognize the inherently experiential qualities of mindfulness. While there is further work to be done academically

to understand the full physiological and psychological impacts of mindfulness, as a field researcher I clearly observed the positive and transformative impact of mindfulness in a classroom setting, on both teachers and students.

Keywords Mindfulness, Meditation, Education, Students, Teachers, Well-being, Curriculum, Buddhism, Contemplative-Study

Foreword

I would like to begin this foreword by returning to my personal statement, included in the first draft of my Plan of Study.

> I was raised in the Toronto alternative school system in schools that focused on peacemaking (peer mediation) and social justice. From a young age I was asked to look in a critical way at the structure of my education and be involved in its creation… As a teenager and young adult I formally studied mediation and Buddhist mindfulness. (Plan of Study, updated 04-08-12)

This statement reflects my original inspiration to pursue a master's degree: this being my own personal interest and background in the field of education and social justice. My aspiration was to expand this knowledge in an academic setting.

My time at the Faculty of Environmental Studies has pushed me to explore my area of interest with a critical and analytical eye. The true interdisciplinary nature of the faculty has supported my aspirations to grow as an academic. Through human participatory research, the components of my plan of study were brought to life with the tools of data collection and on camera interviews. My research put me on the ground in England, India, Bhutan and the United States, working directly with Buddhist monastics and experts in the field of mindfulness and education. These experiences gave me the resources and support needed to accomplish my learning objectives, as outlined in my POS. These learning objectives included:

- Define systemic problems which mindfulness seeks to address
- Study Buddhist mindfulness

- Critically analyze tensions surrounding Western and traditional perspectives (pertaining to the implementation of mindfulness in the classroom)

The research and literature reviews from both my Plan of Study and II-III exam shaped and informed my major paper, as they helped me to focus and unpack my area of concentration. My final paper is a clear culmination of my POS and II-III exam, incorporating the literature review, field research, area of concentration and research methodologies. I am grateful for the time I got to spend with the FES as a learner.

Section 1: Introduction

Over the past three years my field research has taken me around the world, to pristine private schools in London England, up into the breathtaking mountains of Bhutan, onto the crowded streets of New Delhi, India and into the quiet monastery of a group of Vietnamese Buddhist monks living in Bordeaux France. I arrived at each of these places as a participant observer, hoping to gain deeper insight into the practical use and impacts of mindfulness and meditation practices on teachers and students. To gain this insight I worked directly with Buddhist monastics offering retreats and workshops in conference and classroom settings. In each of these diverse places I found myself having a similar conversation. The conversation was about the general lack of emotional and social support for teachers and students within modern education systems, which has created systemic symptoms such as teacher burn-out, student anxiety, depression and stress. I was struck by the commonality of the issues faced by both teachers and students around the world.

Through interviews with international experts, along with a literature review, this paper will explore some of the current issues that exist within the education system regarding teacher and student well-being, along with some of the historical and cultural antecedents that have caused these issues to manifest. Furthermore, the interviews, literature review and field research case studies, will support the theory that mindfulness practices can be implemented in a modern classroom setting to directly address and counteract the underlying social causes and symptomatic issues being experienced by teachers and students, such as anxiety, burn-out and stress, and that this implementation has a clear positive and transformative impact on the entire school community.

Section 2: Personal Context

Before continuing with this paper it is important to disclose my own personal connection with mindfulness and meditation. This connection has provided me with a unique access to the international mindfulness community, along with an ever-present challenge to conduct my research with an objective and critical mind.

I attended my first retreat with international scholar, Nobel peace prize nominee and Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh at the age of ten. At this retreat I participated in the children's program, getting to experience first hand what it means to practice mindfulness as a young person. Throughout my teenage years I attended retreats with my family. As a young adult I continued to practice mindfulness and meditation in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh and the international Plum Village community (the name for his collective centers of practice around the world).

Thich Nhat Hanh established a tradition of practice known as "engaged Buddhism" (based on the principals and tradition of Zen Buddhism) during the Vietnamese war. At this time he was a practicing in a temple as a young novice monk in his home country of Vietnam. Having seen the physical and psychological impact war was having on the people of his country, he decided to take the practices of mindfulness and meditation outside of the temple and bring them to the young people of his country as a means of addressing their suffering. He established the School of Youth For Social Service, providing youth with tools to help them transform their suffering into positive action, for example rebuilding local schools. During the war he travelled to the United States and met with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who nominated Thich Nhat Hanh for a

Nobel Peace Prize. For his public denouncements of the war and refusal to take a side Thich Nhat Hanh was exiled from Vietnam. For the past thirty-five years he has continued his work to bring mindfulness and meditation out of the monastery and into people's everyday lives. Through his work he has created an international community known as the Plum Village Community, with practice centers in France, the United States, Germany, Hong Kong and Thailand ("Thich Nhat Hanh", 2014).

When I enrolled in York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies Master's program I decided that I wanted to look at this tradition and practice through a professional and critical lens, specifically in the context of exploring what impact it might have on educators and students. Through my connection with the community I was able to go with monastics into classrooms and conference settings around the world to participate, observe and conduct research on the impacts of mindfulness and meditation on teachers and students.

Section 3: Field research overview

The following figure is an overview of my field research and mindfulness events that I participated in during the course of researching and writing this paper (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Overview of field research

Event Type	Date	Location	Role	Details
Retreat	September 27th, 2011 – October 2, 2011	**Mississippi , United States** Magnolia Grove Monastery (Batesville)	* Participant	*Attended a 5 day retreat led by Thich Nhat Hanh to experience basic mindfulness techniques and practices.
Teaching Tour	October 26, – November 10, 2011	**East Coast, United States** Universities: Yale, Harvard, Brown, Georgetown, Columbia, the University of Pennsylvania**,** IONA College and Lehman College	* Co-Facilitator * Participant Observer	* Facilitated and observed mindfulness and meditation workshops at Universities across the East Coast of the United States as part of a teaching tour led by monastics in the Plum Village tradition.
Conference	March 23 – April 2, 2012 (Conference March 30 – April 2, 2012)	**London, United Kingdom** American School in London (ASL)	* Conference coordinator * Researcher * Participant Observer	* Assisted in the coordination of a conference for educators at the American School in London, led by Thich Nhat Hanh. * Conducted research in the form of a before and after survey of conference participants.
Teaching Tour	September 16 – October 27, 2012	**Thimpu, Bhutan & New Delhi, India** Gross National Happiness Centre, Thimpu, Vasant Valley School, New Delhi and Step By Step School, Noida	*Workshop co-facilitator *Researcher * Participant Observer	* Co-facilitated workshops on mindfulness and meditation for youth in Bhutan in coordination with the Gross National Happiness Centre. * Co-facilitated mindfulness and meditation workshops for elementary and high-school students in New Delhi, India. Conducted post surveys of student participants.
Winter Retreat	January 12 – February 17, 2013	**Walbröl, Germany & Bordeaux, France** European Institute for Applied Buddhism & Plum Village Monastery	*Participant * Program advisor	* Deepened personal practice and understanding of foundational practices during the annual winter retreat at the Plum Village center in Germany. * Worked closely with monastic Sister Chau Nghiem to develop materials for Plum Village's initiative for educators.
Educators' Retreat & Conference	August 11 – August 16, 2013	**Ontario, Canada** Brock University	*Conference Coordinator *Presenter * Researcher	* Assisted in the coordination of the conference activities * Gave presentations on using mindfulness in classrooms * Coordinated speaker panels * Conducted before and after survey of participants on behalf of the Plum Village community in coordination with Exeter University

Section 4: A Conversation with the experts

During my international field research I had the opportunity to conduct interviews with various experts in the field of both education and mindfulness. These interviews provide insight into the global conversation about the growing concern for the well-being of teachers and students in modern educational systems and the proposed application of mindfulness and meditation as a possible intervention. Although these interviews were conducted several months apart in far-flung reaches of the world, they reflect a cohesive and growing awareness of the social and emotional issues faced by teachers and students that have sparked scholarly interest in the emerging field of mindfulness and education (Paul H. Harnett & S. Dawe, 2012).

Each interview shared in this paper was conducted between March 3rd, 2012 and October 25th, 2012. The interviews were recorded with a Canon 7D SLR camera and Tascam audio recorder, operated by my fiancé and ever-reliable adventure partner, Robert Walsh. These recordings were done in accordance to York University's code of ethics. Participants were asked to be involved on a voluntary basis and were given informed consent forms, which outlined the risks involved. I have transcribed the recordings and chosen excerpts from them to analyze within this paper.

A short biography of the interviewee and a description of the interview setting, along with the question that was asked by the interviewer will precede each of the transcribed quotes. For the sake of this paper an interview number has been assigned to each interview. This number does not correspond to the order in which the interviews were conducted. The date of the interview is also provided.

Interview #1
Interview date: September 25, 2012
Location: Thimpu, Bhutan
Interviewee: Thakur Singh Powdyel
Citizenship: Bhutanese
Profession: Former Minister of Education for Bhutan (then current minister of education at time of the interview)
Interviewer: Elli Weisbaum

In September of 2012 I was invited by Thich Nhat Hanh's community to be part of a small delegation travelling to Bhutan and India to offer mindfulness workshops to teachers, parents and students. In Bhutan we were hosted by the Gross National Happiness Center. We offered four days of workshops to youth in the capital city of Thimpu. On the final day of workshops the minister of education invited the delegation to have dinner with him. This is how I came to be in a packed van driving up one of the winding, almost vertical roads that snake through the capital of Bhutan.

After a multi-course meal, which included the national dish of chili-peppers in a cheese sauce, a uniquely spicy challenge to any pallet, the minister of education agreed to sit down for an interview. He wore a traditional Bhutanese outfit called a Gho. He shared about Bhutan's current initiative of "Green Schools for Green Bhutan". This initiative focuses on several areas of 'greenery' including 'environmental greenery' (allowing students to explore the link between human beings and nature) 'intellectual greenery' (cultivating open and passionate minds in the teachers and students) and 'social greenery' (creating engaged, moral citizens). Acknowledging that the youth of a country become its future adult citizens is the driving force behind this initiative. According to Thakur Singh Powdyel, cultivating 'greenery' at a school level is an investment in a societies future as a whole.

After sharing about this initiative he then went on to share some of his own theories regarding what is taught in schools.

> In the scheme of education the place of teacher is absolutely central. We may have fabulous resources, state of the art equipment, very motivated students, but if the teachers are not motived or animated, engaged we can go so far but no further. But if we have a highly motived animated teacher, passionate teacher, then he or she can make up for the deficiencies in resources and deficiencies at the level of students and actually do a wonderful job. As teachers I believe we teach basically two things. We teach what we know, what we know may be physics, or chemistry, or biology, mathematics, literature, or philosophy, or finance or sports, so we teach what we know. But more important as teachers we teach who we are. Who we are is not in the book, it is not in the internet, or in the library. Who we are is us. Our entire self. Our physical self, our intellectual self, our academic self, our moral self, our spiritual self, cultural self. The product of our training, our upbringing our sense of right and wrong our worldview, our tastes our habits, our ideas, dreams and fears. All these together make us who we are. And who we are we do not teach, we do not talk about. Who we are we show in our examples, in our conduct, in our behavior in the way we present ourselves through action, through speech, through our thoughts. These actions together make us who we are. And who we are is something that the children see straight away. We do not need to talk about who we are. Who we are we simply present, we show. From our examples students pick up their own models for their lives. So that is why it is an extremely difficult job, to do

> teacher. And yet the most important job in the world. (Thakur Singh Powdyel, personal communication, September 25, 2012)

Often when looking at the state of education the focus becomes the written curriculum or the test scores of students, rather than the personal well-being of teachers and students. In the article "Five Reasons Teacher Turnover Is on the Rise" Smollin (2011) writes:

> Since the No Child Left Behind Act was introduced in 2001, standardized test scores in math and reading have become the most important accountability measures used to evaluate schools. Studies show that pressure to raise student test scores causes teachers to experience stress and less job satisfaction. As states increasingly rely on standardized test scores to evaluate individual educators, determine teacher pay and make lay-off decisions, testing pressure will only increase. (Smollin, 2011)

In his interview, Thakur Singh Powdyel reminds us how important it is to look beyond test scores and see the significance of the 'invisible curriculum', being the teachers themselves. Acknowledging the impact that a teacher's personal presence has on their students is pivotal when examining the current systemic issues faced by teachers and students.

Interview #2
Interview date: March 2, 2012
Location: London, England
Interviewee: Sister Chan Duk (commonly goes by: Sister Annabel)
Citizenship: United Kingdom
Profession: Buddhist nun in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh / Plum Village
Interviewer: Elli Weisbaum

During the winter of 2012 I was asked to help coordinate a conference for educators, led by Thich Nhat Hanh, which took place at place at the American School in London, (research from this conference to be discussed later in the paper). During this retreat I had the opportunity to interview several guest speakers and experts in the field of mindfulness and education.

Thich Nhat Hanh's delegation to this conference included Sister Chan Duk, the first westerner to be ordained as a Buddhist nun in Thich Nhat Hanh's tradition. She is the current Dean of Practice at the European Institute of Applied Buddhism (EIAB). Originally from England, she taught as a high school teacher there for fifteen years in England before ordaining.

We begin the interview by discussing where she currently lives and works. She shares that the EIAB has hosted several retreats for teachers. Teachers often attend the EIAB's general retreats as well. She says that some teachers come to retreats because they have already tried a little bit of mindfulness in their classrooms and want to learn more, but that many of the teachers come with a feeling of great despair. They come because they are desperate and looking for help. I ask her where their despair comes from and what they are looking for at the retreats.

> We always have the Dharma sharing [discussion groups] every day of our courses, so we hear quite a lot from the teachers. And normally what we feel, the despair, it comes from that they are part of a system that is much bigger than they are and they cannot do anything about the system. The system says that the children have to pass exams. If your students don't pass exams you are a bad teacher and we do not want

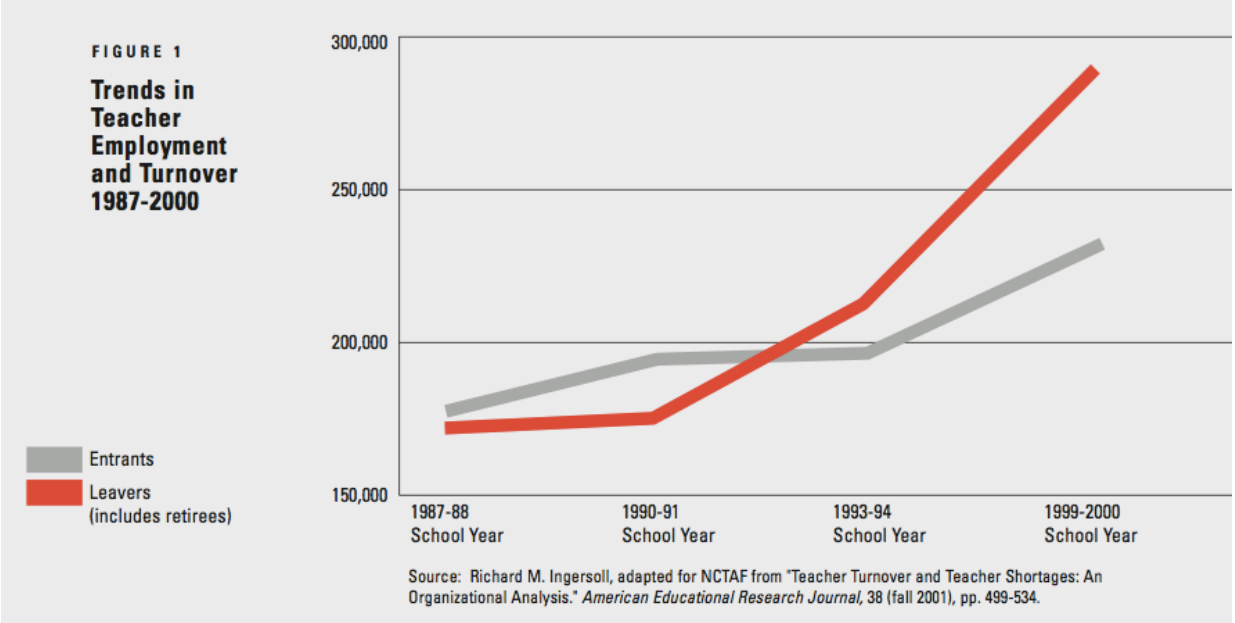
to employ you anymore or give you a promotion. So there is always that pressure on doing the curriculum properly and making sure all the texts are read completely. And as long as that pressure is there and we are afraid of losing our job or our position in the school or just afraid of the authority then we feel trapped, we feel frustrated. We do not want to teach like this but we feel no alternative so that is one great source of despair….

And of course there is the usual thing of stress. There is too much. Too many papers to mark. Too crowded a schedule, timetable. Not enough time to be with the children as people and to know about them, know about their difficulties. For instance if you really want to, this is my experience as a teacher, if you really want to know a child better you have to keep them behind after school or use the lunch hour in order to sit down and talk to them.

I think all teachers they begin with a very strong aspiration, an ideal of what being a teacher means to them and there's always love in that, that they want to do the best they can for the children. I don't think you enter teaching in order to become famous or to get honours or something. It's like if you become a nurse you do so out of compassion and love. But after a while that can be eroded. Your feeling, your deepest aspiration there is no way; you don't have the space to realize it. At that point, when you don't have the motivation of love in you anymore, it's just the fact that you need a salary in order to be able to survive, then the teaching becomes very very difficult. Just doing what's expected of you from others. You're not doing what you really want to do from within. (Sister Annabel, personal communication, March 2, 2013)

From Sister Annabel's experience we can see that stress and pressure are part of a teacher's daily reality, with many root causes stemming from the administrative and curricular systems. In the "Profile of Teachers in the U.S. 2011" the National Center for Education and Information found that "Almost all the comments written in by numerous survey respondents were expressions of strong opposition to the current emphasis on student testing and dissatisfaction with school administrators." (Feistritzer, 2011, p. 51).

The dissatisfaction of teachers can be seen reflected in recent studies that look at teacher attrition, also referred to as teacher turnover. In their 2003 summary report the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003, p.8) states, "Teacher retention has become a national crisis. As we make clear in the full report that accompanies this summary, teacher turnover is now undermining teaching quality and it is driving teacher shortages. " The summary report includes a graph (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003, p.9) that illustrates the clear trend in the increase of teachers terminating their employment.



While there is no detailed breakdown to accompany this graph of the exact reasons teacher attrition is so high (for example: dissatisfaction, issues with remuneration etc.), the graph serves to establish that there is a clear issue within the field of education when it comes to teachers remaining in their jobs.

If, as the Bhutanese minister of education suggested, teachers teach who they are, then a system which causes them despair and stress is inherently transmitting these qualities to the students in the classroom. Therefore, we can begin to see a connection between the need for tools that increase well-being for teachers and the natural extension of this well-being to the students.

Interview #3
Interview date: April 2, 2012
Location: London, England
Interviewee: Paul Richards
Citizenship: American
Profession: High school principal at the American School in London (ASL)
Interviewer: Elli Weisbaum

During the retreat led by Thich Nhat Hanh at the American school in London I sat down with the school's principal Paul Richards. We set up our camera in one of the school's staff rooms. The walls have colorful artwork on them, some done by students, others look professional. The smell of coffee brewed earlier in the morning permeates the whole room.

Paul Richards is originally from Boston Massachusetts and has been the principal at the American School in London for three years. Prior to this, he was the principal at Needham High School in Massachusetts, and before that the principal of Nantucket High School. He completed his doctoral work in educational administration at Boston College, studying academic stress in suburban high schools. As a principal he has explored and implemented mindfulness tools in schools both in the United States and in the United Kingdom.

At the start of the interview I asked him to share a bit about himself and what led him to be interested in mindfulness. He shared that when he moved from Nantucket to Needham High-School, which was a very high achieving large public school, he noticed that many of the students were pushing themselves into frantic and unhealthy states in the name of success. The situation reminded him of slowly boiling a frog; the students did not realize what had happened to them because the pressure had mounted over time. But

as someone stepping freshly into the situation he was able to see quite clearly that there was an unhealthy side to achievement that needed to be addressed.

> So we looked at the program, we studied it and then we started to act. And one of the things we did was instituted yoga into the PE classes so all students got yoga. We also brought in some mind body experts who taught them techniques in mindfulness and ended up very much improving the lives of the young people who decided to participate, but also raising the issue in the community and because we had a major news outlet in our town it also got a lot of attention nationally. So three years ago I came to this school in London and am continuing some of that work. (Richards, personal communication, April 2, 2012)

Interviewer: "When we talk about the pressure being experienced by students and teachers, why is mindfulness something you want to include in the school? "

> …you have to be in a good place if you are going to be the best you can be. If you are going to be a good teacher you have to be in a good happy centered place. If I'm going to be a good principal I need to be in a good place and take care of myself and then I can be the best I can be. If kids are going to be in a position to learn and in a position to listen and in a position to actually remember anything that happens from day to day they need to be ready to learn. So if they come into classes and they are thinking about other things or they are worried about the grade and what that's going to mean for their future there not in a good place to learn or remember or be happy or to be healthy. So we try to break it down to a very basic level with the teachers and with the parents saying get yourself ready and then you

> can listen and that's where the learning happens. (Richards, personal communication, April 2, 2012)

Richards continues to build on the hypotheses proposed by both the Bhutanese minister of education and Sister Annabel, suggesting that there is a direct connection between the amount of pressure and stress within the school system and the teachers' and students' ability to teach and learn. The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child supports this hypothesis, specifically in relation to the correlation between stress and a young person's ability to learn. In the council's working paper 3 titled "Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain" it states, "Extensive research on the biology of stress now shows that healthy development can be derailed by excessive or prolonged activation of stress response systems in the body and the brain, with damaging effects on learning, behavior, and health across the lifespan." (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2014, p.1). Both Richard's personal experience, and council's findings suggest that students need to experience lower levels of stress in order for learning to be affective. In his interview Richards made it clear that in his own experience, mindfulness can provide tools that are affective in helping students work on their own personal well-being and resilience.

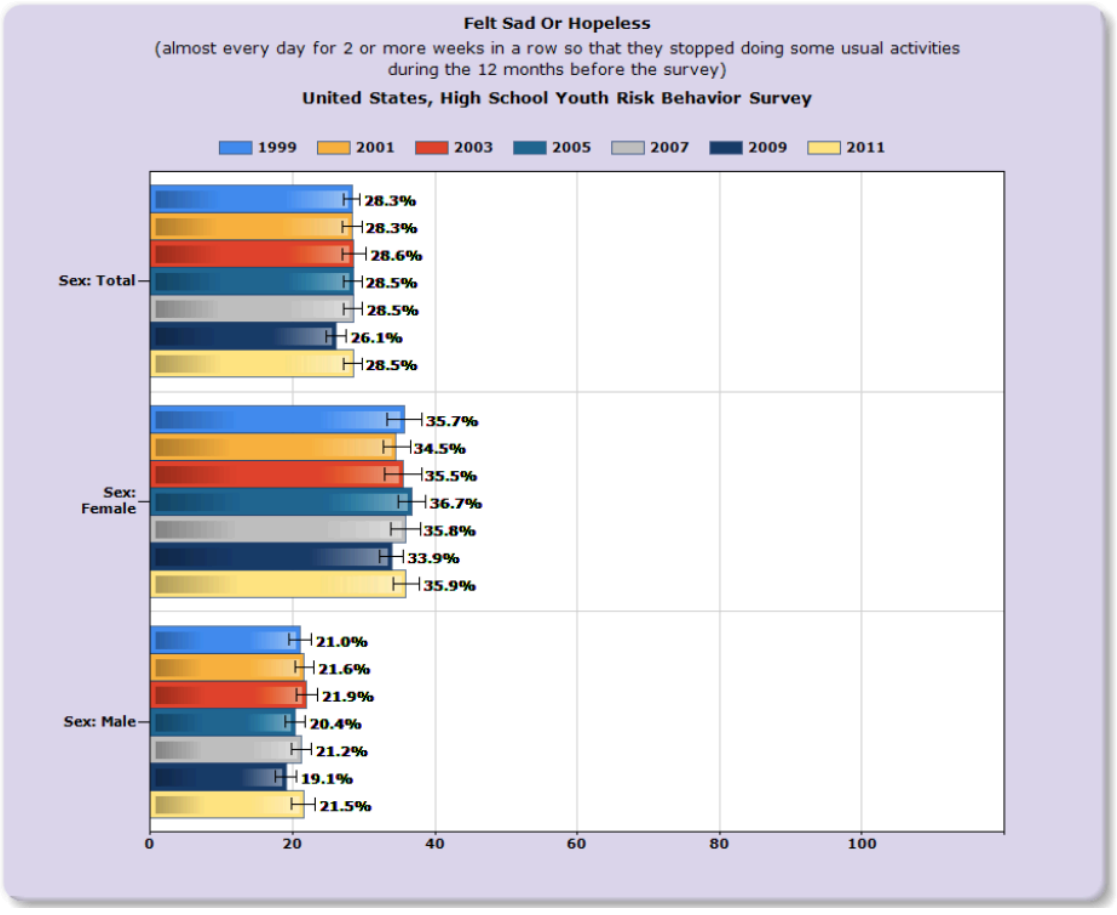
In a talk that Richards' gave just before our interview, he mentioned a concept called 'paper tigers'. I asked if he would elaborate on this concept and its relationship to our understanding of the pressures and stresses faced by students in our education system.

> I didn't invent the concept of paper tigers but I like to use it. There's a psychiatrist named Ken Ginsburg out of the University of Pennsylvania who coined that term. Basically, kids these days in high-school are having the flight or fight response

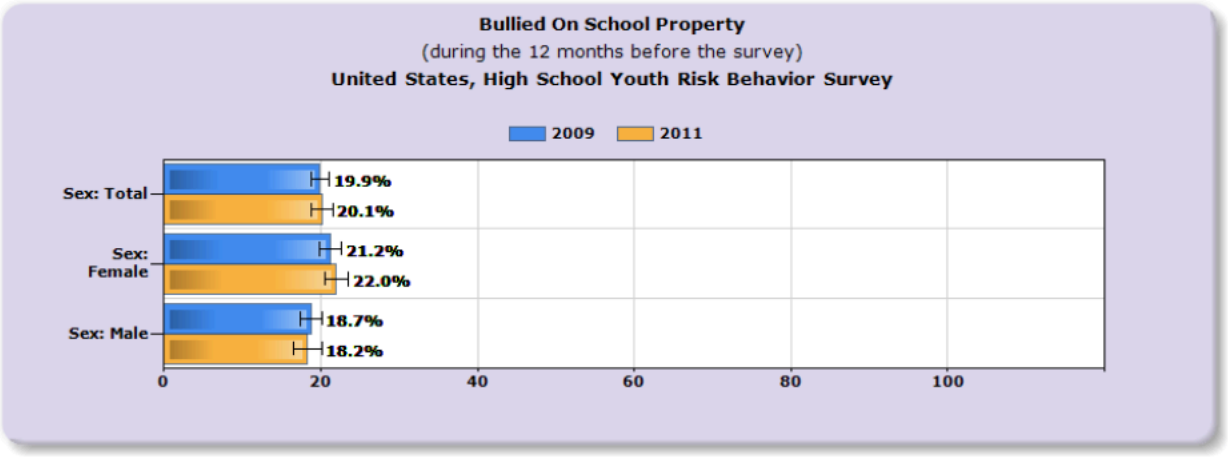
> triggered which goes way back genetically to when we were all in Africa and confronting real tigers and dangers and we are creating an adrenalin rush and a cortisol release. We are having all the physical symptoms of a flight or fight response but we are reacting to paper tigers, exams, peer pressure; all sorts of things that are just physiological threats. So what's happening are, these kids are building up these physical hormones and they are not releasing them, they are not dealing with them. So they generate some chronic sicknesses because they just haven't taken care of themselves. So stress is often looked at as just a psychological issue but we've tried to explain the physical connection to it and through mindfulness, deep breathing and other techniques, exercises you burn off these hormones to where you feel much better. We've tried to empower the kids to say you are in control of your own happiness. You may not be able to control the homework, you may not be able to control what your parents are saying to you, but you can control how you perceive things, you can control where you spend your time and you can do so through mindfulness. (Richards, personal communication, April 2, 2012)

The example of 'paper tigers' gives insight into the physiological manifestations, which lead to symptoms such as anxiety and stress, which standard institutional activities, such as homework and exams, create. From his experience we can see that there is a problem to be acknowledged in how 'achievement' is defined and acquired. Our understanding of student 'achievement', which is influenced by our dominant structure of Capitalism, has a direct effect on students' mental and physical health. Again, Richards refers to mindfulness as a potential tool that could be used to address some of these issues.

Richard's has established, from his own personal experience, that there are issues surrounding student's mental health and well-being that need to be addressed within the education system. This claim can be supported by looking at Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 1991-2011. This data was collected in the form of a survey from middle and high-school students and can be viewed for free online. A filter is available to sort the data on the basis of race/ethnicity, sex, grade or site. For the graphs below no filter was used. The statistics in the graphs below are based solely on answers from High-school students.



The graph above (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013) shows that between 1999 and 2011 over 33% of the female survey participants and over 19% of male survey participants felt sad or hopeless (almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities during the 12 months before the survey). If you look at the graph the percentage of students feeling sad or hopeless between 1999 and 2011 fluctuates slightly, but does not change much. This is important because it indicates that whatever intervention tools are being used, they have failed to significantly reduce the number of students feeling sad or hopeless.



The graph (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013) above reveals that, in the sex total of both female and male survey participants, over 19% were "Bullied on School Property" (during the 12 months before the survey). This shows bullying to be quite pervasive, revealing another source of potential anxiety and stress among student populations, in addition to the effects of the standard educational triggers of exams and homework discussed by Richards.

Interview #4
Interview date: April 2, 2012
Location: London, England
Interviewee: Professor Katherine Weare
Citizenship: United Kingdom
Profession: Emeritus Professor at the University of Exeter and Southampton
Interviewer: Elli Weisbaum

During the conference at the American School in London I sat down with Professor Katherine Weare for an interview. She has an air of inquisitive confidence. Before beginning the interview she takes a moment to adjust the office chair we have asked her to sit in so both her feet can be firmly planted on the ground.

Katherine Weare is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Exeter and Southampton. Her basic fields are social and emotional learning and mental health and well-being in schools. She has written some of the leading books and papers in this area and conducted several definitive reviews of the evidence that has informed policy and practice in many countries. She has been central to the development and implementation of national and international programs for social and emotional learning and well-being, working with the European Union and the World Health Organization to develop programs in both western and Eastern Europe, including Russia. In the UK she is a key player in the development of the national secondary SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) program for the English Department of Education, and editor, board member and advisor to several national and international journals and bodies devoted to mental health and well-being in children.

When Weare introduces herself and her work she describes herself as being known as ‘Mrs. Evidence’ because of her interest in rigorously clarifying the evidence for

interventions that use mindfulness. At the time of the interview she was, in addition to being a professor, a student at the University of Exeter, studying mindfulness based cognitive therapy and mindfulness based stressed reduction (MBSR). Her interest in taking these courses stemmed from wanting to go beyond a purely academic understanding of the theories to an understanding of their practical implementation.

When it comes to the question 'what is happening in the world right now in relation to the development of mindfulness curriculums in schools and evidence based reviews of interventions' Weare says that it is a rapidly developing and changing field with 'a whole heap of things going on really'. She suggests that it is a difficult question to answer succinctly because there is so much being researched and developed in this field at the this moment. There are organizations studying the impacts of social emotional learning on the students, projects that are attempting to develop curricula and foundations developing online content and materials.

Acknowledging that the field to which the term mindfulness is applied is very broad, I ask her if we could pause for a moment in our discussion and hear how she defines the concept of mindfulness.

> What interests me actually about mindfulness is if you explain it simply enough everybody gets it. It's not peculiar, it's not esoteric, it's not necessarily spiritual, though it often becomes that way for people. It's basically about being in the here and now. Not thinking about the past not thinking about the future not worrying not ruminating. Not being somewhere else. It's being right here in the now. And actually everybody's had that experience. You don't have to go on a course to

> glimpse it. Everybody's got a hobby that they just get obsessed with and right in the middle of it is mindfulness. If you're trying to score a goal, if you're fishing, if you're trying to stick a difficult stamp onto a stamp collection, when you're really focused and not thinking about anything else then at that point you are really there and you are really mindful….Now there is many other ways of looking at mindfulness and I'm at the moment at a retreat in which the leader, Thich Nhat Hanh, is talking about mindfulness on many different much more fundamental levels. About a whole way of being on the planet, about deep understanding about the nature of reality and so on and that's great and some people get there through mindfulness. But at the most ordinary school level of talking to a head teacher why on earth should I teach my kids about this, I don't want them to be Buddhist, I don't want them to see the nature of reality I just want some decent grades. Helping everybody to be more in the here and now is actually what everybody wants. You don't need to get complicated about it. The minute you say it to someone they say 'I want that'. The question is how to you get it and how do you deepen it and that's really what mindfulness training takes you into. (Weare, personal communication, April 2, 2012)

Through Weare's definition of mindfulness one can begin to see how it might be applied to the classroom as a means of providing training to students and teachers in order for them to calm their minds and focus their attention. Thus it becomes a possible antidote to some of the issues that the other interviewees have described. Weare also describes the scalability of mindfulness to be both a simple practical tool to calm the

mind, as well as a means to gain insight into our relationship to the planet and each other as a global community.

Following up on this question I asked her what challenges she sees in bringing mindfulness based interventions into classrooms.

> Well I think in many ways the sell of mindfulness at a fairly superficial level is quite an easy one. Because, as I say everybody wants it and the research that I've reviewed shows very clearly that if you help kids to practice mindfulness that they are more in the here and now and they are more able to learn effectively, to focus, to reduce some of the daft behaviors that upset people including themselves. To feel good about themselves, to get on with other people. So once you look at what mindfulness does, rather than looking at it as a strange esoteric practice it's actually very effective. And I think the starting point is really to sell that idea to schools, who will say well of course I want that. [One of the challenges is that] You need to be further along that road [practicing mindfulness yourself] and I think that's a bit of a barrier. Cause teachers often want to grab some materials and rush off and teach the class and they're a bit impatient with the idea that I'm not going to learn this myself.
>
> But the good news is if they do learn it themselves they rapidly realize it has huge impacts on themselves, because another key point about this is this is not just mindfulness in classrooms, this is mindfulness for teachers, for head teachers, for parents, and its starts to impact across a whole school once it gets going. So it's a bit like an avalanche, once it gets there it really starts to permeate the whole school." (Weare, personal communication, April 2, 2012)

In the former half of this interview excerpt Weare reflects on some of the positive and practical outcomes of implementing mindfulness in schools, sentiments also shared by Richards. These include an increase in learning effectiveness and focus and a decrease in destructive behaviors. Weare reveals that these outcomes make mindfulness an easy 'sell' to schools because they are already aware that these are areas that they are in need of assistance.

The latter half of her sharing reveals a potential stumbling block for mindfulness based in-school interventions: raising the question of who is qualified to teach them. In her experience Weare postulates that in order for teachers to effectively implement mindfulness in their classrooms they need to have their own practice and deep understanding of mindfulness. In relation to some of the points raised by the other interviewees about challenges facing schools around the world, including lack of resources, lack of time in the schedule to spend quality time with students and intense focus on achievement and success, one can imagine how the need for teachers to develop their own sustained practice of mindfulness could pose a challenge for the implementing mindfulness programs in schools.

These interviews form a clear picture of some of the key issues surrounding the well-being of teachers and students that are causing symptomatic problems, such as stress and anxiety, which negatively impact students' learning abilities and the school environment. Let us continue by examining some of the historical and cultural reasons behind why these issues and pressures exist within education, along with what research the medical and mindfulness communities are offering to support mindfulness and meditation as a possible solution.

Section 5: Literature review of the historical, cultural and medical contexts

Historical and cultural context

An international interest in the positive effects of mindfulness has been rapidly developing over the last decade. In their paper "Review: The contribution of mindfulness-based therapies for children and families and proposed conceptual integration" Harnett and Dawe examine the growing interest in peer reviewed research of the field of mindfulness research.

> The turn of the century has seen a growing interest in mindfulness as evidenced by a comprehensive search of the research and literature with the term 'mindfulness'. In 1990, a search of 30 databases across multiple disciplines resulted in 27 hits, when all publication types (journal articles, book reviews, and dissertations) were included. For the year 2010 the same search resulted in 1060 hits. Of particular interest for the current article was the increase in the number of peer-reviewed articles on mindfulness focusing on children, adolescents or families. Seven were found in 1990 compared to 55 in 2009 and 116 hits one year later. With this rapid escalation of interest in mindfulness, it is timely to consider how the concept of mindfulness can contribute to efforts to improve child and family functioning. (2012, p. 2)

The medical community has done scientific research that supports the positive effects of mindfulness on an individual's well-being, specifically in relation to the positive effects of mindfulness on stress reduction and executive function (Diamond, 2011). Influenced by the research of healthcare professionals, educational institutions

have also begun to show interest in the field of mindfulness.

> Interest in applications of mindfulness-based approaches with adults has grown rapidly in recent times, and there is an expanding research base that suggests these are efficacious approaches to promoting psychological health and well-being. Interest has spread to applications of mindfulness-based approaches with children and adolescents, yet the research is still in its infancy. (Burke, 2009, p. 133)

Both the communities of medicine and education are looking to mindfulness as a potential source of tools that might be utilized to address systemic issues such as depression, suicide and attention disorders in young people. In their paper "The Effects of Mindfulness Meditation: A Meta-Analysis" Eberth and Sedlmeier discuss some of the potential outcomes of practicing mindfulness and meditation.

> What effects can be expected from practicing mindfulness meditation? Since the central aim of mindfulness meditation is attaining mindfulness, this should be the main effect, yet there could well be others. These might include, for example, greater well-being, the ability to concentrate better, stress release, or developing higher mental states, such as clarity or insight. These effects might be a by-product of mindfulness meditation practice, intermediate steps on the way to becoming mindful, or they might just as easily be after-effects of having developed the intended mindfulness. (2012, p. 174)

From these examples one can see the potential positive impacts of mindfulness, as they relate to some of the pressures and issues raised in the previous section from the interviewees. However, the question of why these problems exist within the education system without significant redress remains. On the surface it is easy to point out systemic

issues such as packed schedules, over full classrooms and lack of funding as possible causes for teacher and student stress and anxiety, but trickier to spot the broader societal issues that have caused them. An awareness of the broader societal issues sheds light on the historical context of why these issues exist within the education system. To gain perspective on the broader socio-economic influences at work within the education system, we can look to the concept of hegemony raised by Raymond Williams in his essay "Problems in Materialism and Culture" and John A. Livingston's thoughts on the loss of natural socialization in domesticated mammals in his book "Rogue Primate".

In his essay, Williams discusses the concept of hegemony, arguing that it is not simply a static notion, but something that evolves over time. Williams specifically looks at the systems used by those in power to assimilate individuals into the society.

> …we can only understand an effective and dominant culture if we understand the real social process on which it depends: I mean the process of incorporation. The modes of incorporation are of great social significance. The education institutions are usually the main agencies of the transmission of an effective dominant culture… (1980, p. 38)

It would be nice to think that the education system's primary goal is to create brilliant individuals who can achieve anything they set their minds to, however it is important to remember that the education system is a tool of the dominant power structure. Therefore, the education system plays a key role in what Williams describes as the 'incorporation' of individuals into a society. Acknowledging that education functions in this way allows us to see more clearly why certain ethics and values are being focused on, while others are not. The current effective and dominant culture at this moment is one

based on a modern Capitalist viewpoint. The education system therefore teaches values that support the incorporation of the individual into this current hegemony. More specifically, this means creating not only individuals who can be brilliant entrepreneurs, lawyers and doctors, but also individuals who will be satisfied with being bus drivers and sanitation workers. The system also needs the individual to buy into the capitalist structure of supply and demand, thus education needs to help create not only the next workforce but also the next generation of consumers. Therefore we can begin to see that the system is not inherently focused on the social and emotional well-being of the individual student.

> …there is a process which I call the *selective tradition:* that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as '*the tradition', 'the significant past'*. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded. (Williams, 1980, p. 39)

William's concept of the 'selective tradition' is critical to the understanding of the problem, which the inclusion of mindfulness into education would address. The 'selective tradition' illuminates for us why certain values and ethics are excluded from the Western educational curriculum. Based on his concept of 'incorporation' the education system can be seen as having a primary goal to teach values and ethics that support Capitalist society. This leaves little or no room for values such as compassion and empathy to exist within the core curricula. This has resulted in a society deficient of social emotional values, which are not seen to fit into 'the tradition' of Capitalist society. Thus, we can begin to see the emergence of a clear issue surrounding what values have been included

and excluded from our education system.

In order to better understand why values pertaining to social and emotional learning have been inherently marginalized within Western education, we can look to Livingston's theory regarding the domestication of humans. Livingston looks at the impact humanity's historical shift away from living in the natural world has had on our ability to relate socially and emotionally to one another, likening us to domesticated animals.

> The loss of ecologic place applies to the total population of a particular kind of domesticated mammal. For the individual with-in that population there is the parallel loss of what I have called the sense of "at-one-ship" with other members of the community… (Livingston, 1995, p. 99)

This loss of 'at-one-ship', or the loss of 'natural sociality', highlights a systemic problem within our culture. Livingston proposes that our lack of natural understanding of social and emotional relationships is found in domesticated communities, but not in the natural world from which we originally came.

> It is the wholeness of the wild animal that distinguishes it from the experientially deprived domesticate. It is the wholeness of the wild animal that makes ethical constructs unnecessary – indeed, probably unthinkable. Why create an abstract set of rules and guidelines when you are already doing all the right social things, and always have? Why seek replacement parts when you are complete? Rules and guidelines are for domestics. (Livingston, 1995, p. 103)

If we accept Livingston's theory and consider ourselves domesticated, then it can also be seen that we are in need of replacement parts, rules and guidelines, when it comes

to the ethics of socialization. This is the problem to which mindfulness presents itself as a solution.

Questioning the System: Popular Education

The concept of addressing issues of hegemony and the social emotional well-being of the individual through changes in the education system is not a new idea. An examination of other methodologies that have been proposed as alternatives to our dominant educational structures can provide a historical framework and also insight into the struggles that these kinds of methodologies face.

We can look at the history of Popular Education, which has sought to address these issues from a post-colonial perspective, to see an example of a methodology that has questioned the dominant educational structure in recent history.

In his discussion of "Discourse on Colonialism" Kelley describes the post-colonial movement that occurred after World War II.

> It was the age of decolonization and revolt in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Five years earlier, in 1945, black people from around the globe gathered in Manchester, England, for the Fifth Pan-African Congress to discuss the freedom and future of Africa. Five years later, in 1955, representatives from the Non-Aligned Nations gathered in Bandung, Indonesia, to discuss the freedom and future of the third world. (2000)

Kelley mentions that Malcolm X described the time between World War II and the 1950's as a "tidal wave of colour" (Kelley, 2000). During this time period, revolts, social changes and methodologies emerged which had a significant impact on many facets of modern culture, one of them being education. Paulo Freire's book "Pedagogy of the

Oppressed" is a manifesto for education that reflects the spirit of the post-colonial movement.

> The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students' creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed. (1993, p. 73)

Freire's concept of 'banking education' was that students within the Western education system become nothing more than receptacles to be filled with rote knowledge by the teachers, learning nothing about critical thinking. Thus the education system works to propagate the viewpoints of the oppressor, or dominant culture. This, in turn, solidifies the political and economic structures of the society. While the social movements of the 1940's – 1950's raised significant questions about equality in political and social structures, one can see that Freire brought these questions directly to the doorstep of education.

In his book "Popular Education and Social Change in Latin America" Kane discusses the impact of Freire's work on the movement of Popular Education.

> A familiarity with the work of Paulo Freire is central to an understanding of popular education in Latin America. Freire's importance extends beyond this, however, as he has had an enormous impact on both formal and non-formal education throughout the world… (2001, p. 33)

Freire influenced Popular Education in many ways, making social and political structures primary concerns.

Kane continues to examine the nature of popular educating stating that, while it is possible to use techniques of Popular Education without critically looking at structures of

class and politics, one would not actually be practicing the methodology of Popular Education.

> Not all education done within the popular sector qualifies as 'popular education'. Governments, private companies and other institutions may be involved in educational programmes in poorer areas, including the teaching of literacy, health education and vocational training…they are 'assistentialist' in that while their objectives are concerned with helping the poor, in the absence of an underlying political analysis of poverty they do nothing to challenge existing social relations. In that they target the popular sector, both types of programmes may *claim* to practice popular education but the lack of political analysis and engagement means they clearly lie outside the popular education movement in Latin America". (Kane, 2001, p. 9)

In this statement Kane raises an important issue regarding educational methodologies, being how we define who is authentic and who is not. While many wonderful techniques for teaching have emerged from the movement of 'popular education', Kane asserts that to be truly practicing its methodology you must be actively analyzing the political structures of society.

The issue of authenticity raised by Kane is one that is currently emerging within the field of mindfulness and education. Jon Kabat-Zinn, one of the most well known and respected medical researchers in the field of mindfulness and founder of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) the leading certification for mindfulness in the medical community, discussed the issue of authenticity during a conference at Harvard in September of 2013.

> Medicine and psychiatry have developed such a great degree of interest in mindfulness (and now other contemplative practices) in the past ten years [see figure] that it may be worthwhile reviewing at this juncture what mindfulness is and recall its origins, definition, and uses within the mindfulness-based interventions --- so that its essence and transformative potential are not ignored, misconstrued, denatured, or lost as mindfulness is increasingly adopted and adapted to diverse settings and applications within the mainstream of medicine, health care and society. (Kabat-Zinn, 2013)

As more mindfulness and meditation programs, aimed at educational institutions, emerge and try to balance a secular scientific approach with the holistic values of Buddhist practice, the question of authenticity within this field will continue to grow. It is a significant and foundational question, one that I can raise but not answer, as it requires further time and research. However, it is important as we find ourselves at this stage of growth in the field, to learn from the experience of those in 'popular education'. Kane illustrates for us that there is reason for genuine concern. This concern being that the dominant educational structure has the possible ability to "claim" to use a methodology, when in fact it is not using it in an authentic way.

This is specifically pertinent to the field of mindfulness and education as it seeks to secularize the tools of mindfulness and meditation in order to safely bring them into classroom settings. In her article "Mindfulness-Based Approaches with Children and Adolescents: A Preliminary Review of Current Research in an Emergent Field" Burke reviews both MBSR and MBCT (Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy), two of the leading mindfulness intervention programs.

> MBSR and MBCT include a series of mindfulness meditation practices, drawn from Buddhist origins applied in a secular context, offering universal applications not tied to religious or philosophical traditions…(2009, p. 134)

The information that one of the most well researched and well-known programs in the emerging field of mindfulness and education is seeking to frame itself in a completely secular context, reveals both an answer to the question of how to make mindfulness programs acceptable to main stream education, but also the importance of having an ongoing awareness of authenticity within the field.

Mindfulness and Education

Having examined some of the historical framework and issues faced by 'popular education', let us now see how mindfulness fits into this conversation. 'Popular education' argues that if you are not educating for the oppressed you are educating for the oppressor (Kane, 2001 p.10). Connecting this back to Williams theories on hegemony, we can see that education is a tool of the dominant power structures and that it acts to propagate the values of that culture. Popular education is an example of a methodology that questioned some of social values central to Western society, at that time, through its approach to education. The application of mindfulness and meditation as an educational methodology also seeks to question and upend some of the core values and constructs within Western education, and by extension, Western society. It proposes that taking care of teachers' and students' well-being is equal to the importance, if not more important than, of test scores and completing homework. This is a simplified way of stating it, and may seem somewhat obvious, however based on the current trends of education,

specifically seen through standardized testing (Smollin, 2011), it is in many ways quite a revolutionary statement. Mindfulness proposes that all people are humans and all humans suffer and have the same seeds of anger and compassion in them and therefore all people deserve to suffer less and be taught the tools to do so. Gandhi said, "…be the change you wish to see in the world". Mindfulness suggests that before people can begin to think about being a change, they need to have the tools to experience empathy and compassion. As has been shown through Livingston's concepts of human domestication, our society is not one in which these social tendencies are naturally developed. This sentiment is one that Mindfulness shares with Freire, even though they come at it from different perspectives.

> …Freire believed in the intrinsic worth of human beings and that they had a natural instinct – an 'ontological vocation' – to make the most of themselves, to become fully human, not as selfish individuals but in 'communion' with others. Where people do not progress towards full 'humanistation', he saw this as a distortion of their vocation, that they had been 'thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression and the violence of the oppressors' (Freire, 1972). (Kane, 2001, p. 36)

The ideas that both Kane and Freire highlight relate directly to mindfulness. They touch on the deeper truth that outside of the systems of class, education, politics and religion, which modern society functions within, we are each at our core a human being. As human beings we each possess the same ability to feel fear, joy, compassion and suffering. There are many things that block us from understanding and dealing with these feelings. It can be argued, through an understanding of the basic practices of Buddhism, that the first step in achieving what Freire describes as full "humanistation" or what

Buddhism would call “enlightenment” lies in learning practices that can help us to reconnect first with ourselves and then with each other. In an article published by Shambhala Sun, Malkin shares an interview quote from Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, who discusses the practice of deep listening.

> The practice of deep listening should be directed towards oneself first. If you don't know how to listen to your own suffering, it will be difficult to listen to the suffering of another person or another group of people. (Malkin, 2002)

Learning and understanding these core mindfulness practices is key to creating compassionate individuals and therefore compassionate societies. Mindfulness suggests that this is done by first taking care of and understanding ourselves. In his book “Peace is every step” Thich Nhat Hanh talks about the essence of love and compassion.

> The essence of love and compassion is understanding the ability to recognize the physical, material, and psychological suffering of others, to put ourselves "inside the skin " of the other. We go inside their body, feelings and mental formations, and witness for ourselves their suffering. Shallow observation as an outsider is not enough to see their suffering. We must become one with the subject of our observation. When we are in contact with another's suffering, a feeling of compassion is born in us. Compassion means literally "to suffer with. (1991 p. 81)

What Thich Nhat Hanh discusses, truly understanding another’s suffering, is a very difficult undertaking. One that cannot be accomplished without learning the skills needed to achieve it.

The conviction that mindfulness can provide Western education with the language to teach compassion and empathy is a sentiment currently growing within the educational

community. Cambridge University has started the Well-Being Institute (WBI) to study the positive impacts of mindfulness from a modern scientific perspective.

> Well-being refers to positive and sustainable characteristics which enable individuals and organizations to thrive and flourish. Our inter-disciplinary Institute is dedicated to advancing the scientific understanding of well-being and applying this new knowledge to helping people and institutions develop their full potential. (Well-being Institute, 2014)

The establishment of this institution illustrates the emerging mainstream acceptance of mindfulness or "well-being" as a respected academic and scientific methodology. The legitimization of the field, through institutions such as the University of Cambridge, along with understanding the perspectives and research emerging from the medical community, is key to the long-term success of mindfulness being incorporated into education.

Medical research can provide a trusted context through which the potential positive impacts of mindfulness can be established. In the article "Alterations in the Brain and Immune Function Produced by Mindfulness Meditation" Davidson, et al. describe their findings from an eight week training program of mindfulness meditation, with a control group.

> These findings demonstrate that a short program in mindfulness meditation produces demonstrable effects on brain and immune function. These findings suggest that meditation may change brain and immune function in positive ways and underscore the need for additional research. (2003, p. 564)

This study illustrates the physiological benefits that the medical community is attributing to mindfulness. While further research is necessary, these preliminary findings allow for a legitimate connection between the physiological and psychological implications of mindfulness practice.

The potential positive psychological implications of mindfulness practice can also be further understood through the medical community's understanding of social interactions and behavior.

> We are the most social being on earth. We want to connect. And in fact we need connections to survive, just as we need air and water. When we are excluded or "outside" the human community, we experience pain as real as the pain of placing our hands on a hot stove. The social pain signals and the danger warnings travel the same pathways to the same place in the brain as physical pain. Without social engagement, affecting and being affected by one another, our brains are adversely affected; we become less effective and more deregulated. Without responsive human connections, our stress levels soar. If we feel inadequate in meeting the culture's demands for independence and autonomy, we feel shame and silenced. Rather than seeing this mismatch as a failure of cultural values to properly register and support core human needs, we blame the person; we locate the problem inside the individual. Rather than overlooking the significant role that culture plays in human suffering, we need to practice contextual accountability along with emphatic attunement. Mindfulness practices can contribute to this shift of perspective, which expands our sense of human possibility and anchors us in the power of connection. (Jordan, 2013)

In this statement Jordan reveals that psychology supports the core mindfulness concept that as human beings we must connect with ourselves and the world around us in a healthy way in order to have a sense of well-being and touch true happiness. If mindfulness can provide us with a sense of well-being and studies of the brain show that learning is adversely affected by stress (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2014) than an argument can be made for the positive implications of implementing mindfulness in a classroom setting. Continuing to link studies of the positive emotional impacts of practicing mindfulness with scientific research being done on how the brain is affected by strong emotions, and the impacts this has on forming memory and learning, will be key to cultivating the acceptance of mindfulness as an educational methodology for mainstream education.

Through reviewing the current literature we can see that the field of mindfulness is one that is rapidly developing and emerging as a potential resource to address issues currently affecting the well-being of teachers and students. The history of 'popular education' provides us with a historical framework of a recent movement that also challenged the dominant education structure, and raises concerns of authenticity within educational pedagogy. It is also clear that the preliminary medical research supports mindfulness as a secular tool, thus helping to open doors for its acceptance within western education.

Section 6: Field research – Experiencing the practice

We have established that the dominant cultural influences of capitalism on education have resulted in a system that is lacking in social and emotional support for teachers and students. This has resulted in high levels of anxiety, despairs and stress

among teachers and students, as seen through the as seen through the studies done on teacher attrition, done by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, and the data collected through the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System by the CDC. Greater understanding of the brain has shown that these symptoms directly impact a student's ability to learn (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2014), and from the interviewees' own personal experience, the teacher's ability to teach. But can mindfulness and meditation practice really address these issues?

In order to answer this question I have spent the past three years travelling with monastics in the Plum Village tradition all over the world to work first hand with teachers and students, within retreat, conference and school settings (see figure 1 on p. 4). As participatory observer and researcher my goal was to gain insight into the practical implementation and participant response to mindfulness and meditation practices.

I will present my findings and experiences in two case studies; the first from my time at the American School in London, during a three-day conference for educators led by Thich Nhat Hanh, the second from my time in elementary and high schools in New Delhi, India, sharing mindfulness workshops in a classroom setting with students and teachers, led by monastics and lay practitioners in the Plum Village tradition.

Before sharing my observations from the two case studies, it is important to describe some of the core mindfulness practices used by the Plum Village community, as they are central components of the activities participants in both case studies experienced.

In their "Applied Ethics Proposal", a proposed course in mindfulness for educators, Plum Village describes mindfulness as "The energy of being aware and awake to what is happening inside and around us in the present moment" ("Applied Ethics

Proposal", 2014). The ability to experience and sustain mindfulness takes practice, and so it is through activities, which Plum Village describes as "practices", that one is able to attain this awareness. Practices can be thought of as different exercise or tools that help train our mind to be able to be aware of and stay connected to the present moment.

During the time I spent with the Plum Village community I observed two foundational elements that are used across a wide spectrum of practices, being the breath and the bell. The sound of the bell cuts through our thoughts and invites us to bring our mind back to our body and the present moment, often by inviting our mind to focus on our in and out breath as an anchor.

Thich Nhat Hanh has a saying, which he refers to as a Gatha, which is the Sanskrit word for song or verse, which he often shares when introducing the practice of the bell (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Thich Nhat Hanh Gatha

Listen, listen,
this wonderful sound brings me back to
my true home.

The idea is that we only ever truly exist in the present moment, the mind can take us to the future or the past, but our true home is in the here and now, the present. This seemingly simple exercise is actually incredibly challenging. To actively keep our minds in the present and not drift to thoughts of the future or the past, to turn our planning and grasping minds off, requires diligent practice. Mindfulness practice is extremely experiential, and so I invite you as a reader of this paper to take a moment to stop reading

and take three full in and out breaths. Observe what your mind is doing, what thoughts come in, what are you grasping at?

It is very natural for our minds to wander, and this is not an inherently a negative thing. Another core mindfulness practice is the practice of non-judgment; we do not need to classify things as good or bad, we simply see that they are. So when we notice our mind wandering during an activity, we do not get angry at ourselves that our mind has wandered, we simply become aware of it, smile to those thoughts and gently invite our mind to come back to the present moment through the anchor of our breath. The practice of being aware of our minds wandering, and of inviting our mind back to the present moment, gives us the opportunity to not only relax, but also to check in with ourselves. It allows us to see how we are feeling, to notice what is on our minds and discover what may be causing us anxiety or suffering (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1991).

This practice of connecting to the present moment through the bell and the breath forms the foundation for many of the core practices that I experienced during my field research, including sitting meditation, walking meditation, deep relaxation and eating meditation. Each of these practices starts with this foundation and then elaborates on it in a different way. For example, with walking meditation participants connect their breath to their steps as they experience an activity we do in our daily lives in a new way. Bringing mindfulness to daily activities, like walking and eating, allows participants to change paradigms and habit energies outside of the structured setting of a conference or retreat. The monastics will often point out that it might not be realistic to try to conduct every activity in our daily life mindfully. However, we can find specific moments in which we might apply the practice of mindfulness. For example, we might decide that from where

we park our car to the entrance of our school or office building we will practice mindful walking, being aware of each step and inviting our mind back to the present moment. Or perhaps we want to try eating our breakfast mindfully or practicing sitting meditation for ten minutes before we go to bed. Each person has different practices that they connect with and different ways that they might play around with these practices in order to incorporate them into daily life**.** For further descriptions of the core practices please see the appendix.

Case Study 1 – Conference at the American School in London

From Friday March 30th, 2012 to Monday April 2nd, 2012 the American School in London hosted a conference, led by Thich Nhat Hanh and facilitated by monastics and lay practitioners from the international Plum Village community. I participated as an observer and also helped with the coordination of the conference. In addition to this, I conducted a pre and post survey of conference participants.

Participants of the conference were educators from various countries around the world, with the majority from Europe. Over the course of the conference, educators participated in a variety of mindfulness and meditation activities. These activities aimed at developing participants' personal mindfulness practice, along with mindfulness tools, which could be applied professionally (see figure 3 for sample schedule). Participants also listened to talks given by Thich Nhat Hanh and other senior monastic teachers from the Plum Village tradition.

Figure 3: Conference Schedule Day 3

Time	Activity
8:00am	Sitting Meditation w/Thich Nhat Hanh
8:30am	Tea & Coffee break
9:00am	Talk "Happy Teachers will Change the World"
11:00am	Walking meditation on school grounds
12:00pm	Mindful Lunch (first 20 minutes in silence)
1:00-2:00pm	Guided total relaxation
2:15pm	Workshops - Leading total relaxation - Songs for the practice - Helping children deal with strong emotions - Resolving conflicts - Working with policy makers - 5 mindfulness trainings
6:00pm	Dinner
8:30pm	Discussion & sharing groups

As an observer it was interesting to witness the energy and expectations that many of the teachers arrived with, compared to how they were feeling when they left. On arrival day, I spoke with many of the teachers who were incredibly hungry for tools to use and apply in their classrooms. This almost frenetic energy of wanting solutions to problems experienced within the classroom was brought to the conference by many of the participants, and could be felt by the conference facilitators. After the silent period of lunch on the first day, several of the monastics shared their observation of this phenomenon. They also shared their aspiration to find the space to cultivate participants' personal practice and well-being before discussing any activities to use with their students.

The first days talk, given by Thich Nhat Hanh, was called "Taking Care of the Teacher". As he spoke about this topic there was a discernable collective exhale from the entire audience. After the talk participants seemed relieved. The workshops on the first

day also focused on developing the teachers own personal practice, through activities such as sitting meditation, walking meditation and workshops on transforming pressure and stress at work, handling strong emotions, improving the capacity to listen without judgment and communicate with loving speech, and reconciling difficult relationships with others.

On the second day the topic for the talk was "Happy Teachers will Change the World". Already the energy of the participants felt quite different. I observed a lot more smiles, less anxiety about small things such as getting a good seat for the talk and a general slowness as we moved between activities. On the second day the workshops focused on ways that participants could share the practices they were learning with their students.

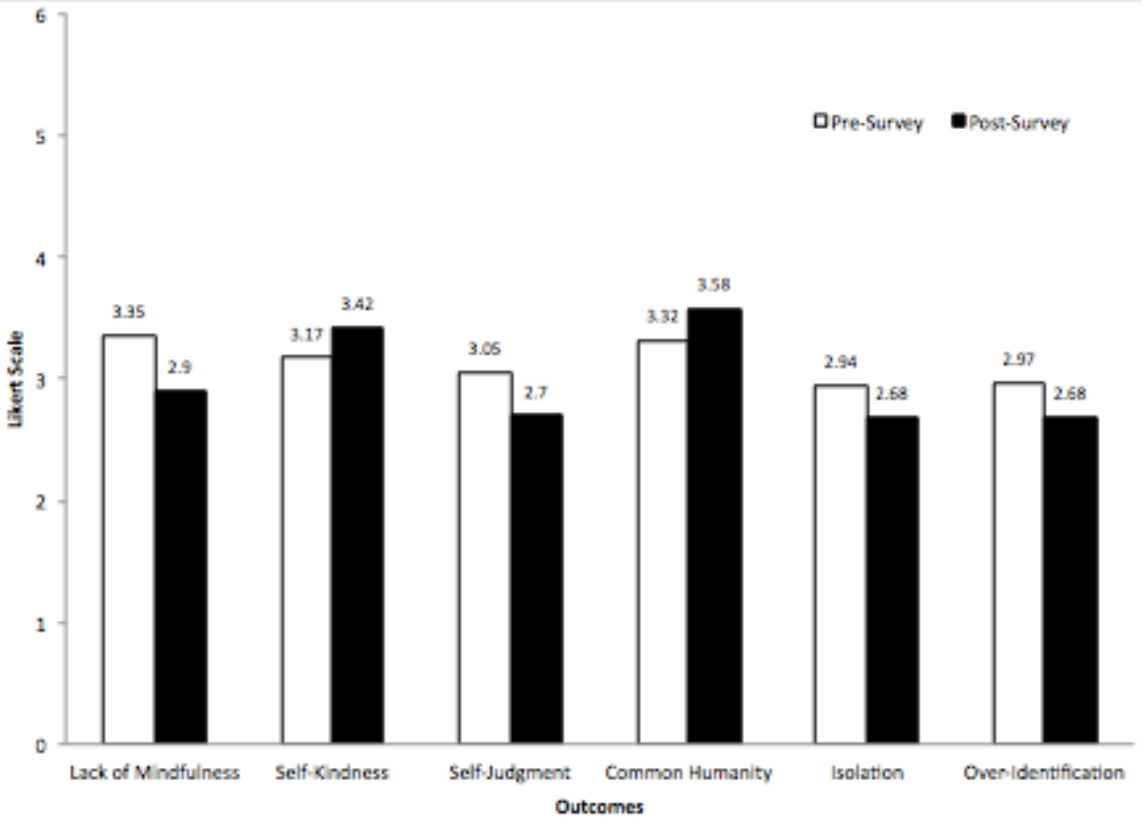
On the final day of the conference there was a real sense that a community had been formed. As the group gathered for one final question and answer session, in the main conference hall, there was a clear sense of relaxation and enjoyment. However, as we moved towards wrapping up and leaving the conference, the frenetic energy that had existed on the first day appeared again as participants started to think about packing up and getting back to their daily lives. As the monastics often share, experiencing mindfulness is a lifelong practice, one that was clearly touched during the conference, but difficult to sustain without ongoing practice and support.

Further to my own observations, I conducted a pre and post survey of conference participants, in coordination with two other researchers: Natalie Tran and Denys Candy, to examine the association between participation in a four-day mindfulness conference and teachers' mindfulness and compassion for themselves. Prior to the start of the

conference participants completed a pre-survey questionnaire assessing their mindfulness, consisting of Likert scale items that reflect awareness and attention to actions, thoughts, emotions, and physical states (Brown & Ryan, 2003). The pre-survey also included items assessing teachers' compassion for self (Neff, 2003) as measured by the following subscales: self-kindness (e.g. I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies), self-judgment (e.g. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself), common humanity (e.g. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition), isolation (e.g. When I fail at something that's important to me I tend to feel alone in my failure), and over-identification (e.g. When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion). At the completion of the four-day conference, teachers completed a post-survey measuring similar constructs.

Acknowledging the sample size, which was limited to the conference participants, along with the lack of controls, prevents me from drawing a direct casual claim. However, the surveys did provide me with an interesting reflection of what I personally observed. The data shows that over the four day period of the conference participants feelings of isolation, lack of mindfulness, over-identification and self-judgment when down, while participants self-kindness and common-humanity went up (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Data from Pre & Post Survey at Educators' Conference



This data is significant in that it shows the positive impacts of mindfulness practice on educators' personal well-being. Relating back to what the interviewees shared, that who the teacher is himself or herself has a significant influence on the environment of a classroom, along with the awareness of growing issues surrounding teacher burn-out and turn-over in Western education, these findings support the theory that mindfulness practice can have a constructive impact on both teachers and students.

Case Study 2 – Workshops in elementary and high schools, New Delhi, India

From October 8th-10th, 2012 workshops on mindfulness were held with students at a school in New Delhi, India. These workshops were led by monastics and lay teachers in the tradition of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh and organized by Ahimsa Trust. I participated as both an observer and workshop co-facilitator.

Over the three-day period students from grades 3-12 attended a two-hour workshop each day. The total time spent with each class was approximately six hours. The approximate size of the classes were ninety students each, for a total of nine hundred students participating in the workshops over the three days. There were eleven facilitators, with classes broken into smaller groups during each workshop.

One focus of these workshops was to share the foundational tools of the breath and bell through mindfulness practices that the students could use in their everyday lives to increase their capacity to be calm and handle strong emotions such as anxiety and stress. The workshops also developed skills to heighten their awareness, concentration and critical thinking.

The specific activities that took place during the workshops included: guided meditation, eating meditation, walking meditation, pebble meditation, talks on handling strong emotions, technology and sexuality (including developmental changes in the body and mind), motivational 'practice songs' and deep relaxation.

At the end of the three days, grades ten, eleven and twelve (ages fifteen, sixteen and seventeen) were given feedback forms. The students were clearly given the option of not writing their names on the form so they could remain anonymous and therefore give

candid feedback.

The feedback from the students was overwhelmingly positive, enthusiastic and heartfelt. Similar to the educators' conference at the American School in London, I observed an increased sense of community, calmness and attention among the participants. Below I have summarized responses to questions 1-3 and question 7 from the feedback form. Each of these summaries is accompanied by a figure, which has direct quotes from the students' written feedback. The quotes shared from the student feedback forms have been directly transcribed and are un-edited.

The first question on the student feedback form asked: "Did you learn something new over the past few days? If so, what?". The majority of students answered yes to this question. In their responses the majority used words such as "calm" and "relax". A large portion of responses stated that they learned ways to deal with pressure and stress.

Figure 5: Quotes from the student feedback form Question #1:

"Learnt many different things over the past few days. I understood how to handle stress and pressure. I never knew that being mindful could have such a positive impact on our lives" – Grade 10
"Yes I did. I learnt how to relax and get over stress and problems related to homework by just talking to myself and meditating" –Grade 10
"How to take care of my emotions and deal with stress" –Grade 10
"I learned how to enjoy a simple thing such as breathing. I learned how to deal with uncomfortable situations" – Grade 11

Figure 5 continued:
"Yes, I learnt how to relax, control my stress, and untie the knot in my head, express and share" – Grade 11
"Yes, I learned to be more attentive towards everything I do even if it is something as small as eating. I also learned how to meditate and enjoy breathing" – Grade11
"I learned to listen to my inner voice" – Grade 12
"Yes, how to be totally relaxed and calm and let go of our stress and anxiety. Also how to focus and concentrate." – Grade 12

The second question asked students "Did you feel like the workshops were beneficial? If so, why?" Responses to this question were similar to the first question, in that the majority responded positively. The feedback words to this question were also reflective of the previous question, being words like "relaxed" and "calming". Responses to this question also included a concern about how they would be able to find the time in their busy lives for mindfulness practices, even though they felt it was very beneficial.

Figure 6: Quotes from the student feedback form Question #2

"Yes they were beneficial – it taught us how to relax and be calm and be at peace and be happy. It was good at this time when we had had exams so we were stressed." (Grade 12)
"It was EXTREMLY beneficial for me I learnt how to stay peaceful and understand other people" (Grade 11)
"These workshops have helped me a lot. It has taught what actual happiness is about and how one can achieve it." (Grade 10)
"Yes. The workshops helped me to work more peacefully and efficiently." (Grade 10)

Figure 6 continued:
"A person like me cannot handle stress well. This workshop has guided me in ways to handle stress/anxiety in a very graceful manner." (Grade 11)

Question three from the feedback form asked "Would you want some of these activities incorporated into the school? If so, which ones (for example: deep relaxation, guided meditation, songs)?" The majority of students answered yes to this question. Overall the activity mentioned most that they would want to have incorporated into the school was deep relaxation. The second most mentioned activity was songs. Activities like eating, walking and guided meditation were also mentioned.

Figure 7: Quotes from the student feedback form Question #3

"I really want deep relaxation to be incorporated into school. It really made me calm. I also enjoyed learning songs, they were so true and full of life." (Grade 10)
"I would want deep relaxation incorporated into the school since it helps us forget all other stress for some time. As well as getting rest to our body" (Grade 10)
"Yes. Deep relaxation. It helps us slow down our fast paced lives." (Grade 11)
"Yes. Deep relaxation, songs and the guided meditation" (Grade 11)

The final question on the feedback form, question number 7, asked students "Anything else you would like to share with us". Over half of the students decided to share additional unprompted responses. Many of the responses to this question shared the sentiment that they would like the monastics/lay workshop leaders to come back to the school to continue giving workshops like this. Many of the responses to this question thanked the monastics/lay workshops leaders for coming to the school.

Figure 8: Quotes from the student feedback form Question #7

"I had a wonderful experience, thank you so much!" (Grade 11)
"The idea of hugging oneself, I found that very interesting as it shows how we can love ourselves" (Grade 11)
"It was a really good experience would like to experience such a workshop again" (Grade 11)
"This should be done more often so that we don't forget it, and it was a great experience" (Grade 11)
"I am grateful to the monks and nuns who took this precious time out to tell us to slow down and enjoy life" (Grade 11)
"This experience was very good I learnt how to appreciate and accept everything. Thank you so much! We'll get to see you again hopefully." (Grade 11)
"I really enjoyed this workshops and we should have it again!" (Grade 10)
"Thank you for helping me realize who I am!!" (Grade 10)

Through their feedback, the student's reflect some of the intended impacts of mindfulness practice, specifically regarding students' ability to understand and handle their own strong emotions, increasing their sense of well-being. The students also share that they would like to experience mindfulness workshops again, specifically in their feedback to question #7, which was an open ended question asking if they had anything else to share. This feedback is particularly important because it indicates that high-school level students were not bored or turned-off by these practices, but actually felt like they were worthwhile enough to experience again. Overall the student feedback provides a strong sense of the positive impacts of mindfulness practice when experienced in a classroom setting.

Section 7: Conclusion

Through the interviewees' personal experiences, backed up by recent studies done by the National Centre for Education and other referenced material, we have seen that issues within the education system are resulting in pressures and stress on both the teachers and students. For teachers the resulting symptoms include burn-out, teacher turn-over, despair, dissatisfaction and stress. For students the resulting symptoms include stress, anxiety, flight or fight syndrome and hopelessness. Through the examples of recent scientific studies we have learned that the repeated experience of stress negatively impacts the brains ability to learn. Other studies have shown that the practice of mindfulness can reduce stress. Connecting these two concepts we can see that by implementing mindfulness and reducing stress in students we can potentially have a positive impact on their ability to learn. Through the literature review we have gained insight into some of the historical and cultural contexts for why these issues are present within education, including the concept of hegemony, which sheds light on education's role as a tool of the dominant power structure, with a specific focus on churning out workers and consumers that fit into capitalist society. With this understanding we can see why there are gaps in the curriculum, specifically in relation to the development of individual's well-being. It has also been shown that mindfulness is emerging as a potential resource to provide concrete tools and activities which teachers and students can use to increase personal well-being (heightened sense of community and decreased stress, self-judgment and isolation). This paper has also raised the issue of authenticity and the need for a continued awareness of the authentic implementation of mindfulness within a field that seeks to translate tools from the root source of Buddhism into a secular context.

This is particularly important as mindfulness practice finds a way into the main stream through support by research from the medical community, which has thus far been inherently secular. Because of its status as an emerging field, it is clear that further research is needed to define more fully the effects of mindfulness as an intervention tool within the classroom. Further in-depth research in this field is imperative, so that academic and public institutions can utilize it effectively. It is also important to recognize the inherently experiential qualities of mindfulness. Through the two case studies, we have seen a clear picture of the positive effects mindfulness can have on the well-being of both teachers and students. Therefore, this paper must conclude that more research is needed before a full academic recommendation of mindfulness-based interventions in education can be given. However, it can also conclude that while practicing mindfulness with teachers and students in London, England; Thimpu, Bhutan; and New Delhi, India; the writer of this paper witnessed the transformative impact of mindfulness. Through my field research I saw first hand that the effects of mindfulness on the individual resulted in a direct and immediate impact on the well-being of the entire school community. To summarize: we have a ways to go academically to understand the full physiological and psychological impacts of mindfulness, but as human beings we can touch it right away in the here and now.

Calligraphy by Zen Master
Thich Nhat Hanh

Epilogue: Discussing tensions & potential capitalist cooptation

This epilogue will serve as a reflection on some of the inherent tensions and potential capitalist cooptation that exist in the implementation of mindfulness into western educational settings. While these tensions are alluded to throughout the paper, this epilogue seeks to explore them in more detail. Acknowledging that tension exists between the implementation of Buddhist mindfulness into Western classroom settings and the dominant culture of Capitalism is important for several reasons. Without this understanding the emerging pedagogy of mindfulness in education is at risk of being coopted by the dominant structure.

Examples of the cooptation of mindfulness practice can already be seen in its propagation as a "tool" for creating students who are more focused and calm. While these can be seen as potential benefits of a mindfulness program, if the production of effective learners and by extension effective workers, becomes the sole focus of a mindfulness based program it must be asked if some of the original authenticity of mindfulness – which seeks to create holistic connections between the body and mind – is being lost. The need to be aware of this potential dilution of the source material is raised by Kabat-Zinn in his article "Many Doors – One Room: The Deep Transformative Implications of Mindfulness" discussed on page 38 of this paper.

As mindfulness continues to be adapted for use in different modern settings, such as classrooms, medical centres and businesses, it is important to be aware of the potential for cooptation, along with the potential loss of some of the core values in the Buddhist roots of mindfulness. This is not to say that all adaptation necessarily equals cooptation, or that it is inherently negative to change the wording or structure of mindfulness

practices when adapting them to different environments. Mindfulness practice asks that we find a middle path, not labeling things as good or bad, better or worse, but that we simply become aware of the truths that exist within a situation. This allows us to take better care of ourselves, and the world, within the context of a given situation. This concept is sometimes referred to as the awareness of "multiple truths". This is the acknowledgment that a situation can have more than one truth to it, and that they can all be held and examined at the same time. Let us apply this framework to a situation I found myself in during the fall of 2013, while on a teaching tour with Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village community. Thich Nhat Hanh was invited to the World Bank headquarters in Washington DC to give a day of mindfulness (DOM). During the lunch break two lay practitioners (myself included) and one of the monastics were invited to attend a brief "standing meeting" to share a mindfulness practice with a group that had not been able to attend the DOM. We soon learned that a "standing meeting" was a brief meeting where everyone stayed standing to keep alert and also to keep the meeting concise. On the spot we were asked to share some practice within the time span of two minutes. We decided to try something new and do a two-minute standing hybrid body scan/guided meditation. Looking at this example, we can see many truths existed at once. There was the truth that some human beings, who work at the World Bank, got to experience a moment of mindfulness practice that they otherwise would not have. This may have provided someone with some personal calm and relief that they needed, or inspired someone in the group to seek out more information on mindfulness based practices and Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings. There was the truth that the practices of deep relaxation and guided meditation were quite stripped down and removed from how they are traditionally

practiced. A variety of truths will exist whenever mindfulness practices are brought into new settings, and the need to navigate these multiple truths is where the tension lies. At what point the core values or authenticity is lost in the adaptation, where a point of disengagement might be found, is one that has not yet been defined within this emerging field. This is why it is crucial for practitioners and adaptors to be aware of the potential for both growth and learning, along with cooptation and the need for disengagement.

In the field of mindfulness and education a wide spectrum of approaches to the adaptation of mindfulness into classroom settings is already beginning to emerge. For example, some programs focus on stripping down the practices to their "scientific" parts, with the intention of making the programs more easily brought into Western classroom settings. In my own experience, going into schools in India with the monastics, we found that there was a need to reduce the use of the word Buddha, to make the workshops feel more in line with the secular school environment. The core practices remained very similar to how they are shared during retreats at Plum Village monastic centres. Actively reducing the use of the word Buddha is a clear example of one way mindfulness might be adapted to a new environment. Let us now look at this adaptation through the lens of multiple truths. There is a truth that in order to bring the practice into different environments, changes in language may be necessary. There is also a truth that the necessity for change serves as an example of underlying tensions in a field that seeks to bring traditional wisdom into the space of the modern classroom.

There is also an inherent tension between the connections created by capitalism and the connections formed through Buddhist mindfulness practice. Both seek to create connections and community. However, the means and outcomes are very different. As

discussed earlier in the paper, education is one tool utilized by the dominant power structure and it plays a role in creating the next work force and group of consumers (discussed on page 32). One way it does this, is by creating connection and a sense of community through avenues that support capitalist values. For example, we may feel a deep connection and sense of community with other people who enjoy watching a particular TV show, own the same kind of computer that we do, or listen to the same music. These connections serve to satisfy an individual's need for community while creating connections that propagate the values of consumption needed to support capitalist society. Mindfulness, on the other hand, seeks to create connections and a sense of community that support values of "interbeing". "Interbeing" is a concept shared in Thich Nhat Hah's teachings, which illustrates the Buddhist value of the interconnected nature of all things. Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that we can touch this interconnection by seeing the "non-it" elements that exist in all beings. For example, a rose cannot exist without the rain and the sunshine. The practice of interbeing asks that when we look at the rose we also see the sun and the rain, the "non-it" elements. Through mindfulness practice we can apply this concept to all things, including human beings. Each person is made up of "non-self" elements, their mother and father, teachers, the sun, the rain and the earth. So when we look at ourselves in the mirror, through the practice of mindfulness, we can see all of the elements of the universe. In this way, mindfulness seeks to create deep connections between all living and non-living entities. This kind of connection creates a natural sense of responsibility towards both ourselves and the planet. This deep understanding of our connection to the ecology of our world is in direct contradiction to the kinds of connections and values upheld by the current status quo.

With this understanding, we can begin to see mindfulness practice as a potential opening to a counter-hegemonic force.

The comparison of the different kinds of connections made by the current dominant culture and mindfulness provide a clear picture of inherent tensions that exist in applying mindfulness to Western Education, as it does not specifically serve the purpose of incorporating individuals into the current hegemony. However, it can also be seen that there is a potential risk of the dominant power structure coopting mindfulness as a tool to create more focused and attentive learners ready to accept their place as part of the capitalist workforce and consumer base. Therefore, as mindfulness continues to grow as an educational pedagogy it is imperative that the community continues to be aware of these areas of tension and potential cooptation.

References

Applied Ethics Proposal. (2014). Retrieved from http://wakeupschools.org/resources/

Brown, K.W. and Ryan, R.M. (2003). The Benefits of Being Present: Mindfulness and Its Role in Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*, 822-848. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822

Burke, Christine. (2009). Mindfulness-Based Approaches with Children and Adolescents: A Preliminary Review of Current Research in an Emergent Field. *Springer Science+Business. 19,* 133-144. doi: 10.1007/s1086-009-9282-x

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (June, 2013). *1991-2011 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data.* Retrieved from http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/YouthOnline/ServerRedirect.aspx

Davidson, R.J. et al. (2003). Alterations in Brain and Immune Function Produced by Mindfulness Meditation. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 65,* 564-570. doi: 10.1097/01/PSY.0000077505.67574.E3

Diamond, A. and Kathleen L. (2011). Interventions Shown to Aid Executive Function Development in Children 4 to 12 Years Old. *Science, 333*, 959-964. doi: 10.1126/science.1204529

Eberth, J. and Sedlmeier, P. (2012). The Effects of Mindfulness Meditation: A Meta-Analysis. *Springer Mindfulness, 3.* doi: 10.1007/s12671-012-0101-x

Franklin, C.A., and Snow-Gerono, J.L. (2007) *Perceptions of teaching in an*

environment of standardized testing: Voices from the field. Retrieved from www.nrmera.org/PDF/Researcher/Researcherv21n1Franklin.pdf

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Feistritzer, C.E. (2011). *Profile of Teachers in the U.S. 2011.* The National Center for Education Information. Retrieved from http://www.ncei.com/Profile_Teachers_US_2011.pdf

Harnett, P. and Dawe, S. (2012). The contribution of mindfulness-based therapies for children and families and proposed conceptual integration. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 17,* 195-208. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-3588.2011.00643.x

Jordan, J.V. (2013, September 11-12). Depression And Mindfulness: The Path Out of Isolation. In C. Germer, J.R. Platt & R.D. Siegal (course planners), *Meditation and Psychotherapy Deepening Mindfulness*. Boston, MA: Harvard Medical School Department of Continuing Education.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994) *Wherever You Go There You Are.* New York: Hyperion.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013, September 11-12). Many Doors – One Room: The Deep Transformative Implications of Mindfulness. In C. Germer, J.R. Platt & R.D. Siegal (course planners), *Meditation and Psychotherapy Deepening Mindfulness*. Boston, MA: Harvard Medical School Department of Continuing Education.

Kane, L. (2001). *Popular Education and Social Change in Latin America.* London: Latin American Bureau.

Kelly, R. (2000). A Poetics of Anticolonialism. *Monthly Review, 51*(6). Retrieved from http://monthlyreview.org/1999/11/01/a-poetics-of-anticolonialism/

Livingston, J. (1995). *Rogue Primate.* Boulder, CO: Roberts Rinehart Pub.

Malkin, J. (2002). *In Engaged Buddhism Peace Begins with You.* Retrieved from shambhalasun.com

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2003). *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children.* Retrieved from http://nctaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/no-dream-denied_summary_report.pdf

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2014). *Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain: Working Paper 3.* Retrieved from http://developingchild.harvard.edu

Neff, K.D. (2003). The Development And Validation Of A Scale To Measure Self Compassion, *Self and Identity, 2,* 223-250. doi: 10.1159/000215071

Plum Village Website. (2014). *Thich Nhat Hanh.* Retrieved from http://plumvillage.org/about/thichnhat-hanh/

Schoeberlein, D. (2009). *Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness: A Guide for Anyone Who Teaches Anything*: Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications.

Smollin, M. (2011). *Five Reasons Teacher Turnover Is on the Rise.* Retrieved from http://www.takepart.com/article/2011/08/09/five-reasons-teacher-turnover-rise

Thich Nhat Hanh. (1991). *Peace Is Every Step*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Williams, R. (1980). *Problems in Materialism and Culture.* London: Verso.

Well-being Institute. (2014). *Welcome*. Retrieved from http://www.wellbeing.group.cam.ac.uk/welcome/

Appendix: Descriptions of foundational practices

This appendix includes excerpts from the conference booklet that was given out to attendees of the Educators' Retreat at the American School in London, March 30 – April 2, 2012. Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village Community published this booklet for the conference and hold the copyright to the materials shared below.

Practicing together

Mindfulness is the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment. It is the continuous practice of touching life deeply in every moment of daily life. To be mindful is to be truly alive, present and at one with those around you and with what you are doing. We bring our body and mind into harmony while we wash the dishes, drive the car or take our morning shower.

Breathing

Our breathing is a stable solid ground that we can take refuge in. Regardless of our internal weather – our thoughts, emotions and perceptions – our breathing is always with us like a faithful friend. Whenever we feel carried away, or sunken in a deep emotion, or scattered in worries and projects, we return to our breathing to collect and anchor our mind.

We feel the flow of air coming in and going out of our nose. We feel how light and natural, how calm and peaceful our breathing functions. At any time, while we are walking, gardening, or computing, we can return to this peaceful source of life.

We may like to recite this gatha:

"Breathing in, I know that I am breathing in. Breathing out, I know that I am breathing out."

We do not need to control our breath. Feel the breath as it actually is. It may be long or short, deep or shallow. With our awareness, it will naturally become slower and deeper. Conscious breathing is the key to uniting body and mind and bringing the energy of mindfulness into each moment of our life.

Bells of Mindfulness

The inviting of the bell calls out to us:

Listen, listen, this wonderful sound brings me back to my true home.

By stopping to breathe and restore our calm and our peace, we become free, our work becomes more enjoyable and the friend in front of us becomes more real. Back home we can use the ringing of our telephone, the cry of a baby, or even the sound of fire engines and ambulances as our bells of mindfulness. You may also install the mindfulness clock in your computer to remind you to stop and breathe (www.mindfulnessdc.org/mindfulclock.html). With just three conscious breaths we can release the tensions in our body and mind, and return to a cool and clear state of being.

Sitting Meditation

Sitting meditation is like returning home to give full attention to and care for ourselves. We sit upright with dignity, and return to our breathing. We bring our full

attention to what is within and around us. We let our mind become spacious and our heart soft and kind. The purpose of sitting meditation is to enjoy. Don't try to attain anything!

Sitting meditation is very healing. We realize we can just be with whatever is within us – our pain, anger, irritation, or our joy, love, and peace. We are with whatever is there without being carried away by it. Let it come, let it stay, and then let it go. No need to push, to oppress, or to pretend our thoughts are not there. Observe the thoughts and images of our mind with an accepting and loving eye. We are free to be still and calm despite the storms that might arise in us.

If our legs or feet begin to hurt during the sitting, we are free to adjust our position quietly. We can maintain our concentration by following our breathing and slowly and attentively change our posture. At the end of the sitting meditation session, allow a few minutes to massage your legs and feet before standing up again.

Walking Meditation

Whenever we walk, we can practice meditation. This means that we know that we are walking. We walk just for walking. We walk with freedom and solidity, no longer in a hurry. We are present with each step.

Walking in this way should not be a privilege. We should be able to do it every moment. Look around and see how vast life is, the trees, the white clouds, and the limitless sky. Listen to the birds. Feel the fresh breeze. Life is all around and we are alive and healthy and capable of walking in peace.

Let us walk as a free person and feel our steps get lighter. Let us enjoy every step

we make. Each step is nourishing and healing. As we walk, imprint our gratitude and our love on the earth.

We may like to use a gatha as we walk. Taking two or three steps for each in-breath and each out-breath,

> *Breathing in, "I have arrived"; Breathing out, "I am home" Breathing in, "In the here"; Breathing out, "In the now" Breathing in, "I am solid"; Breathing out, "I am free"*

Eating Meditation

Eating a meal together is a meditative practice. We should try to offer our presence for every meal. As we serve our food we can already begin practicing. Serving ourselves, we realize that many elements, such as rain, sunshine, earth, air and love, have all come together to form this wonderful meal. In fact, through this food, we see that the entire universe is supporting our existence.