

Evaluation of the S. Burlington INNER RESILIENCE PILOT PROGRAM

September 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Inner Resilience (IR) Program was conducted in the S. Burlington (VT) school district during the 2008-09 school year. Forty-one teachers, administrators and staff, most from the district's three elementary schools, took part. The program consisted of a 10-month series of trainings, workshops and retreats that taught educators how to reduce stress, regulate their emotions, and increase mindfulness and attention, thus improving their personal and professional well-being. Mindfulness activities, taught to the participants at group meetings and weekend retreats, included deep breathing, meditation, yoga, and other contemplative and stress-reduction practices. In validated measures completed at the beginning and end of the program, participants showed a statistically significant decrease in their perception of stress and increase in mindfulness. Educators also filled out monthly reports charting their personal progress. An analysis of those reports showed a significant increase in educators' aggregate "personal health promotion" scores, which included perceptions of happiness, calmness, and work satisfaction. In questionnaires submitted at the end of the program, 87% of educators said the IR Program had had a serious or moderate effect on their personal lives, and 90% said it had had a serious or moderate effect on their professional lives. Starting in January, the 28 teachers and four counselors in the overall group began introducing age-appropriate IR activities to their students; at the end of the program, 16% said it had had a significant positive effect on students, and 40% said it had had a moderately positive effect. An increase in students' ability to calm themselves was the impact cited most often by teachers. In another component of the evaluation, five teachers (four third-grade and one fourth-grade) filled out weekly logs describing how the program unfolded

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This report describes the Inner Resilience Program as adapted and piloted by the S. Burlington (VT) School District in 2008-09. The program was developed by Linda Lantieri and launched in New York City in 2002. The S. Burlington school system is the first outside New York City to implement the model. For more information about the Inner Resilience Program, go to www.innerresilience-tidescenter.org

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in their classrooms and noting changes they observed in students. They reported on a total of 71 weeks. In 60% of those weeks, teachers said that the program had a moderate or strong effect on their students; in the rest, they reported a marginal or non-existent effect. Teachers varied widely on the extent to which they observed changes, with some reporting changes frequently and others only rarely. The 84 students in these five classes were asked how the program affected them. About half of students said the IR Program helped them focus “a little” better in class and made them “a little” more ready to learn. Sizable minorities said the program helped “a lot” in these areas. Regardless of their opinion of the program’s effects on them or their classes, over 75% of the students said such activities could benefit at least some children, and that they should therefore be introduced more widely in school.

INTRODUCTION

Growing concern about teacher stress and burnout in recent years has led to a variety of efforts to improve teacher well-being. Many of those efforts have focused on the physiological and psychological benefits of contemplative techniques. Also known as mindfulness, mind-body, self-care or reflective techniques, these practices employ relaxation, stretching, focus and breathing exercises to quiet the mind and restore energy and concentration. The practices are not only meant to support and improve teachers’ own ability to cope with their demanding jobs, but to help them be more effective in the classroom as well. Indeed, a number of studies suggest that teachers’ emotional well-being and social/emotional competence can have an important impact on student outcomes.¹

Students, too, have been the focus of numerous studies. Dozens of schools have experimented with contemplative programs for students that are meant to impact a range of behaviors, from ability to focus and complete tasks to aggression and overall academic performance. Those school-based programs, and others targeting children and adolescents in medical or other specialized settings, have shown positive effects related to stress, anxiety, and ADHD behaviors.² A recent review of 317 studies found that staff-implemented programs teaching social and emotional skills to schoolchildren do lead to measurable improvements in

children’s behavior, attitudes toward school, and academic achievement.³ Although these findings are promising, it is important to note that many of these individual studies were small and were hampered by weak research designs.

As evidence for the efficacy of mindfulness has grown, so has interest of mainstream educators and the public. The Garrison Institute, a leader in developing contemplative techniques for the classroom, recently received a grant from the US Department of Education to complete development of its Cultivating Awareness and Resiliency in Education Program, a professional development program for teachers that has already been piloted in three major cities.

Despite these developments, even the most enthusiastic supporters of contemplative education acknowledge that the field is still in its infancy, and that the large, rigorous studies needed to establish a consensus on the benefits of such programs have yet to be conducted. Indeed, the tools and methodologies necessary for such studies are in many cases still under development. The current evaluation, therefore, must be seen as another incremental step in an emerging but incomplete field of study: a useful addition, but hardly the final word.

The 2008-09 S. Burlington Inner Resilience Pilot Project was a 10-month program of trainings, retreats and group workshops designed to teach self-care and reflective practices to educators and allied staff in S. Burlington schools, and to help teachers in turn to bring similar activities into their classrooms. The S. Burlington program was based on an initiative developed in the New York City school system in response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Since 2002, that program has involved more than 2,000 educators and 40,000 children. A randomized, controlled evaluation of the program in 2009 found that teachers in the test group experienced a statistically significant reduction in stress, increases in attention and mindfulness, and greater relational trust with colleagues. Third-grade students perceived greater autonomy and influence in their classes, and third- and fourth-grade students experienced less frustration.⁴ The founder of the NYC program, Linda Lantieri, acted as the primary trainer and consultant for the S. Burlington project.

¹Jennings, P. & Greenberg, M.T. (2009). *The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes*. Review of Educational Research, 2009; 79; 491.

²Saltzman, A. *The still quiet place: related research*. Web: <http://www.stillquietplace.com/relatedresearch.html>; Garrison Institute. (2005). *Contemplation and education: Current status of programs using contemplative techniques in K-12 educational settings: A mapping report*. Web: <http://www.garrisoninstitute.org/reports/Contemplation%20and%20Education%20Mapping%20Report%20June05.pdf>; and Flook, L. & Flaxman, G. (2008). *Mindfulness research summary*. University of California/Los Angeles Semel Institute. Web: <http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=38>

³Payton, J., Weissberg, R.P., Durlak, J.A., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., Schellinger, K.B., & Pachan, M. (2008). *The positive impact of social and emotional learning for kindergarten to eighth-grade students: Findings from three scientific reviews*. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. <http://www.casel.org/downloads/PackardTR.pdf>

⁴Simon, A., Harnett, S., Nagler, E., & Thomas, L. (2009). *Research on the effect of the Inner Resilience Program on teacher and student wellness and classroom climate: Final report*. Metis Associates: New York City.

Though very similar in content, the S. Burlington project nonetheless differed from its New York counterpart in some ways. For instance, the S. Burlington program primarily involved teachers of kindergarten through grade 3, meaning that the majority of students reached by the project were too young to be tested or to give critical feedback. The NYC program recruited teachers of grades 3, 4 and 5 and studied effects among students at those higher grade levels. The S. Burlington program was also far smaller; 855 students in NYC were tested, compared to 84 in S. Burlington. Finally, as we will discuss later, the evaluation design itself was much simpler in Vermont, creating opportunities to capture changes in just a few areas of well-being. In commissioning an evaluation of this first-year effort, the school district acknowledged its modest scope but nonetheless hoped to discover enough about teachers' and students' reactions to the program to improve and perhaps expand on it in the future.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The IR Program spanned the entire 2008-2009 school year, and fell into two program components, one designed for educators and the other for students.

1. **Training of educators.** Throughout the year, teachers and allied staff were taught self-care/reflective skills. The goal was to help participants better regulate their emotions and focus their attention, thus improving their ability to be constructive in both their personal and professional lives. It was theorized that growth in these areas would not only lead to greater well-being for the educators, but would directly and indirectly create positive benefits for students as well.
2. **Training of students.** In the spring semester of the year, educators began implementing age-appropriate self-care/reflective activities with students in their classrooms. The goal was to improve students' ability to regulate their emotions and improve their concentration and attention.

A total of 41 teachers began the project and 38 finished it. All participants completed pre- and post-participation questionnaires, monthly progress reports, and pre- and post-tests measuring certain changes over time. From this large group, two small subgroups, each consisting of five teachers, were identified for closer examination. One group agreed to keep weekly logs of the experiences implementing the IR curriculum in the classroom; the second group participated in phone interviews at the end of the project. Eighty-four students in five classes (four third-grade classes and one fourth-grade class) were also pre- and post-tested and surveyed at the end of the program. Due to the limited roll-out of the program in this pilot year, the school district decided against

using control groups for either the teacher or student groups; instead, interest in this phase of evaluation revolved around understanding whether, and to what degree, test groups alone seemed to respond to the intervention. Wherever possible, the evaluation utilized published instruments with established reliability and validity. We developed an array of other instruments as well, in order to capture as much qualitative information as possible.

PARTICIPATING EDUCATORS

An introductory training was conducted for all interested district teachers and staff in May 2008. Teachers and staff from the district's three elementary schools – the first area of focus for the project – then received an invitation to participate in the pilot program that would start in September. As expected, the volunteers were predominately, but not exclusively, from the elementary schools. Most (28) were teachers; the rest worked as administrators, nurses, counselors or other staff. All were white and the majority had master's degrees. All but two were female, and they varied in age from 29 to 65, with most in their 40s and 50s. Most were long-time educators (the average length of time in the field was 18.5 years); only four teachers had been in the field for less than four years.

The group's experience with mindfulness practices was mixed. Only four participants had regularly practiced mindfulness activities in the past, but most (34) were familiar with such activities and had practiced them on and off. When asked to summarize their attitude toward the program, a large majority expressed an expectation that it would result in some benefits for them; 15 said they "assumed" it would make some sort of difference in their lives, but could not predict how much, while 19 said they "knew for a fact that this sort of program can make a profound difference in people's lives," and thus were hoping for "serious benefits."

THE INTERVENTION FOR EDUCATORS: TRAINING IN SELF-CARE/REFLECTIVE TECHNIQUES

The IR Program offered trainings to participating educators throughout the school year. The events were designed to train them in a variety of stress-reduction and self-care activities, and in the use of a curriculum for introducing similar, age-appropriate activities to their students. The separate trainings are described below; all except the weekly holistic trainings were mandatory for program participants.

- "Nurturing the Inner Life," a two-day retreat in October that trained educators in the IR curriculum. The stated learning objectives of the retreat were threefold: 1) to teach participants about the factors that contribute to stress and its impact on health and performance; 2) to

teach relaxation techniques and self-care tools for use in daily life; and 3) to help participants reconnect with their passion for education. Both this retreat and a similar but shorter event in March were led by IR Program founder Linda Lantieri.

- Monthly sessions beginning in September focusing on learning mindfulness skills for personal and professional growth. In these 90-minute sessions, led by Anthony Quintiliani, a Burlington-based clinical health psychologist, educators learned an array of secular contemplation and mindfulness skills. Participants chose one of two sessions each month to attend. Though most participants did attend a majority of the sessions, the total in attendance in any given month varied considerably, from a high of 41 in September to a low of 20 in March. Thirty of the 38 educators who handed in program evaluation materials in June attended 8, 9 or all 10 of the classes.
- Optional weekly classes in contemplative practices. There were 24 classes in all – four each of gentle yoga, restorative yoga, mindfulness, introduction to meditation, Tai Chi, and Qigong. Each series was taught by a certified instructor. The classes were rotated among three schools and were scheduled to begin in mid-afternoon just after the elementary schools closed. Unlike the monthly sessions, these weekly classes were not well-attended. Nineteen participants attended none of the classes; 10 attended between one and four classes. Only four attended 10 or more classes. Low attendance did not seem to reflect participants' perceptions that the classes were not valuable; rather, several of the educators complained that the classes were inconveniently timed or located.
- Half-day coaching in each school on implementing the IR Program curriculum, *Building Resilience From the Inside Out* (Lantieri, 2008), in the classroom, along with grade-level question-and-answer sessions for teachers.
- Day and a half retreat in March that, like the October retreat, focused on restorative activities.

BRINGING MINDFULNESS INTO THE CLASSROOM: A FOCUS ON STUDENTS

Between January and June 2009, the 28 teachers in the IR Program introduced a range of mindfulness activities to students in their classrooms. Teachers were instructed to introduce these activities at their own pace, and therefore the content and tempo of the program varied slightly by

class. Five teachers kept weekly logs for this study; those logs indicate that, at least for the lower grade levels, students spent no more than one hour per week on IR-related activities, usually in five-, 10-, or 20-minute increments.

Typical IR-related activities for these younger classes included writing in personal journals; doing breathing and stretching; coloring mandalas; listening to soothing music and specially selected stories; and engaging in sensory-sharpening exercises such as holding pebbles or shells and trying to notice every detail. Each class had a newly created “quiet corner” or “peace corner” where students who needed a break could find self-calming tools such as finger labyrinths and ooze tubes. (The activities and tools offered in the corners varied from classroom to classroom, and were chosen by the teachers and students themselves.) In stressful moments, students were also reminded to take deep breaths or otherwise make real-time use of the skills they had been learning.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

This evaluation relies on both quantitative data – that is, data derived from questionnaires designed by social scientists to measure certain attributes and to capture changes in those attributes over time – and qualitative data, or the subjective feelings and opinions of participants about the project and its effects on them. It is important to note that this evaluation did not seek to discover the impact of any single training component on educators or students, or to collect their impressions about those individual components and their merit vis-a-vis one another. Rather, the evaluation sought to measure the impact of the total program on participants.

The evaluation focused on four separate groups: the 41 original participants, five teachers in targeted classrooms, the children in those classrooms, and an additional five teachers randomly selected from the larger adult participant group.

From the overall group of 41 educators, we sought answers to these basic questions:

1. Did educators' self-reported stress levels change over the course of the 10-month program? (Instruments used: The Mindfulness Applications Survey,⁵ The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale,⁶ and The Perceived Stress Scale.⁷)

⁵Quintiliani, A. (2008). *Mindfulness applications survey*. S. Burlington Inner Resilience Program Evaluation, S. Burlington School District, S. Burlington, VT.

⁶Brown, K.W. & 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.

⁷Cohen S., & Williamson, G. (1988). *Perceived stress in a probability sample of the United States*. In S. Spacapan & S. Oskamp (Eds.) *The social psychology of health: Claremont Symposium on applied social psychology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

2. Did educators feel the program was helpful to them in their personal and professional lives, and, if they worked in the classroom, did they feel it had an effect on their students' calmness, focus, or ability to stay on-task? (Instruments used: Inner Resilience Program Pre- and Post-Participation Surveys.⁸)

We also measured impacts on 84 children in five classes, (four third-grade and one fourth-grade class). Three of the classes were in one elementary school, and the remaining two were in a second school. The children's parents gave written consent, and children were tested twice, once in January and again in June. At the end of the year, we also collected their impressions of the program and its impact on them.

Our primary questions were:

1. Did students' self-reported levels of "mindful attention" to daily events change over five months of classroom instruction? (Instrument used: Day-to-Day Experiences Survey.⁹)
2. Did students' self-report levels of optimism change over the five months? (Instrument used: The About Me Survey.¹⁰) Optimism was considered a reasonably good proxy for some of the attributes the program was targeting in students: pro-social behavior in the classroom, emotional awareness and sensitivity to others, and self-confidence.
3. Did students perceive that the activities taught in the program helped them feel calmer and more ready to learn? (Instrument used: My Opinions Survey.¹¹)

Between January 2009 and June 2009, we collected weekly logs from each of the five teachers in these targeted classrooms, asking them to document the IR-related activities they implemented with their students that week, and to record any changes in children they felt were related to the activities. (See Weekly IR Teacher Log in Appendix.)

Our central questions were:

1. Which activities were implemented, how often, and for how long each time?
2. Did teachers perceive the activities to have an effect on students' behavior? If so, they were asked to describe the activities and corresponding effects in detail.
3. Did the activities appear to have positive calming/focusing benefits for students with particular behavioral or attention issues?

Finally, we interviewed five randomly selected educators about their experiences with the program, focusing on changes in their professional lives and, if they were

teachers, in their classrooms. Our goal was to record their impressions and reactions to the program, their suggestions for improving the program, and their sense of the overall importance of the work. Interviews were semi-structured per a written protocol and were conducted by phone. Central questions for these interviewees were:

1. Did the overall IR Program produce impacts on these educators' personal or professional lives?
2. If so, what were those effects?
3. Did these educators believe that the IR Program had any effect on the children with whom they worked? If so, what evidence could they give of those effects?

FINDINGS

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS: EDUCATORS

A significant increase in overall 'personal health.' The Mindfulness Application Survey asked educators attending the monthly trainings to report on their use of mindfulness skills in the past week and to rate their levels of work satisfaction, happiness and ability to be calm and understanding of themselves and others. Their ratings were summed into a single overall "personal health promotion" score, and those scores compared over time. It also asked them to document the number of hours they spent on mindfulness activities during the week. The survey was developed by monthly group leader Anthony Quintiliani, and while not tested or validated by usual scientific protocol, nevertheless could be expected to reveal how group participants perceived their own levels calmness and satisfaction to have changed over time. As one might expect, the average number of hours participants reported doing private mindfulness practices each week increased over time, from a low of 2.4 hours in October to a high of 5.5 hours in April. Thirty-five participants completed surveys in both September 2008 and June 2009. The mean scores of participants were 36.8 in September and 44.5 in June, suggesting that as a whole, participants perceived themselves as more calm and happy at the end of the year than at the beginning. In a comparison of the mean pre- and post-test scores of individuals, the changes were shown to be significant ($t = -3.663$, $sig. = .001$, $\alpha = .05$). The same results can be seen in other sets of pre/post scores for randomly selected periods in the 10-month training period. For instance, comparisons of scores between Sept/Nov, Sept/Jan, Sept/March and Nov/June all show increases in the group mean, and in all but one of those cases (Nov/June), the improvements were significant. These findings suggest a general trend toward greater calmness as the year went on.

⁸Wilson, M. (2009). *Inner resilience program pre-participation survey and post-participation survey*. S. Burlington Inner Resilience Program Evaluation, S. Burlington School District, S. Burlington, VT.

⁹Adapted from Brown, K.W. & Ryan, R.M. (2003).

¹⁰Song, (2003). *Resilience inventory*, in Schonert-Reichl, K. (2005). *Evaluating the Mindfulness Education (ME) Program*, University of British Columbia: Vancouver.

¹¹Wilson, M. (2009). *My opinions survey*. S. Burlington Inner Resilience Program Evaluation, S. Burlington School District, S. Burlington, VT.

A significant decrease in perception of stress. The Perceived Stress Scale is a widely used, well-validated instrument that measures the perception of stress. This 10-item questionnaire was administered to participating educators in September, at their first monthly session, and again in June, at their last session. Findings from the 38 participants who filled out both the pre- and post-tests show that perceptions of stress decreased over the 10-month period, with a mean score of 19.2 in September and 14.1 in June. Differences in pre- and post-test individual scores were significant ($t=5.368$, $sig=.000$, $\alpha=.05$), and the effect size was large at .528.¹²


A significant increase in levels of mindfulness. The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (also known as the Day-to-Day Experiences Scale) is a 15-item scale designed to assess receptive awareness of what is taking place in the present. The scale has been validated with college, community, and cancer patient samples, and numerous studies show that it predicts well-being and the ability to self-regulate one's emotions. Thirty-six program participants filled out both pre- and post-tests; mean individual scores were 50.5 in September and 58.4 in June, showing an increase in mindful attention. Differences between pre- and post-test individual scores were again significant ($t=-4.791$, $sig=.000$, $\alpha=.05$), and the effect size was large at .600.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS: EDUCATORS

One measure of a program's success is whether it satisfies the expectations of the participants. So what, specifically, were the hopes of the teachers, staff and administrators as they began the IR program in September 2008? At their first meeting, participants were asked to respond to these two questions:¹³

Q. When the program is over, I will know it has been effective for me if I start seeing these differences in my personal life.

The educators' responses indicated that they hoped for two primary benefits: a reduction in their stress levels, and an improvement in their physical health. A sampling of typical responses is below.

 *Less feelings of hurriedness, stress, overall better health, less tired.*

Less worry, stress, anger. More joy, relaxation, better health.


More restful sleep at night, fewer backaches and migraines, I'll be a happier person, I'll worry less, stress less.

Better relational interactions, better problem-solving capacity and memory and attention.

Less road rage! More patience with children. Nicer talk at home from me.

Q. When the program is over, I will know it has been effective for me if I start seeing these differences in my professional life.

In general, the educators and other administrative personnel involved in the program said they hoped it would help them communicate better with colleagues and students, and control their levels of stress. These comments were typical:

 *Less stress, people working together better, more thoughtful communication – calmness at work that is evident in students.*

Better able to share a sense of calm and positive reinforcement with the students I work with.

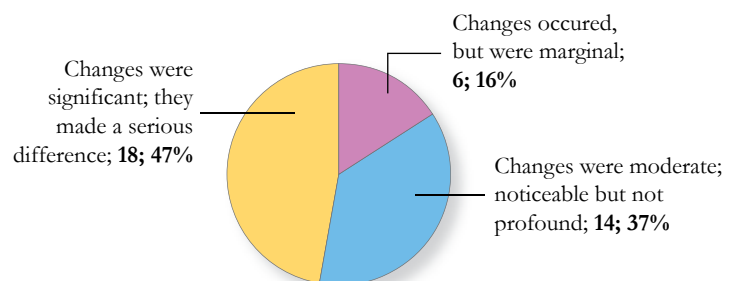
I will react to students calmly when they make poor choices, I will listen more attentively to students and colleagues, I will complete one task at a time!

Greater capacity to handle adolescent energies with openness and patience.

Keep personal stress from interfering with my job. Be more effective and time-efficient. Be more patient with others (colleagues and students).

Q. Overall, the IR Program's effect on my personal life was ...

FIGURE 1: OVERALL, IR PROGRAM'S EFFECT ON MY PERSONAL LIFE WAS: (n=38)*




* 'n' refers to number of participants responding to this question. In the chart, number of participants is followed by percent of the whole.

As Figure 1 indicates, the program seems to have fulfilled the participants' expectations. Eighty-four percent of the

¹²The effect size is a standardized measure of the magnitude of an observed change; it is a more accurate indication of an effect's meaningfulness than whether the effect is statistically significant.

¹³Educators and students participating in this evaluation were promised anonymity. Where it creates a useful context and does not jeopardize their privacy, educators are identified by title, and students by grade level.

educators said that, after 10 months of trainings, the program had produced either moderate or significant changes in their personal lives, usually manifested in greater calmness. Sixty percent of the respondents said they would “definitely” continue the practices after the program ended; the others said they would “probably” continue the practices. (Not all participants responded to every question in the post-program survey, so totals in charts vary slightly.) Representative comments are below:

 *[I experienced] an increase in my tolerance/acceptance of other people.*

I am more calm and centered when in a stress situation. Family members and students have also become more ‘mindful.’

I was calmer when dealing with difficult things that were stressful – I found myself breathing more deeply instead of blowing up ...

I have the ability to de-stress and calm when needed. Helping with sleeping and getting back to sleep.

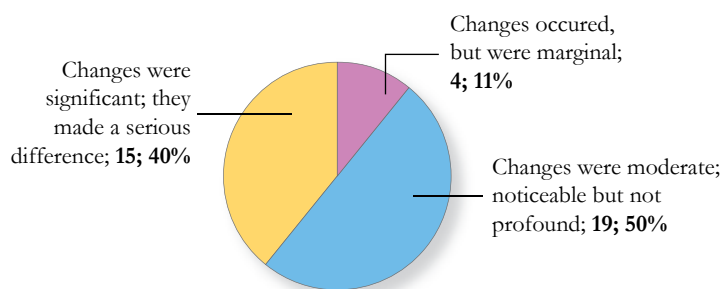
[I have had a] significantly healthier response to stress, balancing work/personal life. I have learned to meditate, have a ‘quieter mind’ and to handle negative thoughts/feelings.

[I am] able to turn to specific strategies when dealing with major health issues with my Mom and Dad!

As the parent of an anxious child, [I became] aware of home language and of my surroundings.


Q. Overall, the program’s effect on my professional life was ...

FIGURE 2: OVERALL, THE IR PROGRAM’S EFFECT ON MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE WAS: (n=38)



Ninety percent of participants said the program produced moderate or significant changes in their professional lives, while 11 percent said that the changes were marginal. (Because of rounding, figures in the chart total over 100.) None reported that the program had no effect. Seventy-eight percent of those who regularly work with children said that

they would “definitely” continue the IR practices once the pilot program was over; the remainder said they would “probably” continue. Some of their comments follow:

 *I plan to continue to fully implement these lessons/strategies in my class for many years to come.*

I have integrated the practice directly into my teaching. I’ve also been able to use self-claming/stress reduction [with kids and myself] in my office, making me more available and more effective.

My calmness transfers to students in my classroom. I am better able to deal with colleagues and administrators. I am better able to laugh off ... or ignore stressful situations.

I could step back more often and not react as much in difficult situations.

I was able to say ‘no,’ walk away from chaos, be more centered.

[There was] a dramatic change in the way I dealt with all students, but particularly those with behavioral issues.

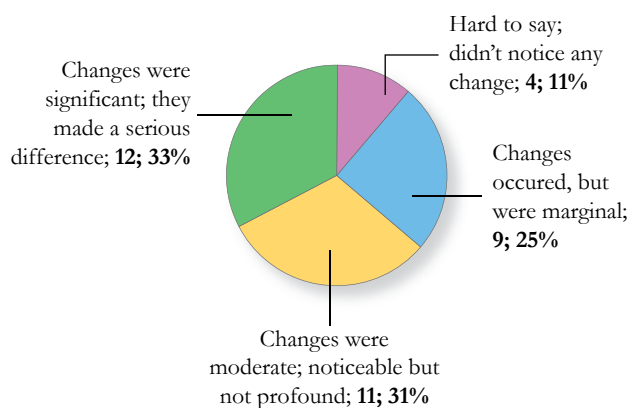
[I have] more awareness of my own daily speed and the benefit derived from slowing down. I ‘catch myself’ racing when I don’t have to be. [I also] benefit from slow intentional breathing.

[I am] calmer with children. I did deep breathing and some yoga with them – took imaginary visualization trips with them – and practiced some deep breathing and some meditation myself for short periods during the day to help me stay calm.


The changes I made in the classroom were great for the kids. The best thing was the peace- in area, hook-up time, relaxation time, [and] get ready to learn time.

Q: Did the program affect your relationships with your colleagues?

FIGURE 3: DID YOU EXPERIENCE CHANGES IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES? (n=36)



Participants were also asked whether they felt the program had positively affected their relationships with colleagues. Most – about two-thirds – said the program had produced changes in their relationships, and those changes were either moderate or significant in magnitude. The remaining third said changes were either marginal or non-existent. (See Figure 3.) Following are a sample of the comments:

 Collegial conversations around difficult topics were easier – started from a more relaxed place. – Administrator

I don't take things as personally. I am able to separate the stress field that surrounds other people, and not let their issues effect me as much as I would have. – Elementary Teacher

I got to know some colleagues better and see them in a different light. – Elementary Teacher

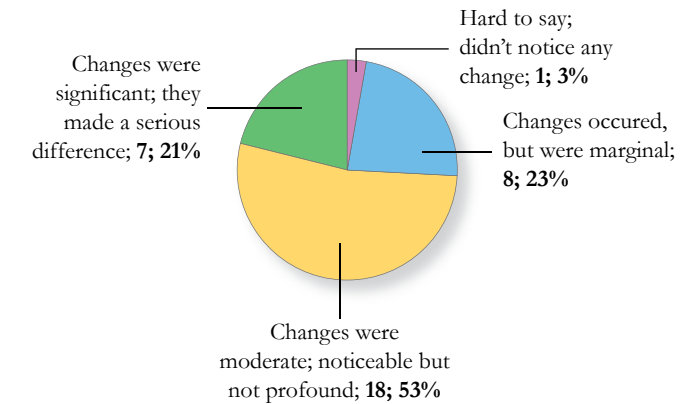
It has built a bridge of common language to talk about our and our kids' stress and anxiety. – Elementary Counselor

I was able to be more patient, calm and mindful in my dealings with colleagues – more accepting of differences and more tolerant with difficult peers. – Middle School Teacher

I felt a deeper connection with coworkers. I use calming techniques in stressful situations (meetings etc.) with coworkers. – Elementary Teacher

Q. If you are a teacher or guidance counselor, do you believe your participation in the IR Program produced changes in your students?

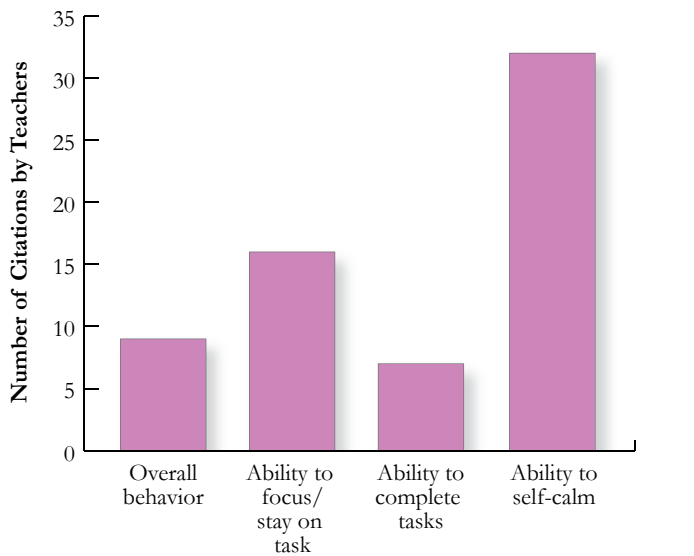
FIGURE 4: IF YOU ARE A TEACHER OR COUNSELOR, DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE IR PROGRAM PRODUCED CHANGES IN YOUR STUDENTS? (n=34)



This question is one of the most important because it goes to the heart of the theory of change underpinning the program. The IR Program is presumed to have both direct and indirect impacts on students, and those impacts – greater calmness, focus and readiness to learn – are then assumed to create the possibility for personal and academic growth. For a variety of practical reasons, this evaluation did not attempt to directly measure academic performance in students, nor did it attempt to measure behavioral impacts (behavioral indicators such as number of detentions and number of days tardy or absent are often used in studies of high-school students, but are not considered appropriate for elementary students). Instead, this evaluation relies on the observations of the teachers themselves, assuming their good-faith efforts to objectively report effects and their ability to assign relative weight to those effects. As Figure 4 indicates, seven teachers, or about a quarter of respondents, said they observed significant changes for students; 18, or just over half, said they observed moderate changes; another quarter said changes were marginal; and one respondent said there were no noticeable changes.


Q. If you believe your students were positively affected, what evidence could you give that supports this opinion?

FIGURE 5: AREAS IN WHICH CHANGES OCCURED IN STUDENTS, AS REPORTED BY TEACHERS



This question asked the teachers and counselors who said their students had been positively affected by the IR Program to name how they were affected; educators were given four choices – overall behavior, ability to focus/stay on task, ability to complete tasks, and ability to self-calm – and instructed to circle as many as applied. As Figure 5 indicates, the ability to self-calm was selected most often,

with ability to focus and stay on task a distant second. We then asked educators to consider whether those claims were provable; that is, whether concrete improvements they said resulted from the program were, or could have been, documented objectively. The request was a difficult one, since teachers were not given the task of documenting changes at the outset of the program. Because of their age, it can also be particularly difficult to objectively measure changes in young children's performance or behavior. Yet the question's purpose was exploratory, an attempt to discover what teachers themselves noticed in their students and considered "evidence" of program effectiveness. It should be noted that the comments below represent only about half of those made, and were selected because they were detailed and came closest to providing the objective evidence requested.

 *I have students (3) who when asked to write something related to this year, wrote about our peace corner, and beautifully explained its purpose and impact. My most challenging student in terms of aggressive and impulsive behavior now visibly takes a deep breath in and out to "get to a calm place" before problem-solving. – Elementary Teacher*

I work with all students in the school. I noticed that this program validated my notion that kids need more quiet/privacy and I created more of these options. Many times students asked to use these spaces while they worked on their art. – Teacher

Students were able to use our "Peace Center" as a place to reflect and calm down. It helped them have a venue to deal with the strong emotions they were feeling. It also taught them self-regulating skills and strategies to deal with situations that arise. – Elementary Teacher

I found that some students would do deep breathing and try to calm themselves before talking about something – also when we did it as a whole class, they went off to work calmer and more focused. – Elementary Teacher

Those students who were/are behavioral challenges learned and used mindfulness strategies that enabled them to regain focus and control – I witnessed the changes in behavior. – Elementary Teacher

2 children with significant attention/behavior issues are using self-calming strategies independently, unprompted; all but 2 are completing tasks independently; 2 students with significant anxiety have shown considerable improvement and ability to cope; all students are able to articulate feeling and body awareness. – Elementary Teacher

Some students have learned to self-calm after they have become stressed or escalated. Their ability to recoup much faster has meant that they have had increased work completion, more time in class and better relationships. – Elementary Teacher

[I have gotten] reports from parents about kids bringing the practice home! – Elementary Teacher

The need to implement individual behavior plans was almost eliminated. Students now have a menu of strategies to work with when needed – they don't need help to 'make a plan' or a better choice. – Elementary Teacher

Students shared with me how they use strategies outside of school – to help them sleep, when they were frustrated with siblings, etc.... – Elementary Teacher

I've seen a big change in a student whose teacher uses IR. He's a kindergartner, and he struggled at the beginning of the year, crying and being disruptive. Today, I saw him in what he considered a crisis, and he told me he needed a break, to take some deep breaths, and then he went back to class. – Nurse

Anxious students used calming strategies more readily and reported feeling differently, more in control. – Elementary Counselor

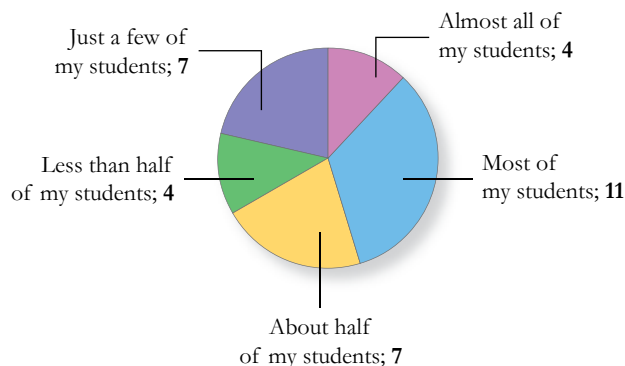
Students wanted and asked for these activities. Behavioral changes for some – more ability to calm down and not create power struggles. Journal entries of students referred very positively to this part of our day. – Middle School Teacher

Students made significant growth in reading in a short period of time. – Elementary Teacher

One-to-one, IR worked: improved concentration, improved direction-following, improved calmness of body. – Elementary Counselor

Q. If there were changes in your students, what percentage of students did they occur in?

FIGURE 6: IF THERE WERE CHANGES IN STUDENTS, WHAT PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS DID THEY OCCUR IN? (n=33)



This question asked teachers to estimate how many of their students seemed positively impacted by IR activities – just a few, some, most, or all. As Figure 6 indicates, teachers’ perceptions were remarkably varied, with nearly equal numbers of teachers saying that “almost all” and “less than half” of their students were impacted. Eleven of 33, or exactly one-third, said that they observed changes in “most” of their students. What accounts for this wide variation in teachers’ perceptions of how many students benefited from the IR Program? It’s difficult to know. Teachers, as we have noted, were encouraged to introduce IR-related activities at their own pace, so a program that was enthusiastically implemented by one teacher may have been more tentatively implemented by another. The composition of the classes could be expected to vary somewhat, with some classes having greater-than-usual complements of challenging or high-achieving students. Teachers themselves probably varied somewhat in their belief in the program’s potential to make significant differences for their students, and some probably also focused more on certain groups of students and may have judged the program’s impact on whether they observed changes in those particular groups.

Q. If you noticed changes in students, did certain types of students seem to respond more than others?

Twenty-eight teachers answered this question; of those, 19 reported that certain types of students were more affected than others. However, there was no consensus on which types of students those were. At least five teachers said high-achieving students – those who were able to listen carefully and follow directions – benefited the most. A second group of teachers said the most fidgety students responded best: “I think the students who need it the most

responded more positively than others – they seemed to recognize how much it helped them,” one teacher said. Some teachers said it was hard to tell who benefited most, and that some children did not benefit at all. “It varied,” one elementary teacher said. “Some of the children who could have really benefited did not respond.”

More comments are below:



Students with major difficulty remaining calm and keeping their body quiet were not as successful as their peers. Many who were successful after lots of practice didn’t carry it with them past the practice time. – Elementary Teacher

Students who follow directions were able to settle into reflection time – two were not as capable. – Elementary Teacher

All responded, but I did notice it more effective in certain children that were easily distracted and did not always stay focused – they were better, calmer and more focused. – Elementary Teacher

I noticed some change with my special education students’ awareness of stress/anxiety/frustration, [but they were] not always able to use skills taught. – Elementary Teacher

An anxious student and a behaviorally challenged student showed the most calming when using the strategies taught. – Elementary Teacher

Kids who had the strongest emotions felt validated and were given a safe and healthy way to deal with them. It also helped other kids know it does happen and everyone can use the strategies we practiced. – Elementary Teacher

UP CLOSE: THE IR PROGRAM IN FIVE CLASSROOMS

In addition to collecting data from the 41 participants in the program, we looked carefully at how the IR curriculum unfolded in five classrooms between January 2009, when IR-related techniques first began to be introduced to students, and June 2009, when the school year ended. As noted earlier, we collected weekly logs from four third-grade teachers and one fourth-grade teacher detailing the IR-related activities they had implemented that week and their observations about the impact of those activities on the students. We asked teachers to think particularly about the program’s possible impacts on their most challenging students, and on whether their own work outside the classroom – the trainings and retreats they attended – had had an impact on their students.

The five teachers reported on a total of 71 weeks of class, with individual teachers filling out between 13 and 16 logs each (some teachers occasionally missed a week; in two classrooms, student teachers also filled out logs). These week-by-week reports provide a nuanced picture of the way the IR Program looked in the classroom, and for that reason constitute a particularly valuable source of information for this evaluation.

The number and type of IR-related activities each teacher introduced varied, but the mix generally included writing in journals, listening to calming music, experiencing “pin-drop” moments of silence, coloring mandalas, hearing special stories, listening to relaxation CDs, and doing breathing and stretching exercises (sometimes with a stuffed-animal “breathing buddy”). Typical was this entry from a teacher: Over one week in April, her students did “belly breathing 2 times this week; pin-drop moment 2 times a day; shell-holding for detail 1 time; focus activities 2 times; and peaceful place.”

FIGURE 7: THIS WEEK, HAVE YOU OBSERVED BEHAVIORAL CHANGES IN YOUR STUDENTS THAT YOU FEEL ARE THE RESULT OF ONE OR MORE IR ACTIVITIES? (n=71 weeks)

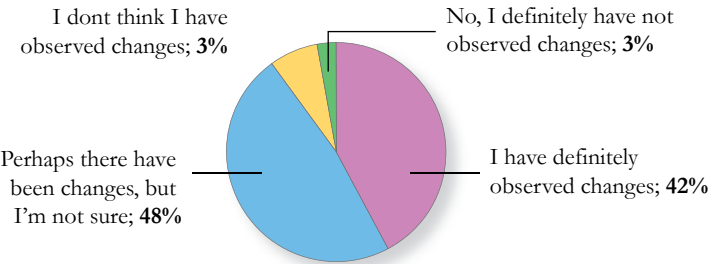


FIGURE 8: THIS WEEK, HAVE YOU OBSERVED BEHAVIORAL CHANGES IN YOUR STUDENTS THAT YOU FEEL ARE THE RESULT OF ONE OR MORE IR ACTIVITIES? (by teacher)

| | I have definitely observed changes | Perhaps, but I'm not sure | I don't think so | No, definitely not | Total |
|-----------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Teacher A | 0 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 16 |
| B | 4 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 12 |
| C | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| D | 7 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| E | 5 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Total | 30 | 34 | 5 | 2 | 71 |

Another teacher described a week in January this way: “[We did] daily pin-drop moments (silence and focus) w/ chime; progressive relaxation IR CD 2 times; quieting mind during cursive writing w/ CD music. Read aloud – listening walk and activity; mindfully eating and tasting snack; stress inventory; and Piggy Pie meditating book.” Some weeks the program was pared down to the basics; in the second week of March, one class simply “breathed in silence or with a sound machine every day for between 3-5 minutes.”

The time any given teacher spent on IR-related activities varied, with the classes averaging about 35 minutes per week. Many activities took only a few minutes, while others (such as listening to soothing music) were coupled with reading or writing assignments and took no extra time of their own.

In each log, teachers reflected on whether IR-related activities had a noticeable effect on their students that week. As Figure 7 indicates, almost half the time, teachers in these five classrooms were not sure if the program was producing changes in their students, while about 40 percent of the time they said they had “definitely observed” changes. Interestingly, two of the five teachers varied dramatically from the others, with one saying she “definitely observed” changes in her class every week of the semester and another saying that most weeks she either definitely did not observe changes, or was unsure whether she had. Many factors could account for the difference in these two teachers’ observations: the composition of the classes themselves, the number or types of IR activities that were introduced, or the teachers’ enthusiasm about the material or comfort level teaching it. It is notable that, even when teachers couldn’t say they had definitely seen changes, they nonetheless reported small improvements in behavior: “Increased attention in pm hours,” one wrote, adding the next week that “the class on average is much more controlled and focused in the afternoon.”

From the Teachers’ Logs: The IR Program’s Effects on Their Students in General

In 34 of 71 weeks, or about half the weeks, teachers reported that their students were about as productive and on-task as they would expect them to be, considering the particular class and time of year. In 37 weeks, teachers reported that the students were more productive and on-task than they would expect.

In writing about their experiences with the program, the teachers enumerated small changes throughout the semester, always in the context of the day-to-day ebb and flow of the classroom. In the five sets of logs, we see classes slowly becoming familiar with the exercises and choosing their favorites; we see teachers watching their students

master some activities that originally were difficult for them. Sometimes a school play or impending vacation interrupts the progress the class was making with IR; other times, a particularly challenging student spontaneously employs a newly learned skill, surprising his teacher with how quickly he has calmed himself down and returned to work. Taken as a whole, the logs provide a glimpse into the real-world life of the classroom and the incremental, practical changes the IR Program made over time.

In January, one teacher wrote, “Kids are using the peaceful place in the most genuine way. They are grateful for the reflection time and no one is misusing it as a distraction. Kids are self-regulating.”

Of students’ participation in a quilt-square puzzle exercise, she wrote: “For over an hour students focused and mindfully followed directions. There was no frustration and the room was very quiet (normally several students would struggle to follow directions and self-regulate).”

Another teacher, in a log entry from January, wrote: “After listening to the muscle relaxation CD, students seemed more focused during our technology time. Usually I have to remind them to stay focused.” In February she noted changes in the way some students responded to the breathing exercises. “I’ve noticed some students really focused on their breathing. For example during the IR CD, more students were focused (only 2 or 3 weren’t). That’s a definite increase.” Yet later that same month, she said that it was “still hard to notice changes” in students on a day-to-day basis. Apparently, the class-wide changes she was hoping to see hadn’t yet materialized.

In March, though, she noted more progress. “One of my students was hysterically crying. When an adult tried to speak with him she suggested that he take 5 deep breaths. He did – and completely calmed down. And finally, all of my students are able to keep a calm body during the (relaxation) CD.”

A third teacher wrote in January: “I use the pin-drop moment to reset students if I feel the frustration level is high. I turn off the lights and we take some deep breaths. Kids get back to work more successfully.” In February she noted that “breathing exercises seem to have the most effect and come up the most in conversations with kids.” In March, she wrote: “I am noticing kids walking away from each other instead of engaging in a conflict. They are able to re-direct emotion and seem calmer.” In April, she wrote: “It’s finally warm. When the kids were outside in our courtyard reading and writing, they were taught to breathe and take part of that time to sit and be mindful. Wow! They observed and reported out about sounds, sights and feelings they’d never noticed before.” In May, she noted, “Always after the IR activity, students are calmer and ready to transition into learning. What is more

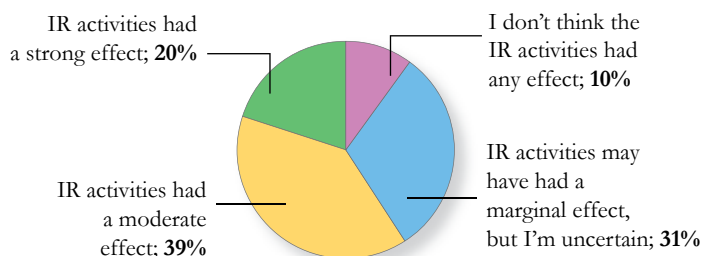
impressive is the students’ ability to articulate what is working/not working for them in regards to relaxation and mindfulness.”

The teacher who noticed the most consistently strong benefits for her students wrote in January that her class was “noticeably calmer – easier to transition and thoughtful, clear, calm.” In March, a student teacher working with the class noted: “On Thursday we found that they were very energetic in the morning so we did 2 sessions with the breathing buddies. After that, we listened to a Native American flute song and they imagined a place that they wanted to be.... Self-control has improved. We remind students who are angry or frustrated to be mindful of their actions and brainstorm ways of improving self-control.”

Later that same month, the teacher wrote that the class “liked to do a relaxation exercise before certain activities such as a spelling check-in.” In April, she noted that she could “see less fidgeting in specific individuals,” and in June, that students listening to the relaxation CD were “much calmer – 2 fell asleep.”

Teachers’ Observations about the Program’s Effects on Their Most Challenging Students

FIGURE 9: THIS WEEK, DO YOU BELIEVE IR ACTIVITIES HELPED YOUR MOST CHALLENGING STUDENTS STAY FOCUSED AND ON-TASK? (n=71 weeks)



There was no consensus among the five teachers on how the program affected their most challenging students. Three teachers reported strong or moderate effects for these students most weeks, while the other two reported marginal and zero effects most weeks.

The teachers who noticed benefits wrote:



It appears that a few of them experience success during mindful activities (in regard to focus) and then have a boost of confidence and try harder. Some parents are mentioning at conferences that students are recovering from meltdowns better or not melting at all.

Two students with high needs are using the strategies – one without prompts, the other with prompts – mostly for self-calming (regulation) and attitude.

My most challenging students are talking more about how they're using strategies outside of school.

Anxiety, in two cases, seems to be more in control, with reduction evident.

Some of my heavy-hitters take a breathing break and try to control themselves – good news!

One student had trouble with another kid and he said, "I'm breathing to help figure it out."

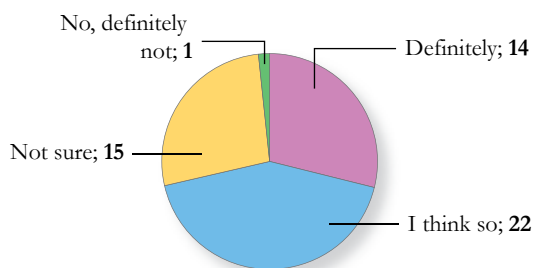
They're in more control of their bodies and emotions.

Of my three highest need students: Student 1 was able to identify that he was probably tired and if he spent a few minutes in the peaceful place, he could rejoin the group – PHENOMENAL! Student 2 asked for help – AMAZING. Student 3 didn't ask for help and instead of crying told me he was going to take some deep breaths and keep trying – OUTSTANDING!

The end of the year can (after a 2-year loop) be emotionally challenging – my students are expressing these emotions appropriately and reflecting deeply.

The Influence of Teachers' Personal IR Work on Their Students


FIGURE 10: THIS WEEK, DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR PERSONAL IR WORK CONTRIBUTED TO POSITIVE CHANGE IN YOUR STUDENTS?
(n=52 weeks; one teacher not reporting)



Does a changed teacher create changes in her classroom, and if so, what changes, for whom, and to what extent? It is difficult to tease apart the effects on children of the IR activities themselves – the sensory-sharpening activities, breathing and stretching exercises, journaling, and peace corners – from the effects of simply having a teacher who is more calm or patient than usual.

Four of the five teachers in the targeted classrooms said that they felt their personal self-care/reflection practices had indeed made them calmer, less reactive to tense situations, and more sensitive to their students' emotional states. (The fifth teacher did not respond to questions about the impact of her personal IR work on her students.)

Some of the teachers' comments appear below.

 *My students tend to mirror my emotions/energy. I'm very demonstrative. When I am frazzled or stressed they without fail act out. Though I have been incredibly stressed lately, I am resilient and more aware of how students interpret this.*

My [personal practices] have enabled me to stay calm in emotionally charged situations. Today two of my students were very upset and ran from the room. When I came back into the room the rest of the class had become out of control. We were able to process, talk about how to calm our bodies, etc., [and] the rest of the day went fine. My ability to stay calm and focused helps focus my students.

Deep, mindful breathing truly helps calm me and increases my ability to focus and remain positive and productive under stress.

I'm calmer when I speak to them about their behavior – they respond more positively.

I continue to take calming breaths, which helps me to have more patience with students – and to use a calm voice with them. They de-escalate a lot faster.

Many of my students see me as a role model – if I'm sitting quietly, they want to sit quietly.

I am energized and enthusiastic about this work and able to stay calm, which in turn affects my students' attitude and level of calmness.

I continue to talk about my own practices and experiences as a model, but as a learner, not an expert.

IMPACTS ON STUDENTS IN THE FIVE CLASSROOMS

Qualitative Findings: Students

FIGURE 11: DID IR ACTIVITIES HELP YOU FEEL MORE READY TO LEARN? (n=84)

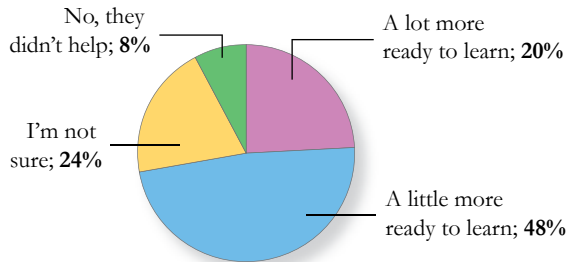
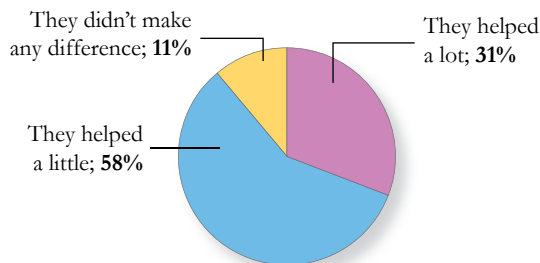


FIGURE 12: DID IR ACTIVITIES HELP YOU FOCUS BETTER IN CLASS? (n=84)




Students in the five targeted classrooms – there were 84 in all – were asked in June to fill out questionnaires about their experiences with the IR Program. Perhaps predictably, the vast majority said they enjoyed the activities (39% said they “liked them a lot” and 48% said they “sort of liked” them). Of more interest to this evaluation, however, was whether the students felt the activities had been of practical use to them as learners. On that question, the majority of students said they found the activities at least somewhat helpful. For instance, when asked if they felt the activities had helped them focus better in class, 31% reported that the activities helped “a lot,” 58% said they helped “a little,” and 11% said the activities didn’t make any difference. Slightly fewer (20%) said the activities helped them feel “a lot more” ready to learn, while 48% said they made them “a little more” ready to learn. Whether or not they felt that they had personally benefited from the program, a large majority of students (77%) felt that such activities should be offered in school. Twenty percent said they weren’t sure if the activities should be offered in school, and 2% said they should not be offered.

An analysis of the students’ reports from the five classrooms shows general unanimity of opinion about the IR Program’s

effects. This is remarkable, given that the teachers’ own impressions of the program’s effect on students varied greatly. For instance, on the question of whether IR activities made students feel “more focused,” there was no statistically significant difference between the classes; on the question of whether the activities made students feel “calmer and more ready to learn,” there was a difference between only two of the classes (the highest- and lowest-scoring on this item). Yet, as we have seen, teachers differed a great deal on what they were seeing. One teacher reported “definitely” seeing changes every week of the semester, while another was unsure she had ever seen changes. While students were thus fairly consistent from class to class about the effects of the IR Program, teachers were not. Why should this be the case? It could be that teachers themselves are not able to accurately judge the program’s effects on students. At the very least, it suggests that teachers in this small subgroup used different criteria in judging those effects.

Students, of course, are particularly valuable sources of information about the usefulness of the IR Program, and their views represent a range of opinions and experiences. Below is a sampling of their responses to the following three questions. (See the Appendix for more comments.)

Q. Why did you like or not like these activities? Think about what it felt like to do them, and what it felt like after doing them.

 *They help me relax when I am getting a little out of control. – Third-grader*

I liked them because they were fun and they helped me in class. – Third-grader

I felt very relaxed and tired and I didn’t have lots of thoughts. – Third-grader

I liked most but not all. To do them it felt like I was still a little crazy but after I was calm. – Third-grader

I like them because belly breathing is calming, I like to color, the ooze tube is awesome, and I love to write. But sometimes it was boring to stare at the floor or hear music or voices. – Third-grader

I sort of liked them because it helped me shut off my brain and let go of all the stressed thoughts I had. – Fourth-grader

They really helped me get all my anger levels to go down. – Fourth-grader

Q. Is it a good idea for students to do these kinds of activities in school? Why or why not?

FIGURE 13: IS IT A GOOD IDEA FOR STUDENTS TO DO IR ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOL? (n=84)

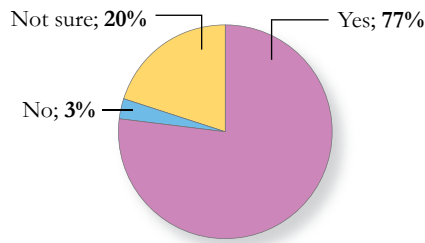
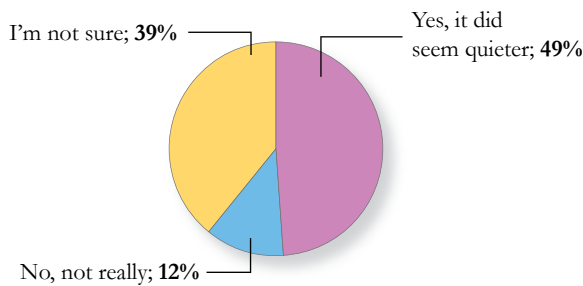



FIGURE 14: DID YOUR CLASS SEEM QUIETER AND CALMER AFTER DOING IR ACTIVITIES? (n=84)



 *[It's a good idea because] some of the kids are having lots of problems and these could help. – Fourth-grader*

It is like a break in the day instead of work – to listen to your body. – Third-grader

If you're worried or sad or mad or excited, it will help. – Third-grader

It's a good idea because it will help kids focus and get good grades. – Third-grader


They might make other people calmer and ready to learn, but I usually stayed the same. – Third-grader

It is a bad idea because it takes up work time. – Third-grader

I think we should [do them] because when you're hyper you should calm down to learn. – Third-grader

Q. What other kinds of things do you feel would help students feel calmer and more ready to learn?

This question was not directly related to the IR Program, but asked students to instead think about the other activities that might be useful to them. Interestingly, most of their answers refer at least obliquely to activities they learned in the program, a finding that suggests the degree to which they had internalized the program's basic premise that greater calmness and focus are worth working for, and can be achieved in relatively simple ways.

 *Do a mandala without anybody talking. – Third-grader*

What helps me is reading quietly, or coloring quietly! – Third-grader

Closing eyes and putting your head on table with sound machine on rainforest. A meditating class with a small waterfall and ooze tube. – Third-grader

Each day to take one minute and just relax. – Third-grader

Longer recess. – Third-grader

A time where we could sit down and stay-awake-but-fall-asleep. – Fourth-grader

Quantitative Findings: Students

In addition to asking students to reflect on the impact of the IR Program on them and their classmates, this evaluation also sought to measure changes in students' "mindful awareness" and optimism, using instruments validated through other research with children. Yet, from a research perspective, asking young children to track and report on changes in their emotional lives is always risky, and the results can be unreliable. Despite careful selection of instruments and the use of a standardized testing protocol, such was the case here. Many children skipped questions, while some filled in the same answer for every one; according to the teachers, even those who did fill out the surveys correctly did not necessarily give much thought to the process. There were probably also small, unavoidable differences in how the surveys were administered from class to class. Whatever the reasons, the pre- and post-test results for many students were so inconsistent that we were forced to discard surveys from all five classes. Future evaluations with children in the lower elementary grades should take this problem into account and concentrate on collecting data on children's behavior from other sources such as parents and teachers, or from structured one-on-one interviews with the children.

INTERVIEWS WITH FIVE RANDOMLY SELECTED PARTICIPANTS

FIGURE 15: FIVE INTERVIEWEES' OPINIONS ABOUT IMPACT AND IMPORTANCE OF IR PROGRAM

| | |
|---|---|
| The IR Program had a positive effect on my teaching and/or professional life: | Yes, definitely (5) |
| The program had a positive impact on my interactions with students: | Yes, definitely (5) |
| The program had a positive impact on my students' behavior: | Yes, definitely (5) |
| The program had a positive impact on my personal life: | Yes, definitely (3); yes, probably (2) |
| Your overall opinion of the importance of the IR Program for educators and others working with children in schools: | Very important (4); moderately important (1) |
| Should participating in the IR Program be mandatory for educators and staff? | No (5) |

Finally, we sought to gather information about the impacts of the IR Program from one more subgroup: five randomly selected participants who agreed to be interviewed after the program had concluded in June. (The teachers from the five targeted classrooms were excluded.) The interviews were conducted by phone during the last three weeks of June. Among the interviewees were three elementary school teachers, one school nurse, and one middle school teacher.

The interviews were semi-structured, with each IR participant answering 10 standard questions and elaborating as requested. The teachers were unanimous in their opinions about the program's impact on their students' behavior, their own professional lives, and their interactions with students, and nearly unanimous in reporting that the program had clear and significant benefits for their personal lives.

One teacher in the middle school was well-versed in contemplative practices before enrolling in the IR Program. For her, the program was a personal refresher course and a primer on how to introduce mindfulness practices to students. She said it quickly became clear to her that the program was meaningful to her students because, once introduced to the various activities, they began asking for them. "They got to the point where they were requesting to do the meditation every Friday," she said. "For the focus, I would bring in various music, from whale sounds to pan flute, Indian-type music to New Age soft background music. I never called it 'meditation.' We started at maybe five minutes in the beginning, and in the end, we did maybe 20 minutes, and the kids were saying, 'Gee, we wish it had been longer.' "

In considering who among her students seemed to be most impacted by IR activities, a second-grade teacher said: "The students who needed it the most seemed to get the most from it. It seemed like the kids who didn't know how to be calm, they were the ones who were the most focused and most into it. It's like they knew they needed it and it felt good for them. The kids who were calm already seemed maybe the most disengaged."

She went on, "Last spring, I asked the kids to think about if this [the IR Program] is useful, does it make a difference, does it feel good to do. I asked them to close their eyes, so they wouldn't feel pressure or judged from the other kids, and to put up one finger if it's not at all helpful and five if it's really awesome (and two, three or four for in between). Spontaneously the three kids who were the most challenging all put up 10 fingers – their hands just shot up. Afterwards I asked them, on their own, if they forgot that I said put up five fingers if they liked it or if they meant to put up 10 fingers on purpose, and all three said they meant to put up 10 fingers because they thought it helped them that much."

A kindergarten teacher said the program asks teachers to switch perspectives, and move from trying to quash negative behavior to helping students prepare to learn. "At really exciting times, times when it's difficult for them to settle, kids would calm themselves. I could say 'Let's calm ourselves,' and kids knew what to do. I would say 'Let's have a moment of silence,' and it worked. Or if there was a conflict, they would go and take a moment and color and then come back and talk about it, and a little more of the truth would come out. I thought that was great."

"If there was a conflict, they would go and take a moment and color and then come back and talk about it, and a little more of the truth would come out."

Another kindergarten teacher in a different school said that the program satisfied a basic need that otherwise goes unaddressed for children: "I think this is teaching them a life skill: that in the world we live in everything is so hurried and crazy and that's not something that they have practice in – being calm. They benefit because it doesn't only apply to class, it applies to anything all the time. When I'm not with them they can calm themselves. We do things like breathing buddies, calming music, their eye pillows. I had several kids who said, 'I got out a breathing buddy at home and did it at home.' "

The middle school teacher used more sophisticated language and imagery with her students. “I use the analogy that I use with the kids in my classes that are just before lunch, where I say, ‘If you’re hungry, bring a snack and eat it because you cannot do the work if your focus is on your hunger.’ And I look at this work the same way. You cannot focus on your work if you haven’t calmed that inner hunger feeling, and this works to help feed that.”

“You cannot focus on your work if you haven’t calmed that inner hunger feeling, and this works to help feed that.”

The interviewees mentioned that the program served another purpose beyond its stated goals: it seemed to strengthen relationships between program participants who either hadn’t known one other previously, or hadn’t known one another well. The kindergarten teacher’s comment was typical: “It was nice to have a common thing like this that we could talk about and reflect on and discuss with other people and bounce ideas off of – that wasn’t happening before without this program.”

While the interviewees were generally very enthusiastic about the program, they did voice a few concerns. Two teachers mentioned fears of venturing into territory that others in the community may view as vaguely religious. One teacher said, “I wanted to be very careful not to overstep any personal beliefs that kids and their families would have, and to be very careful that it didn’t come across as being ‘spiritual,’ but more calming and listening to the inner voice.” Four of the five said the optional “holistic” classes teaching yoga, tai chi and other mindfulness practices were inconveniently timed. Two said they wished that teachers had had more time to debrief with one another about ways to implement IR activities with students.

Four of the five said they considered the program “very important” for educators, but none of them recommended making it mandatory for teachers and staff in their district.

Four of the five said they considered the program “very important” for educators, but none of them recommended making it mandatory for teachers and staff in their district. “I think everyone can benefit, but as soon as the district makes something mandatory, people who haven’t done it immediately turn it into something negative,” said one.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE INNER RESILIENCE PROGRAM

Program evaluations are meant to measure and report on participant outcomes – to find out, in other words, if a program “works” as intended. But there is another, related purpose: to help program developers improve the program for the future. As we have seen, the IR Program was

enthusiastically received by the majority of educators who participated in it.

Regardless of the degree to which educators felt the program to have been beneficial to them personally, the vast majority said it was valuable enough to

recommend to colleagues. Fully 95% of the participants said they would “strongly encourage” colleagues to participate in IR training; only two participants said they were “unsure” about recommending the program to peers.

Yet there were some program weaknesses as well. Several respondents said the program would have had greater impact if more colleagues had been involved and if they had sensed more support from a wider range of administrators. More than a dozen participants suggested making the optional classes more convenient to attend, and many expressed a need for more sharing and collaboration between IR participants. Because of the richness of many of these comments, they are reproduced at some length below.

Q. “This program would have been more impactful if ...”



...our entire staff had participated.

...the monthly meetings were held in my building. It was very stressful getting to them each month.

...we had more specific examples of what to do with primary grade students and specific language examples when communicating with students and families.

...there was more of it – another retreat, more opportunities to work with Linda [Lantieri], etc.

... I had put more effort into it. I got a lot from it but know I would have gained even more if I’d done more of the classes, tried more stuff on my own and with kids.

...we had time with colleagues to share and compare notes.

...I didn't feel so rushed to get to monthly meetings – time constraints and conflicts.

...[as a non-classroom teacher] I had more time to implement with students and to collaborate with colleagues.

...all the principals were involved.

...everyone could have been in the pilot. If we had done IR before our district changed so [much of the] elementary curriculum, we would have had skills to cope with overwhelming changes.

...it were supported by the entire school.

...[we had] seen more videos/pictures of the real-life application of some techniques and strategies (i.e., how can you fit a peace corner in an already overcrowded classroom).

...the administrators showed more support (principal). She made a lot of negative comments that affected me and my colleagues.

...one, if I felt more relaxed about utilizing the amount of time it takes to fully implement the program in an effective way, and two, if I had more support within the building.

...more time to implement, smaller monthly groups, more support.

...more in-service than afterschool training.

...our administration, within our building, understood it more and supported it in its entirety.

...the support group was smaller – under 20 – and was only SB folks. More opportunity to practice techniques and also share what works with kids so [that] carry-over and validation of work happens.

...for a first year pilot, I'm not sure I would change anything. For a next step, I might suggest offering options in more depth – once a week all year of Tai Chi or Chi Gong, etc. More work with Shen Zin.

...more middle school teachers and staff participated. Also, monthly meetings were too rushed. Make them ½ hour longer. Much more to learn!

...we could team together as IR participants and work in a classroom together – cover both classrooms.

...I had practiced more. While I did attend most monthly meetings it was difficult to practice every day. I spent very short times during the day and practiced whenever I could. A set time would have been more helpful.

...the retreat was longer... if the school-based groups gathered more ... if we had a 'mindfulness partner.'

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like all studies, this one has limitations. The study included a relatively small number of participants, and utilized no control groups for either students or teachers. These problems weaken the conclusions that can be drawn, and at the very least suggest that more research be done to replicate the findings.

Another issue concerns the age of the students studied. As we have seen, they were not able to contribute meaningfully to the quantitative portion of this evaluation project. Older students would have been able to report more reliably about themselves, and more diverse data could have been gathered from them regarding changes in behavior and academic performance. While the students' post-participation reports provide a wealth of information about how they perceived the program, we are forced to rely primarily upon their teachers for insights about how the program affected them. As we have seen, however, teachers themselves were inconsistent reporters.

Indeed, one of the most interesting questions that emerged from this project is why students were so unanimous in their opinions of the program's effects while their teachers' views varied so markedly. The weekly logs provide a wealth of information about how teachers implemented the IR-related activities in their classes, and how much of a difference they felt those activities made to their students. As has been noted, the fact that those opinions varied so widely could reflect differences in the teachers – in the degree to which they implemented the material, their comfort with it and enthusiasm for it, or their teaching experience more generally – or differences in the classes themselves. What it almost certainly suggests is that, in this pilot phase of the program, teachers were not coached in how best to judge impact on students. Program developers could address this problem by creating a standard tool for teachers that helps them collect the same types of information from each class. The goal would not be to squelch the valuable subjective opinions of teachers, but to give them criteria on which to base those opinions, and to help them create some objective benchmarks – clear and uniform performance indicators – so that levels of progress can be charted and compared between classes.

The evaluation's quantitative findings, showing marked improvements in perceptions of stress and day-to-day mindfulness in the overall group of educators, are impressive, yet how these gains translate to teacher satisfaction

and performance in the classroom need to be more thoroughly investigated, along with questions of how long those effects last.

Finally, we must consider whether teachers in the overall program – which after all constituted a self-selected test group – can be expected to give objective and unvarnished opinions about a program that many of them clearly hoped would succeed and continue.

Yet, to their credit, it appears most participants were able to judge the program and its effects objectively. The degree of nuance in their post-participation questionnaires – with many teachers in fact reporting only minimal or moderate benefits for themselves and their students – suggests that as a whole, participants were capable of basing their ultimate judgments only on the results that were evident to them. Indeed, the high percentage of educators pronouncing moderate rather than profound benefits for their students is paradoxically the most convincing proof that their word should be accepted at face value. It also suggests that the program, which in this pilot year was implemented to students in a piecemeal, somewhat experimental fashion, would have even greater impact if the curriculum were standardized.

This evaluation necessarily leaves many questions unanswered. Only a few men took part in the study, for instance, so we cannot know if their impressions of program impacts would differ from those reported by women. It is also possible that impacts and opinions could vary by age, number of years of teaching experience, race/ethnicity, and level of school being taught, though only larger studies with a far more diverse array of participants could tell.

CONCLUSION

Improving the quality of public education in the United States has been an ongoing focus of policymakers, parents and other stakeholder groups, and proposals for bolstering various aspects of student and teacher performance are routinely made. The goals of such proposals have included reducing teacher burnout, enhancing students' capacity for personal growth and good citizenship, and creating an intentionally calm and thoughtful learning environment where both students and educators can thrive.

The use of secular contemplation and mindfulness activities as one strategy toward achieving these goals is relatively new. This evaluation, like many others conducted recently, suggests that the approach is promising and warrants continued development. On a subjective level, both educators and students in the S. Burlington IR Pilot Program reported that they benefited from learning and using contemplative

techniques; additionally, teachers reported positive changes in many of their students. Moreover, surveys of the teachers show statistically significant improvements in perceptions of stress and levels of mindfulness over the year. The various strains of data we gathered do not shed light on every potential impact of the program; for instance, as noted, we were unable to study possible academic impacts on students or the effect of the program on specific problems such as truancy or delinquency. Yet, taken together, the data do nonetheless constitute compelling evidence that the IR Program had a clear and marked impact on participants.

Beyond what the evaluation conclusively shows, it is likely that other benefits accrued to those involved. For example, researchers have found correlations between lower stress levels and improved classroom performance of teachers. Since the teachers studied in this pilot experienced a reduction in stress, we can assume that their ability to function effectively in the classroom may also have improved as well. What type of improvement, and how much, are topics for future study.

Contemplative programs in schools have drawn criticism from those who claim that such activities take away valuable instruction time, and have an unproven impact on academic achievement. But the fear that contemplative exercises, if brought into the classroom, will necessarily crowd out academic work was not in fact borne out by this study – IR activities in the classroom took relatively little time, with many conducted during regular reading and writing assignments or sandwiched into class transitions. The effect on academic achievement, both short- and long-term, does remain an important question, however. Large and rigorous studies, such as the one currently being funded by the US Department of Education, will eventually provide answers. However, while definitive evidence is not yet available, it seems logical that any practice that reduces stress in students, creates more emotionally competent teachers and enhances the classroom learning climate would have a positive impact on student achievement as well.

Concern also has been expressed that, given schools' limited financial resources, IR-type programs are a luxury they simply cannot afford. Weighing one-time and ongoing costs against short- and long-term benefits is complicated and probably impossible given our current state of knowledge about eventual program impacts; in any case, such speculative analysis is far beyond the scope of this evaluation. However, it is worth noting that teachers who participated in the year-long program also earned professional development credits worth the equivalent of

a three-credit college course. Since such continuing education is required of teachers, it is useful to compare the cost of IR Program training and materials – estimated by program developers at about \$1,000 per educator – to the costs of equivalent coursework at local colleges, for which the school now allocates \$1,300 per educator per year. Still, financing the program is obviously a critical issue. In its pilot year, the program was funded by a mix of private foundation grants and public health, drug prevention and education-related monies. It was also supported by educators and trainers who either volunteered their time or offered reduced rates for their services. Because many of these sources were available for one year only, sustainability planning is particularly important if the program is to continue.

Finally, a small number of critics have suggested that contemplative practices are religious by nature, and that employing them in school is therefore inappropriate. This evaluation found no such religious overtones to the IR Program; in fact, trainers and educators intentionally avoided language that carried even the slightest spiritual connotation. As such programs become more commonplace in public schools, and as research produces more evidence about their content and impact, it is likely that such objections will begin to wane.

APPENDIX

Comments from Students in Five Classrooms About Their Experiences with the IR Program

Students in the five classrooms studied in this evaluation participated in a variety of activities related to the IR Program. They listened to soothing music, did breathing, stretching and sensory-focusing exercises, and visited a classroom “peace corner” when they needed to calm down. They heard special stories, did natural journaling and experimented with “biodots,” self-adhesive, heat-sensitive paper that changes colors to indicate stress level.

At the end of the semester, as part of their evaluation of the program, students were asked to recall the special “mindful awareness” activities their classes had been doing since January. Then they were asked to answer a series of questions. Below are three of the questions and the students’ answers to them; some comments were excluded because they were fragmentary or repeated comments already made. (To see all the questions students were asked, see the My Opinions Survey on page 36.) Following each comment is the grade level of the student who made it.

Why did you like or not like these activities? Think about what it felt like to do them, and what it felt like after doing them.



Sometimes it is fun and relaxing and sometimes it is a little dull. (3rd grade)

It felt relaxing to do them and after I do them I feel calm and tired. (3)

I liked them because you get to relax and reflect on the day. It feels comforting to do them. I’m tired after them. (3)

I like them because I would be relaxed. I felt stressed before, then relaxed after. But sometimes it did not work. (3)

I really only liked the ‘find a special place’ one because that made me relaxed, but the rest didn’t do anything. (3)

It felt peaceful and it sounded peaceful. (3)

They help me relax when I am getting a little out of control. (3)

When I was doing it it felt too slow. After I do it I feel relaxed. (3)

When we first started I was kind of stiff and groggy. When we ended them I felt ungroggy and relaxed. (3)

I liked the activities a lot because it helped me calm down and remember to be mindful and to calm my brain to think about what to do. (3)

I liked them because I relaxed but I don’t like them because I think it wastes our time sometimes. (3)

I liked it a lot because the ooze tube made my eyes focus on that and nothing else. (3)

[I didn’t like it that much because] it makes me tense and my body feel really weird. (3)

I did not like them because after we did them I was really tired and we aren’t allowed to go to sleep! And I never got to turn on any of the games! (3)

I liked them because they were fun and they helped me in class. (3)

I sort of like ‘calming’ because you can stay in one position and tense up. (3)

I didn’t like when I was trying to focus on my breathing and the woman’s voice always distracted me. When I was done I felt really tired. When I was doing it I felt pretty relaxed. (3)

I didn’t like the tensing because it was not very comfortable. (3)

I didn’t like them because for some reason it didn’t help me relax. (3)

I liked them because when we were done I could concentrate better. (3)

Well I liked most but not all. To do them it felt like I was still a little crazy but after I was calm. (3)

I liked breathing because it was amazing. I didn’t like the stories because it was hard to pay attention. (3)

I felt very relaxed and tired and I didn’t have lots of thoughts. (3)

When I did some it made me insecure. After, I felt hungry. I don’t know why only some times it calmed me. (3)

Some of the CDs made my body feel crummy. It sometimes made my hands and wrists sore. (3)

I sort of liked them cause some took a lot of thinking and concentration. (3)

Looking at ooze tube was cool and coloring mandalas is very calming. (3)

I did not like them because you had to sit a lot. (3)

I like them because belly breathing is calming, I like to color, the ooze tube is awesome, and I love to write. But sometimes it was boring to stare at the floor or hear music or voices. (3)

Um well, I liked it sort of because I like to move and be active. (3)

[I didn't like them that much] because most of the time they don't help but when they do we have to stop early like today. (3)

They were fun they helped me concentrate more and helped me practice my breathing. (3)

I just like to calm down, especially after recess or break. (3)

I liked them because at the moment it helped me relax but then afterward I find myself using the strategies. (4th grade)

Well I really like the ooze tube! Stress tabs and belly breathing wasn't that fun because we do a lot of belly breathing. Peaceful corner ... because when you're stressed you go to it and you feel much better! (4)

Well some of them were fun but my friends were distracting. (4)

They really helped me get all my anger levels to go down. (4)

I sort of liked them because they sometimes made me calm but other times it was distracting. (4)

I sort of liked them because it helped me shut off my brain and let go of all the stressed thoughts I had. (4)

I liked them because it was a good chance to just get away and relax. (4)

I liked them because they really helped me with my anger and I really liked the touch game! (4)

Why is it a good or bad idea for students to do these activities in school?



Because it relaxes you so you can be relaxed and learn at the same time. (3)

I think it's a good idea because it helps certain people focus. (3)

Because it helps. (3)

It's a good idea because it will help kids focus and get good grades. (3)

Might make other people calmer and ready to learn ... but I usually stayed the same. (3)

More people won't feel stress when they're mad. (3)

[I'm not sure because] some kids are doing good with it and some are not. (3)

Because it will help [kids] focus and feel good about themselves. (3)

It is like a break in the day instead of work – to listen to your body. (3)

Other kids can get really calm by this. (3)

Because it helps kids to learn. (3)

Because it makes you calmer and not so loud. (3)

Because it helps kids be calm and not hyper. (3)

I think it's a good idea because if kids didn't do this they would not be relaxed for the next activity. (3)

It's good because it helps people concentrate. (3)

Because if you're worried or sad or mad or excited it will help. (3)

It is a bad idea because it takes up work time. (3)

When your class is very loud these activities made the class calmer. (3)

Well it works for some people but for others they would get bored. (3)

I think it's a good idea because our class is really loud a lot. (3)

Some kids fool around while doing the activities. (3)

It's good because some people need to be calm. (3)

I'm not sure because most people just make more noise. (3)

What if it doesn't help you? (3)

I think we should [do them] because when you're hyper you should calm down to learn. (3)

I think it's a really good idea because it really helped me so I think it should really be helping other people. (4)

Some kids fight so this will stop them. (4)

I think it's a good idea because if you do those strategies I think you concentrate more. (4)

Some of the kids are having lots of problems and these could help. (4)

It doesn't do anything but annoy you. (4)

[It's a good idea because] some people just need a break. (4)

It's a good idea because some kids it really helps. (4)

[It's a good idea because] I think it was helpful for our class to listen. (4)

It's a good idea because kids can relax and calm down and you learn a lot about being more resilient. (4)

I think it's a good idea because it helps people to be calmer. (4)

What other kinds of things do you think would help students feel calmer and ready to learn?



Having a relax time, like just putting your head down and thinking of happy things. (3)

Make a mindful room and kids go there, maybe twice a week to learn how to be relaxed and how to stay relaxed. (3)

Taking deep breaths when you feel like you're going to explode. (3)

I think yoga and brain gym would help kids to stay or get calm and ready to learn. (3)

Someone reading a book to us. (3)

Leave more relaxing time. (3)

Read a lot, turning the lights out. (3)

Meditation, food, resting, releasing stress. (3)

Doing this at home. (3)

Learn more about how you can do it whenever you want. (3)

Take deep breaths and count backwards. (3)

Every day take a little time to relax. (3)

Do a mandala without anybody talking. (3)

What helps me is reading quietly, or coloring quietly! (3)

Closing eyes and putting your head on table with sound machine on rainforest. A meditating class with a small waterfall and ooze tube. (3)

Having a moment of quiet. (3)

Longer recess. (3)

Inhaling and exhaling when about to take a hard test. (3)

1. Relaxing music 2. Breathing in and out (3)

Not sitting next to someone who you will want to talk to while you are relaxing. (3)

Big breathing. Have time alone. (3)

I think you could do something at recess because kids are very wound up. (3)

A back massage while listening to music. (3)

I think you should have a breathing buddy and not to sit next to friends. (3)

Each day to take one minute and just relax. (3)

Your own stuffed animals, like beanie babies. (3)

Go outside. (3)

Complete silence. (3)

Squeezing a soft ball can take away stress. (3)

Raisins. (3)

Going outside and being really silent. Being able to hear yourself think. Fiction. (3)

The candle thing was a good idea so we should do that more often! (3)

Maybe sometimes we could put on really sad music and think about somebody who we missed or someone that had died in our life so we can let all the crying out! Or [the teachers] could give to each of us our own stuffed animal to use every time. (3)

We should bring in our own stuffed animals so we will not fight over them. (3)

Maybe do more games cause a lot of people don't pay attention with the belly breathing with the beanie babies. (3)

Be quiet. (3)

Mandalas. That really calmed me down. (3)

For me it's putting my hands in the sandbox. (4)

During NECAP [testing] putting on some nice quiet music. (4)

A time where we could sit down and stay-awake-but-fall-asleep. (4)

If [the guidance counselor] came in more often. (4)

The peaceful corner and holding a rock or something squishy – if when you are upset you squish something I can feel better because I get my anger out. (4)

Reading can calm kids down from stress. (4)

Sitting outside on a calm day maybe reading or writing, just being peaceful. (4)

I'm not sure but if kids sat down and did the belly breathing more often then it would be an even bigger help. (4)

1. meditating. 2. laying down and just resting. (4)

Reading, writing, breathing, a minute of silence. (4)

Maybe resting for a little bit while listening to music. (4)

PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate by circling how often you felt or thought a certain way.

Number _____

Date _____

0 = Never 1 = Almost Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Very Often

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly? | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and 'stressed'? | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way? | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life? | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things? | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control? | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? | 0 1 2 3 4 |

DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCES (MAAS) SCALE

Instructions: Below is a collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the 1-6 scale below, please indicate how frequently or infrequently you currently have each experience. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be. Please treat each item separately from every other item.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Almost Always | Very Frequently | Somewhat Frequently | Somewhat Infrequently | Very Infrequently | Almost Never |

1. I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later. 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else. 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present. 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way. 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention. 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time. 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. It seems I am "running on automatic," without much awareness of what I'm doing. 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them. 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there. 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing. 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time. 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. I drive places on 'automatic pilot' and then wonder why I went there. 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past. 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. I find myself doing things without paying attention. 1 2 3 4 5 6
15. I snack without being aware that I'm eating. 1 2 3 4 5 6

S. BURLINGTON IR PROGRAM PRE-PARTICIPATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this form by circling the most appropriate answer to the questions below. This information will be used for research purposes only.

1. Sex Male
 Female
2. Age _____ (in years)
4. Education Bachelor's Degree
 Master's Degree
 Doctoral Degree
 Other _____
5. Position held Teacher
 Counselor
 Administrator
 Other _____
6. School level Elementary School
 Middle School
 High School
7. How many years have you worked in education? _____
8. Please complete the following statement by circling the best answer:

"In the past, I have practiced 'mindfulness' activities (breathing exercises, yoga, meditation, guided visualization or other activities meant to quiet and focus the mind)" ...

1. Never
2. A few times
3. Many times; I practice on and off, sometimes for months at a stretch, but I do not consider myself a serious, long-term practitioner
4. Regularly – consistently and over many years

9. If you circled number 3 or 4 in the above question, please describe which mindfulness activities you have practiced with at least moderate regularity:

10. My attitude toward participating in the Inner Resiliency program can be summed up by the following statement (circle one):

1. I don't know if this program will make much of a difference in my life, but I'm willing to give it a try.
2. I'm assuming that the program will make some sort of difference in my life, but I'm not sure how much.
3. I know for a fact that this sort of program can make a profound difference in people's lives, so I'm hoping for serious benefits.

11. When it's over, I will know this program has been effective for me if I start seeing these differences in my personal life:

12. When it's over, I will know this program has been effective for me if I start seeing these differences in my professional life (please be as specific as possible):

S. BURLINGTON IR PROGRAM POST-PARTICIPATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. I attended (circle all that apply):

| | | |
|--|----------|-----------------|
| Nurturing the Inner Life/IR curric. (2 days in fall) | attended | did not attend |
| ½-day classroom coaching | attended | did not attend |
| 1½ -day restorative retreat (in spring) | attended | did not attend |
| Optional weekly holistic classes | attended | how many? _____ |
| Monthly classes with Anthony Quintiliani | attended | how many? _____ |

2. Overall, the IR program's effect on my PERSONAL life was (circle one):

- a. It's hard to say / I didn't really notice any change
- b. Changes occurred, but they were marginal
- c. Changes were moderate – noticeable, but not profound
- d. Changes were significant; they made a serious difference for me

3. If there were changes, please name them. Be specific.

4. The program's effect on my overall PROFESSIONAL life was: (circle one)

- a. It's hard to say / I didn't really notice any change
- b. Changes occurred, but they were marginal
- c. Changes were moderate – noticeable, but not profound
- d. Changes were significant; they made a serious difference for me

5. If there were changes, please name them. Be specific.

6. Did you experience changes in your relationships with your COLLEAGUES? (circle one)

- a. It's hard to say / I didn't really notice any change
- b. Changes occurred, but they were marginal
- c. Changes were moderate – noticeable, but not profound
- d. Changes were significant; they made a serious difference for me

7. If there were changes, please name them. Be specific.

8. If you are a teacher or counselor, do you believe your participation in this program produced changes in your STUDENTS? (circle one)

- a. It's hard to say / I didn't really notice any changes
- b. Changes occurred, but they were marginal
- c. Changes were moderate – noticeable, but not profound
- d. Changes were significant; they made a serious difference

9. If there were changes for your students, please circle the areas in which they occurred (circle as many as apply):

- a. Overall behavior
- b. Ability to focus/stay on task
- c. Ability to complete tasks
- d. Ability to self-calm

10. If there were changes in your students, did they occur in: (circle one)

- a. Almost all of your students
- b. Most of your students
- c. About half of your students
- d. Less than half of your students
- e. Just a few of your students

11. If you believe that students were positively affected, what evidence could you give that supports this opinion?
(By evidence, we mean proof not based solely on casual observation, but on academic performance, behavioral changes, task completion or other changes that were or could be documented.) This question is important. Please reflect for a few moments before answering.)

12. If you noticed changes, did certain types of students seem to respond more than others?
(circle one)

Yes No

Please explain:

13. In the IR program, you practiced a number of techniques intended to impact your personal life. Do you plan to continue them now that the program is over? (circle one)

- a. Yes, definitely
- b. Yes, probably
- c. Maybe, I'm not sure
- d. Probably not
- e. Definitely not

14. If so, which ones will you continue?

15. You also learned new techniques to bring into the classroom. Do you plan to continue them now that the program is over? (circle one)

- a. Yes, definitely
- b. Yes, probably
- c. Maybe, I'm not sure
- d. Probably not
- e. Definitely not

16. If so, which ones?

17. Would you urge colleagues who didn't take part in the program this year to participate the next time it is offered?
(circle one)

- a. Yes, I would strongly encourage my colleagues to participate
- b. Yes, but only if they had a special interest in the topic
- c. I'm neutral – I wouldn't either encourage or discourage them
- d. No, I wouldn't recommend the program to them
- e. I'm not sure

18. Please complete the following sentence. "This program would have been more impactful if...":

S. BURLINGTON IR EVALUATION TEACHER WEEKLY REPORT

Date: _____
Teacher name: _____
Grade level: _____

1. Please describe each Inner Resilience/mindfulness-related activity you did in your class this week, how many times you did each activity, and for how long the activity lasted each time you did it.

Examples of Inner Resilience activities would include:

- Stopping periodically for a few minutes to take a class stretch or deep breathing break
- Listening to one of the exercises on the IR CD (listening or relaxation)
- Any other activity that stresses mindfulness, i.e., focusing on the senses or quieting the mind with music and art, etc. (Coloring mandalas would be one such activity.)

Example: The class did breathing (and/or stretching) exercises twice each day, for 5 minutes each time. The class also listened to the IR CD each day for 7 minutes.

2. Have you observed behavioral changes that you feel are the result of one or more IR/mindfulness-related activities?

- _____ I have definitely observed changes
_____ Perhaps, but I'm not sure
_____ I don't think so
_____ No, definitely not

3. If you think have you observed behavioral changes due to the IR activities, give examples. Name the activity, and then the changes (i.e. any increases in student positive affect, cooperation, self-regulation, self-awareness, focus on task, listening, or engagement). Be detailed.

4. This week, please estimate the percentage of your students who were mostly on-task and productive:

90-100% _____
80-89 _____
70-79 _____
60-69 _____
50-59 _____
40-49 _____
30-39 _____
20-29 _____

5. Does this vary from what you would consider typical for this time of year, and with this class?

Yes _____
No _____

If yes, how does it vary?

6. Please think of your most challenging students (those with behavioral or attention issues). To what degree do you believe the IR activities have helped them stay focused and on-task?

_____ This week, I don't think the IR activities had any effect on these particular students.
_____ The activities may have had some marginal effect, but it's hard to say for certain.
_____ In general, I think the IR activities had a moderate effect on these students this week.
_____ In general, I think the IR activities had a strong effect on these students this week.

If there has been a moderate or strong effect on their behavior or attention, please give details and examples:

7. Teachers in this program are involved outside the classroom in activities that promote personal growth and calmness. Have any activities you have done outside – either trainings associated with the IR program or personal changes you have made as a result of those trainings – contributed to positive changes in your students?

_____ Definitely
_____ I think so
_____ Not sure
_____ No, definitely not

8. If you think your personal practices did contribute to classroom change, explain why and give examples.

MY OPINIONS SURVEY

What grade are you in? _____

Who is your teacher? _____

What is the date? _____

Since January, your class has been doing special “mindful awareness” activities. Now we want to know your opinion about those activities – especially whether they were helpful to you in any way. Please answer all the questions below.

First, write down some of the activities that your class did:

Now, please answer these questions.

1. Have you liked doing these activities? (circle one)

- a. I liked them a lot
- b. I sort of liked them
- c. I didn't like them that much
- d. I didn't like them at all

2. Why did you like or not like them?

3. Do you think these activities help you focus your attention better in class? (circle one)

- a. Yes, they helped a lot
- b. Yes, they helped a little
- c. No, they didn't make any difference

4. Did your class seem calmer and quieter after doing these activities? (circle one)

- a. Yes, the class did seem calmer and quieter
- b. No, not really
- c. I'm not sure

5. Circle the best answer to this statement: "Doing these activities made me feel ready to learn."

- a. Yes, a lot more ready to learn
- b. Yes, a little more ready
- c. I'm not sure
- d. No, they didn't help

6. Do you think it's a good idea for students to do these kinds of activities in school? (circle one)

- a. Yes, it's a good idea
- b. No, it's not a good idea
- c. I'm not sure if it's a good idea or not

7. Why is it a good or bad idea? Please explain below.

8. What other kinds of things do you think would help students feel calmer and ready to learn?

MINDFULNESS APPLICATIONS SURVEY

By Anthony R. Quintiliani, PhD, LADC. This survey has not been subjected to validity or reliability research.

This survey is anonymous. Participant number: _____ Date _____

Your willingness to participate in this monthly survey will help us to better evaluate our training efforts and skills applications. Please consider the past week and how you would describe these qualities for yourself most of the time.

1. Did you apply any resiliency/mindfulness skills during the past week?
Yes or No (please circle one)
2. How would you rate your positive mood during the past week? On a scale from 1 (very low) to 10 (very high – positive), please rate yourself. _____
3. How would you rate your ability to be calm in the face of stress during the past week? On a scale from 1 (very low) to 10 (very high – calm), please rate yourself. _____
4. How would you rate your ability to be understanding of others (colleagues/students) during the past week? On a scale from 1 (very low) to 10 (very high – understanding), please rate yourself. _____
5. How would you rate your ability to be understanding of yourself during the past week? On a scale from 1 (very low) to 10 (very high – understanding), please rate yourself. _____
6. How would rate your work satisfaction during the past week? On a scale from 1 (very low) to 10 (very high – satisfaction), please rate yourself. _____
7. How would you rate your level of happiness during the past week? On a scale from 1 (very low) to 10 (very high – happy), please rate yourself. _____
8. How much time did you practice resiliency/mindfulness activities during the past week (specific activities with a consciously relaxed and present focus)? _____ hours

Add up your personal health promotion score* for this week: _____

If you wish to track your progress, maintain a log of your weekly scores on your own.

*For the purposes of this evaluation, the personal health promotion score was the sum of questions 2 through 7.

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