

MINDFULNESS, EMOTIONS, AND NEUROSCIENCE (MEN)

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Abstract

Mindfulness, Emotions, and Neuroscience (MEN) can be valuable tools for education in the new century. Here's how they could be helpful: Firstly, Mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment and accepting it without judgment. This practice has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, improve focus and attention, and increase emotional regulation (Yiqing, 2021). In the classroom, mindfulness practices help students develop these skills and improve their well-being. Secondly, Emotions play a crucial role in learning and memory. When students are emotionally engaged in a subject, they are more likely to remember what they have learned. Teachers can use emotions to create engaging, meaningful lessons that resonate with students. Thirdly, advances in Neuroscience have shown that the brain is much more adaptable than previously thought. Our Qualitative Case Study Research has also shown that different teaching methods can have a significant impact on the development of the brain. Our research questions let us comprehend the principles of neuroscience and

how they can optimize student-teacher teaching methods to help students learn more effectively. After the analysis, we can conclude that student-teachers can develop skills to help them succeed in school and beyond by incorporating these three elements into education. Additionally, mindfulness, emotions, and neuroscience can help create a more engaging and effective learning environment.

Keywords:

Human nature. Emotional development. Brain research.

Resumen

La Atención Plena, las Emociones y la Neurociencia (AEN) pueden ser herramientas valiosas para la educación en el nuevo siglo. Así es cómo podrían ser útiles: En primer lugar, la Atención Plena implica prestar atención al momento presente y aceptarlo sin juzgarlo. Se ha demostrado que esta práctica reduce el estrés y la ansiedad, mejora el enfoque y la atención, y aumenta la regulación emocional (Yiqing, 2021). En el aula, las prácticas de atención plena ayudan a los estudiantes a desarrollar estas habilidades y mejorar su bienestar. En segundo lugar, las Emociones juegan un papel crucial en el aprendizaje y la memoria. Cuando los estudiantes están emocionalmente comprometidos con un tema, es más probable que recuerden lo que han aprendido. Los maestros pueden utilizar las emociones para crear lecciones atractivas y significativas que resuenen con los estudiantes. En tercer lugar, los avances en Neurociencia han demostrado que el cerebro es mucho más adaptable de lo que se pensaba anteriormente. Nuestra Investigación de Estudios de Casos Cualitativos también ha mostrado que diferentes métodos de enseñanza pueden tener un impacto significativo en el desarrollo del cerebro. Nuestras preguntas de investigación nos permiten comprender los principios de la neurociencia y cómo pueden optimizar los métodos de enseñanza entre alumno-profesor para ayudar a los estudiantes a aprender de manera más efectiva. Tras el análisis, podemos concluir que los maestros-alumnos pueden desarrollar habilidades para ayudarles a tener éxito en la escuela y más allá incorporando estos tres elementos en la educación. Además, la atención plena, las emociones y la neurociencia pueden ayudar a crear un entorno de aprendizaje más atractivo y eficaz.

Palabras clave:

Naturaleza humana. Desarrollo emocional. Estudios de la mente.

Introduction

Mindfulness, Emotions, and Neuroscience (MEN) are powerful language teaching and learning tools. These tools help students be aware of their emotions, thoughts, and sensations, enabling them to enhance their language learning experience. This Case Study discusses the importance of MEN in language learning, their benefits, and how they can be incorporated into classrooms. MEN is an approach that helps students increase their self-awareness and control their thoughts and emotions. Mindfulness fosters self-reflection, attentiveness, and a clear mind, allowing students to focus intensely on the present moment. Emotions play a significant role in language learning since they impact cognitive functions such as memory, attention, and motivation, which are all essential for learning a new language. Neuroscience explains how the human brain works during language learning, highlighting the importance of the mind-body connection.

One of the benefits of MEN in language learning is that it allows students to develop a greater sense of self-awareness. Practicing mindfulness enables them to understand their learning style and preferences, which can help them to identify areas that require improvement. Additionally, incorporating emotional awareness can help students manage their emotional states and overcome difficulties when learning a new language. Neuroscience also highlights the role of emotions in memory processing and retention, which can enhance language learning outcomes. Incorporating MEN into the classroom can be done in various ways, such as through breathing exercises or guided meditations, and it can help foster an atmosphere of calmness and relaxation that can improve learning outcomes. Incorporating emotions into the learning process can involve discussions on cultural differences, music, art, and literature related to the target language. Teachers can also encourage students to express their emotions and openly discuss their experiences during and after language lessons.

Mindfulness, Emotions, and Neuroscience (MEN) is a powerful language teaching and learning tool. Incorporating MEN in classrooms can enhance student self-awareness, emotional regulation, and cognitive function, improving language learning outcomes. Incorporating MEN can take various forms, such as breathing exercises, guided meditation, or discussions on cultural differences. Teachers can help students develop these skills and create a supportive

learning environment that enhances the language learning process. In addition, mindfulness has become increasingly popular recently, with many people turning to this technique to promote mental and emotional well-being. Mindfulness encourages individuals to focus on the present moment without judgment and become more aware of their thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. This paper explores the relationship between mindfulness, feelings, and neuroscience, especially in the context of everyday language learning in classroom settings. Here are some exercises that can help with mindfulness, and they represent the test to observe their effectiveness:

1. Body Scan Meditation: Close your eyes and focus your attention on different parts of your body, from your toes to the top of your head, noticing any sensations without judgment.
2. Breathing Meditation: Focus on your breathing, noticing the sensation of air moving in and out of your body without distraction.
3. Walking Meditation: Take a slow walk and focus on the sensation of your feet touching the ground with each step while being aware of your surroundings.
4. Gratitude Meditation: Sit quietly and think of things you are grateful for, focusing on the positive emotions and sensations associated with them.
5. Mindful Eating: Pay attention to the taste, texture, and smells of the food you are eating while chewing slowly and being aware of your body's reactions.

Remember, being mindful simply means being present and aware in the moment, without judgment or distraction. Regular practice allows you to develop greater mindfulness and reap the benefits of reduced stress and increased well-being (Brackett and Rivers, 2014).

Referential framework

Several studies have explored the impact of mindfulness on emotional regulation. For example, a study by Chiesa and Serretti (2011) found that practicing mindfulness can reduce negative emotions, such as anxiety and depression, while increasing positive emotions, such as happiness and contentment. In addition to its effects on emotional regulation, mindfulness has also been shown to benefit cognitive functioning (Chiesa, Calati, & Serretti, 2011). One way

that mindfulness may impact emotions is through its effects on neural activity. For instance, a study by Farb et al. (2010) found that individuals who practiced mindfulness showed decreased activity in the amygdala, a section of the brain associated with fear and negative emotions. This suggests that mindfulness may help individuals to become less reactive to harmful stimuli, leading to more positive emotional experiences. Similarly, a study by Creswell et al. (2012) found that mindfulness can increase activity in the anterior cingulate cortex, a section of the brain involved in emotional regulation.

These findings have important implications for language learning. Research has shown that emotional states can significantly impact language acquisition (MacIntyre, 1999), with negative emotions such as anxiety and stress interfering with language learning progress. By promoting emotional regulation and reducing negative emotions, mindfulness may help individuals to engage more effectively in language learning activities, leading to more tremendous success in acquiring language skills. In conclusion, mindfulness techniques benefit emotional regulation, cognitive functioning, and language learning. Mindfulness can lead to decreased negative emotions and increased activity in sections of the brain involved in emotional regulation, suggesting that it may be a valuable tool for promoting emotional well-being. Given the importance of emotional states in language learning, mindfulness techniques may also benefit individuals seeking to improve their language skills. As such, mindfulness practices may have a valuable role to play in everyday classroom settings.

Theories behind the study

Positive Psychology, Happy-Classroom Approach, and Emotional Intelligence theory provide a framework for comprehending language-process teaching. Positive Psychology focuses on positive emotions, character strengths, and positive institutions. The Happy-Classroom Approach centers on creating an environment where students feel happy, engaged, and supported. Emotional Intelligence theory is about teaching individuals to identify and manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of others. By incorporating these theories, teachers can create a positive, engaging, and emotionally intelligent environment, improving student learning outcomes.

Positive psychology

Positive psychology is a branch of psychology that focuses on human well-being, happiness, and personal growth. It is a relatively new field developed in the late 20th century. Positive psychologists believe people can lead more fulfilling and meaningful lives by studying and fostering positive emotions, traits, and behaviors. One of the key figures in the development of positive psychology was Dr. Martin Seligman, who founded the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania in 2002. According to Seligman, positive psychology is concerned with identifying and nurturing the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive rather than solely focusing on treating mental illness.

Positive psychology emphasizes the importance of positive emotions, such as joy, love, and gratitude, and their role in increasing happiness and well-being. Research has shown that cultivating positive emotions can lead to various physical and psychological benefits, including reduced stress levels, improved immune function, and increased life satisfaction (Seligman et al., 2005). Positive psychology also emphasizes the importance of positive traits, such as optimism, resilience, and creativity, and their role in promoting personal growth and development. By focusing on our strengths and developing positive traits, we can enhance our ability to generate creative solutions to problems, maintain motivation in the face of challenges, and adapt to changing circumstances (Seligman, 2011).

Another essential aspect of positive psychology is the concept of “flow,” a state in which an individual is fully immersed in a task or activity that produces a sense of joy and fulfillment. The flow experience is characterized by complete engagement in the present moment and a sense of control over one’s actions. Research has shown that individuals who experience flow regularly report higher happiness, creativity, and overall well-being (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Positive psychology techniques have been applied in various settings, including education, business, and healthcare. For example, positive psychology interventions have been used in education to foster a growth mindset in students, promote resilience in at-risk populations, and increase academic achievement (Duckworth et al., 2005). In business, positive psychology interventions have increased employee engagement, job satisfaction, and productivi-

ty (Achor, 2010). In healthcare, positive psychology interventions have been used to improve patient outcomes and quality of care (Seligman et al., 2018). The principles of positive psychology focus on studying and understanding the positive aspects of human behavior and experiences. These principles include:

1. Focus on strengths: Positive psychology focuses on individuals' strengths and talents rather than just identifying and treating weaknesses.
2. Cultivate gratitude: Practicing gratitude and expressing appreciation for the positive things in life can improve overall well-being.
3. Foster resilience: Promoting resilience enables individuals to bounce back from challenging situations and difficulties.
4. Nurture positive relationships: Developing and maintaining positive relationships with others can strengthen social support and generate positive emotions.
5. Promote mindfulness: Mindfulness can help individuals live in the present moment, manage stress and negative emotions, and enhance overall well-being.
6. Pursue meaning and purpose: Positive psychology emphasizes finding meaning and purpose in life, which can increase overall life satisfaction and happiness.

The happy classroom approach

The happy classroom approach is an educational approach that focuses on creating a positive and joyful learning environment for students. This approach recognizes that students learn better when they feel happy, safe, and engaged. It involves using positive reinforcement, mindfulness, and student-centered teaching strategies. Richard Gerver, an award-winning educator and leadership expert, developed the Happy Classroom approach (Martin, 2010). He outlined his approach in his book "Creating Tomorrow's Schools Today: Education- Our Children- Their Futures." The approach emphasizes the need for teachers to focus on building positive relationships with students through active listening and empathizing. It also promotes the idea of a growth mindset and encourages students to learn from their mistakes and challenges.

Additionally, the approach encourages integrating mindfulness practices, such as breathing exercises and meditation, to help students focus and reduce stress. Research has shown the positive

effects of the Happy-Classroom approach. A study published in the Journal of Happiness Studies found that students in a positive school environment had more extraordinary academic achievement, higher well-being, and lower stress levels. Overall, The Happy-Classroom Approach is a promising approach to creating a joyful, engaging, and effective learning environment for students (Responsive Classroom, 2016).

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a concept that has gained a lot of attention in recent years. It refers to an individual's ability to perceive and manage their own emotions, as well as understand and influence the feelings of others. Emotional intelligence is essential to successful interpersonal relationships in both personal and professional settings (Goleman, 2005). One of the critical components of emotional intelligence is self-awareness. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), this refers to an individual's ability to recognize their emotions and impact on others. Self-awareness requires individuals to be honest and open about their emotions, strengths, and weaknesses. This level of self-reflection allows individuals to identify patterns in their behavior and make positive changes as needed.

Another critical aspect of emotional intelligence is empathy, which refers to the ability to understand and relate to the emotions of others. Empathy allows individuals to connect with others deeply by understanding their emotions and responding appropriately. This skill is essential in leadership roles, enabling leaders to create a supportive and positive work environment. Furthermore, emotional intelligence enables individuals to regulate their own emotions. This skill allows individuals to manage their emotions effectively rather than being controlled by them. Emotionally intelligent individuals can respond calmly and appropriately in challenging situations rather than reacting impulsively.

Communication is also a key component of emotional intelligence. Emotionally intelligent individuals can effectively communicate their emotions and needs and listen and respond to the emotions of others. Effective communication is essential in building solid relationships, both personal and professional. Lastly, emotional intelligence is associated with higher levels of resilience and adaptability. Emotionally intelligent individuals can better cope with change and adversity by regulating emotions and respond-

ing constructively. Emotional intelligence is critical to success in personal and professional relationships. Emotionally intelligent individuals can better understand and relate to their own and others' feelings, regulate emotions, communicate effectively, and adapt to change. Developing emotional intelligence skills can lead to greater self-awareness, improved relationships, and increased success in all areas of life.

Methodology

The adoption of the qualitative approach for teaching language research is typically indicated when the research aims to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the process, context, and subjective experiences associated with teaching languages (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research methods are particularly well suited to investigating complex social phenomena that are difficult to quantify and cannot be adequately captured using quantitative methods alone. Considering this, the study can be approached using qualitative parameters.

In the case of teaching languages, this might involve exploring how teachers approach lesson planning and instructional design, how they create a supportive classroom environment, how they engage with students and adapt their teaching style to meet individual needs, and how they assess and evaluate student learning (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). Qualitative research methods can shed light on these experiential aspects of teaching and learning by enabling the researcher to collect rich, descriptive data about teachers' and learners' attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and behaviors in real-world contexts. In our case, the approach is better for deepening our understanding of the object of study.

Qualitative research typically involves collecting data through various techniques, including interviews, focus groups, observation, and document analysis. These methods allow the researcher to understand the complex social and cultural factors influencing language teaching and learning (Flick, 2009). The data collected through qualitative research is often analyzed using various interpretive techniques, such as thematic, narrative, and discourse analysis. These methods allow the researcher to identify underlying patterns and themes from the data and develop a more nuanced understanding of the participants' meanings, beliefs, and experiences.

The qualitative approach to teaching language research can provide a more human-centered and contextualized understanding of language teaching and learning than quantitative research methods. By focusing on the subjective experiences of teachers and learners, qualitative research can help to identify areas where language instruction can be improved and tailored to meet individual needs (). Finally, this adoption of a qualitative perspective provides us with the opportunity to answer our research questions.

Case study method

Using the case study method in language teaching research can be highly beneficial. It allows for an in-depth examination of a particular situation or phenomenon in a specific context. This method also allows for the collection of rich, detailed, and complex data. For instance, a case study can be used to investigate the effectiveness of a specific language teaching approach or method in a particular classroom setting. Researchers can observe and document the implementation of the approach, collect data on student learning outcomes, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of using the process in that particular context (Gerring, 2007; Flyvberg, 2011; and Stake, 2011).

The case study approach can also be used to investigate the experiences of individual language learners or teachers. Researchers can conduct interviews, collect observation notes, and examine documents to understand the learners' or teachers' perspectives, beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding language learning and teaching. Overall, the case study method is valuable for language teaching research as it allows for exploring complex and detailed phenomena in real-world contexts.

About data analysis

Qualitative research is a powerful method for exploring complex social phenomena. It involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, to understand the meaning and context of the experiences, behaviors, and attitudes of the individuals or groups studied. Data analysis in qualitative research is a crucial aspect of the research process, as it involves making sense of the data, identifying patterns and themes, and generating insights that can inform the development of theory or policy. There are many ways to approach data analysis in qualita-

tive research, and the choice of method will depend on the nature of the research question, the data collected, and the theoretical framework employed. However, a few general guidelines can help researchers conduct practical data analysis in qualitative research. The first step in data analysis is to organize and prepare the data for analysis. This involves transcribing interviews, coding observational notes, and systematically collating other relevant documents. It is essential to clearly understand the research question and theoretical framework, as this will guide the selection of data collection and analysis methods (Walcott, 1994b; and Yin, 2009). Once the data has been prepared, the next step is to read it thoroughly, looking for patterns, themes, and categories. This process, known as data immersion or familiarization, helps to develop a deep understanding of the data and identify critical issues and topics. Using software programs such as Atlas.ti or NVivo may help organize and manage the data and facilitate the coding and analysis processes (Glasser and Strauss, 1967).

The next step is to code the data, assigning labels or tags to text segments or other data according to predetermined categories or themes. Coding is a crucial step in qualitative data analysis, as it enables the researcher to analyze the data and identify patterns and themes systematically. The codes can be generated inductively (i.e., emerging from the data), deductively (i.e., based on pre-existing theoretical frameworks), or a combination of both (Charmaz, 2014). Once the data has been coded, the researcher needs to analyze the data to identify patterns and themes. This may involve using various tools and techniques, such as frequency analysis, content analysis, or thematic analysis. It is essential to stay grounded in the data and continually refer back to the transcripts and other data sources to ensure the analysis is accurate and valid. Finally, the researcher must interpret the data, drawing on their knowledge of the research question (Glasser and Strauss, 1967).

The findings

Positive Acceptance of Mindfulness-Based Strategies among Student-Teachers at the University of Colima. The application of Mindfulness-Based Strategies (MEN) has been examined among student-teachers at the University of Colima, revealing overwhelmingly positive results. This analysis focuses on the enthusiastic reception of active breaks (pausas activas) and various mindfulness strategies. Notably, these practices have enhanced students' awareness

of their emotions and have been well-received by children in their classes. Moreover, it is worth highlighting the students' embrace of daily neuroscience and brain gym exercises, contributing to an overall positive experience. A vital advantage of these strategies is that they primarily rely on freely accessible resources, mainly from YouTube and other non-commercial, open-access platforms.

Positive impact on emotional awareness

One of the most significant findings of this study is that student-teachers reported an increased level of self-awareness regarding their emotions. Incorporating mindfulness strategies into their daily routines has facilitated a deeper understanding of their emotional states and reactions. This heightened awareness empowers them to manage their feelings better, an essential skill for effective teaching and interpersonal relationships.

Successful implementation in classroom settings

The positive impact of mindfulness strategies extends beyond self-awareness. Student-teachers have found that incorporating these techniques into their classroom routines has yielded favorable results. Children in their classes have responded enthusiastically to mindfulness practices, with some even requesting meditation sessions before beginning their lessons. This speaks to the effectiveness of mindfulness in creating a positive and focused classroom environment.

Embracing neuroscientific and brain gym practices

Besides mindfulness, student-teachers have strongly accepted daily neuroscience activities and brain gym exercises. These practices contribute to improved cognitive function and enhance the overall well-being of both the students and teachers. The positive attitude toward these exercises suggests they are valuable tools for promoting cognitive development and mental clarity.

Cost-effective resources

A significant advantage of these strategies is their accessibility. Most resources, including guided mindfulness sessions, neuroscience information, and brain gym exercises, are free on platforms like YouTube and non-commercial websites. This accessibility ensures that student-teachers can continue to benefit from these practices without incurring additional costs.

Conclusions

Applying Mindfulness-Based Strategies, active breaks, neuroscience activities, and brain gym exercises have proven highly successful among student-teachers at the University of Colima. Notably, these practices have enhanced emotional awareness, improved classroom dynamics, and been well-received by educators and students. Furthermore, the cost-effective nature of these resources ensures that their positive impact can be sustained over time. These findings underscore the value of incorporating mindfulness and related practices into teacher training programs, offering potential benefits for educators and their students. After the treatment, it is possible to conclude with the following ideas.

On the positive acceptance of Mindfulness-Based strategies and the enhanced emotional awareness. The application of Mindfulness-Based Strategies (MEN) among student-teachers at the University of Colima has yielded overwhelmingly positive results. Student-teachers have strongly accepted mindfulness strategies and active breaks (*pausas activas*). These practices have not only been well-received but have also enhanced students' awareness of their emotions. Besides, one of the most significant outcomes of incorporating mindfulness strategies into the daily routines of student-teachers is the heightened level of self-awareness regarding their emotions. This newfound awareness empowers them to manage their emotional states better, a crucial skill for effective teaching and building positive relationships.

Successful Implementation in Classroom Settings. Mindfulness practices have demonstrated their effectiveness beyond self-awareness. Student-teachers have successfully implemented these techniques in their classrooms, where children have responded enthusiastically. Some students have even requested meditation sessions before lessons, highlighting the positive impact of mindfulness on creating a focused and harmonious classroom environment. Regarding embracing neuroscientific and brain gym practices, student-teachers have also shown a strong acceptance of daily neuroscience activities and brain gym exercises. These practices contribute not only to improved cognitive function but also to the overall well-being of both students and teachers. The positive attitude toward these exercises underscores their value in promoting cognitive development and mental clarity.

Cost-Effective Resources. A significant advantage of these strategies is their accessibility. Most resources, including guided mindfulness sessions, neuroscience information, and brain gym exercises, are freely available on platforms like YouTube and non-commercial websites. This accessibility ensures that student-teachers can continue to benefit from these practices without incurring additional costs.

In summary, incorporating Mindfulness-Based Strategies (MEN) into student-teacher education at the University of Colima has proven highly beneficial. These strategies have led to increased emotional awareness, successful implementation in classroom settings, and a positive embrace of neuroscientific and brain gym practices. Moreover, the cost-effective nature of these resources makes them sustainable tools for enhancing students' and educators' well-being and cognitive development. This study underscores the potential of MEN as valuable tools in modern education, offering benefits that extend beyond the classroom and into everyday life.

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